

Alois Fink

Jan 17.

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum,

To inform you about the current state of affairs in Oberammergau, I am sending you a report from the Süddeutsche Zeitung which describes the situation most clearly.

As you recall, a direct referendum for or against reform had been rejected, and instead it had been decided to conduct a public opinion survey which was to help the village council make its decision. However, the council was to remain independent and solely responsible.

After the survey Oberammergau is more divided than ever. Both before and during the voting, the opponents of the reform did not miss a trick of deceptive manipulation. The way the results were announced also ~~were~~^{were} most dubious. ~~Contrary~~^{Through the official} to a result of 48% and 48%, Mayor Zwink gave the Religious Press Agency (KNA) an incorrect partial result of 60% and 40%.

The confusion and the hardening of fronts has accordingly intensified. A state of local civil war has been reached. True, the voting in the village council stands unchanged at 11 to 6; but the opponents of reform, led by the senior mayor, Zwink, are hoping to gain their objectives through further delay. They expect that after the communal elections on March 5, the voting ratio in the village council will shift in favor of retaining the Daisenberger version, whereupon the decision of the previous village council could be rescinded.

The Bavarian public can hardly understand Oberammergau as it is now, especially since the Rosner trial performance evoked an overwhelmingly positive response. The proponents of reform, including the performers, are facing ^{even} more hostility than before; there actually has been a suicide attempt. They are beginning to feel resigned, and they feel that they have not only been slandered, but deceived and abandoned. They now depend on ^{every bit of} ~~whatever~~ encouragement and help they can get.

For we must remember that nothing has been finally decided. Schwaighofer keeps on fighting, and he is not alone.

Suppose Oberammergau opts for Daisenberger in 1980. This is not exactly probable but neither is it out of the question; the chances now are 50-50. If ~~this were to happen~~ ^{it should come to that,} I believe it would signal the end of the Oberammergau Passion Play. Many people, including the best, no longer want to go on, ^{the} Public reactions are ~~so~~ ^{imagine,} easy to ~~foresee,~~ and there ~~will be~~ ^{would} no ~~Schwaighofer~~ ^{longer be a} to rely on. In that case I personally would say: ^{it's} just as well.

A by-product of the opinion survey, but clearly evident ^{from the survey details,} is the sad ~~fact~~ ^{realization} that the mentally underprivileged have won again. They are unable to see that they are running their village into an open knife, as the saying goes: in this case, a typical Oberammergau whittling knife.

I assume that you will approve my giving copies of this letter to the gentlemen who recently came with you to champion a solution of the Oberammergau problem in such a matter-of-fact and tolerant way.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Alois Fink

Enclosure: clipping from Suddeutsche Zeitung
January 14, 1978
and 15,