



NEWS AT A GLANCE

JEWISH SERVICES IN CRISIS [Part 3]

Competing for fewer resources: A community weighs priorities

By Cynthia Mann

■ **St. Martin's Press will not publish Holocaust denier David Irving's biography of Nazi leader Joseph Goebbels.** The decision to withdraw the book, which was scheduled to be published in May, came after the publisher received complaints about the author's credentials. [Page 3]

■ **Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres charged that Iran is seeking to bring an end to the peace process by toppling his government through terrorism.** Peres made the comment after disclosing that an Iranian ship loaded with explosives presumably intended for attacks on Israelis and Jews in Europe had been discovered in the port of Antwerp, Belgium. [Page 4]

■ **Two firebombs were hurled at a bus filled with Israelis leaving a right-wing rally in Hebron.** No one claimed responsibility for the attack, which left six people hospitalized with burns.

■ **An attempt by the Israel Defense Force to prevent leaks of sensitive military information to reporters sparked condemnations of the army investigators' methods.** The IDF chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak, acknowledged that military investigators had obtained records of mobile telephone calls between defense reporters and senior army officers. [Page 3]

■ **A recent poll of Palestinian attitudes indicated that 70 percent of the respondents oppose armed attacks against Israelis, while 21 percent support them.** The poll, conducted by the Nablus-based Center for Palestine Research and Studies, showed support for the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas dipping to an all-time low.

■ **Pope John Paul II prayed in his Easter message for a victory of peace over violence in the Middle East.** The pope called on God to "strengthen the artisans of justice and peace" in the Holy Land. [Page 3]

■ **Royal Jordanian Airlines flew its first scheduled flight into Ben-Gurion Airport.** Israeli motorists were allowed to drive private vehicles between Eilat, Israel and Aqaba, Jordan. [Page 4]

CLEVELAND (JTA) — Francine Immerman has a keen sense of her community's competing priorities and the conviction that they will come into sharp conflict when the dust settles from the national budget debate.

The 37-year-old woman has children in a Jewish day school here and a grandmother at Menorah Park Center for the Aging. Both institutions receive some funding from the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland.

Immerman is also active in the United Jewish Appeal campaigns for Israel. As the secretary-treasurer of the Government Affairs Committee of Ohio Jewish Communities, the liaison between federations and government, Immerman is more sensitive than most to the likely impact of looming federal budget cuts.

Indeed, she says she is girding for the "hard decisions" the cuts will force the community to make.

The cuts are expected to reduce the flow of money to Cleveland's 19 federation-supported social service agencies and schools, which receive a hefty 27 percent of their budgets, on average, from government sources.

They could hurt the most vulnerable populations — the elderly, the poor and refugees — while intensifying the demand on already-strained local resources.

While Cleveland's federation historically is a national leader in per capita giving, its Jewish Welfare Fund is in the midst of its fourth consecutive flat annual campaign, this year raising \$24.5 million, a mere \$605 more than the previous year.

The other source of the fund's revenue, the United Way, is also decreasing its allocation due to its own sluggish campaign.

National experts say looking at Cleveland helps other communities better understand the challenges they face.

"Cleveland has a very established Jewish community with a strong identity, a sophisticated social service network and a tradition of involvement on all levels," said Diana Aviv, director of the Washington office of the Council of Jewish Federations. "Given its record, it is one of the federations others look to consider how they should handle problems," she said.

Cuts will force sharp reckoning

The cuts in Cleveland will force a sharp reckoning with what matters most to the community. It may well pit allies of local social service agencies against advocates of Israel and against champions of Jewish continuity who want to protect funding for day schools at all costs.

"I don't think federations will ever be out of the business of local service needs because that's why they came into being 100 years ago," Immerman said, noting that they will, however, need to refocus and decide which services are essential.

At the same time, she said, emphasizing Jewish continuity is the only way to ensure there will be strong communities able to meet local service needs and to inject meaning and content into Jewish life.

"The mission of the Jewish community is not [only] to survive, it's to thrive and flourish. If we pass down bricks and mortar but can't explain what it means, then what's the point?"

Immerman said she expects the re-examination of priorities to result in "some shift" in the distribution of funds overseas.

But she said she did not believe that Cleveland will decrease its allocation significantly because of its "deep commitment to overseas needs."

"We can't ever forsake our connection to the State of Israel," she said. "Without it, we lose a key element of Judaism" that has "united us for more than 2,000 years in the Diaspora."

Two years ago, Cleveland changed its formula for dividing funds between Israel and local needs. The change, first implemented in fiscal 1995's budget, resulted in a cut that year of more than \$700,000 to Israel. The local agencies also are already feeling the fiscal pressures.

In its 1995-1996 budget, the federation enacted a 1.8 percent cut to agencies across the board. Executive Vice President Steven Hoffman insists

that this was a onetime measure. In the future, he said, "we will have to introduce some sense of priorities into where to put our dollars."

The absence of precise budget numbers from Washington makes it more difficult for Hoffman and his federation to formulate a strategic action plan to guide the allocations process.

"We can't make a plan if we don't know what's coming," said Hoffman.

Sitting in his office in the heart of downtown Cleveland, he likened the current atmosphere to one that precedes a military battle.

"The mood is something like it was in the United States on the eve of the Gulf War," he said. "We are trying to gather our intelligence to learn what we're up against and position our forces to prepare for what's going to come. We know it's going to be painful, but we will have to wait for things to start."

Michael Siegal, chairman of the federation's budget committee, believes that it is critical to establish "a priority scale" because a sustained policy of across-the-board cuts would ultimately jeopardize all the agencies.

The community must determine, "Is education a priority or is it widows and orphans?"

Setting priorities is a task that has been assigned to a federation strategic planning committee, which has met a few times in recent months. A Jewish educator was brought in recently to help members with "values clarification" to determine "what our Jewish tradition tells us about priorities," Hoffman said.

When it comes to assessing the priority of each of the social service agencies, Hoffman said the committee expects to develop certain criteria.

He said questions that might be asked include, "Can this [service] be provided by the general community" or must the Jewish community provide it? "Are there a lot of Jews at risk" if this service is not provided by the Jewish community? "Does the provision of this service help the community to maintain its cohesion?"

Some of these questions demand immediate answers. For one, the community must decide how much slack to pick up with the end of the United Jewish Appeal's special Operation Exodus campaign to help resettle refugees, mostly from the former Soviet Union.

Lower funds, but the needs continue

Cleveland funneled close to \$600,000 to programs to help refugees acquire housing, work, English and other tools needed to survive in a new land. That will virtually dry up in June even though the need continues.

So far, the federation's executive committee has recommended to the board that current levels of aid to refugees be maintained, Hoffman said.

The Jewish Family Services Association here has helped resettle 5,300 refugees between 1989 and 1995.

Irene Marocco, director of resettlement at the agency, said the number of "free cases" — those who come without family sponsorship and are supported entirely by the community — will be capped.

Yelena Tamarov, 34, and her family arrived in September as one such case from Tashkent, Uzbekistan, driven out by interethnic tensions.

Using her caseworker, Galina Slobodkin, as a translator, she said the resettlement program had made all the difference in the world.

"They helped us with everything, with all our problems, so we didn't feel like outsiders. We feel at home," Tamarov said. "They met us at the airport, brought us to an apartment, gave us food and gave us money."

When asked what she would have done without the

help, she opened her blue eyes wide, as if unable to imagine the prospect. "I don't know," she said, then laughed with relief.

Meanwhile, expected reductions in Medicare spending increases and Medicaid cuts would hit especially hard here.

Jewish institutions in Ohio now get \$45 million in Medicaid for the impoverished frail elderly.

Nursing home administrators here say that with 75 percent of their patients dependent on Medicaid, their nursing care, food quality and recreational, social and religious programming are likely to be scaled back.

The Mayfield Jewish Community Center is girding for cuts in daytime programming for seniors.

"We've already had to prioritize our services to reach greater numbers," said Carol Kranitz, the center's director.

Already, the days end at 3 p.m. instead of 5 p.m., when they used to, and a popular program on medication misuse is slated for elimination.

In the dining room on a recent afternoon sat Leah Lavitsky, originally from Odessa, who said she has been coming to the center for 15 years.

"I come because I don't have another choice," she said, above the enthusiastic sounds of choir practice.

Otherwise, "I sit home alone every day. I like the swimming pool and sometimes they have programs. Sometimes, the meals are not so good, but I don't care," she said with a smile.

"The best lunch is Friday," chimed in Esther Gelman, who said she has come to the center every day for 11 years to swim and sing in the choir.

It is Gelman's routine and that of countless others which hangs in the balance as the historic debate unfolds in Washington on social policy and the role of the federal government. □

Jewish charitable mission evolved

By Cynthia Mann

NEW YORK (JTA) — Local Jewish federations were established at the end of the last century to support health, welfare, job training and educational services for Jewish immigrants, the Jewish poor and the Jewish orphaned.

But that mission broadened over time as Jewish agencies began taking money from the government and expanded their programs to serve people on a nonsectarian basis.

During the Depression, the federal government supplanted much of the Jewish community's anti-poverty efforts with massive cash relief programs.

Then, in the 1960s, a new pattern of partnership was established when the federation-sponsored human service agencies "turned to the federal pot" in a more systematic way, said Gerald Bubis, founding director of the School of Jewish Communal Services of Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles.

When new government money became available to nonprofits, Jews had the social service infrastructure as well as the "entrepreneurs" to take advantage of it, said Harvey Newman, executive director of health and human services of UJA-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York.

"We were positioned to take and use the money more efficiently," he said.

Taking federal money, of course, meant that services had to be available to all who sought it, regardless of race or religion.

These new requirements broadened the federations' mission in a fundamental way.

Responding to public outcry, publisher cancels denier's book

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — In response to an enormous outcry from Jewish groups and individuals as well as from staff members within the publishing house itself, St. Martin's Press has decided not to publish Holocaust denier David Irving's biography of Nazi Joseph Goebbels.

Irving, a British citizen who was formally denounced by England's House of Commons as an apologist for Hitler in 1989, has vowed to circulate his book, "Goebbels: Mastermind of the Third Reich," on the Internet.

Goebbels, Hitler's minister of propaganda, was one of the central architects of the Nazis' "Final Solution" to destroy the Jews.

The decision to withdraw the book, which was scheduled to be published in May, came after St. Martin's received about 25 phone calls and several letters about the Irving book, according to company spokesman John Murphy.

Irving has appeared as a guest lecturer at the annual conference of the Institute for Historical Review, a group which denies the magnitude of the Holocaust.

The Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee were among those who wrote to the publisher.

"Surely you must know that Mr. Irving is a well-known Holocaust denier and an apologist for the Nazi regime," wrote ADL National Director Abraham Foxman, in a letter dated March 22.

"A pseudo-scholar, he has no academic credentials as a historian and his writings on Hitler, Nazis and the Holocaust have been consistently shown to be replete with errors, oversights, poor research and fantasy."

St. Martin's officials initially responded to the critics by comparing efforts to stop Irving's book from being published to Nazi and fascist censorship.

"At first hearing the policy and tactics of certain callers — researching an author's background for reasons to blacklist his foreground — seemed characteristic of Goebbels himself, of Joseph McCarthy, and of every quasi-totalitarian extremity in politics, religion and ethnic bigotry," Thomas McCormack, chairman and editorial director of St. Martin's Press, said in a statement announcing cancellation of the book.

The calls, however, prompted St. Martin's to investigate Irving's credentials and associations and to call what Murphy described as an "unprecedented" staff meeting in which a majority of staffers made it clear that the book should be withdrawn.

Publisher admits 'mistake'

After McCormack personally read the 700-page book, and checked out Holocaust denial sites on the Internet, including a David Irving "home page" on the World Wide Web, he decided to cancel publication.

"St. Martin's made a mistake, and there is no worse way to compound a mistake than by not admitting it and not correcting it if you can," said McCormack in his statement issued April 3.

In announcing the cancellation, McCormack was widely quoted as saying, "My whole family is Jewish."

McCormack's wife and two children are Jewish, and he considers himself Jewish "for all intents and purposes" though he has not formally converted, said Murphy, the publishing house spokesman.

The publisher's initial response "was offensive and off the wall," Foxman said of the ADL. "They were defending Irving without knowing the facts."

After the cancellation, he said: "Good judgement is better late than never."

Irving's book was slammed in a pre-publication review in the trade journal Publishers Weekly. Saying the book contained the "language of camouflaged admiration," the review termed it "repellent," and said there was "an agenda to Irving's documentation."

St. Martin's Press is not the first company to treat Irving as a credible expert, said Kenneth Stern, a specialist on anti-Semitism and extremism at the American Jewish Committee. Irving is invited to speak on radio programs occasionally, and in 1992, the Sunday Times of London hired him to translate Goebbels' diaries, Stern said.

"Sometimes people aren't aware of what he's about and will treat him as a historian rather than someone falsifying history for an anti-Semitic agenda," said Stern. "David Irving has gotten a free ride for a long time." □

Pope prays for peace in Israel

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — In an Easter message broadcast live by television to 65 countries, Pope John Paul II prayed for a victory of peace over violence in the Middle East and elsewhere.

He spoke following an open-air Easter Sunday mass celebrated before more than 100,000 people in St. Peter's Square.

The pope called on God to "strengthen the artisans of justice and peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Ireland, and in the Middle East, and particularly in the Holy Land, where hopes for peaceful coexistence are still jeopardized by recourse to force and violence."

During the mass, he referred to Jews as "our older brothers" and prayed that God make them "intrepid promoters of freedom and peace." □

Military investigators chided for methods of plugging leaks

By David Landau

TEL AVIV (JTA) — An attempt by the Israel Defense Force to prevent leaks of sensitive military information to reporters has sparked condemnations of the investigators' methods.

The IDF chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak, acknowledged Monday that military investigators had obtained records of mobile telephone calls between defense reporters and senior army officers.

Shahak said in a television interview designed to defuse a burgeoning debate over the issue that the investigators had been "mistaken" in the manner in which they attempted to plug the leaks.

But he stressed that the investigators had been within their legal rights to obtain the telephone records, adding that they had procured a court order from a Tel Aviv magistrate.

Nevertheless, the investigators had been wrong not to consult with more senior officers within the army before applying for the court order, Shahak said.

He said he would have forbidden the move had the tactic been brought to his attention.

The disclosure of the episode in the local press Sunday triggered an outpouring of condemnation from the left and center of the political spectrum, as well as from the academic community and the media.

The head of the Press Council, former Justice Minister Haim Zadok, issued a strong protest, arguing that the army's action infringed upon the journalists' rights as private citizens and their ability to conduct their professional business unimpeded. □

Peres charges Iran seeks to topple his government

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres has charged that Iran is seeking to topple his government and thereby bring an end to the peace process.

Peres made the comment Sunday before the Labor Party's Central Committee after disclosing that an Iranian ship loaded with explosives and presumably intended for attacks on Israelis and Jews in Europe had been discovered in the port of Antwerp, Belgium.

The disguised shipment, which was being sent to an Iranian food importer in Munich, had only been discovered by chance, Peres said, adding that the Iranian plan could have succeeded.

"They are doing whatever they can to bring an end to peace and bring an end to the government that goes for peace," Peres told the Central Committee.

This was not the first time Peres said that Islamic militants wanted Labor to lose the May 29 national election.

The Likud opposition voiced sharp criticism when Peres recently said that the wave of Hamas suicide attacks in Israel in late February and early March were aimed at bringing to power a Likud government that would be more hardline in its approach to the peace process.

Likud officials responded in a statement to the remarks made by Peres on Sunday with the charge that the prime minister had given up seeking the Israeli public's confidence in his party and instead felt obliged to "recruit all of Israel's enemies to convince the public why it shouldn't vote for the Likud.

"Had the Likud made similar comments on Peres, he would have complained of incitement against him," said the Likud statement. "Too bad he needs such wretched allies to convince the public to support him."

Iran reacted to the Hamas suicide bombings by calling them "divine retribution" to the Jewish state. The Tehran government later backed off from the statement after coming under criticism from Western countries.

E.U. fails in mission to Tehran

In a related development, a delegation from the European Union failed to convince Iran to condemn terrorism during talks last week in Tehran.

The E.U. delegation, which included the deputy foreign ministers of Italy, Spain and Ireland, traveled to Tehran to tell the Iranian government that the future of Iran's continued dialogue with Europe depended on its firm condemnation of terrorism.

"We asked Iran not to take ambiguous positions on the bomb attacks in Israel that could encourage speculation that Iran backs terrorism," the delegation was quoted as saying.

But Iranian officials stood firm, denying that the Palestinian militants' fight against Israel amounted to terror. The officials, who have been accused by Israel of financing and arming the Hamas terrorists who carried out the bombings, also repeated Iran's rejection of the Mideast peace process as "unjust to the Palestinians."

The 15 member states of the European Union, many of whom maintain trade links with Iran, have come under pressure from the United States and Israel to isolate Iran as a rogue state.

But the European Union has resisted these pressures, preferring to maintain what it calls its "critical dialogue" with Iran in hopes of getting the Islamic Republic to support the Middle East peace process.

The failure of the E.U. mission in Tehran may lead the organization to reconsider its stance.

The mission is scheduled to report on its trip to Iran during an April 22 meeting of the E.U. foreign ministers in Luxembourg.

At that time, the foreign ministers "will verify the usefulness of proceeding with the critical dialogue with Iran," according to a European diplomatic source. □

(JTA correspondent Joseph Kopel in Brussels contributed to this report.)

Begin's son asserts Sharon had secret plan to take Beirut

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A public debate has erupted in Israel over whether the late Prime Minister Menachem Begin had been aware of then-Defense Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to bring the Israeli army to Beirut as part of the 1982 Operation Peace for Galilee.

Likud Knesset member Ze'ev "Benny" Begin, son of the late prime minister, submitted an affidavit last week that his father was not aware at the time of the incursion into Lebanon of his defense minister's plans.

The affidavit was submitted to the Tel Aviv District Court as evidence in a libel case brought by Sharon against the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, which asserted in a 1991 article that Menachem Begin was unaware of Sharon's intentions.

Sharon, now a Likud Knesset member, brought the libel suit charging that the Ha'aretz report was false.

In his affidavit, Benny Begin said his father did not know of the plan until he read a lecture given by Sharon on August 14, 1987, in which he stated that the operation in Lebanon was planned from the start to reach Beirut.

"I did my utmost to avoid submitting the affidavit, but like every other citizen, I must honor the court's ruling," Begin was quoted as saying.

Israel launched an invasion of Lebanon on June 6, 1982, to destroy bases of the Palestine Liberation Organization and to stop attacks across its northern border.

The Israel Defense Force laid siege to PLO positions in Beirut by the end of the month, but withdrew in August after U.S. mediation efforts.

Israel reoccupied Beirut in September of that year, after which it authorized local Christian militias to round up any remaining PLO fighters from Palestinian refugee camps. The subsequent massacres in the Sabra and Shatilla camps drew worldwide condemnation and sparked Israeli anti-war protests.

Israel later began a phased withdrawal from Lebanon, but left some 1,000 troops behind to patrol a nine mile-wide "security zone" in southern Lebanon. □

Jordan airline begins flights to Israel

By David Landau

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Royal Jordanian Airlines this week flew its first scheduled flight into Ben-Gurion Airport.

In another step also taken Sunday toward full normalization of ties between Israel and Jordan, Israeli motorists were allowed to drive private vehicles across the Arava Terminal between Eilat and Aqaba.

Both steps were called for under the terms of the two countries' historic October 26, 1994, peace treaty.

The first day at the Arava terminal was sluggish, with motorists tending to turn back rather than pay a whopping \$200 fee for the bureaucratic and insurance arrangements required in order to cross the border.

The next normalization step, postponed until later this month, will be a frequent bus connection between Eilat and Aqaba. The fare: \$1.50. □