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Immigration

RECORD OF A MEETING WITH A DELEGATION OF THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF
BRITISH JEWS HELD AT 10 DOWNING STREET AT 1000 HOURS ON TUESDAY
27 NOVEMBER 1979

Present:

Prime Minister	The Hon. Greville Janner (President)
Mr. David Wolfson	Dr. Lionel Kopelowitz (Senior Vice President)
Mr. Charles Anson	Mr. Martin Savitt (Junior Vice President)
Mr. Mike Pattison	Mr. Victor Lucas (Treasurer)
	Mr. Stuart Young (Appeals Treasurer)
	Mr. Hayim Pinner (Secretary General)

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In thanking the Prime Minister for her courtesy in receiving the delegation, Mr. Janner emphasised that the Board of Deputies were a non-party apolitical body representing the British Jewish community. The most difficult of the issues they wished to raise with the Prime Minister was immigration. The British Jews were an immigrant community. They accepted the responsibility of Government to control immigration, but viewed with anxiety the proposed different treatment of people not born in the United Kingdom. The Prime Minister said that she could go no further than recent statements by the Home Secretary. She had spoken on this issue in the election campaign. There was a major problem over fiances, who had no previous links with the country. The problem extended to their dependants. Her own constituency experience, where she had a substantial community of Asians from East Africa and the sub-continent, showed that the existing Asian community provided little opposition to the Government's proposals. There would always be compassionate exceptions to the new regulations and the problem of refugees from tyranny would also require different

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solutions. The Government had said how it proposed to handle immigration matters, and she would stand by that absolutely. There could be no perfect solutions in this difficult field. There would, of course, be a debate in the House of Commons to confirm the regulations before these were brought into force. Mr. Pinner said that Jews who had arrived in Britain in the mid-30s could be affected by these proposals. The Board of Deputies recognised what the Government was trying to do. Mr. Savitt asked the Prime Minister to bear in mind their representations whilst the Government finalised its intentions. The Prime Minister said that she could offer no hope of changing the Government's approach, although the views expressed would of course be considered.

Mr. Janner thanked the Prime Minister for the Government's agreement to the site for the Holocaust Memorial. The Prime Minister said that she had had no direct part in the decision, but was happy to accept the credit for her colleagues.

Mr. Janner expressed thanks for the Government's quiet assistance on the problems of Soviet Jews. In addition, Mr. Blaker's public comments in the House had been more forthright than those of his predecessor. The Prime Minister said that the Government would continue to do what it could, whilst endeavouring to avoid making life more complicated for East European Jews.

Mr. Janner said that the Jewish community were disappointed that the Government was not prepared to do better than their predecessors over the authentication of documentation required under the Arab boycott. Lord Byers had started movements to change the position in the House of Lords, but had withdrawn under commercial pressure. The Board of Deputies had asked the Government to disassociate itself from the authentication process and leave this to others, but last week the Government had announced that it would continue previous policy. The Prime Minister said that she could not promise movement, but she recognised the delegation's wish to register their strong views on the subject. Mr. Pinner said that discrimination under the boycott now applied to Egypt as well as Israel. The Prime Minister said that, as in

the case of Rhodesia, the sooner a settlement was achieved in the Middle East, the better for all parties concerned.

Mr. Janner asked whether there might be some quiet Government move on oil supplies for Israel. Her difficulties were much greater now that the last fields had been handed back to Egypt. The Prime Minister doubted whether there could be any developments here. Britain had responsibilities both as part of the EEC and as a member of the International Energy Agency. The 5% shortage created by the Iranian situation had been bad enough. If the 7% shortage were to be reached, triggering the IEA sharing arrangements, there would be an entirely new situation. Politics had taught her never to extrapolate from trends. In respect of oil supplies there had been few predictions of the Yom Kippur war and recent Iranian events, both of which had had a dramatic impact. Those monitoring developments had been alarmed by the Mecca Mosque attack whose ultimate meaning was not yet clear. It was still proving impossible to get the consumer countries and OPEC countries together. In Western countries faced by the alternative of massive unemployment, Governments were getting their oil where they could. This created a volatile spot market. The Prime Minister could not blame Governments who took this action. The UK was not yet up to self-sufficiency. If future developments did create shortages above the 7%, i.e. the trigger point, there would be major international activity because of the crippling economic effect: the long-term implications could not be properly assessed. It was not in the Arab interest to create such a disturbance. Mr. Janner said that Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and some other producers had an interest in stability, but it was not true of all. The Prime Minister said that it was in the interest of some major Arab states to keep the Western economies functioning. Dr. Kopelowitz said that the delegation were asking whether the Israeli oil companies could obtain commercial supplies from the North Sea companies. The Prime Minister said that North Sea production was committed for some time ahead. About half our exports were already going to Europe. Mr. Janner said that the Board of Deputies understood that there had been approaches to the