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Oberammergau, 3. juli 1979

Dear Bill:

Ten days ago the community of Oberammergau selected the performers for 1980. Although, just as I suspected it was impossible to effect a compromise for 1980, it may be said that the majority of the members of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft stuck together.

With the exception of five performers who took on major assignments in the Daisenberger play, the majority of the Rosner supporters remained true to our reform idea. We are setting up now for 1984 because in spite of everything, for us and for the community of Oberammergau, the number of citizens willing to perform in the Passion Play is disappointing. The Arbeitsgemeinschaft will continue to exist. Those of our people who are participating in 1980 will nevertheless continue to work for a reform.

Naturally, we regret exceedingly that our work has not yet borne fruit. In spite of that we will not give up.

The Daisenberger text will be criticized by us as unusable. During a conversation in Munich with Regional Bishop Schwartzboeck, the Bishop spoke in favor of a reform and his sermon in the Church of Oberammergau on the occasion of the renewal of the vow for 1980 hopefully moved some "Oberammergauer" to reflection. During the conversation he also mentioned that we cannot concur with the Cardinal's acceptance of a revised Daisenberger text for 1980 and that further we are astonished at his action in view of the fact that after the 1970 Play the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising called for a basic reform of the play.

In 1980, 35 performances for foreigners who book European tours will keep the "books balanced" -- the old English and American ladies will look upon Oberammergau as they do Bayreuth and Salzburg, Vienna and the castles of Neuschwanstein and Linderhof -- tourist attractions -- and will extol them as "beautiful and very nice."

We are hoping for ~~large~~ criticism in 1980 from the press and the media. That, with reinforcement from this side will help promote the necessary reform of the Oberammergau Passion Play.

The enclosed newspaper clippings report the preparations for 1980 and also describe our line and position.

The Arbeitsgemeinschaft will continue to work: in the Fall we will repeat the "Totentanz" in Murnau and we will offer a broad spectrum of theatrical opportunities for actors who will not be performing in 1980. This will bridge the coming year and keep us occupied until the time comes to campaign intensively for 1984.

The community of Oberammergau did not deal fairly with the participants in the trial performances of 1977. We have not forgotten. We believe that 1980 will be the last time that the Daisenberger text will be performed.

In looking back, we are thankful especially to Rabbi Tanenbaum for the advice and the open, fair and relevant discussions regarding our efforts to bring about a reform.

I hope that the current defeat will not diminish this mutual understanding. Nothing would have pleased us more than to present the world a new and acceptable Passion Play.

With special greetings to you, your wife, and, of course, Rabbi  
Tanenbaum and Miles Jaffe,

Cordially,

Hans Schwaighofer