

**HIDDEN AMONG THE PAGES OF CRIME BILL:
MEASURES TARGETING TERROR AND HATE**
By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- Little-known provisions in the controversial \$30 billion crime bill that passed Congress last week drew praise from some Jewish groups for cracking down on terrorism and hate crimes.

The praise came despite certain reservations expressed about other measures in the bill, including an expansion of the death penalty.

After a suspense-filled drama, the Senate joined the House in resurrecting the first major piece of anti-crime legislation to pass Congress in six years.

After fending off stiff challenges from conservative lawmakers and gun control opponents, the measure passed the Senate 61-39 on Aug. 25.

Providing billions of dollars in grants to hire new police officers and to build more prisons across the country, the bill also bans dozens of semi-automatic assault weapons.

Along with the assault weapons ban, two unpublicized sections of the bill were hailed by many in the Jewish community for their direct aim at terrorism and at hate crimes.

Culminating an effort to combat hate crimes at the federal level, the bill will, for the first time, allow federal courts to impose stiffer penalties for hate crimes.

Over two dozen states currently have laws allowing judges to impose stiffer sentences if a crime is motivated by prejudice, but the federal government had not tackled the issue of stiffer sentencing until last week.

Depending on the nature of the offense, the provision known as the Hate Crime Sentencing Enhancement Act, will increase the average penalty for a crime by one-third over what would be meted out if it was not motivated by prejudice.

New Penalties For Assisting Terrorists

In contrast to crimes committed at the local level, such as desecration of a synagogue or a cross-burning, federal hate crimes involve crimes such as kidnapping and extortion motivated by race, religion, gender or disability.

Hate crimes committed on federal property such as national parks or Indian reservations also constitute federal offenses.

Forty-six states and the District of Columbia currently have some type of hate-crime law on the books, although not all the states include stiffer sentencing.

"Increasing penalties for bias crimes at the federal level sends an important message to both victims and would-be perpetrators that our society regards such crimes as reprehensible," David Strassler and Abraham Foxman, national chairman and national director, respectively, of the Anti-Defamation League, said in a statement praising the crime bill's success.

Another provision in the bill which drew widespread praise in the Jewish community estab-

lishes new categories of federal crimes for assisting terrorists and also bans contributions to terrorist organizations.

Leaders of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations hailed the measure regarding terrorism.

The provisions are "relevant to the concerns of the Jewish community and all Americans," said the umbrella organization's chairman, Lester Pollack, and executive vice chairman, Malcolm Hoenlein, in a statement.

The measure also makes it a crime to give money or weapons to terrorist groups.

Although proponents on Capitol Hill believe the ban will be difficult to enforce because it is difficult to monitor donations, they say they hope the measure will make people think twice before giving money to terrorist groups.

The terrorism sections of the bill were pushed by U.S. Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), who has tried in vain to pass tough anti-terrorism legislation for at least the past four years, according to an aide.

As chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Criminal Justice, which includes jurisdiction over terrorism, Schumer has long advocated the death penalty for terrorist acts that kill American citizens, another provision which was included in the crime bill passed last week.

Statute Of Limitations Increased

The bill also increases sentences for any felony involving international terrorism and imposes stiffer penalties for passport and visa fraud.

The measure also extends the statute of limitations for terrorism and other related crimes from five to eight years.

Lobbyists for Irish American groups fought the anti-terrorism language, fearing that the bill would prevent donations to the Irish Republican Army's fund-raising arm, according to Capitol Hill aides familiar with the issue. However, both the terrorism and the hate crimes language drew little opposition.

Schumer praised the overall legislation as a beginning to combatting crime and terror.

"To be effective, we need to develop an orchestrated plan that will enable us to keep sustained pressure against terrorism at all times," he said.

Many Jewish groups had considered opposing the crime bill because it establishes over 50 new crimes punishable by the death penalty.

Some, however, ultimately weighed in with support for the legislation because of the assault-weapons ban and funding for crime prevention.

"We have always viewed the crime bill as a mixed bag," said Mark Pelavin, Washington representative of the American Jewish Congress. "As passed, the bill includes a lot of programs we consider important, but we're disappointed by the expansion of the death penalty."

President Clinton is expected to sign the bill into law at a White House ceremony after returning from a vacation on Martha's Vineyard.

DIPLOMATIC FLAP WITH PAKISTAN ERUPTS AFTER ISRAEL REFUSES AN ENTRY TO GAZA

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- A diplomatic storm erupted this week over Israel's refusal to allow a Pakistani ambassador to enter the Gaza Strip because he did not contact Israeli officials prior to the visit.

Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto reportedly canceled her plans to visit Gaza next week as a result of the incident.

Bhutto, whose predominantly Muslim country has no diplomatic relations with Israel, had planned to visit Gaza before attending a U.N.-sponsored world population conference in Cairo.

Bhutto apparently had canceled the visit once last week after Israeli officials said she would need their approval before making the visit.

But over the weekend she apparently changed her mind, and on Sunday, Mansur Alam, the Pakistani ambassador to Egypt, attempted to enter Gaza for the apparent purpose of arranging Bhutto's visit.

The envoy spent some seven hours waiting at the Rafah crossing separating Gaza from Egypt before he was turned away on the orders of the secretary to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The order reportedly was given with the knowledge of both Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

Israeli officials later claimed the envoy did not follow Israel's entry procedures.

Israel is sensitive about the issue of Palestinian leaders inviting foreign dignitaries to either Gaza or the Jericho enclave in the West Bank. Both areas fell under Palestinian self-rule in May, but the autonomy agreement signed with Israel does not grant sovereignty or control over foreign relations to the Palestinians.

'A Serious Breach Of The Peace Process'

Bhutto would have been the first foreign head of state to visit Gaza.

The Palestinian leadership reacted angrily to the incident, with Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat calling Israel's actions a "serious (breach) of the peace process" and warning they would have wide-ranging repercussions.

But Rabin took Pakistan and Bhutto to task for failing to abide by proper protocols and for bypassing Israel.

"First Pakistan has to turn to us to ask for permission for the ambassador to go to Gaza," he said. "The same applies to the prime minister."

The Palestinian governing council, which convened a special meeting Sunday night to address the matter, maintained that under the terms of the self-rule accord, the council -- not visitors to the Palestinian autonomous areas -- is obliged to notify Israel through proper channels of any planned diplomatic visits.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Sha'ath displayed his anger at the incident by showing up more than an hour late Monday to sign the accord for extending Palestinian control over several key areas in the West Bank.

Sha'ath described the Israeli action as a big mistake.

The incident constituted a "gross violation of the (self-rule) agreement," said Sha'ath. "I think it will hurt very much the attempt by the

government of Israel to normalize relations with Islamic countries."

A Pakistani official said it was unlikely Bhutto would visit Gaza after what took place.

"The treatment meted out to our ambassador at the border was not very pleasant," he said, "so certainly we don't want the prime minister to face any unpleasant situation at the border."

Some Israeli officials were said to believe the prime minister's line was unnecessarily harsh and that a visit by Bhutto to Gaza would be good for the Palestinians and for the peace process.

Some also suggested that such a visit could benefit Israel and open the way toward diplomatic relations with Pakistan, which has so far rejected Israeli overtures aimed at normalizing relations.

REBUFFED AGAIN: RUSSIAN NATIONALIST REFUSED REQUEST TO ENTER SWITZERLAND

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- In an unprecedented move, the Swiss government has refused to grant an entry visa to Russian ultranationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

"This is the very first time Switzerland refuses to give a visa to such a high-ranking politician," a government spokesman said of the rejection of the request by Zhirinovsky, who last year obtained a visa to enter Switzerland.

Last week, the German Embassy in Moscow refused a visa request for Zhirinovsky to visit Germany next month.

Zhirinovsky, who leads Russia's nationalistic Liberal Democratic Party, has repeatedly made headlines with his anti-Semitic views and his calls to regain the former glory of the Russian empire.

Late last year, Zhirinovsky made waves by entering Austria and staying at an alpine resort with a friend who was a former member of the Nazi SS.

According to the daily newspaper *Le Journal de Geneva*, the Swiss government made the decision because of Zhirinovsky's extreme right-wing views. The paper also stated that the decision by Swiss authorities marks a new direction in the government's attitude toward those who openly espouse racist ideologies.

In September, Switzerland will hold a public referendum on whether to enact legislation that will make it a crime to discriminate against ethnic groups or incite racial hatred.

DIVORCE RATE INCREASING, SAYS TOP RABBI

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- Israel's chief Ashkenazic rabbi has disclosed that the rate of divorce among Jewish couples in Israel is on the rise.

On Sunday, Rabbi Yisrael Lau told a conference in Jerusalem organized by the Ministry for Religious Affairs and the Chief Rabbinate that "people appear to regard marriage as a revolving door through which they enter and leave with ease, making a mockery of Jewish marriage."

"In 1993, the rate of couples divorcing was a quarter of the number of marriages," he said.

Lau said that 5,258 divorces had been registered with the chief rabbinate in 1990, and that this number rose to 5,692 in 1992 and to 6,229 in 1993.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES: PRAGUE JEWISH LEADER TRIES TO ATTRACT YOUNGER GENERATION

By Marta S. Halpert

PRAGUE, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- No business suit, no tie. The president of Prague's Jewish community not only dresses informally, he is informal.

Zeno Dostal, author of 12 books and director of several films, does not want to put on an act as "president."

"I have been a member of the Prague Jewish community for the past 33 years," said Dostal in a recent interview. "I became *primus inter pares* (first among equals in Latin) when I was elected to this position in 1992. So what? I did not change."

But his tasks have changed drastically. As leader of the Jewish community in the Czech capital, Dostal has taken the time from his busy life in the arts to develop social and economic programs for Prague's small Jewish community.

By Dostal's estimate, there are currently 1,350 members of the Prague Jewish community, of which 60 percent are over the age of 65. He puts the total number of Jews in the entire Czech Republic, which includes the states of Bohemia and Moravia, at between 5,000 to 7,000.

"Imagine, more than 35,000 Jews lived in Prague at the outbreak of World War II. At least two-thirds of them perished," Dostal said in a low voice.

He added that half the survivors of the Holocaust emigrated by 1950. Later, under hard-line Communist rule, emigration was virtually impossible.

Dostal noted that much of the current communal work focuses on the needs of the elderly.

"We do here our utmost for the elderly and needy people. We have organized additional hospital beds and special-care units for them. We provide 40 to 60 meals-on-wheels a day," said Dostal, who also served as chairman of the local B'nai B'rith for many years.

But, he noted, efforts are also being directed at younger members of the community.

A Number Of Conversions

He and his team of communal leaders have organized a youth club where 60 to 80 young people meet weekly. There is also a Hebrew-language ulpan that has some 18 students ages 13 to 30. The community has also witnessed a number of conversions.

"We had 19 *giyurim* (conversions), men between 25 and 30, who wanted to become Jews according to *halachah*," or traditional Jewish law, said Dostal.

He also related a story about a 72-year-old man who recently came to Prague's famous Alt-neuschul synagogue -- built in 1270 and still in use today -- and asked the rabbi there to perform his Bar Mitzvah.

As a young Czech boy, the man had left his country to join Britain's Royal Air Force. But he recently returned to his native land to celebrate the Bar Mitzvah he had missed out on -- more than 55 years ago.

Dostal was also proud of a new effort being directed at the youngest members of the community. "This is a very important day for me,"

he said during the course of the interview. "I just received a check with a remarkable sum of money from the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation. We are opening with this money the first Jewish kindergarten in postwar Prague."

Housed on the premises of a state-run kindergarten attended by 150 children, the Ronald S. Lauder Kindergarten, Prague, has three rooms that will serve 12 Jewish children.

"The kids will get Jewish education, and we will also provide them with kosher meals on a daily basis," Dostal said proudly. "But we will try not to isolate our children from the majority there. It will be fruitful for both (Jewish and gentile children) to see their respective traditions and festivals."

The kindergarten was to be inaugurated this week for the new school year, just in time for the children to start learning about the traditions of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The inauguration, Dostal said, will bring him one step closer to fulfilling his dream: creating a young community that will take Jewish life in Prague into the future.

In addition to his communal work, Dostal has also led a fruitful artistic life. During the years of Communist rule, he was unable to publish his books. During those years, Dostal said, "I was working in the coal mines and somewhat later as a theater props manager."

It was only after the weakening of Communist authority that he could harvest the fruits of his literary ambitions and start publishing his books one by one.

Five of his 12 books were published after the "Velvet Revolution" in 1989, when the Communist leadership resigned and the first Cabinet in 41 years without a Communist majority took power.

Dostal has also been active in films. His previous directorial projects have dealt with the fate of the Jewish people during the war years. The film he is currently working on, "Galut (or Exile) in the Valley," deals with Jewish life from 1920 to 1930.

SPIELBERG TO DONATE 'SCHINDLER' PROFITS

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- All of Steven Spielberg's personal profits from his Academy Award-winning film "Schindler's List" will go to the newly established Righteous Persons Foundation.

Creation of the foundation was confirmed by Chris Kelly, Spielberg's spokeswoman, although no formal announcement will be made until Oct. 1, when the foundation director, Margery Tabankin, will begin her job.

Tabankin is a longtime head of the Hollywood Women's Political Committee and served as director of Volunteers in Service to America during the Carter administration.

The foundation's endowment has not been determined, said Kelly, who would not comment on a rumored figure of \$25 million.

One focus of the foundation will be Holocaust education, although its scope is expected to extend to other Jewish causes.

Numerous proposals from Jewish organizations and institutions have already been received, Kelly said.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**REMAINING JEWS IN UKRAINE COUNTRYSIDE TRY TO MEMORIALIZE PAST, BUILD FUTURE**

By Lisa Glazer

BOGUSLAV, Ukraine, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- On the road outside Kiev, the city's stately avenues and river views give way to the dusty paths, sunflower fields and wandering cows of the Ukrainian countryside.

Almost every wooden farm cottage has a hand-drawn water well, and as the cars zip by, an occasional horse-drawn cart clops along beside them at the slower speed of another era.

Many years ago, this region was the heart of the Jewish Pale of Settlement -- the towns were bustling shtetls, and Jewish life alternated between periods of vicious pogroms and thriving creativity.

Yiddish was spoken on the streets. Sholem Aleichem spent time in these parts, and not far away is the birthplace of Israel ben Eliezer, the Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Chasidic Judaism.

Today, after decades of repression and then rapid emigration to Israel, few Jews remain. But those that do are slowly, cautiously, still somewhat fearfully, reclaiming their heritage, even as their numbers dwindle.

Ten of the small towns outside Kiev have newly created Jewish community groups, with one of the most active in Boguslav, home to 247 Jews.

Boris Greenberg, 56, is the leader of Boguslav's Jewish Cultural Association, formed a year ago. A stocky man whose light blue-grey eyes contrast with the deep, nut brown of his leathery skin, he is the town's main keeper of its Jewish past.

"Until the war, 11,000 of the 13,000 people here were Jewish. Everyone spoke Yiddish, even the non-Jews," he said.

And now? Most people speak Russian or Ukrainian. Yiddish is rarely heard.

In a place of so much history -- some of it suppressed, most of it on the verge of being forgotten -- creating memorials and recognizing former Jewish buildings is an exercise in the restoration of truth.

A Closed Shul Served Gestapo, Communists

In the middle of a small juncture in the road is a simple brick and cement building with a new wooden entrance. Once one of Boguslav's four synagogues, it was closed in 1917.

Years later, the building's basement was used as an interrogation cell for the Gestapo during World War II. After the war, the building was turned into a museum for the Pioneer Youth.

Today, the local government is dismantling cherry-red Soviet memorabilia from the building. But even behind the posters and slogans and Lenin plaques, nothing of its Jewish past remains.

A little further outside town is a deep ravine where the Nazis ordered 3,900 Jews to dig their own grave and then killed them.

In 1969, when openly Jewish activity was still dangerous, Greenberg began a memorial to these victims. It took him four years to finish it.

Today it stands, a cleared field and a simple mound of earth the size of a coffin, with a plaque that reads: "Here lie the remains of Jews killed by the fascists in September 1941."

At the Jewish cemetery in another section of

Boguslav, another plaque, this one built by the government, honors the victims of fascism -- but without mentioning exactly who they were.

"Everyone knew it was for the Jews, but they didn't want to write the word," said Greenberg. Near the monument are new graves without Hebrew lettering or Stars of David. "We have anti-Semitism. People are afraid," he said.

Nearby, the old section of the cemetery remains a lopsided tumble of tombstones, some shaped like tree stumps with branches cut to nubs, other resembling crouching lions. They are overgrown with foliage but here, too, Greenberg has been attempting to restore order.

Still, the main task of the Jewish Cultural Association concerns the living, especially the town's many poor and elderly Jews.

On one afternoon, Greenberg brought a holiday food package from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to a couple in a hobbled old wooden home that looks like it emerged straight out of a Marc Chagall painting, lopsided walls and all.

Living On Less Than \$20 A Month

In the main room, Moise Gofeld, 76, lay on his iron bed, his remaining hairs white, his teeth few. His wife, Perel Shmulevony, 73, shuffled across the floor to offer greetings. As pensioners, they receive less than \$20 a month from the government, provoking hardship and fury.

"Bread costs 3,000 coupons (less than 10 cents). What kind of life is that?" rasped Gofeld, who worked all of his life as a shoemaker. "When we were young," he said, "there were four or five synagogues. Now, nothing."

And how was Jewish life under the Soviets? Despite his years, he summoned sarcasm with ease. "Oh, it was very good," he said.

In another home, Aaron Rottenshtein, 70, also lay in bed, alone and ill. His pension barely pays for medicine, and with the recent death of his son, he was tired and sad.

When asked how he lives on his small budget, he explained that he eats only rice and milk. And then he began to cry.

"I can't sleep at night, I am alone, without money, without anything," he said, shaking. Too upset to continue, he got ready to return to bed.

From this difficult encounter, Greenberg traveled on to the new office of the Jewish Cultural Association. Inside the tiny, two-room office was a spectacle of color: Six or seven types of wallpaper decorated the walls, and the ceiling was painted in a colored star pattern.

One room, which had a long table spread with Jewish books, held a gathering of 12 people, including local Jewish activists, the mayor and the Ukraine representative of the JDC, which paid for the renovation of the office. Over lunch, Greenberg said, "Before, a lot of people didn't say they were Jewish. I was never like that."

Greenberg thinks the Jewish communal programs "will continue for three or five years, and then it will be the end. Many Jews are leaving for Israel, and I have the feeling that anti-Semitism will increase."

For all his efforts, the history of Boguslav -- of Ukraine -- remains a heavy stone.

Look closely at the thin concrete rectangles separating the town's sidewalks from its streets: They are cut from Jewish tombstones.