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Romania, 1976-1978.

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STATEMENT BY RABBI ALEXANDER SCHINDLER
CHAIRMAN, CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF MAJOR AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
SEPTEMBER 8, 1976

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

I appreciate your giving me this opportunity to present the views of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations of which I am chairman. The Conference is the coordinating body of 32 national Jewish organizations and speaks for the organized American Jewish community on this and related issues.

We are in favor of continuing the MFN status which has been conferred on Romania.

Ours is a qualified endorsement. The law's requirement of free emigration assuredly has not yet been achieved; many Romanian Jews desiring to be reunited with their families here and elsewhere are denied the right to do so. Yet we see this failing against the background of those considerable rights which are granted to the Romanian Jewish community itself. We see it also in the context of that independent foreign policy which the Romanian government has pursued and which we favor -- her efforts to normalize relations with nations outside the Soviet bloc, with our own country and with Israel. Nor are the gates of emigration entirely shut; some flow, however sluggish and uncertain, is encouraged. And so we support an additional one-year waiver of section 402, in the hope that continuing efforts by our officials will, in fact, lead to the achievement of the Trade Act's ultimate objective: a free movement of peoples.

My testimony is based not just on a careful sifting of passport and visa statistics, but also on more personal observations gleaned on a journey through Romania. I travelled there some weeks ago on the invitation of the Romanian government, her Jewish community, and with the cooperation of our State Department. I toured Bucharest and five or six centers in the northeast section of that land. I met with leaders of some twenty Jewish communities which I was

unable to visit personally. I conferred with governmental officials and party chiefs -- among them the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. Of course, I also counselled with our own Embassy officials who were most helpful in all of these encounters and whose manifest devotion to the moral concerns of our government I have come to respect and value greatly.

The Romanian Jewish community enjoys many rights. There are synagogues and communal centers. Worship is unrestricted, liturgical materials are at hand, and even religious instruction is permitted. Canteens have been established in every major Jewish population center and free kosher meals are provided to one and all, even, by special transport, to the home and bedridden. Special medical and dental care is available, and food and clothing are distributed regularly. Several old-age, nursing homes are in operation and much needed for a population whose median age is sixty-five. All of these institutions and activities are administered by the local Jewish community with the approval and cooperation of the Romanian government. They are given considerable financial support by the Joint Distribution Committee, an American Jewish charitable institution, whose efforts are facilitated by the MFN status which Romania now enjoys.

These rights which the Romanian government accords to its Jewish citizens are on a full par with the rights given to her other minority groupings. Yet the concept of human rights, as we perceive it in its fullness, must encompass the right of emigration. And it is on this score, and this score primarily, that our testimony is qualified.

The facts speak for themselves. When Romania was originally granted most-favored-nation status, congress asserted and administration witnesses agreed that further renewal of this special relationship must depend on a steady flow of emigration. The House Committee on Ways and Means, in offering its concurrence, actually foresaw a dramatic rise in this emigration, based on its upward trend

during the weeks preceding last year's hearings.

But there has been no upswing in Romanian emigration. In the twelve months preceding the approval of MFN, 2,592 Romanian Jews were allowed to leave; in the twelve months thereafter, emigration declined by nearly one hundred souls. Reports for the first seven months of 1976 allow us to project no more than 2,300 emigrants, still a further marked decline. If those figures which swelled during last year's hearings and on which the House Committee based its projections had been realized -- an average of 307 per month for the two months preceding and three months following the hearings -- the annual rate of emigration would have approached 3,700, precisely the same number of Jews who left Romania during 1973 and 1974. Thus the current emigration rate is actually 37.5 per cent below what might have been expected if the rate which Romania "demonstrated" to congress had been sustained.

Former Romanian Jews now living in Israel and elsewhere insist that many of their relatives still in Romania want to be reunited with them, and indeed many have indicated to Romanian authorities that they have a desire to do so. Many more undoubtedly want to join their relatives abroad but have not made formal application to leave because of the difficulties which still inhere in the emigration process: the requirements of prior approval from several national and local authorities, lengthy interviews probing motivation, risk of job loss, indefinite delays. Frequently passports are fully processed, even to the point of having visas entered by the Israeli Consulate, only to be withheld at the very last moment for weeks and months on end, with no perceivable pattern, and for no apparent reason.

A governmental policy of restricted, carefully controlled emigrations -- which these statistics and procedures could well be interpreted to reflect -- is clearly inconsistent with the letter and the spirit of the 1975 Trade Act. This is why we qualify our approval of the President's proposal that he waive the

requirements of section 402, which we support on other, weighty grounds, with the request that the emigration figures be kept under continuing careful review and that our government's representatives continue to bend every effort in order to make certain that the practices of Romania will lead substantially to the achievement of a full and free emigration.

I cannot conclude my testimony without once again expressing my admiration and gratitude to the members of our State Department and in particular to our representatives in Bucharest whose words and actions bear testimony to the fact that insofar as the United States is concerned interests in the extension of trade and political sway do not supercede our concern for the extension of human rights, and that among these rights, the free movement of peoples is an ideal to which our national honor is pledged.



May 21, 1976

His Excellency, Corneliu Bogdan
Ambassador of Roumania to the United States
Embassy of Roumania
Washington, D.C.

My Dear Ambassador Bogdan:

I am so glad that we finally had a chance to meet and I must say that my preconception of your excellence, based on prior private reports, has been confirmed. You seem to be as good as they say you are and I really regret that your tour of duty in the United States will end so soon so that our association will only be of relatively short duration.

As we told you at our meeting, we share your earnest hope that there be continued progress in the favorable relationship which obtains between your country and the United States. I hope that you will find it possible to help us establish your government's earnestness in helping on the immigration issue. We fully agree with you that the number's game is foolish to play and that this particular problem must be seen in the context of an overall approach manifested in many spheres. Still, the United States Congress is concerned only with the problem of immigration and they will insist on our reassurances on this score.

I double checked the issue which Mrs. Charlotte Jacobson raised and our records do indeed indicate that there are some six hundred (600) people who are ready to leave this very moment, the bulk of them having already been processed both by your government and by the Israeli Consulate and yet they are still unable to leave. The elimination of this particular log-jam would go some way toward the solution of our mutual problem.

Once again I want to say how pleased and privileged I was to meet you. I want to wish you well as you turn to your new responsibilities.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
Chairman

bcc: Mrs. Charlotte Jacobson
Mr. Yitzhak Rager
Rabbi Israel Miller
Mr. Yehuda Hellman

התאחדות עולי רומניה בישראל
HITACHDUT OLEI ROMANIA B'ISRAEL
Jerusalem ירושלים

כ"ג באייר תשל"ו

23.5.1976

ירושלים,

ת.ד. 1483 P.O.B.

Just Decline

לכבוד

ועידת הנשיאים בארה"ב

א.מ.נ.

אשתקד הפנינו חשומת לבכם למצב העליה מרומניה. פועלכם מלא את לבנו תקוות לאחר ההבטחות שהשגתם הן דרך הממשל האמריקאי והן ישירות מן הרומנים, ועל כך ברכנו אתכם בלבנו.

למרבה הצער, הסתיימה שנת 1975 במספר הנמוך ביותר של עולים שידענו מארץ זו זה שנים רבות. גם 1976 עד כה מצטיינת בירידה תלולה ומדאיגה במספר היוצאים מרומניה לישראל.

קשיים חדשים ברישום ליציאה, הכבדה בפורמליות, פרסומים בעתונות המקומית, לראשונה זה שבע עשרה שנה, המכוונים נגד הרוצים לצאת, כולם מיועדים להפחיד, להרתיע וכתוצאה מכך להמעיט מספר מגישי הבקשות.

לפי מיטב ידיעתנו, הנזונות בראש וראשונה מפניות המשפחות המפורדות בארץ, אך גם ממכתבים המגיעים מרומניה, ברור לנו ללא צל של ספק שרבות יהודים נפשם יוצאת להתאחד עם משפחותיהם, מהן הופרדו בכורח הנסיבות ואחודם נמנע חרף רצונם העז.

לא עשינו פעולות ראוה, אם כי נצלנו כל הזדמנות להבהיר לרומנים כאן, בשיחות שקטות, את עמדתנו הנחרצת, הדורשת קיום ההבטחות לבצוע המדיניות ההומניטרית המוכרזת ע"י מתן אפשרות לאחוד משפחות ואנו פונים אליכם עתה, כאשר מתחדש הדיון במעמד רומניה כמדינה מועדפת ביותר, שתפעילו את השפעתכם הישירה על הרומנים ועל הממשל בארה"ב, כדי לשכנע שלא נשקוט עד שדרישה הומניטרית זאת לא תבוא על ספוקה.

ברגשי כבוד ובברכת אחים,

צבי רוזן

נ"ר

June 2, 1976

Mr. Tzvi Rosen
Hitachdut Olei Romania B'Israel
P.O. Box 1483
Jerusalem, Israel

Dear Mr. Rosen:

I have your letter of May 23 and want to assure you we are aware of the decline in emigration from Romania. We are working very closely with all interested parties in the United States and have even made inquiry with the Romanian government.

I assure you of our interest and concern in this connection.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
Chairman

cc: Mr. Yehuda Hellman

EMBASSY OF THE
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF ROMANIA
WASHINGTON, D. C.

NN/ES

No. 6593

August 7, 1976

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Chairman, Conference of Presidents
of Major American Jewish Organizations
515 Park Avenue,
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

It was a real pleasure meeting you in New York on August 5, 1976 when we had the opportunity to discuss matters of general and mutual interest.

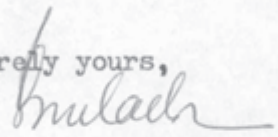
It is my opinion that our discussions were interesting and constructive and consider that we must keep in permanent contact and see each other frequently, for discussing any matter when our presence, advice and views sharing is required and needed.

I take the opportunity to reiterate my invitation to you and your wife for a Romanian afternoon and dinner at my residence in Washington, at your convenience.

In the mean time I wish you a nice and very succesful trip in Romania.

Looking forward to see you again,

Sincerely yours,


Nicolae Nicolae
Ambassador

August 25, 1976

Mr. Stefan Andrei
Secretary of the Communist Party
Bucharest, Romania

Dear Mr. Andrei:

My heartfelt thanks for receiving me on my recent journey to Romania and my visit to Bucharest. You were most gracious to give me so much time and I appreciate especially the frankness of your approach.

I share your conviction that there is no reason why we cannot cooperate with one another and that given such cooperation there is little that cannot be achieved.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

August 24, 1976

Mr. Gheorghe Nenciv, President
Department of Religious Affairs
St. Snagov 40
Bucharest, Romania

Dear Mr. Nenciv:

I am deeply grateful to you for sponsoring our visit to your land and for the personal time you gave me during my visit as well as the many courtesies which were shown to us by you and through your good offices.

I found our conversation most helpful and I do hope that we will have an opportunity in the not-too-distant future to resume it.

We are admiring of the religious rights which are granted to the Jewish community, thanks to your Government and through the instrumentalities of your position. This enhances our regard for Romania and our determination to work in cooperation always.

With warmest wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

August 24, 1976

Rabbi Moshe Rosen
Chief Rabbi
Bucharest, Romania

My Dear Rabbi Rosen:

I am deeply grateful for your warm and gracious hospitality and for your many courtesies to me during my visit to Romania.

I am admiring of your efforts in Romania and for the Jewish community. There is very little doubt that you have accomplished much in most difficult times and places. The entire Jewish world has to be indebted to you.

I really do not know how to evaluate my visit fully. I know that it was not entirely without its impact and I hope some positive results will flow from it. I approach all matters with two concerns, the assured continued support and vitality of the Romanian Jewish community as well as the free opportunity for those who might have the hope to be reunited with families in other lands. If both of these purposes can be furthered I will indeed be satisfied.

With repeated thanks for your kindnesses and with every good wish, I am,

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

P.S. The enclosed letter awaited me on my return from Romania and I share it with you in the hope that you might possibly be of help.

August 24, 1976

Mr. Jon Patan
Vice Prime Minister
Bucharest, Romania

Dear Mr. Patan:

I am exceedingly grateful to you for receiving me when I was in Bucharest and I meant what I said: I do respond both to your pragmatism and the warmth of your human approach. It is clear that you are a kindred spirit.

I deeply appreciate your offer to be of help and eagerly await, through the United States Embassy, your response to my request.

It was a joy and a privilege to meet you as well as to visit your great land.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

EMBASSY OF THE
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF ROMANIA
WASHINGTON, D. C.

September 7th, 1976

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

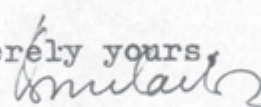
Dear Rabbi Schindler:

First of all I would like to thank you for your nice letter and for the warm words about our delightful evening.

It was a real pleasure for my wife and myself to meet you and your gracious wife.

With warmest personal regards and best wishes to you and Mrs. Schindler.

Sincerely yours,


Nicolae M. Nicolae
Ambassador

PERSONAL &
CONFIDENTIAL

August 25, 1976

Ambassador Simcha Dinitz
Embassy of Israel
1621 22nd St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Simcha:

Thank you for your helpfulness yesterday.

You were good. My acknowledgements were not formal, but truly reflective of my response to your briefing.

If you do write a report home in re my Rumanian briefing, by all means feel free to include my recommendation that the Eastern European section should be fully integrated into the Foreign Ministry. My fleeting exposure to its problems convinces me of the wisdom of this move. Relations with other governments and their embassies invariably are involved and the structural separation of these entities leads to a confounding of policies -- never mind the confusion which is the inevitable consequence of this artificial segregation. I am not arguing for different people -- they are honorable and well intentioned. I am arguing for integration, and coordination and central supervision.

I guess this recommendation won't make me popular either - but what the hell. My standing in the polls is low enough as it is, so I'll persist in expressing what I feel.

Again, my thanks.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF MAJOR AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

515 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022
Plaza 2-1616
Cable Address: COJOGRA

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS:

American Israel Public
Affairs Committee
American Jewish Congress
American Mizrahi Women's
Organization
American Zionist Federation
Anti-Defamation League
B'nai B'rith
B'nai B'rith Women
Bnai Zion
Central Conference of
American Rabbis
Council of Jewish Federations
and Welfare Funds (observer)
Hadassah
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish Reconstructionist
Foundation
Jewish War Veterans
of the U.S.A.
Labor Zionist Alliance
Mizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrachi
National Committee for
Labor Israel, Inc.
National Council of
Jewish Women
National Council of
Young Israel
National Federation of
Temple Sisterhoods
National Jewish Community
Relations Advisory Council
National Jewish Welfare Board
North American Jewish
Youth Council
Pioneer Women
The Rabbinical Assembly
Rabbinical Council of America
Union of American Hebrew
Congregations
Union of Orthodox Jewish
Congregations of America
United Synagogue of America
Women's American ORT
Women's League for
Conservative Judaism
World Zionist Organization
American Section, Inc.
Zionist Organization of America

September 13, 1976

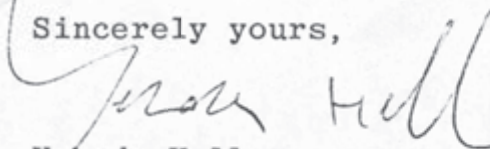
Subcommittee on Trade
House Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

AMERICAN JEWISH

We thought you might be interested in seeing the enclosed testimony which we have submitted to the House Committee on Ways and Means's subcommittee on Trade as part of the subcommittee's one-day public hearing on continuing MFN status for Romania, to be held on Tuesday, September 14, 1976.

The statement by Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, represents testimony on behalf of the Presidents Conference and its 32 constituent bodies.

Sincerely yours,


Yehuda Hellman
Executive Director

SENT TO:

Congressmen on the Subcommittee on Trade

Encl.
YH:jj

Phil M. Landrum
Sam Gibbons
Joseph E. Karth
Richard F. VanderVeen
Dan Rostenkowski
James R. Jones
Abner Mikva
Joseph Fisher

Otis Pike
Henry Helstoski
Barber Conable
Bill Archer
Guy VanderJagt
Bill Frenzel
John Duncan

CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF MAJOR AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

515 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022
Plaza 2-1616
Cable Address: COJOGRA

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS:

American Israel Public
Affairs Committee
American Jewish Congress
American Mizrahi Women's
Organization
American Zionist Federation
Anti-Defamation League
B'nai B'rith
B'nai B'rith Women
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National Federation of
Temple Sisterhoods
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North American Jewish
Youth Council
Pioneer Women
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Union of American Hebrew
Congregations
Union of Orthodox Jewish
Congregations of America
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Women's American ORT
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Conservative Judaism
World Zionist Organization
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Zionist Organization of America

September 13, 1976

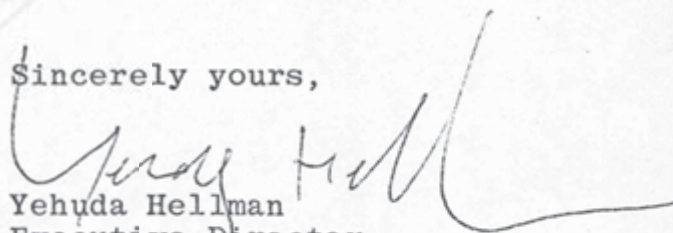
Congressman William J. Green, Chairman
Subcommittee on Trade
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Green:

We thought you might be interested in seeing the enclosed testimony which we have submitted to the House Committee on Ways and Means subcommittee on Trade as part of the subcommittee's one-day public hearing on continuing MFN status for Romania, to be held on Tuesday, September 14, 1976.

The statement by Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, represents testimony on behalf of the Presidents Conference and its 32 constituent bodies.

Sincerely yours,


Yehuda Hellman
Executive Director

Encl.
YH:jj

cc: John M. Martin, Jr.
Harry Lamar

John M. Martin, Jr., Chief Counsel
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Room 1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-3625

Harry Lamar
Subcommittee on Trade
233 Cannon Office Build.
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-3943

NITELETTER

September 7, 1976

Rabbi Moshe Rosen
Jewish Federation
Budapest, Romania

Conference accepted my recommendation to approve renewal MFN stop

However urging that matter of immigration be kept under controlled
review.

telephoned 8/7/76
cc: Rick Brown



*Will dictate
on this*

August 26, 1976
Island No. ----

Dear Alex

I hope your visit to Roumania and to Austria was a success. The preliminary publicity this visit was given, could not have been harmful.

In the meantime, on three successive days, the Haaretz was reporting on the Consul General. Things apparently have reached a head and you felt constrained to take action. The statement you made that your contacts are with Simna and not with the Consulate--without referring to the latter--was excellent, and the reader in Israel could easily comprehend what was going on. I do hope that your colleagues on the Conference support your position, with the result that that fellow will be cut to size, and, before long, will evaporate.

I will be writing on this matter to Navon and ask him to put it on the agenda of the Foreign Affairs Committee--if it is not resolved by the time the Knesset reconvenes.

Now that the Kansas City operation is behind us, you must have your hands full with the two rivals for high office, neither of whom will ignore the Jewish vote.

A Georgian Bay island, about five acres in size, surrounded as it is by other Rock and wood islands--and with neither telephone and electricity--is an ideal place for a truly restful vacation. About the 8th of September we expect to return to ~~New York~~. Toronto.

Are the Breira people causing you difficulties? I hope the Conference is a reasonably harmonious body and your relations with Simna are good.

Warmest regards to you and Rhea in which Ayala joins.

Cordially,

J. Abramov



S.Z. Abramov,
c/o Conreal
Suite 202
32-34 Front street, West
Toronto, Ont.
Phone No. (416) 922-88-05

September 7, 1976

Zalman Abramov, M.K.
c/o Conreal
32-34 Front Street, West
Suite 202
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Dear Zalman:

First of all let me note how delighted I was to hear that you are well and happy. Happiness has a way of radiating from those who possess it to those who stand near and both Rhea and I are glad not just for your sake but for ours too.

The Austrian trip was successful. I conveyed the message which I sought to bring and of course reported fully on my conversations to all interested parties.

Romania, too, was a success if success is measured by interest and the seriousness of the conversations which ensued. I saw quite a bit of Romanian Jewish life in the five days that I was there and also had negotiations with top Administration and Party officials.

The immigration picture is not good, it isn't bad but it could be much better. There is very little doubt in my mind that the Government has directed a restricted, controlled, "rhythmic" immigration lest any kind of mass exodus from even one community create a determined and like feeling in other groupings, particularly Germans desiring to go to West Germany. This controlled immigration is at variance with the intent of American law, nonetheless I have determined to back MFN for one more year and this for the following reasons:

- a) They hold 65,000 Jews hostage and could withdraw extensive rights which the Romanian Jewish community now enjoys.
- b) There is some annual flow of immigration, in my judgment approaching 15% of those who will ultimately want to go. This too could be shut off should we take adversary positions on MFN.
- c) AIPAC informs me that the anti-MFN votes are not there, In any event.
- d) Joint informs me that their considerable aid to the Romanian Jewish Community is facilitated by the MFN agreement.

So there we are. In a word, I am going to try the carrot rather than the stick and a year from now we'll know whether or not we were successful.

Zalman Abramov, M.K.
September 7, 1976
Page -2-

The Ben-Ari matter is an annoyance and I am even beginning to feel sorry for him. I really did not bring the matter to the newspaper, but our disagreements were an open matter from both sides so that when an Israeli journalist asked me "is there a conflict in the relationship between Conference and Consulate," I replied "How can there be a crisis in a relationship where there is no functional relationship? We relate to Dinitz and Herzog." That reply opened up the floodgates which I wish to God would stop but I guess the press has nothing better to print. Fortunately the entire matter was kept out of the local press at my urging and with an assist from Itzhak Haslin and I'd just as soon have it that way.

The family is well and preparing to return to normal fall and winter activities, school for the kids, extensive travel for me, etc. etc. It was wonderful having a brief time, at least, with all of us at home and enjoying each other.

Rhea joins me in sending love to you and Ayala.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

ROMANIAN LIBRARY

866 SECOND AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017

Phones: 935-1067; 935-1068

September 27, 1976.

Your Excellency:

I read with great satisfaction your statement before the Finance Senate Committee and I would like to express all my gratitude to you for your personal opinion regarding the realities in contemporary Romania.

I appreciate very much your help.

I am very grateful to you and I would be delighted if you could give me a chance to meet you in person to discuss with you several problems.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Emilia Gheorghe,
Director.



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Bucharest, Romania

Cc: Fedorov
Baron
10/10/76

October 4, 1976

Rabbi Alexander Schindler

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I thought you might be interested in an aspect or so of my discussion last week with Stefan Andrei, my first since I returned to Bucharest.

He commented first of all on how pleased he was to have talked with you, saying among other things how impressed he was with your intelligent approach to the problems you discussed. He also said he felt your testimony during the Senate hearings was very fair. He was glad to hear that you might be back here on a visit next spring and said he wanted to be sure you saw President Ceausescu then.

For my part, I pressed him for building up a reserve of approvals so people could leave when their personal situations permitted and at the same time avoid the undesirable consequences of the drops in numbers that have plagued us these last two springs. I also urged him to see what could be done about cutting down the processing time which in the case of emigration to the States, for example, takes at least nine months and an average would be even more. I'll be following up with him and others (I've already talked with Patan and am seeing the new Israeli Ambassador, Shamay Cahana, this week.)

I very much enjoyed my lunch with you and Mr. Hellman and once more want to let you know how gratified I am for your efforts both to help and to understand.

Sincerely,

Harry G. Barnes, Jr.

October 19, 1976

His Excellency, The American Ambassador
Harry G. Barnes, Jr.
Embassy of the United States of America
Bucharest, Romania

Dear Ambassador Barnes:

Many thanks for your letter of October 4th and for keeping me posted on your conversations with Stefan Andrei. I was pleased with the report and reaction to my testimony.

I have spoken with Ambassador Nicolae and he is pressing me to return to Bucharest sooner than this Spring, it may well be that he misunderstood his boss but in conversations with me he has suggested a meeting with President Ceausescu in November. My present plans call for me to stop in Romania en route home from Israel where I will be on the 20th of November. According to Nicolae, the President would like to see me on the 25th and 26th of November and I am making plans accordingly.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

STATEMENT BY JACOB BIRNBAUM, NATIONAL DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR RUSSIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN JEWRY AND STUDENT STRUGGLE FOR SOVIET JEWRY, BEFORE THE TRADE SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE, MONDAY, JUNE 27, 1977.

IMPROVING ROMANIAN EMIGRATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- I. Expansion and sharpening of monitoring facilities.
- II. U.S. - Romanian discussions to eliminate elements of intimidation and over-complexity from emigration procedures.

Mr. Chairman, this is the third year of Congressional hearings to determine Romania's eligibility to be exempt from the force of section 402 of Title IV of the 1974 Trade Reform Act, on the understanding that "substantial progress" is being made toward Romanian emigration policies and procedures devoid of harassment and intimidation and fear. We hope that this time members of the Trade Committee will find ways of insuring real progress.

Romania has MFN status under False pretenses

In 1975, after having heard the assurances of former Undersecretary of State A. Hartman and of former Romanian Ambassadors C. Bogdan and I. Datcu, I did not testify. Unfortunately, after a brief respite, my phone lines once more became burdened with complaints of endless harassments. I regret that my analysis of Romanian emigration statistics, of the various types of harassment and their consequences in my 1976 testimony to the Trade Subcommittee of the Senate (Sept. 8, '76) and of the House (Sept. 14, '76) is still perfectly valid. My conclusion was that in the light of the facts, a straightforward waiver would "need some justifying" indeed. At the time I suggested the establishment of Congressional monitoring and review facilities. The suggestions, expanded in a letter to the Committee a few days later, were ignored and I am under the impression that after the hearings were completed, no committee discussions of any kind were held. The only effort made to deal with this question of monitoring was incorporated into House Resolutions 596 & 7, initiated by Congressmen Koch, Drinan and Dodd.

Seven months later, my testimony of March 15, 1977 before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, could find no improvement. Quite the contrary. I related an incident which took place in Bucharest during July 1976 at the very time the Romanians knew that the Senate and House hearings had been postponed until the beginning of September to give them a chance to improve their performance. "We went to the State Committee for Visas and Passports to plead for our reunion. . . we were given a chilly reception. . . When I alluded to the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accord and other international agreements which Romania is a party to, the official said HE COULD NOT CARE LESS ABOUT SUCH AGREEMENTS AND THIS HELSINKI BUSINESS DIDN'T MEAN A THING AS FAR AS THEY WERE CONCERNED."

The conclusion was inescapable: Romania is in

- cont'd -

violation of the family reunion emigration provisions of Basket III of the Helsinki Final Act and is enjoying MFN trading status and other economic benefits under false pretenses.

Bucharest less responsive in 1977

Furthermore, the Romanians appear to be substantially less responsive this time around. There are fewer flashy "approvals" (which incidentally may often not turn into actual exit permits for a very long time). They point to an "increase" of Romanian migration to the U.S. between January 1 and May 31. On examination, the "increase" turns out to be 28! (472 to 500). For the same period, the flow to Israel has halved to 458 from 853. If this is maintained for the rest of the year, it will be the second time in three years that the flow to Israel has halved. The 1973 and 1974 figures were in the 4000 range; for 1975 and 1976, they were 2000. Now they seem to be shooting down to the 1000 range for 1977. It is further ironic that Israel with by far the greatest human base for family reunion from Romania should now have a smaller flow of migration than the U.S. Romanian motives are obvious.

Few in Washington have heard of the public campaigns against emigration in Romania this year. Romanian diplomats blandly assert that there is really no problem and that the sources of emigration, particularly within the elderly Jewish community, are drying up. These cruel falsehoods ring hollow in the ears of those of us in intimate touch with the situation. Mr. Chairman, I find it curious that my phone lines never hum with the pleas of persons trying to get their relatives out of neighboring Hungary which has a Jewish community of like size!

The ominous words of the woman who wrote to us last year are coming true: "I believe the new strategem of the Romanian authorities is to refuse the petitioners the right to file for travel documents and when questions from abroad arise, the answer may be, 'Sorry, but the people you mention never filed an application, and we don't force our citizens to emigrate!'" It is true that there is now a highly intimidating series of processes before the application forms even become available.

Despite the massive violations indicated, President Carter, in his letter of June 2, 1977, followed his predecessor in recommending the extension of the waiver for another year. He hopes thereby to provide an "incentive" for improved "performance". With one large exception, the wording of his letter is the same or similar to that of Mr. Ford's last year. There is the same emphasis on good trade relations as an encouragement to Romania to maintain her independent style foreign policy. While this is a worthy aim, we should beware of the myth, still subscribed to by many in Washington, that if we do not appease the Romanians they will be driven into the arms of Moscow.

The President asserts that "overall emigration [to Israel] has risen markedly since the implementation of the U.S. - Romanian Trade Agreement." This is incorrect, especially if seen in the "overall" perspective of the declines since 1974; a halving twice since that time.

- cont'd -

President Carter's three-part warning to Bucharest -- emphasis on "close monitoring"

The President's letter contained a radical innovation, however -- a three-part warning to the Romanians indicating that he was seeking improved "performance". He intended --

- 1 - "to monitor closely compliance with the objectives of section 402".
- 2 - If performance was unsatisfactory, he reserved the right to "reconsider my recommendation".
- 3 - "We will bring to the attention of the Romanian government any actions or emigration trends" not "conforming to past humanitarian assurances".

After my long campaigns in Congress, the State Department and, recently, in the National Security Council, for such monitoring, I have at last become more hopeful that such facilities will shortly be established by the Administration in Bucharest and Washington, supplemented by expanded Congressional review and monitoring mechanisms.

In my opinion, once Bucharest realizes that we intend

- a) to follow up continuously on a case-by-case basis
- b) to insist on a U.S.-Romanian discussion of the various categories of difficulties,

the signal will finally get through that we are really serious in this area.

Let us briefly examine these two sections further.

- A - Continuous comprehensive monitoring will have to include --
1. more detailed and frequent reports from our embassy in Bucharest, relating also to would-be emigrants to lands other than the U.S. If additional staff is required, this would be in line with some recent recommendations for more utilization of staff for human rights work abroad.
 2. expansion of the Administration's monitoring and review facilities in Washington.
 3. expansion of Congressional review and action procedures.
 4. persistent Administration intervention with the Romanians, assisted by steady Congressional pressures.
- B - Initiation of U.S.-Romanian discussions about the various difficult categories as --
1. simplification of family reunion emigration procedures. For example, a simple letter of intent might be regarded as the first recognized step to emigration.
 2. reunion of separated couples (the President's second annual report to the Helsinki Commission mentions the present number in relation to the U.S. as being 71; the second highest number reported is 11 for East Germany); the extreme difficulty of marriage with former Romanians and, of course, with foreigners.
 3. job displacement and demotion.
 4. discrimination against children of prisoners, sometimes even former prisoners.
 5. discrimination against relatives of former high officials.

6. Special hardship cases of former prisoners, now elderly and ailing. They are doomed to a kind of eternal limbo, unable to join their children abroad, unless they can pay impossible fines. A group of these people underwent "scapegoat" trials in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

To sum up, what do we want from the Romanians?

- 1 - Early permission to leave for those waiting more than a year.
- 2 - Cessation of the various harassments outlined above.
- 3 - Adequate emigration --
 - maintain steady growth to the U.S.
 - revert to the 1973/4 levels of 300 - 400 monthly to Israel.

CONCLUSION

The Romanians know that our attitude to them is fundamentally moderate and positive. Our recent unconditional gift of \$20 million is surely indicative of this. We need not fear therefore that our signals to them about the seriousness of our concerns in this area will be misjudged, and that the Romanian government will rush panic-stricken beneath the sheltering wings of the Kremlin. In the final analysis, the Romanians need us -- politically and economically -- far more than we will ever need them. In my opinion, most of these petty oppressions will disappear once they are convinced that we are willing to firmly back up our views.

Mr. Chairman, we look forward to your Committee's detailed recommendations to help the President implement his proposals for "close monitoring" and appropriate interventions with the Romanians. Thank you very much.

* * *

Note: Lists of would-be emigrants to the U.S., Canada and Israel who are having difficulties are appended. Many have been trying to leave for years.

NOTE: RIBICOFF'S COMMENT TO BIRNBAUM WAS THAT THE
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN HIS WRITTEN STATEMENT
ARE CONSTRUCTIVE AND WILL BE PASSED ON TO THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH.

SUMMARY OF STATEMENT BY JACOB BIRNBAUM, NATIONAL DIRECTOR, CENTER
FOR RUSSIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN JEWRY AND STUDENT STRUGGLE FOR SOVIET
JEWRY, BEFORE TRADE SUBCOMMITTEE OF SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE,
JUNE 27, 1977.

IMPROVING ROMANIAN EMIGRATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- I. Expansion and sharpening monitoring facilities.
- II. U.S. - Romanian discussions to eliminate the elements of intimidation and over-complexity from emigration procedures.

Romania has MFN status under false pretenses

The past few months have seen major public campaigns against emigration by the Romanian government, a further startling decline in Romanian emigration to Israel (the figures are down by half, the second time in the last three years), an "increase" of 28 in migration to the U.S., and no letup in the ceaseless stream of reports of fear, harassment, job displacements. Clearly, Romania has been enjoying MFN trading status and attendant economic benefits in recent years under false pretenses.

President Carter's three warnings to Romania

Despite these massive violations, the President has recommended the extension of the waiver for another year in the hope of providing an "incentive" for better "performance". He made it plain however that he intended --

- 1 - "to monitor closely compliance with the objectives of section 402".
- 2 - if "performance" was unsatisfactory, he reserved the right "to reconsider my recommendation".
- 3 - "We will bring to the attention of the Romanian government any actions or emigration trends" not "conforming" to past "humanitarian assurances".

If the members of this Trade Subcommittee accept the President's recommendation, they should strive hard to insure that --

- A - the facilities for "close monitoring" of which the President speaks will become operational in a way that they have not been before.
- B - "the actions or emigration trends" which are not satisfactory will really be taken up with the Romanians with a new kind of forcefulness.

SUMMARY

How do we deal with the Romanians?

A) "Close Monitoring"

- 1) Expansion of the Administration's monitoring facilities in Bucharest and Washington, with frequent detailed reports, followed by reviews, leading to action.

- cont'd -

Romania - Summary .2

- 2) Expansion of Congressional review and action facilities.
- 3) Persistent Administration intervention with the Romanians, to be complemented by steady Congressional pressures on them.

B) Initiating U.S.-Romanian Discussions About the Various Types of Difficulties

Once again, Congressional pressures can be most helpful to the Administration's negotiations. Here are some of the categories for discussion --

- 1) Simplification of emigration procedures.
- 2) Reunion of separated couples; difficulties in marrying non-Romanians.
- 3) Job displacements and demotions.
- 4) Discrimination against children of prisoners.
- 5) Discrimination against relatives of former high officials.
- 6) Special hardship cases of elderly former prisoners.

What do we want from the Romanians?

- A) Early permission to leave for those waiting more than a year.
- B) Cessation of the varied harassments.
- C) Adequate emigration flows --
 - to the U.S., maintain steady growth
 - to Israel, revert to the 1973/4 levels of 300 - 400 monthly.

CONCLUSION

The Romanians know that our attitude to them is basically moderate and positive. Our recent unconditional gift of \$20 million after the earthquake is surely an expression of this. We need not fear therefore that our signals to them about how seriously we want them to take our concerns in this area will be misunderstood, and that the Romanian government will rush panic-stricken beneath the sheltering wings of the Kremlin. In the final analysis, they need us -- politically and economically -- much more than we will ever need them.

In my opinion, most of these petty oppressions will disappear once the Russians are convinced that we are ready to take firm measures to back up our views.

Mr. Chairman, we look forward to your committee's detailed recommendations to assist the President implement his proposals for "close monitoring" and appropriate interventions with the Romanians.

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 3. job displacement and demotion.
 4. discrimination against children of prisoners, sometimes even former prisoners.
 5. discrimination against relatives of former high officials.

Romanian Jewish Immigration to Israel

Approximate Annual Totals

1971	1,900
1972	3,000
1973	4,000
1974	3,700
1975	2,000
1976	2,000
1977 (thru May)	458



Romanian Jewish Immigration to Israel

Monthly Totals

1975

	<u>Number of Immigrants</u>
January 1975	62
February	41
March	102
April	60
May	46
June	199
July	403
August	238
September	262
October	350
November	130
December	<u>115</u>

Total 1975

2,008

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

1976

January 1976	328
February	232
March	99
April	51
May	143
June	211
July	237
August	238
September	117
October	118
November	79
December	<u>136</u>

Total 1976

1,989

1977

January 1977	46
February	62
March	113
April	132
May	<u>105</u>


Total thru 5/31/77

458

Romanian Immigration to the United States

Annual Totals

	Fiscal Year	Calendar Year
1965	274	--
1966	104	--
1967	19	--
1968	27	68
1969	154	142
1970	372	373
1971	629	362
1972	269	348
1973	367	469
1974	511	407
1975	312	890
1976	1,339	1,021
thru 5/77	941	496



Romanian Immigration to the United States

Monthly Totals

1975

Immigrant Visas Issued*
By Embassy Bucharest

January 1975	27
February	13
March	14
April	24
May	20
June	29
July	110
August	182
September	181
October	131
November	62
December	97

Total 1975 890

1976

January 1976	74
February	87
March	130
April	97
May	77
June	111
July	96
August	104
September	74
October	40
November	66
December	65

Total 1976 1,021

1977

January 1977	69
February	59
March	138
April	101
May	129
June 1-17	67

Total thru 6/17/77 563

*Includes third country processing, but excludes dual nationals



For
VANIK

Mrs. Edith J. Miller
The Union Of American
Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue, N.Y. N.Y.

10021

*with
the Compliments of the
Embassy of Israel
at Washington*

*as per our telephone
conversation.*

David

December 8, 1977

Mr. Alfred H. Moses
888 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Al:

I, too remain concerned regarding the plight of the Jewish community of Romania.

You are right in suggesting that a meeting be held with Ambassador Nicolae. My schedule is a bit tight and the week of December 12 is out of the question as I will be in Poland on a special mission for the Federation of Polish Jews of the U.S.A. Perhaps it will be possible to set up a get together for the week of December 19. On my return from Poland I will be in touch with you to determine possible dates.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

ALFRED H. MOSES
888 SIXTEENTH STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

December 3, 1977

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, Chairman
President's Conference of the Major
American Jewish Organizations
515 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10022

Dear Alex:

The plight of our fellow Jews in Romania still concerns me. When I was recently in Israel for AJC, Nechemia Levanon brought us up to date on recent developments. Essentially, Levanon reiterated the facts you and I discussed in Washington in September.

Several days later when we met with Mr. Begin, I asked him about the non-Sadat portion of his Romanian visit and particularly about Jewish emigration. I was anxious to learn whether there had been any shift in the Israeli approach to the matter. As you know, our government has unofficially, and off the record, indicated that it is perplexed, and perhaps annoyed, by the Israeli's refusal to furnish the names of persons seeking to emigrate and by what the U.S. considers to be a policy shrouded in mystery. In response, Begin stated that Ceausescu had indicated he would be helpful "in the re-unification of families." Begin added that the figures for November and December would tell whether Ceausescu's statement had meaning.

A few months ago, Ceausescu made a blistering statement to the Romanian Communist Party attacking persons seeking to emigrate. The thrust of his remarks was directed against the Hungarians and, perhaps secondarily, the Germans but the policy implications covered all "cults." The "re-unification of families" is the Romanian government's buzz word for any exception to this policy.

I think it would be advisable if two or three of us were to meet again with Ambassador Nicolae. I have not talked with him since he returned to Washington in mid-September. I plan to call him to suggest a luncheon date for the week of December 12 or 19. If you plan to be in Washington any time during those two weeks and could possibly spare time for a lunch with the Ambassador, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,



CHARLES A. VANIK, OHIO, CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE

SAM M. GIBBONS, FLA.
DAN ROSTENKOWSKI, ILL.
JAMES R. JONES, OKLA.
BENJAMIN J. MIKVA, ILL.
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ED JENKINS, GA.

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GUY VANDER JAGT, MICH.
BILL FRENZEL, MINN.

Ex OFFICIO:
AL ULLMAN, OREG.
BARBER B. CONABLE, JR., N.Y.

NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS

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COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

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MARY JANE WIGNOT

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE

December 13, 1977

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

This is in response to your letter of November 10
regarding Romanian-Israeli emigration.

Thank you for sending me the letter from Mr. Rosen.
The information is most useful in our continuing oversight of
Romanian emigration practices.

Sincerely yours,

Charles A. Vanik
Chairman

CAV:JA:sac

November 10, 1977

The Honorable Charles A. Vanik, M.C.
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Vanik:

The enclosed letter has reached me from Israel. I am
sharing it with you as it may be of interest.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

(Translated from the Hebrew)

ORGANIZATION OF IMMIGRANTS FROM ROMANIA IN ISRAEL
Jerusalem

Rabbi A. Schindler
Chairman, Conference of Presidents of Major
American Jewish Organizations
New York, New York

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

As you are well aware, the community of immigrants from Romania in this country numbers several hundred thousand.

Very many of our members appeal to us concerning their relatives who wish to emigrate to Israel but refrain from submitting formal applications for fear of the authorities who deal severely with applicants, and knowing especially the varied obstacles placed in the way of those who have decided to apply.

It is our estimate that we would see at least 25,000 Jews leaving (Romania) if all those who wish to emigrate were allowed to go.

It is strange to note that, according to the statement of the Romanian Government, only about 25,000 Jews were registered at the last population census, while to the best of our knowledge the number of Jews (including dependents eligible under the Israeli "Law of Return") is over 60,000.

We thank you for your efforts and ask you to sustain them until a solution is reached to the painful problem of family re-unification.

Sincerely,

Zvi Rosen
Chairman

התאחדות עולי רומניה בישראל
HITACHDUT OLEI ROMANIA B'ISRAEL
Jerusalem ירושלים

כה' באב תשל"ז

9.8.1977 ירושלים,

ת.ד. 1483 P.O.B.

לכבוד

רביי שינדלר

יו"ר מועדון הנשיאים באה"ב

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

כידוע לך היטב מונה קהילת יוצאי רומניה בארץ כאות
אלפי יהודים.

הכונים מבין חברינו פונים אלינו בדבר קרוביהם הרוצים
לעלות ונמנעים מלהגיש בקשה פורמלית מפקד השלטון הנוהג ביד קשה עם
המגויסים, ביחוד לנוכח הקשיים הכרוכים העומדים בדרכם של אלה שכבר
החליטו להגיש.

הערכתנו היא שאילו נתן לעלות לכל אלה הרוצים בכך היינו
עדים ליציאתם של לפחות 25.000 יהודים.

מוזר להוכיח שבמפקד האחרון נרשמו לפי הודעת ממשלת רומניה
רק כ-25.000 יהודים, בו בזמן שלפי מיטב ידיעתנו מספר היהודים (והנלווים
אליהם על פי חוק השבות) הוא למעלה מ-60.000.

אנו מודים לך עבור מאמצייך ומבקשים אותך להמשיך בהם עד
להשגת פתרון לבעיה הכאובה של אחד המספחות המפורדות.

בכבוד רב,

צבי רוזן יו"ר

צ.ב.ר.



(Translated from the Hebrew)

ORGANIZATION OF IMMIGRANTS FROM ROMANIA IN ISRAEL
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Chairman, Conference of Presidents of Major
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New York, New York

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It is strange to note that, according to the statement of the Romanian Government, only about 25,000 Jews were registered at the last population census, while to the best of our knowledge the number of Jews (including dependents eligible under the Israeli "Law of Return") is over 60,000.

We thank you for your efforts and ask you to sustain them until a solution is reached to the painful problem of family re-unification.

Sincerely,

Zvi Rosen
Chairman

JEWISH IMMIGRATION FROM RUMANIA

Arrivals in Israel and Visas issued by the Israeli Embassy in Rumania

Figures from January through September, 1977

	<u>Arrivals</u>	<u>Visas</u>
January	46	93
February	62	214
March	113	231
April	132	26
May	105	75
June	109	206
July	70	288
August	113	76
September	<u>181</u>	<u>79</u>
	931	1,288

Figures of past years' arrivals in Israel from Rumania

1976 - 2,073
1975 - 2,187
1974 - 3,700
1973 - 4,000



June 6, 1977

H.E. The American Ambassador Harry G. Barnes
Embassy of the United States of America
Bucharest, Romania

Dear Harry:

It was good hearing from you and I was pleased to learn that you will be in the States this summer. Hopefully, it will be possible for us to get together during your stay.

My travel plans for June and July call for me to leave the States on June 21st for meeting in Amsterdam and then head to Israel for a series of meetings early in July. On July 9th and 10th I must be in London for meetings of our World Union for Progressive Judaism and I should be heading home a day or two thereafter. Thus, it is feasible that we might meet the week before you return to Bucharest on July 20th. Needless to note, I'll be happy to come down to Washington for a meeting. If you prefer New York that's fine too. But at any rate I am marking my schedule for a possible get together with you the week of July 11th to 15th or on the 18th or 19th. Please let me know if this suits your convenience.

With earrest regards from house to house, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bucharest, Romania

May 25, 1977

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex:

I just had word yesterday that the House Hearings on Renewal of MFN are scheduled for July 14 and this reminded me that I hadn't heard from you in a long time about some of the problems we discussed during your visit last Fall. Is there anything about which you can write me? If the mails seem not the best way to be in touch I would hope in any event to see you while I am in the States in July. I expect to get to Washington late on the 6th, be in New York the 11th and 12th to attend some of the sessions of the joint U.S.-Romanian Economic Council, go back to Washington for another week or so and leave for Bucharest the afternoon of the 20th. From my standpoint, it would probably be most useful to have a chance to see you in New York before I return to Washington. Let me know what suits you.

With warm regards,


Harry G. Barnes

*Suits me to meet him
here. Tell him my
plans. Answer.*

AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
444 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.W., SUITE 412
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001
Telephone (202) 638-2256

July 22, 1977

Attached is Rabbi Miller's testimony for the Presidents Conference, submitted to Vanik's Subcommittee, and my summary of the highlights of that hearing.

Regards.

With the compliments of

JUNE A. ROGUL

Legislative Liaison

file

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY
OF RABBI ISRAEL MILLER FOR THE
CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF MAJOR AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS
BEFORE THE HOUSE TRADE SUBCOMMITTEE

JULY 18, 1977

1. We recognize the extensive religious and cultural liberty which the Romanian Jewish community has enjoyed and also appreciate the independent foreign policy pursued by Romania in moving to normalize its relations with the United States, Israel and other nations of the non-communist world.
2. We are greatly disturbed, however, by the decrease in Jewish emigration from Romania during the last year. This downward trend is in sharp contradiction to the large numbers of Jews who have indicated they want to leave Romania to reunite with their families in Israel. Current Romanian emigration performance does not comply with the provisions of Section 402 of the Trade Reform Act, which calls for liberalized Romanian emigration as a condition for receiving MFN.
3. We are distressed by both the continued existence of obstacles built into the visa application process and the atmosphere of intimidation confronting those desiring to leave. This reduces the number of individuals who actually apply for exit visas. Accordingly, the most significant standard for judging Romanian emigration performance must be the number of Jews who actually leave Romania.
4. Both Congress and the Administration have indicated their dissatisfaction with the recent Romanian emigration performance. We are encouraged by the language in the President's request to Congress where he states his intention to monitor closely Romanian compliance and, "should performance not accord with the intent of this provision", to "reconsider" his positive recommendation on extending the waiver authority. Accordingly, we would expect that if significant improvement in emigration performance does not occur in the coming 12-month period, the President and Congress will take appropriate action to terminate MFN next year.
5. If Congress agrees to extend the waiver authority for another 12 months and the emigration performance does not improve significantly, the Jewish community will support the termination of MFN when it comes up for renewal next year. We will be closely watching for a liberalization of the visa application process and a lessening of the atmosphere which inhibits Jews from applying to leave.

STATEMENT OF RABBI ISRAEL MILLER
CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF MAJOR AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS
BEFORE THE HOUSE TRADE SUBCOMMITTEE
JULY 18, 1977

Mr. Chairman:

I appreciate this opportunity to present the views of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The Conference is composed of 32 national Jewish organizations. I am the immediate past Chairman of the Conference.

As was noted in our past testimony on the question of renewal of Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) status for Romania, there have been aspects of Romanian policy which are indeed worthy of commendation. We have welcomed the increasingly independent foreign policy which the Romanian Government has pursued, and its efforts to maintain friendly relations with the United States, with Israel, and with other western nations. We are also appreciative of the religious and cultural rights extended to the Romanian Jewish community. The American Jewish community has demonstrated its concern for Romania and has expressed its appreciation to Romania with tangible assistance in response to the earthquake devastation in that country during the past year.

We point out these positive elements of Romanian policy because they deserve mention. We wish we could similarly report positively on Romanian performance in an area under consideration here today, that of Romanian Jewish emigration. Regretably, the facts do not permit us to do so.

Background

As you will recall, when MFN for Romania was first being considered by the Congress in the summer of 1975, the relevant House and Senate Committees agreed

to the extension with the understanding that the emigration performance would improve and the emigration figures continue to rise in proportion to the number of individuals indicating their desire to leave. In taking favorable action on MFN, Congress accepted the State Department's urging that actual future Romanian performance be used as the measure by which to judge that country's compliance with the provisions of Section 402 of the Trade Reform Act.

When MFN extension came up for renewal last year, we noted with regret that there had not been an increase in the level of Romanian Jewish emigration. In fact, there was actually a slight decline in the emigration figures below the level for the 12 months preceding MFN extension (2,501 Jews left during August, 1975 through July, 1976 as compared with 2,592 Jews during August, 1974 through July, 1975).

Since the renewal of MFN last September, the emigration situation has deteriorated markedly. During the last eleven months, only 1,255 Jews have been allowed to leave for Israel. Projecting this rate for a full 12-month period (August, 1976 to July, 1977), the Jewish emigration total will not even reach 1,400. This level would represent a drop of more than 1,100 individuals -- or 45 percent--below that for the previous 12 months and an even greater drop below that for the year prior to the initial granting of MFN.

It is significant to note that the Jewish emigration level for the pre-MFN calendar years of 1973 and 1974 was about 3,700 per annum. This level was reduced to approximately 2,000 a year during 1975 and 1976, and at the current year's rate will reach only 1,150 for 1977. Thus, instead of improving following the extension of MFN to Romania, the permitted Jewish emigration rate has dropped sharply and is being maintained at a low level. This situation surely

does not demonstrate Romanian compliance with the liberalized emigration practices required by Section 402 of the Trade Reform Act.

When we look at the number of Jews wishing to emigrate, Romanian performance becomes particularly distressing. While there are no exact figures, our best estimates are that between 60,000 - 70,000 Jews remain in Romania, not the 25,000 recently claimed by the Romanian authorities. While a sizeable portion of this population is elderly and expected to choose to live out their days in Romania, it is estimated that about half of the Jews still in Romania desire to emigrate to Israel. This estimate was substantiated in a letter of May 8, 1975, sent by the Confederation of Romanian Immigrants in Israel, at the time of Congressional hearings on the extension of MFN status to Romania. This letter stated that "to the best of our knowledge, there are 30,000 - 40,000...cases" of Jews still in Romania who have been trying to get visas to reunite with their relatives "and only a very small percentage receives a positive response". Since the receipt of that letter, fewer than 5,000 Jews have actually been permitted to leave for Israel. At the rate of emigration permitted during the last two calendar years (approximately 2,000/year), it would take some 15 to 20 years for all the Jews desiring to leave for Israel to emigrate from Romania.

Obstacles to Emigration

The Romanians have tried to minimize the size of the Jewish population which wishes to leave both by arbitrarily lowering its "official" figures as to the number of Jews still in Romania and by asserting that only a few thousand Jews a year are applying for exit visas. To understand the true situation, we must look at the climate the Romanian authorities have created.

While many Jews have formally applied for exit visas and either been refused or not answered by the authorities, thousands more have been discouraged from applying by the obstacles built into the application process. Those who seek an application for a passport and exit visa are confronted by official committees which probe their motivation and try to dissuade them from applying. Individuals who persevere in the process may find they suddenly lose their jobs and are permitted only menial work for as long as they remain in Romania, which may be indefinitely. If their passport is not vetoed by any of the various national and local authorities which must pass judgment on the emigration request, the passport is given to the Israeli Embassy in Bucharest, which issues a visa for Israel. Even a fully-processed passport with visa, however, may be arbitrarily withheld from the applicant at the last moment by Romanian officials. Those who have applied to leave may wait indefinitely with no word as to the final decision. Others are refused permission, reapply, and are refused again, for no apparent reason. Since the emigration rate is carefully controlled, many wishing to emigrate hesitate to subject themselves to harassment and a prolonged state of uncertainty by applying. These facts cause us to reiterate that the sole standard for judging Romanian emigration performance must be the number of Jews who actually leave Romania.

Conclusions

The poor showing on emigration over the last two years leads us to conclude that the Romanian Government believes Congress will continue to renew MFN automatically regardless of performance in this area. This attitude violates the spirit of the trade agreement and disregards the strong Congressional commitment to the principle of freedom of emigration.

The Administration and Members of Congress have both clearly expressed their dissatisfaction with Romania's poor emigration performance during the last two years. In President Carter's request to Congress, it is significant that in stating his intention to give the Romanians the opportunity to prove directly to his new Administration a willingness to comply with the law, he carefully qualified his recommendation for MFN extension. He has stated the Administration's determination to monitor closely Romanian compliance with Section 402 of the Trade Reform Act and warns that "should performance not accord with the intent of this provision, I would want to reconsider my recommendation". He has also specified that the Administration "will bring to the attention of the Romanian Government any actions or emigration trends which do not seem to conform to the assurances which they have provided in the past to treat emigration matters in a humanitarian manner...".

Rather than a pro forma request to extend MFN, the President has chosen to be consistent with his Administration's concern for human rights. The message is clear and the Administration has put the Romanian Government on notice that compliance is expected.

If MFN is extended for another year and significant improvement in Romanian emigration performance does not occur during that period, we would expect the President and the Congress to take appropriate action to terminate MFN next year.

The Jewish community would support the termination of MFN under these conditions. We will be watching closely for a true liberalization of the visa application process and an easing of the present atmosphere of intimidation confronting those desiring to apply to leave. These changes must be made so that Jews in Romania will feel free to exercise their freedom to emigrate.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Romanian Jewish emigration figures

Appendix B: Obstacles to Romanian emigration and recommendations for removing them

PERMITTED ROMANIAN EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL

APPENDIX A

(ARRIVALS IN ISRAEL)

YEARLY TOTAL

1973-77

1973	3,700
1974	3,700
1975	2,140
1976	2,035
1977	1,150 (Projected)

COMPARISON OF EMIGRATION BEFORE AND AFTER MFN EXTENSION

(MFN EXTENDED AUGUST 1975)

ONE YEAR PRE-MFN

1974	Aug.	612
	Sep.	328
	Oct.	267
	Nov.	200
	Dec.	200
1975	Jan.	70
	Feb.	45
	Mar.	100
	Apr.	80
	May	50
	June	210
	July	430

TOTAL 2,592

ONE YEAR POST MFN

1975	Aug.	250
	Sep.	295
	Oct.	360
	Nov.	140
	Dec.	110
1976	Jan.	350
	Feb.	243
	Mar.	103
	Apr.	51
	May	140
	June	222
	July	237

TOTAL 2,501

SECOND YEAR POST MFN

1976	Aug.	238
	Sep.	117*
	Oct.	118
	Nov.	79
	Dec.	136
1977	Jan.	46
	Feb.	62
	Mar.	113
	Apr.	132
	May	105
	June	109

1,255 - Subtotal for 11 months

1,370 = Projected total for 12 months, 8/76-7/77

Emigration performance is actually poorer with MFN in effect than before MFN extension. The projected emigration to Israel for 12 months (August 1976 - July 1977) represents a drop of 47% below that for the 12 months prior to MFN extension and a 45% drop below the level for the first 12 months post MFN.

*Note decline in emigration beginning in September which coincides with assurance of MFN renewal following September 8 hearings by Senate Finance Committee.

July, 1977

OBSTACLES TO ROMANIAN JEWISH EMIGRATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REMOVING THEM

Guidelines for Measuring Romanian Emigration Practices

We define as obstacles to emigration any procedures or other barriers which restrict an individual from exercising freely his right to leave Romania for the country of his choice.

The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, signed by 35 nations at Helsinki in 1975, set forth certain international standards concerning family reunification and other human rights. Since Romania was a signatory to this most recent multilateral accord, it is appropriate to refer to relevant provisions of the Final Act which can serve as guidelines by which to measure the reasonableness of Romania's emigration procedures and practices.

The section on Human Contacts of Basket Three of the Final Act calls on the participating states "to facilitate free movement...among persons...and to contribute to the solution of the humanitarian problems that arise in that connexion (sic)".

Specifically, the portion dealing with Reunification of Families calls on the participating nations to:

- *deal in a positive and humanitarian spirit with the applications of persons who wish to be reunited with members of their family;
- *deal with applications in this field as expeditiously as possible;
- *lower where necessary the fees charged in connection with these applications to ensure that they are at a moderate level;
- *confirm that the presentation of an application concerning family reunification will not modify the rights and obligations of the applicant or of members of his family.
- *Applications for the purpose of family reunification which are not granted may be renewed at the appropriate level and will be reconsidered at reasonably short intervals by the authorities of the country of residence or destination, whichever is concerned; under such circumstances fees will be charged only when applications are granted.
- *Persons whose applications for family reunification are granted may bring with them or ship their household and personal effects.

Obstacles to Emigration

To the best of our knowledge, the following emigration procedures currently exist in Romania. They present obstacles to unrestricted emigration and serve to intimidate visa applicants and discourage others from applying to leave.

1. The Pre-Application Process

Before an individual is even allowed to apply for an exit visa, he must successfully complete an intimidating pre-application process. He first goes

to the local police station to obtain pre-application forms ("FISA") on which he must fill in the name, address, age and place of work of all his relatives both in Romania and abroad.

The necessary visit to the police station is in itself intimidating. It is often difficult for an individual to obtain the required information about all his relatives, particularly those living in other countries. Sometimes, the required pre-application forms are not available at police stations outside the major cities.

Next, all adult members of the family desiring to leave must appear before a Committee consisting of 8 to 14 people, including representatives of the army, the police, security police, the individual's place of work, management of his apartment house, and the Communist Party. They try to convince him not to apply for a visa to leave Romania.

Each adult in the family must appear separately. The extreme pressure placed on the individual forces many to renounce their intention to apply for a visa. Family dissension is sometimes provoked when one member of a couple is courageous enough to persist in seeking a visa but his spouse is frightened into agreeing to stop the process.

2. Arbitrary Judgments as to Who Can Apply

Those who are not intimidated by the pre-application process wait for a decision as to whether they will be permitted to apply for an exit visa. An individual may either receive permission to fill in an application; be denied permission to make application if the Committee feels he hasn't proved good reason for wanting to emigrate; or receive no reply at all. This procedure provokes much anxious uncertainty for the individual. If he is refused permission to apply or receives no answer, there is no appeal process to which he can turn.

3. Burdensome Documentation Requirements

Along with the application form, one must submit various forms which are often hard to obtain. These include, among others: marriage or divorce certificate; approval from the management of his apartment building; approval from his place of work and certification that his work has not dealt with State secrets; assurances that all his taxes and utility bills are paid; educational diplomas.

4. Costly Fees

A single individual has to pay approximately a month's salary to cover all the fees necessary before he can emigrate (e.g., costs of passport, renunciation of citizenship, etc.). The head of an average household has to pay at least a quarter of his yearly salary in order for his family to emigrate.

5. Uncertainty of Application Process/Indefinite Time Period

If the application is rejected, there is no mechanism by which the applicant can appeal the decision. If the application is approved, a passport is

issued. The passport is routed through various national and local government agencies, and can be withheld at any point in the process, even after it has been sent to the Israeli Embassy in Bucharest and that Embassy has issued a visa for the applicant. The applicant never knows if he will be allowed to emigrate until he actually receives the passport at the end of the process. There are no definite, regular time intervals between the steps of the application process, each one of which may take months. Many Jews who have applied to emigrate to Israel have been waiting for a year for either permission to leave or a response to their request to be allowed to apply to leave. Others have been waiting for years.

6. Sanctions Against Applicants

Many visa applicants face retribution from the Government. A Communist Party worker or a Government worker in an area such as education or communication immediately loses his job when he applies for an exit visa. A worker in a technical specialty, particularly if he is in an administrative position, can invariably expect to be demoted. A student is expelled from his university.

7. Lack of Time to Prepare for Departure

When an applicant is finally notified his application has been approved and receives his passport, he is given only a few days until he must leave the country. Because of the uncertainty of the decision during the application process, it is only at this point that he will begin to conclude his personal affairs, dispose of items he can't take out of the country, pay final bills, fix up his apartment, etc. Often he does not have time to obtain personal documents, such as diplomas, which he will need in his new country, since he must get them certified from both Education and Foreign Ministries but can only apply to them after he has received his passport.

8. Limitations on Money and Property Taken out

The emigrant can take with him no money and no personal items of value. He must pay custom duty on his own used household goods.

Recommendations for Removing Obstacles to Emigration

Generally, the recommendations below are listed in order of priority, with the most important ones first. Highest priority is given to those changes which would have the greatest impact in increasing the number of visa applicants and, hopefully, thereby increasing the emigration flow. Consideration was also given as to which recommended changes lend themselves to monitoring from the West, so that compliance by Romania can be measured.

1. Everyone who wants to should be able to submit freely and without intimidation an application for an exit visa. The Romanian Government should allow this unrestricted application policy to be made known publicly and be discussed openly in the media and elsewhere. The pre-application process, which screens out many would-be applicants, should be abolished.

(NOTE: The pre-application process was initiated after both the initial extension of MFN and the signing of the Helsinki accord. Its introduction goes counter to the Helsinki accord and Jackson amendment which call for facilitating freer emigration.)

2. At the same time, sanctions against those who apply to leave (i.e., demotion or dismissal from jobs, expulsion from universities, etc.) and other forms of harassment should be terminated.

3. An appeal process should be set up to provide recourse for those individuals refused permission to emigrate. The reasons for denial should be made clear to the applicant and should not be arbitrary.

4. The application process should be shortened and facilitated (e.g., through reducing the amount of required documentation). The time period for the whole process should be regularized. The applicant should receive a definite answer as to whether he has permission to leave as soon as the application has been approved, so that he can make plans for his departure (NOTE: "approval" actually is given by the appropriate authorities prior to the passport being routed to the various government agencies). It would seem reasonable to expect that the process from submission of an application until the applicant is permitted to leave the country should be completed within 2-3 months.

5. An emigrant should be allowed to take with him his money and his personal effects, which may represent his lifetime savings. He should not be required to pay duty on his already used household goods.

6. The cost of fees involved in the emigration process should be reduced.

Recommendations for Monitoring Romanian Compliance

1. Expanded monitoring by the Administration in Bucharest and Washington, combined with on-going discussions with the Romanians regarding compliance with the recommendations to liberalize emigration procedures.

2. Periodic review by the appropriate Congressional subcommittees, perhaps on a quarterly basis, of Romanian compliance and the level of emigration figures. Congressional communication with Romanian Government representatives, as appropriate, regarding the findings of the review.

As a basis for the review, the subcommittees might require periodic written status reports from the State Department, as well as requesting reports from private groups monitoring the emigration situation. Information to measure Romanian compliance should also be obtained through questionnaires and interviews routinely administered to emigrants who have left Romania.

HEARINGS ON MFN EXTENSION TO ROMANIA BEFORE HOUSE TRADE SUBCOMMITTEE
July 18, 1977

HIGHLIGHTS

Members Present: Vanik, Chairman; Frenzel, Jones, Jenkins, Gibbons

VANIK OPENING STATEMENT:

Disturbed by fact that emigration figures rise only just prior to MFN consideration in Congress. Notes decline in numbers to Israel. Cites obstacles in the visa application process. Points to President's language in waiver extension notification concerning monitoring of emigration performance and "reconsideration" of waiver request in the event of lack of compliance with the law. Wants definition of the Administration's intended monitoring system.

ADMINISTRATION PANEL:

(Nimetz, State; Stroh, Commerce; Hufbauer, Treasury; Lande, Special Trade Representative's office; Ambassador Harry Barnes)

Nimetz: Administration will intensify discussions with Romanians regarding specific emigration cases. We get summary of cases from Barnes and will review these on a six month basis rather than waiting for a whole year to do so. We will also review emigration to Israel on a six month basis. We will consult with Subcommittee before six months. Interested in discussing with Romanians streamlining of emigration process. Jewish emigration issue is complicated by our not knowing how many Jews actually want to leave; number of Jews remaining in Romania relatively small. Jewish emigration is a matter mainly between Israel and Romania, although U.S. is involved.

Barnes: Periodic lists of cases submitted to Romania over last six months have become more useful; cases are being solved faster; Romanians are taking lists as a measure of their compliance with Section 402. Since Israel doesn't submit specific lists, it is more difficult to determine satisfactory resolution of emigration problems.

CONGRESSMEN TESTIFYING:

Paul Findley, Ed Derwinski and John Breaux spoke in favor of the MFN extension.

Chris Dodd spoke of the disappointing emigration figures, cited fact that many others are intimidated from applying. While he had co-sponsored Ed Koch's letter saying he'd favor terminating MFN if emigration and human rights don't improve, he will go along with the President for another twelve months extension. He recommends the Administration review emigration performance on a quarterly basis and that outside, independent groups (such as Amnesty International) be allowed to go into Romania and look at the emigration situation.

Larry McDonald spoke in behalf of his Resolution of Disapproval of the waiver extension. (The Subcommittee met later in the day and unanimously voted against his resolution.)

RABBI MILLER TESTIMONY:

Jones asked if Miller is satisfied the Administration will aggressively monitor the situation in the coming year. Miller said State Department has been sympathetic, but the emigration record has been poor. He hopes State will be more aggressive with the Romanians this year.

Vanik asked about the religious and cultural conditions for Jews in Romania, about which Miller answered we have no complaints and cited the facilities, etc. which the Jews have there. He stressed that our sole complaint is that those wishing to leave be allowed to.

Frenzel came up to us privately during the hearing. He may go to Romania with Vanik later in the year and said it would be very helpful to him to have lists of names of Jews who want to emigrate. He would also personally like to see some tangible evidence that there are Jews who want to get out.

LIST OF WITNESSES ATTACHED.



Frederick D. Hunt, Washington, D. C.

✓ B. Niculescu, President, American-Romanian Cultural Foundation

✓ Jacob Birnbaum, National Director, Center for Russian and East European Jewry, and also on behalf of Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry

✓ Fannie Bigio, Washington, D. C.

✓ Florian M. Galdau, Chairman, American Romania Committee for Assistance to Refugees

✓ Anchidim Useriu on behalf of Washington Romanian Committee for Human Rights

✓ Laszlo Hamos, Chairman, Committee for Human Rights in Romania

✓ Michaela Iancu on behalf of Committee for the Defense of Romanian Transylvania

✓ Jacob H. Gilbert, Counsel for Ion Ungureanu

former congressman



X = didn't appear *final*

LIST OF WITNESSES
TO APPEAR BEFORE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON A PRESIDENTIAL RECOMMENDATION TO
CONTINUE NONDISCRIMINATORY (MFN) TREATMENT
WITH RESPECT TO THE PRODUCTS OF THE SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC OF ROMANIA

MONDAY, JULY 18, 1977 - 10:00 A.M.

ROOM 1100 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, MAIN COMMITTEE HEARING
ROOM

PANEL OF ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS:

- ✓ Matthew Nimetz, Counselor of the Department of State,
accompanied by Harry G. Barnes, Jr., Ambassador to Romania
+ Ambassador Barnes
- ✓ Edward H. Stroh, Deputy Director, Bureau of East-West Trade,
Department of Commerce
- ✓ Gary Hufbauer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Trade and Raw
Materials, Department of the Treasury
Stephen Landes - Assistant STR
- Richard Rivers, General Counsel, Special Representative for
Trade Negotiations

- * * * *
- AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
- ✓ Paul Findley, M.C. (Illinois)
 - X Mario Biaggi, M.C. (New York)
 - ✓ Edward J. Derwinski, M.C. (Illinois)
 - ✓ John B. Breaux, M.C. (Louisiana)
 - ✓ Larry McDonald, M.C. (Georgia)
 - X Christopher J. Dodd, M.C. (Connecticut)
 - ✓ Rabbi Israel Miller on behalf of Conference of Presidents of
Major American Jewish Organizations
 - ✓ Max N. Berry, Executive Director, East-West Trade Council
 - Milton F. Rosenthal, Chairman, U.S. Section, Romanian-U.S.
Economic Council
 - Hugh P. Donaghue, Vice President, Control Data Corporation
 - John Kyle, Vice President, Occidental Petroleum, Island Creek
Coal Company
 - John O. Logan, Chairman of the Board, UOP, Inc.
 - ✓ Gerald T. Williams, President, Promethean Corporation
 - X Laurence W. Spungen, Vice President, Peer Bearing Company
 - ✓ William F. Moody, President, Moody International
 - X George Dobrea, Vice President, Governmental Affairs,
Greater Cleveland (Ohio) Growth Association
 - ✓ Dr. Emanuel Merdinger, Gainesville, Florida
 - ✓ Thomas A. Kosik, Arlington, Virginia -
 - ✓ Dr. Titus Podea, New York, New York

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July 6, 1977

The Honorable Abraham Ribicoff
Chairman, International Trade Subcommittee
Finance Committee
U.S. Senate
Room G-204 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Ribicoff:

During your June 27 Subcommittee hearing on renewal of MFN for Romania, you asked Dr. William Korcy, who testified on behalf of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, to provide you with a list of major obstacles to Romanian Jewish emigration and recommendations for eliminating them.

Accordingly, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, Chairman of the Conference of Presidents, has asked me to forward the enclosed paper. We hope this will be of use to you and your Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

June A. Rogul
Legislative Liaison

JAR:tad
Enclosure

July 5, 1977

OBSTACLES TO ROMANIAN JEWISH EMIGRATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTING THEM

Guidelines for Measuring Romanian Emigration Practices

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Many visa applicants face retribution from the Government. A Communist Party worker or a Government worker in an area such as education or communication immediately loses his job when he applies for an exit visa. A worker in a technical specialty, particularly if he is in an administrative position, can invariably expect to be demoted. A student is expelled from his university.

7. Lack of Time to Prepare for Departure

When an applicant is finally notified his applications has been approved and receives his passport, he is given only a few days until he must leave the country. Because of the uncertainty of the decision during the application process, it is only at this point that he will begin. Often he does not have time to obtain private documents, such as diplomas, which he will need in his new country, since he must get them certified from both Education and Foreign Ministries but can only apply to them after he has received his passport.

8. Limitations on Money and Property Taken out

The emigrant can take with him no money and no personal items of value. He must pay custom duty on his own used household goods.

Recommendations to Facilitate and Liberalize the Emigration Process

Generally, the recommendations below are listed in order of priority, with the most important ones first. Highest priority is given to those changes which would have the greatest impact in increasing the number of visa applicants and, hopefully, thereby increasing the emigration flow. Consideration was also given as to which recommended changes lend themselves to monitoring from the West, so that compliance by Romania can be measured.

1. Everyone who wants to should be able to submit freely and without intimidation an application for an exit visa. The Romanian Government should allow this policy to be discussed openly and in the media. The pre-application process, which screens out many would-be applicants, should be abolished.

(NOTE: The pre-application process was initiated after both the initial extension of MFN and the signing of the Helsinki accord. Its introduction goes counter to the Helsinki accord and Jackson amendment which call for facilitating freer emigration.)

2. At the same time, sanctions against those who apply to leave (i.e., demotion or dismissal from jobs, expulsion from universities, etc.) and other forms of harassment should be terminated.

3. An appeal process should be set up to provide recourse for those individuals refused permission to emigrate. The reasons for denial should be made clear to the applicant and should not be arbitrary.

4. The application process should be shortened and facilitated (e.g., through reducing the amount of required documentation). The time period for the whole process should be regularized. The applicant should receive a definite answer as to whether he has permission to leave as soon as the application has been approved, so that he can make plans for his departure (i.e., "approval" actually is given by the appropriate authorities prior to the passport being routed to the various government agencies). It would seem reasonable to expect that the process from submission of an application until the applicant is permitted to leave the country should be completed within 2-3 months.

5. An emigrant should be allowed to take with him his money and his personal effects, which may represent his lifetime savings. He should not be required to pay duty on his already used household goods.

6. The cost of fees involved in the emigration process should be reduced.

Recommendations for Monitoring Romanian Compliance with Recommendations

1. Expanded monitoring by the Administration in Bucharest and Washington, combined with continued discussions with and pressure on the Romanians to comply with the recommendations to liberalize emigration practice.

2. Periodic review by the appropriate Congressional subcommittees, perhaps on a quarterly basis, of Romanian compliance and the level of emigration figures. Steady Congressional pressure on the Romanians, complementing that from the Administration, to comply with recommended changes and improve emigration flow.

As a basis for the review, the subcommittees might require periodic written status reports from the State Department, as well as reports from private groups monitoring the emigration situation. Information to measure Romanian compliance should also be obtained through questionnaires and interviews routinely administered to emigrants who have left Romania.

AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
444 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.W., SUITE 412
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001
Telephone (202) 638-2256

July 1, 1977

Attached is the testimony as subcommit-
ted by Bill Korey for the Presidents
Conference on MFN extension to Romania.
For your information, I have also enclosed
a summary of the highlights of the hearing
plus three additional statements of inter-
est.

With the compliments of

JUNE A. ROGUL

Legislative Liaison

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY
OF DR. WILLIAM KOREY FOR THE
CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF MAJOR AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS
BEFORE THE SENATE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SUBCOMMITTEE
JUNE 27, 1977

file
Memorandum

1. We recognize the extensive religious and cultural liberty which the Romanian Jewish community has enjoyed and also appreciate the independent foreign policy pursued by Romania in moving to normalize its relations with the United States, Israel and other nations of the non-communist world.
2. We are greatly disturbed, however, by the decrease in Jewish emigration from Romania during the last year. This downward trend is in sharp contradiction to the large numbers of Jews who have indicated they want to leave Romania to reunite with their families in Israel. Current Romanian emigration performance does not comply with the provisions of Section 402 of the Trade Reform Act, which calls for liberalized Romanian emigration as a condition for receiving MFN.
3. We are distressed by both the continued existence of obstacles built into the visa application process and the atmosphere of intimidation confronting those desiring to leave. This reduces the number of individuals who actually apply for exit visas. Accordingly, the most significant standard for judging Romanian emigration performance must be the number of Jews who actually leave Romania.
4. Both Congress and the Administration have indicated their dissatisfaction with the recent Romanian emigration performance. We are encouraged by the language in the President's request to Congress where he states his intention to monitor closely Romanian compliance and, "should performance not accord with the intent of this provision", to "reconsider" his positive recommendation on extending the waiver authority. Accordingly, we would expect that if significant improvement in emigration performance does not occur in the coming 12-month period, the President and Congress will take appropriate action to terminate MFN next year.
5. If Congress agrees to extend the waiver authority for another 12 months and the emigration performance does not improve significantly, the Jewish community will support the termination of MFN when it comes up for renewal next year. We will be closely watching for a liberalization of the visa application process and a lessening of the atmosphere which inhibits Jews from applying to leave.
6. Since there is still time before the Subcommittee needs to decide whether to recommend a resolution disapproving the MFN extension request, we recommend that this body not make an immediate decision. We suggest that the Subcommittee use the next few weeks to monitor emigration performance closely as an indicator of the Romanian Government's intention to comply with the provisions of the Trade Reform Act in the future.

STATEMENT OF DR. WILLIAM KOREY FOR THE
CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF MAJOR AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS
BEFORE THE SENATE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SUBCOMMITTEE
JUNE 27, 1977

Mr. Chairman:

I appreciate this opportunity to present the views of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The Conference is composed of 32 national Jewish organizations. I serve as Director of the International Council of B'nai B'rith, one of the constituent organizations of the Conference.

As was noted last year in our testimony on the question of renewal of Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) status for Romania, there have been aspects of Romanian policy which are indeed worthy of commendation. We have welcomed the increasingly independent foreign policy which the Romanian Government has pursued, and its efforts to maintain friendly relations with the United States, with Israel, and with other western nations. We are also appreciative of the religious and cultural rights extended to the Romanian Jewish community. The American Jewish community during the past year has demonstrated its concern for Romania in response to the earthquake devastation in that country.

We point out these positive elements of Romanian policy because they deserve mention. We wish we could similarly report positively on Romanian performance in an area under consideration here today, that of Romanian Jewish emigration. Regretably, the facts do not permit us to do so.

Background

As you will recall, when MFN for Romania was first being considered by the Congress in the summer of 1975, the relevant House and Senate Committees agreed

to the extension with the understanding that the emigration performance would improve and the emigration figures continue to rise in proportion to the number of individuals indicating their desire to leave. In taking favorable action on MFN, Congress accepted the State Department's urging that actual future Romanian performance be used as the measure by which to judge that country's compliance with the provisions of Section 402 of the Trade Reform Act.

When MFN extension came up for renewal last year, we noted with regret that there had not been an increase in the level of Romanian Jewish emigration. In fact, there was actually a slight decline in the emigration figures below the level for the 12 months preceding MFN extension (2,501 Jews left during August, 1975 through July, 1976 as compared with 2,592 Jews during August, 1974 through July, 1975).

Since the renewal of MFN last September, the emigration situation has deteriorated markedly. During the last ten months, only 1,146 Jews have been allowed to leave for Israel. Projecting this rate for a full 12-month period (August, 1976 to July, 1977), the Jewish emigration total will not even reach 1,400. This level would represent a drop of more than 1,100 individuals -- or 45 percent--below that for the previous 12 months and an even greater drop below that for the year prior to the initial granting of MFN.

It is significant to note that the Jewish emigration level for the pre-MFN calendar years of 1973 and 1974 was about 3,700 per annum. This level was reduced to approximately 2,000 a year during 1975 and 1976, and at the current year's rate will reach only 1,100 for 1977. Thus, instead of improving following the extension of MFN to Romania, the permitted Jewish emigration rate has dropped sharply and is being maintained at a low level. This situation surely

does not demonstrate Romanian compliance with the liberalized emigration practices required by Section 402 of the Trade Reform Act.

When we look at the number of Jews wishing to emigrate, Romanian performance becomes particularly distressing. While there are no exact figures, our best estimates are that between 60,000 - 70,000 Jews remain in Romania, not the 25,000 recently claimed by the Romanian authorities. While a sizeable portion of this population is elderly and expected to choose to live out their days in Romania, it is estimated that about half of the Jews still in Romania desire to emigrate to Israel. This estimate was substantiated in a letter of May 8, 1975, sent by the Confederation of Romanian Immigrants in Israel, at the time of Congressional hearings on the extension of MFN status to Romania. This letter stated that "to the best of our knowledge, there are 30,000 - 40,000...cases" of Jews still in Romania who have been trying to get visas to reunite with their relatives "and only a very small percentage receives a positive response". Since the receipt of that letter, fewer than 5,000 Jews have actually been permitted to leave for Israel. At the rate of emigration permitted during the last two calendar years (approximately 2,000/year), it would take some 15 to 20 years for all the Jews desiring to leave for Israel to emigrate from Romania.

Obstacles to Emigration

The Romanians have tried to minimize the size of the Jewish population which wishes to leave both by arbitrarily lowering its "official" figures as to the number of Jews still in Romania and by asserting that only a few thousand Jews a year are applying for exit visas. To understand the true situation, we must look at the climate the Romanian authorities have created.

While many Jews have formally applied for exit visas and either been refused or not answered by the authorities, thousands more have been discouraged from applying by the obstacles built into the application process. Those who seek an application for a passport and exit visa are confronted by official committees which probe their motivation and try to dissuade them from applying. Individuals who persevere in the process may find they suddenly lose their jobs and are permitted only menial work for as long as they remain in Romania, which may be indefinitely. If their passport is not vetoed by any of the various national and local authorities which must pass judgment on the emigration request, the passport is given to the Israeli Embassy in Bucharest, which issues a visa for Israel. Even a fully-processed passport with visa, however, may be arbitrarily withheld from the applicant at the last moment by Romanian officials. Those who have applied to leave may wait indefinitely with no word as to the final decision. Others are refused permission, reapply, and are refused again, for no apparent reason. Since the emigration rate is carefully controlled, many wishing to emigrate hesitate to subject themselves to harassment and a prolonged state of uncertainty by applying. These facts cause us to reiterate that the sole standard for judging Romanian emigration performance must be the number of Jews who actually leave Romania.

Conclusions

The poor showing on emigration over the last two years leads us to conclude that the Romanian Government believes Congress will continue to renew MFN automatically regardless of performance in this area. This attitude violates the spirit of the trade agreement and disregards the strong Congressional commitment to the principle of freedom of emigration.

The Administration and Members of Congress have both clearly expressed their dissatisfaction with Romania's poor emigration performance during the last two years. In President Carter's request to Congress, it is significant that in stating his intention to give the Romanians the opportunity to prove directly to his new Administration a willingness to comply with the law, he carefully qualified his recommendation for MFN extension. He has stated the Administration's determination to monitor closely Romanian compliance with Section 402 of the Trade Reform Act and warns that "should performance not accord with the intent of this provision, I would want to reconsider my recommendation". He has also specified that the Administration "will bring to the attention of the Romanian Government any actions or emigration trends which do not seem to conform to the assurances which they have provided in the past to treat emigration matters in a humanitarian manner...".

Rather than a pro forma request to extend MFN, the President has chosen to be consistent with his Administration's concern for human rights. The message is clear and the Administration has put the Romanian Government on notice that compliance is expected.

If MFN is extended for another year and significant improvement in Romanian emigration performance does not occur during that period, we would expect the President and the Congress to take appropriate action to terminate MFN next year.

The Jewish community would support the termination of MFN under these conditions. We will be watching closely for a true liberalization of the visa application process and an easing of the present atmosphere of intimidation confronting those desiring to apply to leave. These changes must be made so that Jews in Romania will feel free to exercise their freedom to emigrate.

There is still some time left before the September deadline by which the Senate must act to pass a resolution disapproving the current MFN extension request. We therefore recommend that the Subcommittee not make an immediate decision on the President's request. We respectfully suggest that during the next few weeks the Subcommittee watch to see whether there is significant improvement in the emigration figures. This period would provide a good indicator as to whether the Romanian Government will demonstrate to the new Administration its intention to comply with the Act, or whether it will continue to disregard both the law and the principles governing the MFN status it now enjoys.

Attached on Appendix A are relevant figures on Jewish emigration from Romania.



PERMITTED ROMANIAN EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL
(1973-77)

YEARLY TOTAL

1973	3,700
1974	3,700
1975	2,140
1976	2,035
1977	1,100 (Projected)

COMPARISON OF EMIGRATION BEFORE AND AFTER MFN EXTENSION

(MFN EXTENDED AUGUST 1975)

ONE YEAR PRE-MFN

1974	Aug.	612
	Sep.	328
	Oct.	267
	Nov.	200
	Dec.	200
1975	Jan.	70
	Feb.	45
	Mar.	100
	Apr.	80
	May	50
	June	210
	July	430
TOTAL		2,592

ONE YEAR POST MFN

1975	Aug.	250
	Sep.	295
	Oct.	360
	Nov.	140
	Dec.	110
1976	Jan.	350
	Feb.	243
	Mar.	103
	Apr.	51
	May	140
	June	222
	July	237
TOTAL		2,501

SECOND YEAR POST MFN

1976	Aug.	238
	Sep.	117*
	Oct.	118
	Nov.	79
	Dec.	136
1977	Jan.	46
	Feb.	62
	Mar.	113
	Apr.	132
	May	105
		1,146 - Subtotal for 10 months
		1,375 = Projected total for 12 months, 8/76-7/77

Emigration performance is actually poorer with MFN in effect than before MFN extension. The projected emigration to Israel for 12 months (August 1976 - July 1977) represents a drop of 47% below that for the 12 months prior to MFN extension and a 45% drop below the level for the first 12 months post MFN.

*Note decline in emigration beginning in September which coincides with assurance of MFN renewal following September 8 hearings by Senate Finance Committee.

HIGHLIGHTS OF HEARINGS ON ROMANIAN MFN RENEWAL BEFORE
THE SENATE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SUBCOMMITTEE
JUNE 27, 1977

Senators Present: Ribicoff, Chairman; Packwood, Curtis. Hansen and Byrd joined after Conference-of-Presidents testimony.

RIBICOFF:

Ribicoff's opening statement focused on his disappointment with Romanian performance on emigration to Israel. He scored the visa application procedures which discourage applicants and criticized the fluctuations in monthly emigration levels.

During the hearings, Ribicoff was critical of the fact that he doesn't hear anything from the Administration about Romanian emigration until MFN extension comes up, and then the State Department assures his Subcommittee that "everything will be all right". He urged them to press the Romanians all during the year to facilitate the visa application process and improve the emigration performance. He questioned whether the U.S. should continue to give Romanian MFN when that country does not live up to the understandings in keeping with Section 402 of the Trade Act.

Ribicoff bemoaned getting the same testimony from the business community representatives each year. He asked the business groups to stress with the Romanians the need to allow free emigration and end harassment of would-be emigrants. Saying the results are not in yet on whether the Jackson amendment or private diplomacy is the more effective approach to improve emigration, he challenged businessmen to demonstrate their contention that diplomacy is better.

PACKWOOD:

Stressed throughout the need for Romanian movement on emigration and the appropriateness of tying human rights to trade. Was hard on the business community representatives and sarcastic with them when they would not commit themselves to a position as to whether non-economic issues (i.e., human rights) should be tied to trade. Sarcastically told Max Berry (testifying as Director, East-West Trade Council) he was "delighted" Berry had finally come around to the position that he no longer favors abolishing Jackson-Vanik, and tried unsuccessfully to get Berry to suggest what other human rights might be linked to trade.

CURTIS:

Focused on his concern with countries not permitting visits of its citizens to close relatives in U.S., and plugged his bill (S.1713 to amend Section 409 of Trade Act) which would deny MFN credits to countries unless they permit citizens to visit or emigrate to join very close relatives in the U.S.

KEY WITNESSES:

MATTHEW NIMETZ (State Department):

Asserts that Romanian emigration performance over past year has contributed to achieving the objectives of Section 402 of Trade Act. Cites Presidential language that Administration will monitor Romanian compliance closely and says State would recommend Carter "reconsider" his recommendation to extend waiver authority in case of non-compliance. Says the problem with assessing emigration performance regarding Israel "is complicated by uncertainty regarding the number of Romanian Jews who actually wish to depart...At times the debate over the conflicting figures has diverted attention from the central humanitarian issues". His testimony language is disturbing in that it implies that the indefiniteness of the numbers and the lack of clarity regarding Israel-Romanian agreements on emigration make it difficult for the State Department to really do anything to help increase emigration to Israel (see pp. 11-12 of written statement attached).

ALAN REICH (Commerce Department):

Reported that Romanian-U.S. bilateral trade has expanded steadily since MFN extension on a mutually beneficial basis, and Dick Rivers submitted written testimony on the trade figures.

BILL KOREY

Responding to Ribicoff's question as to why the Jewish emigration figures have declined, Korey pointed to the intimidating visa application process as a large part of the reason. Ribicoff asked how we reconcile our desire to correct the emigration obstacles with the right of a government to handle its own emigration procedures. Bill responded that the procedures should not discourage or intimidate or harass applicants, or in any other way violate the principles and spirit of Section 402.

Ribicoff asked Korey to submit a list of the obstacles to emigration used by the Romanians and suggestions for correcting them so as to be in compliance with Section 402. (I will prepare the submission.)

Curtis asked about cases we know of concerning individuals wanting to visit relatives in other countries, and Korey replied we are not concerned with this issue.

Packwood asked if the Jewish community is going along with another year's extension of MFN. Korey explained that while we are not specifically recommending extension, we are willing to follow the President's lead on this. Referring to Carter's qualified recommendation for extension, Korey said we would be willing to go along with the additional year but would recommend a cut-off next year if there's no improvement by then. He also recommended that the Committee's taking the maximum time available for deciding what

action to take on the MFN request, in order to test Romanian performance during the next month.

Anticipated Action:

Ribicoff stated the Subcommittee would not make an immediate decision on MFN extension. Instead, it will report to the full Finance Committee on the hearings and take up the issue with the Committee at an unspecified time. A Committee staff person subsequently informed me that it is likely no action in the Senate Committee will occur until after Vanik's trade subcommittee has had a chance to look at the issue. Vanik is planning to hold Subcommittee hearings on July 18. The deadline by which either House must pass a Resolution of Disapproval to block MFN renewal is September 1.

Attachments: List of witnesses
Ribicoff opening statement
Nimetz testimony
Korey testimony
Birnbaum testimony



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hearings on
The President's Authority To Waive Section 402 of the Trade
Act of 1974 and For Most-Favored-Nation Status for Romania

WITNESS LIST

ADMINISTRATION PANEL -

Mr. Matthew Nimetz - Counselor of the Department of State
Mr. Alan Reich - Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Commerce for East-West Trade
Mr. Richard Rivers - General Counsel, Office of the Special
Representative for Trade Negotiations

Dr. William Korey - Director, B'nai B'rith International
Council

Mr. Max Berry - Executive Director, East-West Trade Council

didn't show Mr. Andrew J. Biemiller - Director, Department of Legislation
AFL-CIO

Mr. Milton F. Rosenthal - Chairman, U.S. Section of Romanian-
U.S. Economic Council

Mr. Jacob Birnbaum - The Center for Russian and East European
Jewry

Mr. Hugh Donaghue - Vice President and Assistant to the
Chief Executive Officer, Control Data Corporation

Mr. Andrei Aszody - New York, New York—

Mr. John O. Logan - Chairman, UOP, Inc. (*Petroleum Co. doing business*

Mr. Szabolcs J. Mesterhazy - Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan *(Romania)*

Mr. Adalbert Feher - New York, New York

Mr. Laszlo Hamos - Committee for Human Rights in Romania

Mr. Barbu Niculescu - President, American-Romanian Cultural
Foundation, Inc.

STATEMENT BY SENATOR RIBICOFF

Hearings on
The President's Authority To Waive Section 402 of the Trade Act
of 1974 and For Most-Favored-Nation Status for Romania

The Senate Subcommittee on International Trade today conducts a hearing on the subject of trade with Romania. These hearings will focus both on continuing most-favored-nation tariff treatment for Romania and, more importantly, on extending the President's authority to waive the freedom-of-emigration provisions of the Trade Act of 1974.

Romania is the only nonmarket economy country which has been granted nondiscriminatory, or most-favored-nation, trade treatment under the authority of the Trade Act of 1974. The Trade Act establishes certain conditions for the granting of most-favored-nation treatment, most significantly the condition of freedom of emigration.

In extending the President's authority to waive the freedom-of-emigration provisions of the Trade Act last year, Congress expressed concern over the then low levels of emigration.

This year, I have to say I am disappointed with the performance of the Romanians on emigration. While emigration rates to several countries, including the United States, continue at last year's levels, the rate of emigration to Israel has dropped significantly. During the last five years, an average of 2,800 people have been able to emigrate to Israel each year. In 1976, the number was 2,000. This year, the emigration rate is down by almost a half from last year.

The significant decline in emigration to Israel is very disturbing. Not only have emigration trends to that country differed sharply from the trends to other countries, but the decline in emigration to Israel represents a serious falling-off in the rate of Jewish emigration.

Also, I continue to be concerned by the sharp fluctuations in the monthly levels of emigration as well as the long delays in processing applications and other problems with Romanian emigration procedures.

In my discussions with representatives of the Romanian government, it became clear that one of the factors limiting emigration rates is the small number of applications being filed.

I have looked into the application procedures, and frankly I can see that a great many people must be discouraged from even trying to emigrate. So I am not surprised at the relatively small numbers of applications filed.

I hope these hearings can focus on some of the problems with the emigration procedures as part of our overall review of Romanian performance on emigration.

With respect to trade between the United States and Romania, it is clear that both the overall volume of trade and the level of imports from Romania have increased steadily and dramatically during the last few years. I hope we will hear testimony today on the role which most-favored-nation treatment and other discretionary trade preferences granted Romania have played in

helping to bring about the recent increases in trade between our two countries.

Each witness's testimony will be reprinted in the record of these hearings. All statements received by the Subcommittee will be turned over to the State Department with instructions that each statement be evaluated and, wherever appropriate, that the State Department raise matters of concern directly with the Romanian Government.



see p 10-12

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MATTHEW NIMETZ,
COUNSELOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to have this opportunity to testify on behalf of continued extension of most-favored-nation treatment for Romania.

I would like to discuss with you the foreign policy framework in which our relations with Romania are set and thereby suggest the reasons why we believe that waiver of Section 402 of the Trade Act is warranted.

The dominant theme of Romania's foreign policy continues to be a desire to maintain a high degree of independence in both its political and economic relations with other countries. President Carter took note of this theme in making his determination that continuation of the waiver is justified. In his recommendation to the Congress, the President said, "I believe that a further extension of U.S.-Romanian economic relations can help to promote a continuation of such independent policies and that the Trade Agreement, non-discriminatory tariff treatment and authority to extend Commodity Credit Corporation and Export-Import Bank credit are essential to maintain and expand our present over-all bilateral relationship with Romania."

Because of the determination with which it seeks to maximize its independence, Romania has gone well beyond its

CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF MAJOR AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

515 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022
Plaza 2-1616
Cable Address: COJOGRA

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS:

American Israel Public
Affairs Committee
American Jewish Congress
American Mizrahi Women
American Zionist Federation
Anti-Defamation League
B'nai B'rith
B'nai B'rith Women
Bnai Zion
Central Conference of
American Rabbis
Council of Jewish Federations
and Welfare Funds (observer)
Hadassah
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish Reconstructionist
Foundation
Jewish War Veterans
of the U.S.A.
Labor Zionist Alliance
Mizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrachi
National Committee for
Labor Israel, Inc.
National Council of
Jewish Women
National Council of
Young Israel
National Federation of
Temple Sisterhoods
National Jewish Community
Relations Advisory Council
National Jewish Welfare Board
North American Jewish
Youth Council
Pioneer Women
The Rabbinical Assembly
Rabbinical Council of America
Union of American Hebrew
Congregations
Union of Orthodox Jewish
Congregations of America
United Synagogue of America
Women's American ORT
Women's League for
Conservative Judaism
World Zionist Organization
American Section, Inc.
Zionist Organization of America

July 28, 1977

*Do not send
your fee -*

The Honorable Abraham A. Ribicoff
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Ribicoff:

I am really sorry that I was not able to be at the meeting of your Senate Finance Committee this year when the issue of MFN for Romania was discussed. Unfortunately, I was much preoccupied with Middle Eastern matters during the post-Begin election trauma.

I read the testimony, of course, which was offered by Bill Korey and I also received a report concerning Rabbi Miller's testimony before the parallel House Committee.

You will be exceedingly pleased to learn that the updated six months' figure for exit visas granted by Romania to members of her Jewish community has jumped dramatically. In fact, the six months' figure this year is almost 65% of last year's total. This figure, somewhat in excess of 1,000, should make possible a total emigration of over 2,000 Jewish families which is within the range of what we project, albeit the actual emigration figure for the first six months is still not too encouraging. Yet, emigration invariably follows visas and is a good indication of what the future will bring.

I myself plan to go to Bucharest some time in the not too distant future just to have a personal look and see.

I hope these comments are of some help to you and your country in reaching a decision.

Sincerely,



Alexander M. Schindler

AMS:vm

cc: The Honorable Nicolae M. Nicolae

fellow members in the Warsaw Pact and in COMECON--the Communist economic group--in expanding its ties with the West and with the world's developing countries. Romania was the only COMECON country to join the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It leads the other COMECON countries in the proportion of trade that it conducts with the West. It is also a participant in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Romania is also continuing its efforts to structure its relations with its Eastern European neighbors along lines that tend to increase its freedom of action on the world stage. For example, Romania continues to restrict its participation in Warsaw Pact military exercises and has no Soviet troops stationed within its borders. In addition, Romania continues to champion the right of each Eastern European country to set its own goals and priorities according to its own interests.

Romania's independence is also reflected in its continued ability to maintain good relations with countries that have widely differing social and economic systems--with the United States, the People's Republic of China, Israel, and the Arab countries. Unlike other Warsaw Pact countries, Romania did not break diplomatic relations with Israel upon the outbreak

NIGHTLETTER

August 19, 1977

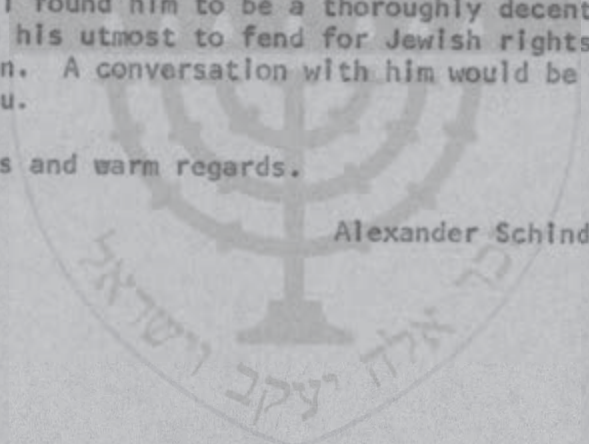
Honorable Menachim Begin
Prime Minister
Jerusalem, (ISRAEL)

Profoundly grateful for all your courtesies during my visit.

It occurs to me that in preparation for your Romanian Journey it would be well if you were to have a long session with Dick Veltz, the new charge-d'affairs of the American Embassy in Israel. Dick was stationed in Romania for a number of years and is thoroughly familiar with the personalities of the Romanian Government as well as with the problems of the Jewish community. I found him to be a thoroughly decent human being who did his utmost to fend for Jewish rights including emigration. A conversation with him would be most helpful for you.

Again deepest thanks and warm regards.

Alexander Schindler



of Arab-Israeli hostilities and maintains constructive relations with the Israelis. Romanian petroleum products, such as fuel oil, continued to flow to the United States during the oil embargo.

As you know, Romania was the only country to negotiate a trade agreement with the United States and to receive MFN under the terms of Section 402 of the Trade Act. In this respect as well, Romania has demonstrated a readiness to strike out on its own path.

We believe it is in the interest of the United States to encourage this independence by continuing to grant Romania MFN and access to U.S. Government credits. We also believe that good relations with Romania contributes to our policy of reducing East-West tensions. Accordingly, the U.S.-Romanian Trade Agreement and MFN play an important role in our foreign policy. Conversely, abrogation of the Trade Agreement and withdrawal of MFN would set back our bilateral relations with Romania and might discourage other Eastern European countries from pursuing closer ties with the United States.

I would like to review for you briefly some of the developments in U.S.-Romanian relations that have taken place since the Senate Finance Committee last reviewed the question of extending MFN to Romania, in September 1975. On November 21,

1976 U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Elliot L. Richardson, and Romanian Deputy Prime Minister, Ion Patan, Co-Chairmen of the United States-Romanian Joint Economic Commission, signed a ten-year agreement on economic, industrial and technical cooperation. The agreement was signed at the Third Session of the Commission in Bucharest. It reaffirms the support of both countries for the expansion of economic relations. This agreement is intended to supplement, and not to replace, the U.S.-Romanian Trade agreement, concluded with Congressional approval in August, 1975. It sets forth general guidelines for long-term arrangements between firms and enterprises of the two countries. It protects investors against expropriation or impairment of their contractual rights by government action, and contains measures for improving business facilities and the provision of commercial information. We expect this agreement to contribute to the steady growth of trade between the United States and Romania.

At the same time, we have continued the wide range of programs in the academic, scientific, commercial and cultural fields, some officially sponsored and some private, which have served to expand our relations with Romania and to broaden the range of contacts between the governments and the citizens of our two countries.

We have also maintained a useful dialogue with the Romanian leadership on issues that concern us. We have, for example, made very clear to the Romanian authorities that this Administration and this Congress remain deeply committed to the support of human rights, both in the United States and abroad. As in the past, we have found that our relations with Romania are sufficiently mature to enable us to discuss usefully even issues on which we do not share the same perspective. We also continue to find a willingness on the Romanian side to resolve in a humanitarian way issues about which we have expressed our concern. Only in the framework of a firm relationship, of which MFN forms a part, can such discussions take place, often with favorable results.

We have also held frequent discussions with Romania on the implications of the Helsinki Final Act and the follow-up meetings which have recently begun in Belgrade. While here again our perspectives are not always the same, the exchanges have been useful, and I might point out that the Romanian leadership has affirmed its commitment in this context to help the reunification of divided families.

As this Committee is aware, there is concern on the part of members of Congress and the Hungarian-American community with the Romanian Government's treatment of its ethnic minority.

This concern has focussed on allegations of discrimination in education, culture, the economy, and the use of the Hungarian language. We have discussed this question on several occasions with Romanian authorities. Like all governments, however, including our own, the Romanian Government has preferred to deal with the problems of minorities as an exclusively domestic question. Recently, however, the Romanian and Hungarian Governments have publicly recognized the existence of a minority question in their respective countries. In a joint communique issued on June 17, President Ceausescu of Romania and General Secretary Kadar of Hungary declared that the existence of ethnic minorities in Romania and Hungary "is a major factor in the development of friendly relations between the two countries." The two sides agreed to approach this problem in accordance with the international norms adopted by the United Nations for the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities. We are encouraged that the two governments primarily concerned have openly discussed the problem, and we hope that this statement will lead to positive steps by both governments to improve the conditions of their minorities. We believe that such a cooperative approach on the part of the Romanian and Hungarian governments offers the best prospect for progress. At the same time we recognize our obligation to lend whatever positive encouragement we can.

I would like now to touch on a few significant aspects of U.S.-Romanian trade, which may be of interest to the Committee.

In 1976 U.S. trade with Romania reached an all-time high of \$448 million, which represents an increase of almost 40% over the 1975 two-way figure. There was a trade surplus in our favor of over \$50 million. This trend of increasing bilateral trade has continued into 1977, as has the U.S. positive trade balance, and at the present rate we could expect U.S.-Romanian trade to approach \$600 million for 1977. I think it is quite clear that this growth has occurred in large measure as a result of our having accorded Romania MFN and of the positive climate for American firms which this action has produced in Romania. The Romanian Government has stressed its interest in developing and expanding our trade relations even further. We believe that an expansion of our commercial relations can play a significant role in encouraging Romania's economic and political independence.

The recently concluded arrangement between Romania and the Island Creed Coal Company of West Virginia is a good example of Romanian interest and ability to enhance its independence of action in the commercial field. Under the terms of this long-term contract, Romania will purchase a

minimum of 14 million tons of coal -- with an option to buy considerably more over the next 30-40 years -- for an advance payment of \$53 million and subsequent payments which could reach as much as \$2 billion. These purchases will permit Romania to lessen its dependence for this vital raw material on the Soviet Union and other suppliers.

I would like to note that extension of the Section 402 waiver for Romania will also permit the United States to continue both the CCC and Export-Import Bank credit programs in Romania, which have supported our agricultural commodity and machinery exports.

I have dealt only in rough outline with the important subject of our trade relations with Romania, but the statement which Mr. Reich of the Commerce Department has submitted to you provides a more detailed description. I think that Mr. Reich and Mr. Rivers would also be pleased to answer any questions you have on trade or commercial matters following my presentation.

Mr. Chairman, you and other members of your Subcommittee are aware of the efforts of the State Department, and those of Ambassador Barnes and our Embassy in Bucharest, to help resolve the many hundreds of emigration and humanitarian cases that have come to our attention. Because of the general

waiver authority granted to the President under Section 402 of the Trade Act, and its application to Romania, it has been possible to pursue our interests in easing emigration restrictions in the context of good U.S.-Romanian relations. Consequently, I am pleased to say that a good proportion of these cases have been favorably resolved.

We continue to believe that the understanding that we reached with the Romanian Government on this matter satisfied the provisions of the Trade Act. We believe that the Romanian performance on emigration during the past year has contributed to the achievement of the objectives of the Act.

As President Carter stated in his request for extension of his waiver authority, we intend to monitor closely Romanian compliance with the objectives of Section 402. Should performance not accord with the intent of this provision, we would recommend reconsideration of his recommendation. In addition, we will bring to the attention of the Romanian Government any actions or emigration trends which do not seem to conform to the assurances which they have provided in the past to treat emigration requests in a humanitarian manner. We will continue to keep the Congress informed of the results of this monitoring success.

I should point out that Romania does not encourage emigration by its citizens. We still hear complaints, perhaps as the result of arbitrary decisions by local authorities. The bureaucratic procedures remain burdensome and time-consuming and could well be streamlined and speeded up. Further, approval of each request to emigrate is not assured, particularly for persons without relatives in other countries.

The Romanian Government has demonstrated, however, an understanding of the importance we place on emigration and a willingness to discuss our concerns whenever we raise them. In addition, Romania accepts a commitment to help carry out the reunification of divided families, as provided in the Helsinki Final Act.

Mr. Chairman, we have provided for you and your Subcommittee statistics which enable us to assess Romania's emigration performance. If we look at the totals for the first five months of this year and last year, we can see that the rate of emigration to the United States is now running slightly above last year's rate. That is, in the period January 1 - May 31, 1977, 496 persons emigrated from Romania to the United States, as compared to 465 during the same period last year. In addition to being slightly above

last year's rate, this emigration level is considerably above emigration rates in the pre-MFN years.

In addition to monitoring emigration from Romania to the United States, we have also followed closely the progress of Romanian emigration to Israel. Here the results are not nearly as encouraging. The five-month total for 1977 is only 458 persons, compared to 853 in 1976.

The problem of assessing Romanian emigration performance with regard to Israel is complicated by uncertainty regarding the number of Romanian Jews who actually wish to depart. As you know, Romania has in the post-war period followed a liberal policy toward Jewish emigration. Well over 300,000 Jews have been permitted to emigrate to Israel. Many of those who remain are quite elderly, and may not wish to emigrate. While we believe that there are Jews in Romania who wish to emigrate but feel prevented from doing so, we have no accurate way of determining how many wish to depart. At times the debate over the conflicting figures has diverted attention from the central humanitarian issue.

In this situation, we believe our best approach is to concentrate our efforts on securing improved Romanian performance.

In the final analysis, we recognize that an acceptable level of emigration from Romania to Israel is the principal

concern of the two countries involved. Only the Israeli authorities can determine which Romanians who apply to immigrate to Israel are qualified to do so. It is our impression that Romanian and Israeli authorities conduct periodic discussions on emigration. At the same time, we intend to keep this matter constantly before the Romanian Government -- but in the context of good relations, not confrontation.

I would also like to mention that there are signs of greater Romanian willingness in recent months to permit increased emigration to other countries. For example, in the case of the Federal Republic of Germany -- the destination of the largest proportion of Romanian emigrants -- emigration has increased greatly this year compared to 1976. During the first four months of this year, some 4,300 Romanians arrived to settle in the Federal Republic, and Romanian statistics show that over 5,600 persons left Romania for West Germany up to June 14. This is more than double the number of Romanians who, according to German statistics, settled there in all of 1976. I must add, however, that the number of Romanians emigrating to West Germany in 1976 -- 2,720, according to German figures -- was relatively low. In 1974, for example, German figures record 5,400 Romanian immigrants.

We believe that the positive effect which the U.S.-Romanian Trade Agreement has had on trade, emigration, and our general bilateral relations with Romania fully justifies continuation of the Agreement. The Agreement has provided an additional stimulus to Romanian independence. In addition, our resulting improved relations with Romania have enabled us to further other worthy humanitarian objectives. We therefore support extension of the President's waiver authority and its application to Romania.



January 16, 1980

Mr. Pedro Schein
Absorption Center
Merkas Klita Apt. 353
Kiriat-Yam B
Haifa, Israel

Dear Mr. Schein:

It was a great joy to receive your letter from Israel!
I am truly happy to learn that you, your wife and your
daughter have finally been reunited with your family
in Israel.

Your letter of thanks is much appreciated. However,
you should know that the real thanks are the very fact
that you have realized your dream of reunion in the land
of our people.

With all good wishes and a hearty mazal tov, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Mr. Pedro Schein
Absorbition Center
Merkaz Klita Apt. 353,
Kiriath-Yam B'
Haifa, Israel

20th. December 1979

Rabbi Alexander Scheindler
Union of American - Hebrew Congregation
838 Fifth Avenue,
New York 10021
U. S. A.

Dear Rabbi Alexander Scheindler,

With great pleasure I wish to inform you that I've arrived Israel atlast with my wife Henriette and my daughter Florina a month ago united again with my family.

Thanking you very kindly for your assistance. Due to your most sincere help I could leave Romania and be in Israel today. My entire family shall always remember you and pray for your health so that you may be able to help more Jews with similar problems like mine, to come to Israel. God Bless You and kindest regards to your family.

Yours faithfully,

Pedro Schein



ce
m.y. Nachumstein

May 3, 1977

Mr. Tamburu Vladimir
Bd. Miciurin 13/A
71314 Bucuresti I
R.S. Romania

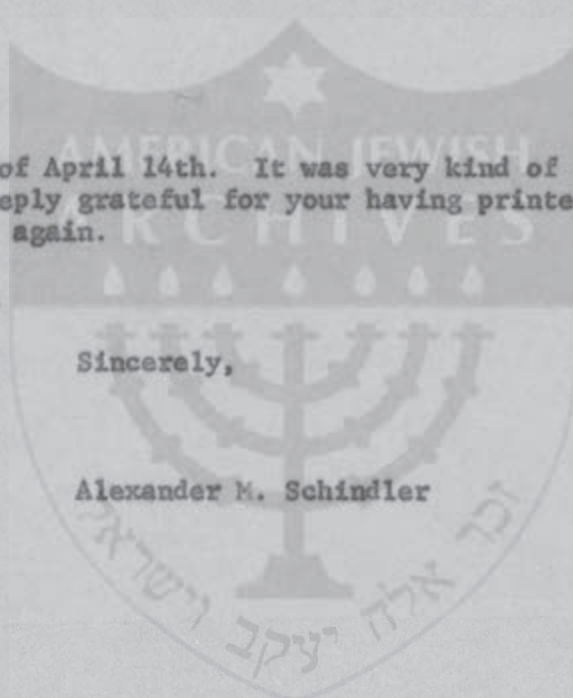
Dear Mr. Vladimir:

Thank you for your letter of April 14th. It was very kind of you to write to me and I am deeply grateful for your having printed my father's poems. Thank you again.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



November 10, 1977

Mr. Aron Croitoru
Rehi Sevet Dan 32/1
Amisav Mabara
Petah Tikva, Israel

Dear Mr. Croitoru:

Your letter of October 24, 1977 has been forwarded to me and
I hasten to respond.

Regretfully, I am unable to be of assistance to you. My work
in behalf of the Presidents' Conference is related only to
organizational and political matters. We are restricted by
our mandate from becoming involved in personal matters such
as housing in Israel. This is a matter you must work out
directly with the authorities in Israel.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

FROM THE DESK OF

IRVING KESSLER

Alex:

Croitoru is an immigrant, many years in Israel, who has written to everyone about his problems. He has no claim on the Jewish Agency.



MO

UNITED ISRAEL APPEAL, INC.



Dear Sirs

LE PRESIDENT,

ALEXANDER SINDLER

UNITED ISRAEL APPEAL INC.

515 Park Avenue

NEW YORK NY 10022 U.S.A.

America


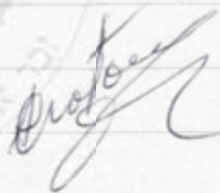
Dear Sirs

24-10-77

Le President Alexander Sindler
United Israel appeal INC.
NEW YORK

I am sending you this letter with
the request to intervene in my mater in order
to solve my housing Problem

Faithfully yours

Subject: Application for obtaining
a flat.

Dear Sirs,

The undersigned Kroyturo Aharon Israel, of Petach Tikva, ^{ISRAEL} Amishav, 32/1, Shevet Dan Street, Identity Card No. 6885553, brings to your information the following:

When I arrived to Israel together with my family, I received a flat in the above mentioned address, it is a place settled by a primitive population including all kinds of robbers and criminals, which we have nothing common with them, therefore I refused to have a flat in this zone.

Amidar representative calmed me in explaining to me (in this he lied) that this flat is temporary only, and that because of lack in flats, I must agree to have it, and that later I shall receive a new and bigger flat.

The climate was rainy and my son was sick, for this I admitted to his explanations, but I fell in the net, as since then I am running and running asking the change of flat.

I have submitted tens of applications to different bodies and treating in this problem, but all was in vain, because, since the moment you arrived to Israel, no one pays attention to you, as "the negro has done his duty"...

I did not know that here in Israel, only by way of PROTECTION it is possible to obtain something. The Israeli press reports that against bribery, people obtained flats according to their request, and to prove it to you I am sending you an article from the Roumanian newspaper "Nuestra Vitae".

To my big sorrow I had no PROTECTION. Therefore I shall describe to you in the following lines what happened to me:

After long years of struggle and suffering, the Prime Minister's Office advised me that I shall have a flat in Petach Tikva, at 36 Katz street.

The flat pleased me, therefore I agreed to have it. So I appeared in Amidar's offices at Petach Tikva, ready to obtain the flat.

But Amidar's clerk looked at me up and down and when he has found out that he in fact does not know me, i.e. I have no PROTECTION, and I am not ready to give bribery, suggested to change the flat promised to me with another flat which is also in the same Katz St. on the other side of the street, No. 96. I would like to point out that this flat is an old one, even smaller than my present flat, containing two rooms. In the above mentioned flat there are only one and half rooms.

The clerk asked me to deliver him my flat against the flat situated in a poverty quarter in the end of the city at the spot called MAABARA Ahadot Yashan. He had a solution to the problem, that the flat is smaller, so that with his big teupet, suggested to me, that our son, then aged 18 years, may sleep with us together in the same room.

I have absolutely refused to have this flat, so there is a question: are we indeed animals? why do we merit such a behaviour? The truth is that we are the sacrifices of the PROTECTION.

After an additional suffering, the Housing Office advises me in 1976, that it is decided to give me a flat in one of the buildings built in Nave Kabush. I waited nearly one year till the finishing of the erection of the a/m buildings, and when I went to Amidar to receive the flat, then the same happening repeated again, like the past. They changed my flat in Nave Kabush with a flat in Fedja.

Having no other alternative, I agreed to receive this flat, but the clerk asked me to buy it, and in case that I have no sufficient money to buy it, he consoled and clamed me, saying that he will look for an old flat, surely will be suitable for me.

I don't understand why they ask me only to buy the flat. I am aware that in the new buildings in Nave Kabush 207, there are flats containing 3 rooms which were given to elder families consisting of 2 persons, and they were not obliged to buy the flat.

The reason of the injustice caused to me is not comprehensive to me at all. I am totally salary-worker, and have no sources which may supply me money for the flat.

In my residence in Amishav Quarter, there are tens of families which are not new immigrants. They received new flats with no need to buy them. Only me, I am requested to buy the flat. Against monthly rent I am ready also to receive a flat, and in this, Amidar will keep its promise, a promise given to me when coming to Israel, that when the time will come I shall receive a bigger and newer flat than this received prealably.

In Roumania I was inspector in the Ministry of finance, and lived in a clean quarter, an honourable population and therefore I also gained honour; I am not accustomed and cannot be accustomed to live in conditions so primitive near types which are so far of culture life.

AMERICAN JEWISH

In Roumania I have not obeyed to advices they gave me, not to come to Israel, and now, when I see to where I arrived, I am sorry that I have not attributed importance to those advices.

I immigrated to Israeli gayly, knowing that I come to my own land, but found here a foreign country, foreign people, and the Institutions oblige me to live in primitive conditions when restraining my rights I am entitled to, being a new immigrant.

I am not the enemy of the country. My son is serving in Zahal (Army) as technician, electronician, and serves faithfully his cluntry. But facing the refusal of the Institutions (Population Committee, Housing Office) to resolve my problem, I was compelled to apply to foreign embassies in Israel and abroad, to explain my problem.

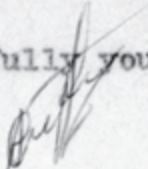
I see myself obliged in future to ask the release of my son from the army Zahal in order to leave Israel. The studies of our son have been financiated by our very proper money, but now the State makes use of his knowledges, But this country does not fulfil its duties towards his parents, then he also is not obliged to fulfil his dities towards his State.

I send you this letter asking you to send it to EMBASSY
OF ISRAEL - USA

and they will send it to the Institutions which will treat my problem.

I beg you as well to let me know about the receipt of the letter, so I shall know that it has not been censored and that I should not take special other means in order that it reaches your hands.

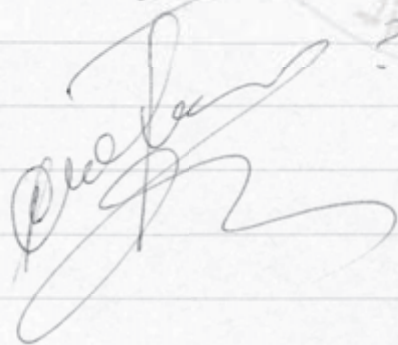
Faithfully yours,



בא בצאן שלטון שיש להם
פולקציה (קטלי) הנדב וקולל באוסה
משפח פנוה, סלביה מרקובל ואחרים
ניגלו בירור בשני מליון ל"ה בצפון תל-אביב
וצאן בשכר בורה ~~הפך~~ סמל' מניין
של מ'סכנים הללו אין מאיפה יטלם.
לעומת זאת באנו צאן מח"בד יאלת חב
א'מ'דר, קטל בירור קטנה בשכונה מלונלה
בה'.

הא עפ היכן מלך הפולקציה ב'טרה
הא כיצד מלקים את כפי המזבין
הניטלים ל'טרה, לאלו שיש להם פולקציה,
בא בצאן שאנשים פטורים כמון
משאירים מאחור קטלום במאסוי, בל'נליק.

מפוע אין המזבין מתעניין בוס
ה'טלם ל'טרה ?



August 19, 1977

Mr. I. Silens
U.S. Department of State
Romanian Desk
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Silens:

It was good talking with you the other day and I am grateful for your counsel.

Enclosed is a copy of a nightletter I have just sent to Prime Minister Begin which is self-explanatory. I do hope that he will arrange to meet with Dick Veitz.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

August 15, 1977

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I trust that you have received my earlier letter summarizing the status of our preparations for Belgrade and enclosing the President's semi-annual report on CSCE. I also said in that letter that you would be invited to a meeting in the Department of State in advance of this fall's review conference at Belgrade.

The morning of Friday, September 9, has been set aside for this meeting and a registration form is enclosed which we hope you will return promptly. It would be helpful if you could arrive at 9:00 a.m. as we hope to begin the meeting promptly at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at noon. You will be met at the Diplomatic (C Street) entrance by State Department officers.

We believe that the preparatory Belgrade Conference went well and that it has set the stage for an honest review of implementation within a well structured and businesslike format. We look forward to a full and informed exchange of views with you in the hope that this will help our delegation prepare for the main Belgrade Conference which is scheduled to begin on October 4.

In the interest of assuring as much time as possible for the give and take of a broad and informal discussion at the September 9 meeting, we would appreciate your mailing to us (with your registration form) any prepared statements you may wish to submit. This would give our panel members time to consider them in advance and an opportunity to respond to them during their opening remarks.

I look forward to your attendance.

Sincerely,

Matthew Nimetz
Counselor

Enclosures:

1. Registration form
2. Return envelope

CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF MAJOR AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

515 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022
PLaza 2-1616
Cable Address: COJOGRA

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS:

American Israel Public
Affairs Committee
American Jewish Congress
American Mizrahi Women
American Zionist Federation
Anti-Defamation League
B'nai B'rith
B'nai B'rith Women
Bnai Zion
Central Conference of
American Rabbis
Council of Jewish Federations
and Welfare Funds (observer)
Hadassah
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish Reconstructionist
Foundation
Jewish War Veterans
of the U.S.A.
Labor Zionist Alliance
Mizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrachi
National Committee for
Labor Israel, Inc.
National Council of
Jewish Women
National Council of
Young Israel
National Federation of
Temple Sisterhoods
National Jewish Community
Relations Advisory Council
National Jewish Welfare Board
North American Jewish
Youth Council
Pioneer Women
The Rabbinical Assembly
Rabbinical Council of America
Union of American Hebrew
Congregations
Union of Orthodox Jewish
Congregations of America
United Synagogue of America
Women's American ORT
Women's League for
Conservative Judaism
World Zionist Organization
American Section, Inc.
Zionist Organization of America

July 28, 1977

The Honorable Abraham A. Ribicoff
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Ribicoff:

I am really sorry that I was not able to be at the meeting of your Senate Finance Committee this year when the issue of MFN for Romania was discussed. Unfortunately, I was much preoccupied with Middle Eastern matters during the post-Begin election trauma.

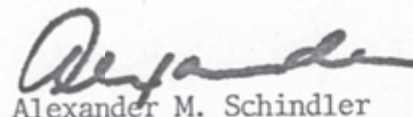
I read the testimony, of course, which was offered by Bill Korey and I also received a report concerning Rabbi Miller's testimony before the parallel House Committee.

You will be exceedingly pleased to learn that the updated six months' figure for exit visas granted by Romania to members of her Jewish community has jumped dramatically. In fact, the six months' figure this year is almost 65% of last year's total. This figure, somewhat in excess of 1,000, should make possible a total emigration of over 2,000 Jewish families which is within the range of what we project, albeit the actual emigration figure for the first six months is still not too encouraging. Yet, emigration invariably follows visas and is a good indication of what the future will bring.

I myself plan to go to Bucharest some time in the not too distant future just to have a personal look and see.

I hope these comments are of some help to you and your country in reaching a decision.

Sincerely,



Alexander M. Schindler

AMS:vm

cc: The Honorable Nicolae M. Nicolae

April 21, 1977

Mr. Jacob Birnbaum
656 West 162nd Street
New York, New York 10032

Dear Mr. Birnbaum:

I have tried to reach you by telephone several times but have failed to reach you. My schedule is extremely hectic and I have been travelling all over the country. I do not appreciate your remarks which imply that I am not concerned with matters of Klal Yisroel.

My life is on a schedule which covers morning, noon and night for seven days a week, at no inconsequential sacrifice to either my health or my family. Only last week one of my five youngsters cried and when I asked him why he said, "because I have no father."

It is for this reason and this reason alone that I am not at my desk when you call and why I cannot make twenty telephone calls a day on the chance that you are in. The many times I have called your number there was no answer or it was busy.

To save us both grief, why don't you just note on paper what you know and wish to share with me and send it to me in an envelope marked personal and confidential. Although I must note that I am in constant communication with David Pedahzur, with Chaim Baer, with the State Department and the Romanian Embassy and I can't conceive of any information you might have which I do not already know.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
Chairman

cc: Mr. Chaim Baer
Mr. Yehuda Hellman

The Center for Russian and East European Jewry

National Director's Address and Phones: 656 West 162nd Street • New York, N.Y. 10032 • (212) 928-7451 (212) 799-8902

Office Address and Phone: 200 West 72nd Street • New York, N.Y. 10023 • (212) 799-8900

April 15, 1977

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Prof. Michael Wyschogrod

Dear Rabbi Schindler, *YKS*

March 17/78
It is over a month since I first called to speak to you on an important matter. I have asked for a brief phone appointment. Though you are exceedingly busy, I find the total lack of response somewhat inexplicable and, personally, quite discouraging. Our last conversation took place nearly nine months ago and there were not more than two or three previous to that, conversations which may not have been entirely unhelpful to you.

The purpose of my call has been to make you aware of one or two possibly significant developments. I do not want anything from you. Where a matter of Klal Yisroel is concerned I have to persist, I suppose. I must confess however that I am not accustomed to this type of experience from a co-worker.

Let me set down my immediate numbers once more:

928. 7451. If the 928 number is very busy, the following may be called, though some waiting may be required : 795. 8867.

Sincerely,

Jacob Birnbaum
Jacob Birnbaum
National Director



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Bucharest, Romania

December 21, 1976

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Alex:

Just a short note in response to yours of November 30 which made it through sleet and snow - something must have been in the way - three weeks later, reaching us today. I trust by now you've had not only Dick Scissors' letter of December 1 on the question of the problems Century Gloves Corporation has been having but also that the firm has been contacted by representatives of ARPIMEX. If either or both of these assumptions are false and you want us to do something else, please let us know.

As I wrote you earlier, Betsey and I enjoyed immensely having you and Rhea here and therefore very much share your hope that we will have a chance to have a number of meetings in a variety of places in the future.

I am anxious to learn of anything you can tell me about your visit to Israel and your perceptions of the Romanian scene at this remove.

With very best regards to you and Rhea,

Harry G. Barnes, Jr.

cc AVI

December 23, 1976

Mircea Raceanu, First Secretary
Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Romania
1607 23rd Street, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Mr. Raceanu:

It was very thoughtful of you and Ambassador Nicolae to send me the wonderful wines. I am deeply grateful for your kindness and your good wishes.

Mrs. Schindler joins me in wishing you and your dear ones all the best at this holiday season.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

November 30, 1976

His Excellency, The American Ambassador
Harry Barnes
Embassy of the United States of America
Bucharest, Romania

Dear Harry:

I'm just back from Israel and I hasten to express my deepest gratitude to you for your many kindnesses and personal courtesies to me during my visit to Bucharest. It was wonderful having an opportunity to meet with you and to come to know you,, Rhea and I enjoyed being with you and your lovely Betsy and we hope there will be many such meetings in the future.

You will recall my discussing the matter of Century Gloves Corp. of Newark, New Jersey and the problem they have had with orders being filled. I had written to Ambassador Nicolae and enclose herewith a copy of his response. If you can further enlighten me I would be most grateful.

With repeated thanks for your graciousness and with warmest regards to you and Betsy, in which Rhea joins me, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Encl.

REGISTERED
SPECIAL DELIVERY

November 5, 1976

Mr. G. Anghel
Embassy of Romania
1607 23rd Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Mr. Anghel:

In accordance with our telephone conversation of this morning, I enclose herewith passports for Alexander M. Schindler and Thes Schindler. As you know they will be visiting Romania in November at the invitation of your President and thus require visas for their visit.

At the moment the exact dates for their visit have not been finalized, the suggested times are November 15-17 or November 27-28. Therefore, it would be helpful if the visas could be for a period covering all of these dates. The Schindlers will be leaving the country on the 14th of November and thus it is imperative that we receive the visas as soon as possible.

With appreciation for your assistance and with kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller
Assistant to the President

Encl.

Send Passport
Embassy

Spec Del.

1607 - 23rd St NW

DC

20008

Written Invoice
not necessary

Call from Nicholas
official -

December 15, 1976

His Excellency The Romanian Ambassador
Nicolae Nicolae and Mrs. Nicolae
Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Romania
Washington, D.C.

My Dear Ambassador and Mrs. Nicolae:

Mrs. Schindler joins me in extending to you and your dear ones our warm good wishes for the holiday season. May the New Year be one of great fulfillment and happiness.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



*The Ambassador
of the Socialist Republic of Romania
and
Mrs. Nicolae
send Greetings of the Season
and Best Wishes for the New Year*

Wnt

nr.501/1976

București, 6 septembrie 1976

D-nei
BLIMETA BAINGLAS
Ulpan Tabor
Mercaz Clita
NATZERET ILIT - ISRAEL

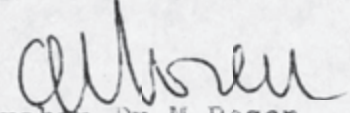
Scrisoarea dv., fără dată, prin care îmi solicitați să intervin ca ginerele dv., neevreu, să primească aprobarea de a pleca definitiv în Israel, ne-a uimit și considerăm că e necesar să facem unele precizări :

- 1). Eretz-Israel se reclădește pentru a fi o țară a evreilor și nu un loc de refugiu pentru alții cari vor să-și părăsească Patria respectivă, din diverse motive.
- 2). "Reunirea familiilor" la care vă referiți, solicitând ca fiica dv. să se poată reuni cu soțul ei, nu se referă la un asemenea caz. Ea se referă la reunirea familiilor evreiești și nu a acelor care au părăsit judaismul.
- 3). Nu v-a silit nimeni să plecați din România. Dacă dv. și fiica dv, v-ați hotărât să plecați, ați scos pașapoartele, ați luat biletele de avion, etc. , știind că cererea ginerelui dv. a fost refuzată, înseamnă că ați acceptat această situație și nu puteți afirma că "au trecut 40 de zile și încă n-a venit".
- 4). Fiica dv. a avut în fața ei alternativa : Ori își părăsește poporul, credința și familia și rămâne lângă soțul ei, poporul său, credința și familia sa, ori își părăsește soțul și pleacă în Israel.
- 5). Adresați-vă "senatorilor și Rabinilor americani" așa cum ați fost sfătuită dar nu uitați să le spuneți că nu e vorba de o cauză evreiască, ci de cu totul altceva.
- 6). In orice caz, este ilariant să vă adresați Rabinului-Sef, cerându-i ca el să vă ajute pentruca :

a). fiica dv. să aibă o familie neevreiască ;

b). Eretz Israel să devină loc de adăpost pentru neevrei.

Greșiți când afirmați că "am putere" și "un cuvânt al meu ar face minuni". Dacă însă ași avea putere, ași împiedica împlinirea a ceea ce cereți dv.


Sefrabin Dr. M. Rosen

Romanian
Trip

Mrs.

Blimeta Beinglas

Ulpan Tabor

Nazareth Elit

Your letter, without date, wherein you ask me to intervene so as your non-Jewish son-in law can receive the visa for Israel, has astonished us and we think that we have to clarify certain points :

1. Israel is rebuilt in order to be a country for Jews and not a refugee center for others, who want to leave their homeland for different reasons.

2. The "family-reunion" you are talking about in asking for your daughter to be reunited with her husband, does not include such a case. It refers to Jewish families only, and not to those who have left Jewery.

3. Nobody forced you to leave Romania. If you and your daughter decided to go away, got your passeports and your tickets, knowing that your son-in-law's request has been denied, it means that you have accepted the situation and you cannot say that " 40 days have passed and he is not here yet".

4. Your daughter had two alternatives : or to leave her people, faith and family and stay by her husband, his people, faith and family, or to leave her husband and go to Israel.

5. You can turn to Senators and rabbis in the U.S.A. as you have been advised but don't forget to mention that not a Jewish matter is involved here, but something completely different.

6. Anyway, it is ridiculous to turn to the chief rabbi for help

a. so that your daughter could raise a non-Jewish family.

b. Israel should become a shelter for non-Jewish people.

You are wrong in assuming that I am powerful and that one word of mine could do wonders. But if I had such power, I certainly would have done anything to prevent the fulfilment of your wish.



Mrs.
BLIMET, BEINGLAS
ULPAN TABOR
Merkaz Olita
HATZERET ILIT - ISRAEL

December 23, 1976

His Excellency, The Romanian Ambassador
Nicolae M. Nicolae
Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Romania
Washington, D.C. 20008

My Dear Mr. Nicolae:

I want to express my deep appreciation to you and Mr. Raceanu for your thoughtful gift. I shall open the wonderful wines for a very special occasion and I know I shall enjoy them very, very much.

Mrs. Schindler joins me in wishing you and your dear ones a very happy holiday season, and a wonderful New Year.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Mircea Răceanu
First Secretary

Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Romania

*1607 - 23rd St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20008*

232-4747

Nicolae M. Nicolae

Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Romania

Washington, D. C.

November 30, 1976

Dr. Jov Somesfalaen
Hotel Opera
Broadway and 76th Street
New York, N.Y. 10023

Dear Dr. Somesfalaen:

I'm just back from my overseas journey and I hasten to respond to your letter of November 10.

Evidently there was some misunderstanding on your part. When you telephoned my office you indicated you wished to meet with me to discuss property in Romania which had belonged to your family for over 300 years and which was confiscated by the government. As my assistant told you when you called, I simply cannot become involved in such matters and there is nothing I or the Presidents' Conference can do to be of aid to you. I do regret this but I simply cannot become involved. As you know, my dealings with the Romanian government are limited to seeking the reunification of families.

With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
Chairman

bcc: Yehuda Hellman

Hotel Opera
Broadway & 76th Street
suite 1909
New York, N.Y. 10023
November 10, 1976

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Conference of Presidents
515 Park Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

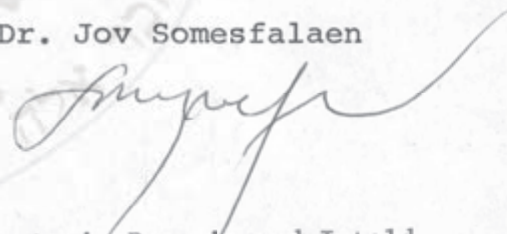
About three weeks ago, I phoned your office to ask for an appointment to see you about the situation of Jews in Rumania. I am a recent refugee from that country.

I was told that you were quite busy, and that your office would contact me right after the presidential elections. They didn't. When I called today, I was told you had left the country, and would return in December.

I hope that you will instruct your office to set up an appointment for me as soon as possible upon your return.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Jov Somesfalaen



NOT SO! He's the one with family property in Romania and I told him you could not become involved in such matters.....it's not a request for reuniting of a family, it's for land.

E
Put this in writing
to him.

Dr. Job Somegallean =
Romanian - New American
Lawyer. =
Wants to see you.

787-1900 7/1909

Letter to Ruman Govt.

Property confiscated -
in family over 300 yrs.

give back - House.

not yet - others have
written.

ROMANIAN EMIGRATION
SINCE 1963

1963	13,000
1964	26,000
1965	11,000
1966	3,600
1967	800
1968	220
1969	1,400
1970	5,200
1971	1,650
1972	2,650
1973	3,700
1974	3,700 (total for year)
Aug.	612
Sep.	328
Oct.	267
Nov.	200
Dec.	200
1975	2,140 (total for year)
Jan.	70
Feb.	45
Mar.	100
Apr.	80
May	50
Jun.	210
Jul.	430
Aug.	250
Sep.	295
Oct.	360
Nov.	140
Dec.	110
1976	
Jan.	350
Feb.	243
Mar.	103
Apr.	51
May	140
Jun.	222
Jul.	237



POST MFN

1. The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations is the coordinating body of 32 national Jewish organizations and speaks for the organized American Jewish community on this and related issues.
2. The Conference endorses the administration's proposal to waive the requirements of section 402 of the 1975 Trade Act for one more year.
3. The Conference appreciates the extensive rights which the Romanian Jewish community enjoys, rights which are "fully on a par with those accorded to her other minority groupings." The Conference also favors Romania's "independent" foreign policy which seeks to "normalize" relations with nations outside the Soviet bloc -- with our own country and with Israel.
4. The Conference is distressed to note that emigration expectations have not been fulfilled. There has been a decline in the total number of Romanian Jews permitted to leave, a decline which takes on dramatic proportions when measured against the flurry of departures during the months immediately preceding and following last year's hearings on the basis of which the original waiver was approved.
5. The Conference therefore qualifies its endorsement of the 402 waiver renewal with the urgent request that emigration figures be kept "under continuing review" and that our government's representatives "bend every effort" to make certain that the Trade Act objective of free emigration be, in fact, attained.
6. The Conference is grateful to the State Department, and in particular to our representatives in Bucharest "whose words and actions bear testimony to the fact that insofar as the United States is concerned interests in the extension of trade and political sway do not supercede our concern for the extension of human rights, and that among these rights, the free movement of peoples is an ideal to which our national honor is pledged."

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER

CHAIRMAN, CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF MAJOR AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 8, 1976

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY
RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER
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BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 8, 1976

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