

MS-603, Box 112, Folder 7 Transcription

Dictation followed by discussion on Jews in Ethiopia. undated

Marc Tanenbaum:

Jesse Cohen, 120 East 37th Street, New York, New York, 10016.

Dear Mr. Cohen, as I indicated to you during our telephone conversation last Wednesday, Mrs. Kate Birn, B-I-R-N, has asked me to serve as co-executor with you in making determinations regarding her estate.

In view of the fact that you are her attorney, I would appreciate you sending me a letter in which you confirm [01:00] your acceptance of my serving as co-executor.

I do not want to get involved in making recommendations or participating in decision making without having my status legally confirmed.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours. Sign my name. Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

And a letter to Daniel S. Mariaschin, political affairs director, AIPAC. Dear Dan, thanks for your note of May 23rd.

[02:00] Please have Michael Lewis call me in mid-June. I have nothing open at the moment, but I would like to meet him in the event some posts open up very shortly.

Best wishes on your new post at APAIC. Cordially. Sign my name.

Mr. Ryan [Campia?].

This is a letter to his eminence, John Cardinal O'Connor, archbishop of New York. My dear Cardinal O'Connor. I wish to acknowledge with much appreciation your kind invitation to be present at St. Patrick's Cathedral on Thursday July 3rd in connection with the New York Statue [03:00] of Liberty observance.

There is a possibility that I will need to be in Jerusalem at that time. Should my plans change, however, I shall be delighted to accept your thoughtful invitation.

I wonder whether you had any further thoughts following our recent conversation regarding your possible visit to Israel for a meeting with Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Blind carbon copy to Ted Ellenoff, Leo [Nevis?] Miles Jaffe, and David Gordis.

Rita, on Friday, please call [04:00] my book binder in case I forget and ask him if he would attend a meeting, (inaudible) on South Africa. If he cannot make it, ask him whether Andy Baker can cover it. I planned to go, but --

Send that to (inaudible) Sherman from Marc Tanenbaum. Subject is "Proposed Annual Report."

Order to Larry Phillips, president of Phillips Van Heusen. Dear Larry, I appreciated your notice, as much as your contribution -
-

First myself, and then George Gruen - to assure that we are represented by competent, [05:00] professional representatives. Let's see. Competent. To assure that we are represented by the appropriate AJC people.

I raise this question because I learned about the meeting with Ambassador Thomas Pickering at about 3:45 p.m. yesterday. Had I known about it, had someone contacted me from your office as a matter of normal procedure, I would've changed my schedule in

order to be present. It was important for me professionally to be present at that meeting.

We will accept responsibility of informing other appropriate people --

This is a memo to --

We will accept responsibility for informing other [06:00] appropriate AJC people who should be invited to these special meetings.

With warm good wishes, for a pleasant and restful summer. I am cordially yours. Sign my name. Blind carbon copy to George Gruen.

This is a note, a memorandum, to David Gordis, and Bill Trusten, mark it confidential. I just -- mark it the date of Thursday, July 25th, 1985. The subject is "My conversation with Ambassador [Rosenne?] re: Shimon Samuels."

I just had a rather lengthy [07:00] and friendly conversation with Ambassador Meir Rosenne, whom Shimon Samuels gave to us as a reference.

Rosan was quite positive about Shimon's qualifications. He said that he found Samuels to be thorough and reliable, that his reports on the French-Jewish situation have been honest, and knowledgeable.

He said, also, that Shimon [08:00] was not in a comfortable situation, that in fact French Jewry, French-Jewish leadership, tried to prevent the ADL from coming into Paris, but in that tough situation, Shimon managed to do a number of positive things. He said that he did not make many enemies.

He also said that he attended some meetings that Shimon had arranged, that they were well prepared, and that he did thorough research in preparing these meetings.

He added that [09:00] he is not a high-profile person, and is not a schvitzer.

He had nothing negative to say about him. That was an altogether positive report.

This is a letter to Mr. Bertsy Mulroy, coordinator, archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Dear Mr. Mulroy. Thank you for your kind letter of July 10th.

I wish to confirm my acceptance of your thoughtful invitation to take part in your October 13th observance of the twentieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*.

I am delighted to know that my long-time friend, Father Tom [10:00] Stransky, will be sharing the platform.

I would like to get as early as possible an outline of the program for that evening.

With warmest good wishes to you, and to Archbishop Weakland, I am cordially yours. Sign my name.

Enclosed, perhaps the clipping from the *Pittsburgh Jewish Paper*.

This letter is addressed to Reverend Robert F. Weiss, SG president, Rutgers College at his address in Kansas City, Missouri.

Dear Robert Weiss. Thank you very much for your warm and thoughtful letter of July 12th, [11:00] in which you invite me to give one of the William [Rosner?] lectures.

I have the warmest memories of my earliest associations with Rutgers College in 1962, and thereafter.

As I review my calendar, the only date available to me now is November 25th. If that is convenient for you, then please consider this my commitment to deliver a lecture on Vatican Council II at that time.

[12:00] I am especially pleased to know that I will be taking part in a series with such warm and good friends as Dr. [Pelican?] and Avery Dulles, among others.

With warmest good wishes, I am sincerely yours. Sign my name. Enclosed the, I guess, the Pittsburgh clip.

This is a letter addressed to the Honorable Elliot Abrams. We have to get his exact title. He is, I think, director of the Latin American desk of the US State Department, Washington, D.C.

Dear Elliot. On behalf of the American Jewish Committee, it gives me pleasure to invite you to deliver a principal address [13:00] on our government's foreign policy toward Central America.

We extend this invitation to you to address our national leadership that will be meeting on Sunday, November 10th, when our National Executive Council will be meeting at the Hyatt Hotel, in Miami Beach, Florida.

It is our intention to conduct a thorough review of what ought to be the AJC's updated approach towards Central America, as well as toward our responsibilities [14:00] relating to the Jewish communities in those countries. For those purposes, we also would plan to invite Ambassador Sol Linowitz to share a platform with you.

At a subsequent session, we are inviting Mr. Marcel Ruff, president of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Central America, to speak about the situation of Jewish communities throughout that region.

I sincerely hope that it will be possible for you to be with us. It would constitute an important contribution to helping our

people understand the foreign policy issues that are at stake in our Central American [15:00] concerns.

With warm, good wishes, I am cordially yours. Sign my name.

Blind carbon copy. Should go to David Gordis, to Shula Bahat, and to Mort [Yarman?].

This is a letter to Mr. Marcel Ruff, president of FEDECO, in Guatemala City.

Dear Marcel. I hope this finds you and your family in good health.

On behalf of the American Jewish Committee, I should like to extend to you a cordial invitation to address a major session of our National Executive Council, which will be meeting in Miami on Sunday, November 10th -- Sunday morning, November 10th, at the Hyatt Hotel, in Miami Beach, Florida.

[16:00] We have invited Ambassador Sol Linowitz, and Secretary Elliot Abrams to make a presentation on America's foreign policy approaches to Central America, generally. We would be grateful if you would then speak on the issues of the present situation

of Jewish communities in Central America. In addition, we are inviting Dr. Jose Miller, the president of the Jewish Community of Cuba, to join you at that session.

If need be, more than likely, we will plan to keep that session off the record so that we could have a frank and useful discussion of the interests that are of concern to all of us.

[17:00] I would be grateful if you could let me know by return mail of your availability for this important discussion.

With warmest good wishes to you, and all of our friends at FEDECO, cordially yours. Sign my name. Also enclose *The New York Times* clip on the Vatican, as well as the Pittsburgh Jewish clipping. Carbon copies of that to Gordis, Bahat, and Yarman.

This is a memorandum to Bernie Resnikoff from Marc Tanenbaum, dated the date in which you do the memo. Carbon copy to David Gordis, Bill [Crossen?], and to David Harris, and George Gruen.

[18:00]

I will be leaving on vacation from July 29th through August 15th. But before I go, I wanted to acknowledge three of your recent

important memoranda -- three of your memoranda which raise important issues:

Number one, [*Futot?*] *Yisrael*. We are very much -- We share your concern about the breakdown in communication between [*Aymanan?*] Hadari, and Dan Elazar. On my return, I plan to discuss this question thoroughly with David Gordis. [19:00] David will likely be in Israel the third week of August, and I'm sure that he can be helpful in trying to straighten out the kinks in this relationship.

Number two, Nissim Rejwan. I'm not altogether up on all the details of that complicated relationship, but plan to do so on my return after August 15th. In the meantime, I am sharing this information with David. Perhaps [20:00] you can discuss this with him as well when he visits Israel.

Number three, AJC mission to Israel - Many of us share your concerns about the *hefkerut*, H-E-F-K-E-R-U-T, that has developed among a number of our departments and field offices in relation to separate missions to Israel. We plan to discuss thoroughly how we can bring better coordination into this area, as well as into others. It will be essential [21:00] that we develop some organized strategy for our relationship with the Israel office,

as well as with regard to other concerns which fit into our international relations programs.

In the meantime, I simply wanted you to know that your memos are being acknowledged, and that we plan to respond seriously so the issues that you raise.

Warm regards. And sign it Marc. Send it out as soon as soon as you can, with a carbon copy to David Gordis and Bill Crossten.

This is a letter to the Honorable Moshe Yegar, the foreign ministry of Israel, Jerusalem, Israel.

Dear Moshe. I was delighted to learn of your appointment as [22:00] consul-general of Israel in New York.

This is very happy news for all of us. We've had a warm and effective working relationship with Naphtali Lavie, and look forward to similar close ties with you.

Once you have settled down in New York City, I hope that we will have an opportunity to meet together, to explore areas of mutual helpfulness.

With warmest good wishes, I am cordially yours. You'll sign my name. Enclose the stuff on Denmark, and Spain, and Hungary.

A carbon copy to Bernie Resnikoff, and [23:00] Leo Nevis.

This is a letter addressed to Mr. David Sinclair in Brooklyn, New York.

Dear Mr. Sinclair. I wish to acknowledge your letter of July 8th regarding the situation of Jehovah's Witnesses in the State of Israel.

As you may know, the American Jewish Committee is deeply committed to the cause of civil liberties and human rights, not only in Israel, but in the United States, and elsewhere throughout the world.

I am taking the liberty of sending a copy of your letter to our Jerusalem office asking them to look into the episodes that you report on.

As soon as I hear [24:00] from our Jerusalem director, I will be in touch with you.

Sincerely yours. Sign my name.

Blind carbon copy to Bernie Resnikoff, and to Sidney [Leskowsky?]. Enclose this note, as well as a copy of Sinclair's letter.

This is a letter to Mr. James Finn, editor of *Freedom at Issue*, at Freedom House, 20 West 40th Street, New York, etc.

Dear Jim. Thank you for sending me a copy of *Freedom at Issue*.

I leave on vacation July 29th, and will be returning August 5th. I plan to read the issue while I am away, and will be in touch with you on my return.

[25:00] I think you are doing a superb job as editor of this important publication, and want you to know of my appreciation.

Cordially as ever. You sign my name.

Barton S. Udell. Dear Barton. Many thanks for your July 17th note -- July 17th letter, and the enclosed project from Seymour Liebman.

I leave on vacation July 29th, and will be away until August 15th.
I plan to be in touch with you on my return about our possible
sponsorship of this study.

With warmest good wishes, I am cordially yours. I sign my name.

Here is a letter addressed to [26:00] Dr. R. Keith Parks, the
foreign mission board to Southern Baptist Convention.

Dr. Keith. Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter to
Congressman Howell Heflin -- to Senator Howell Heflin regarding
the situation of Baptist churches in Israel.

I am forwarding a copy of this to our office in Jerusalem, and
asking them to make inquiries of the appropriate people in the
Justice and Interior Departments.

I must say that I wish you had postponed proposing letters to
congressmen and senators [27:00] before we exhausted every
peaceful, constructive exploration, with the key authorities in
Israel. My concern is that your letter in the wrong hands will
be used as propaganda warfare by the enemies of Israel and the
Jewish people in this country, and abroad.

In any case, we are committed to upholding civil liberties and human rights in Israel, the United States, and elsewhere throughout the world. We will try to do everything we can to assure that these principles are respected with regard to Baptist believers in Israel.

With [28:00] warm, good wishes. I am cordially yours. Sign my name. Blind carbon copy to Bernie Resnikoff, to David Gordis, Sidney Leskowsky. Enclose a copy of Keith Parks' letter, and the list of the congressmen with it.

This is addressed to his eminence, Roger Cardinal Etcheagaray, president of the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace, in Vatican City.

My dear Archbishop -- My dear Cardinal Etcheagaray. I appreciate very much your thoughtful consideration in sending me a copy of the World Day of Peace message, which [29:00] Pope John Paul II will issue on January 1st, 1986.

It is a thoughtful and inspiring document, and I hope that we can join with you in assuring that it receives the proper attention among the broadest constituency with whom we are in contact.

I have the fondest memories of our meeting in your chancery in Marseille. In particular, I am deeply grateful for the excellent and moving [30:00] statement that you made at the Senate of Bishops meeting, in which you spoke about the spiritual foundations of Catholic-Jewish relations.

I plan to be in Rome for a 20th anniversary observance of *Nostra Aetate* around October 28th through the 30th. It would be wonderful if we could arrange to meet with you at that time.

With warmest good wishes. I am respectfully yours, Rabbi Tanenbaum, director of International Relations Department. And we'll throw in a few clips, the Pittsburgh clip, and I'll find something else.

Blind carbon copy to Zach [Sister?], and to David Gordis.

This is a letter to Dr. Daniel J. Elazar, [31:00] director of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Jerusalem, Israel.

Dear Dan. I have just seen a copy of your letter addressed to Bernie Resnikoff regarding your relationship with [Futot?] *Yisrael*.

It saddens me that this misunderstanding has developed. We value very much the relationship of yourself, as well as your colleagues in your past collaboration with the American Jewish Committee.

I leave on vacation July 29th, and will return August [32:00] 15th. I hope at that time to be in touch with you to see if we can iron out the kinks in this communications problem.

In the meantime, I hope you will suspend further judgment until we have had a chance to discuss this at some length.

With warmest good wishes, I am cordially yours. Sign my name. And we'll enclose something with it.

Carbon copy to David Gordis, to Bernie Resnikoff.

This is a letter to addressed to Mr. Samuel Toledano, secretary-general of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain, at his Madrid address.

Dear Sam, I appreciate very much your warm and thoughtful letter. Please forgive my delay in responding. [33:00] This has

been an extremely hectic time for us, what with Bitburg, then Mengele, then the TWA crisis, among other matters.

I leave July 29th on vacation, and will return August 15th. Before going, I've wanted to report to you on a conversation that we had with the first minister of the Spanish embassy, Senor Juan [Arbole?].

The substance of that conversation is contained in the enclosed press statement.

Beyond that, as soon as I return in mid-August, I will respond [34:00] to the several excellent suggestions contained in your May 13th letter. In the meantime, my warmest good wishes to you and your family.

Cordially yours. Sign my name. Enclose that press release on our conversation with Spain. Also the Danish thing. Also the Hungarian thing, press releases.

Rita, when David Harris comes back, please see to it that he sees carbons of much of this correspondence relating to programs, not necessarily those -- not those relating to my personal speaking engagements.

Note to Rabbi Alan Mittleman. Dear Alan. I was deeply sorry to learn of the untimely passing of your father.

Having lost, in recent years, both my brother and mother, I know the [35:00] anguish that we suffer through in these difficult -- we suffer through in these terrible losses.

I wanted you to know that I am very much with you in spirit. I extend to you my -- to you and your family my heartfelt condolences.

Sign my name, Mark.

(break in audio)

M1: (inaudible) the recommendations, and then everybody decides where the priority is. I'm (inaudible) only for myself. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) as a priority, way, way down at the bottom.

F1: I think question was addressed to Dr. (inaudible).

M2: Yeah, I (inaudible) ways of doing something if it's possible.

M3: Very specifically. I think the American [36:00] Jewish Committee enjoys enormous prestige in America, and in Israel, there, and [if it could?] use its good offices to importune the prime minister, who has it within his power to make a determination. He nodded his head twice, and we brought in 121. He hasn't nodded his head since then because they say he's preoccupied with a few other matters, from Oslo, to Cairo, and as a consequence, his secretaries have not put this detail -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

M4: Let's have one conversation now, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

M1: He's right to a point there. We have a budget in American Jewish Committees. Now, you tell me what item in our budget we should reduce to give it for this purpose.

TANENBAUM: Can I respond too?

M1: Yeah.

TANENBAUM: I think Mr. Shimel is addressing the question to our AJC procedures. I think you're right [37:00] in asking a question about priorities. Let me say to Mr. Shimel, with a very deep appreciation for all your dedication over the years. I think one of the real characteristics of AJC has been its ability to respond to crises in Jewish life, and emergencies, and not to be locked in to commitments we had

made a year ago, two years ago. For myself, and I want to share this on a personal level, the life of a Jew in Ethiopia is as precious to us as the life of a Jew --

M1: That's right. But I'm talking priority.

TANENBAUM: Right. Now, my own sense is, and one of the reasons why I felt it was important to put this issue on the agenda is that while we had paid a great deal of attention, given a great deal of priority [38:00] to the survival of the Jews in Israel, rightly so, and to the survival of the Jews in the Soviet Union, and have created all kinds of major organizations, with millions of dollars to help save them, and keep the issue of their survival before the Jewish communities of the world, we really have been terribly neglectful of a community, at one time, was over a million people, and because of our neglect, has now been reduced to a pitiful number of 25,000 people. What are we going to do? Wait until they are all converted into Coptic Christianity, because we are not paying attention to them? Or wait until they're all sold into slavery? The issue for me now is to clarify the practical question -- I have no question about the priority. The fact that they have been neglected for a hundred years by American Jews to our shame, not to our credit, and the issue is for us giving them a number that are still there surviving, what

we do [39:00] to find a way to -- The one thing that I'm not clear about as a result of our conversation is that apparently, something has begun to happen in the past two years with (inaudible), especially in which the (inaudible) acknowledged that some significant activity is taking place, and the question is, how significant is that? How real is that in terms of getting through to the Jews of Ethiopia? If it is not significant, there is the possibility there of really trying to make a difference in their lives, then I think we ought to look at that now, and see what we ought to be doing to go beyond this. I really don't want to get locked into the business of whether they have a claim for their conscience. I have no question about that they have a (inaudible), perhaps a greater claim than many other Jewish communities to whom we have given necessarily, and rightly, a great deal of attention. I mean, I think personally (inaudible), and I personally have not paid attention to this issue, [40:00] while I've paid attention to many others, and now I'm going to try to make up for that now.

M3: What is our relationship (inaudible)?

F1: Yeah, how do you respond to that? (long pause) [41:00]

[42:00] [43:00] [44:00]

M5: Hello, hello? Testing, testing, one, two, three, testing.

F2: First you press Record, then Play, and that's record.

That's the Record --

F3: This is one hell of a pain in the ass. End quote. But one gets used to almost anything.

F2: The actual battery --

F3: OK.

END OF AUDIO FILE