

**NEWS AT A GLANCE**

■ Israel welcomed the decision by a federal judge that Hamas political leader Musa Abu Marzook could be extradited to Israel because there was reasonable cause to believe he was linked to a Hamas conspiracy to commit violence. [Page 3]

■ Israeli officials rejected a U.N. report that said it was unlikely that procedural errors had played a part in the Israeli shelling last month of a U.N. base in Lebanon. Some Jewish officials dismissed it as U.N. politics as usual. [Page 2]

■ Marge Schott, the owner of the Cincinnati Reds, offered an apology after she made laudatory remarks about Adolf Hitler during a television interview. The acting baseball commissioner, Bud Selig, nonetheless left open the possibility that disciplinary action would be taken against Schott. [Page 3]

■ Former SS Capt. Erich Priebke went before a Rome military court to face charges of involvement in Italy's worst Nazi atrocity, in the Ardeatine Caves south of Rome. Priebke, 83, maintains he was just following orders.

■ European officials complained that the United States is playing too large a role in the Middle East peace process. [Page 4]

■ The Palestinian Council convened in the Gaza Strip for a two-day session with Yasser Arafat presiding. The 88 members of the council, who were elected to the legislative body in January, heard reports from committees dealing with the future status of Jerusalem and Jewish settlements.

■ The end of World War II in Europe was marked in Israel for the first time in the 51 years since the Allied victory over the Nazis.

■ An anti-Semitic demonstration by Muslim fundamentalists outside the Israeli Consulate in Cape Town turned violent. When police attempted to control the 500 protesters, they were attacked with stones, bricks and iron rods. [Page 4]

**NJCRAC looks to its future after compromise with agencies**

By Cynthia Mann

NEW YORK (JTA) — A new compromise plan for the future of the Jewish communal world's national public affairs body has averted a rupture in relations between its local and national member agencies.

The National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council has issued a strategic plan that it claims will make it a stronger and more responsive coordinator of public policy for its 117 local community relations council members.

The most important change is that NJCRAC for the first time will have a presence in the nation's capital, although its role will be severely limited.

In fact, the new plan's overall vision of NJCRAC falls far short of the aspirations its leaders originally had outlined for the organization.

It reflects a series of concessions to NJCRAC's 13 national agency members after a power tussle that included threats by the most influential that they would walk away.

For his part, Phil Baum, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, one of the national agencies, hailed the compromise.

With it, "NJCRAC has preserved its relationships with the national agencies," he said. Without it, "there was every likelihood there would be a dissolution of NJCRAC as we know it," he said, adding, "It is very gratifying that a resolution of our differences was achieved."

The Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress, in particular, had claimed that the earlier plan had pushed NJCRAC beyond its mandate, which they said was to help coordinate consensus on major policy issues of the day.

They held that turning NJCRAC into a "full-service" agency would clutter an already crowded public policy field.

They especially railed against the prospect of competition and duplication posed by a separate NJCRAC office in Washington.

The defense agencies also balked at a radical proposal for federations to funnel the roughly \$3 million they now give to national agencies into a central funding pool overseen by NJCRAC for public policy projects.

For their part, NJCRAC leaders maintained that as times have changed, the needs of local councils have changed, and NJCRAC would become irrelevant if it did not become more activist and provide them with more help in the public policy arena.

**NJCRAC presence in Washington**

Intensive behind-the-scenes negotiations culminated in a recently formalized agreement between NJCRAC and the three defense agencies and the subsequent issue of the new plan. NJCRAC will convene a special plenary session next month to approve the plan.

The most important victory for the local councils is the plan's provision for a NJCRAC presence in Washington. Another is the elimination of the veto power previously enjoyed by the national member agencies over any NJCRAC position statement with which they disagreed.

Many local councils believed that such a veto had long loomed as an unjust power imbalance in favor of the national agencies. The plan takes pains, however, to provide for "exemptions" to policy statements based on religious convictions, which will apply only to denominational bodies. This was clearly meant to keep within the fold the Orthodox Union, which had strongly protested any plans to eliminate the veto.

Despite such concessions, however, Lawrence Rubin, NJCRAC's executive vice chairman, lauded the plan as "a road map" to "develop NJCRAC as a more effective and responsive public affairs mechanism" going into the next century.

The compromise, he added, reflects "the habit of the community to come together at the end of the day to look for a consensus."

The sensitivity in reaching a consensus is reflected plainly in the "memo of understanding" with the three defense agencies, particularly on the issue of a NJCRAC role in Washington. The memo calls this "clearly the most difficult issue for us to agree upon." It pledges to limit NJCRAC's

presence so it "complements, does not compete with, the ongoing Washington operations of the national agencies." That includes tight restrictions on NJCRAC's activities on Capitol Hill.

"We will maintain a presence in Washington which will include not more than a single professional and clerical support staff, to be housed in the existing Washington office of one of our member agencies or of the CJF," the Council of Jewish Federations.

Federations fund the lion's share of NJCRAC's budget.

NJCRAC also pledged to continue to initiate any request to the field for action from the New York office and "would not attempt to substitute itself for the defense agencies as a definitive address for the organized Jewish community."

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, called the plan "a constructive compromise" and said both it and the agreement reflected "an element of respect for each other's roles, prerogatives and responsibilities."

"No one wanted to see the agencies walk" and "everyone wanted to see NJCRAC strengthened," Rubin said.

The understanding "lifted everyone's comfort level." □

## **Officials downplay report on Israel's shelling of U.N. base**

*By Cynthia Mann*

NEW YORK (JTA) — The United Nations' challenge to Israel's claim that its shelling of a U.N. compound in southern Lebanon was accidental is being downplayed by Israeli and Jewish officials as U.N. politics as usual.

Privately, however, some say that the incident is a setback to Israel's international posture. But they believe it is unlikely to inflict long-term damage on the Middle East peace process.

Israel has claimed that its April 18 shelling of the U.N. base at Kana, which killed at least 91 civilians taking refuge there, was a mistake.

The shelling came amid Operation Grapes of Wrath, Israel's military campaign to stop Hezbollah from firing Katyusha rockets into northern Israel. A U.S.-brokered cease-fire was reached April 26.

Israeli officials said they were responding to fire from Hezbollah fighters a few hundred yards from the base and hit the camp as a result of a series of technical errors and miscalculations.

A U.N. report finalized Tuesday challenged Israel's account, though it fell short of preliminary findings that the attack was deliberate.

Said the report: "While the possibility cannot be ruled out completely, it is unlikely that the shelling of the United Nations compound was the result of gross technical and/or procedural errors."

The report was compiled by Maj. Gen. Frank van Kappen of the Netherlands, an adviser to Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Israel's Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, who is currently in the United States, reportedly phoned Boutros-Ghali, and termed the findings of the U.N. report "absurd."

Israel's top diplomat at the United Nations also rejected the report and protested its conclusions Wednesday at a meeting with the head of the U.N.'s peacekeeping operations.

"The findings on the ground are inconclusive and we therefore cannot accept the unequivocal determination

of the U.N. that the firing at the U.N. base was intentional," Ambassador David Peleg said in a statement.

"By no means was it our intention to injure people under U.N. protection."

Harris Schoenberg, director of U.N. affairs for the B'nai B'rith Center for Public Policy, said the report reflects ongoing bias against Israel at the United Nations.

The United Nations "has not been what it was intended to be — a place of harmony. Instead, it's been an arena for political warfare, and that's what's happening here."

But, he added, "the central problem" is making sure "this most unfortunate incident won't interfere with a successful conclusion of the peace process."

The U.N. report does not address whether Israel knew that there were civilians at the base, which Israeli officials deny. The Israelis say the United Nations peacekeeping force would not fulfill their requests for information about where civilians were located during Israel's operation in Lebanon.

But the notion that Israel would deliberately attack civilians was met with disbelief.

"Anyone who knows Israel's rules of engagement knows Israel has taken great pains and paid dearly for a strict policy to avoid civilian casualties and the same thing is true here," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Meanwhile, the Israelis have complained bitterly that Hezbollah operatives had been taking shelter at the U.N. bases between their rounds of rocket attacks against Israel, and that U.N. forces did nothing to stop the attacks, despite repeated Israeli requests.

The U.N. report acknowledges that Hezbollah took cover at the bases of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Israeli officials suggested that this acknowledgment as well as the full report could be damaging.

"There is no doubt that the report will affect the future cooperation between Israel and the U.N.'s Department of Peacekeeping Operations," Peleg said, "as well as the relations between Israel and UNIFIL."

## **Intense U.S. opposition**

The final report's softened stance apparently was a reflection of the briefing of peacekeepers at the United Nations this week by the Israeli artillery commander.

It also appeared to be a product of intense U.S. opposition to the U.N. findings.

Peleg, however, protested that U.N. officials drew their conclusions prior to receiving the account from the Israeli commander.

The United States expressed concern over the report.

While a statement from its U.N. mission called Kana "a terrible tragedy," it said Israel "has made it very clear the shelling was not intentional." It is "our view that we should build on those understandings" reached in the cease-fire, said the statement.

This is why Ambassador Madeleine Albright was "so disturbed that the secretary general chose to draw unjustified conclusions about this incident that can only divide and polarize the environment rather than drawing practical lessons that could prevent such a tragedy from occurring again," the statement said.

Hoenlein said he did not believe there would be long-term ramifications.

"People who are looking for an opportunity to do so will exploit this," while "fair people will look more carefully at the evidence and conclude this was not deliberate," he said. □

## U.S. District Court clears way for Hamas leader's extradition

By Cynthia Mann

NEW YORK (JTA) — Israel has welcomed a federal judge's ruling that a leader of Hamas can be extradited to Israel because there is reasonable cause to believe he is linked to a Hamas conspiracy to commit violence.

"There is more than sufficient evidence to show that Musa Abu Marzook was a member of the conspiracy known as Hamas and that the acts charged against him were foreseeable consequences of the conspiracy," wrote U.S. District Court Judge Kevin Duffy.

Gideon Mark, spokesman for the Israeli Consulate in New York said, "We welcome the decision which proves again that the material we supplied in our request for extradition was well-established information."

While an appeal by Marzook is expected, the judge's decision "is an important step in the cooperation" between the United States and Israel "in the fight against terrorism," said Mark.

A Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip reportedly called the ruling a "criminal act."

Duffy ordered that Marzook be held in a New York federal prison until he is turned over to Israeli authorities. Marzook was arrested last July as he tried to enter the United States, where he had been living for several years.

Israel requested the extradition, charging that the 45-year-old engaged in a conspiracy to commit murder and other crimes against Israelis and has raised money for the military wing of Hamas.

"Marzook is responsible for atrocities and crimes perpetrated against our population and we would like to try him and sentence him for these crimes," Israel's ambassador to the United States, Itamar Rabinovich, said in March.

U.S. prosecutors also have charged that Marzook raised money for arms for Hamas and recruited terrorists.

Marzook has described himself as the head of the political bureau of Hamas and has denied he raised money in the United States to send abroad.

He also has denied that Hamas has any organized activity in the United States.

"Hamas' only structure is inside Palestine," he told *The New York Times* recently. "There is no organization outside." □

## Cincinnati Reds owner's praise of Hitler rankles Jewish groups

By Marilyn H. Karfeld  
*Cleveland Jewish News*

CLEVELAND (JTA) — How many times can Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott continue to throw spitballs before the fans cry foul?

With any luck, this will be the last time.

Pressured by Major League Baseball officials, Schott has apologized belatedly for her latest remarks praising Adolf Hitler's early efforts at revitalizing Germany.

Acting Commissioner Bud Selig, who is Jewish and the owner of the Milwaukee Brewers, did not discipline Schott but reportedly said he would continue to monitor the situation.

Calling for Schott to sell the baseball team or be suspended were among the Jewish reactions to Schott's latest comments.

"Everything you read, when he [Hitler] came in, he was good," said Schott in an interview aired by ESPN Sunday night. "They built tremendous highways and got

all the factories going. He went nuts, he went berserk. I think his own generals tried to kill him, didn't they? Everybody knows he was good at the beginning but he just went too far."

ESPN interviewer Sal Paolantonio had asked Schott about a swastika she still keeps in her house. The Reds owner discussed the swastika in a November 1992 interview published in *The New York Times*, and said family members of hers in Germany had suffered during World War II.

At that time she also said Hitler was initially good for Germany but went too far.

"The community is pretty upset," said Aubrey Herman, executive vice president of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, in an interview prior to Schott's apology.

Michael Rapp, executive director of Cincinnati's Jewish Community Relations Council, called the remarks "outrageous."

"I am personally appalled, but of all of Marge Schott's strengths, sensitivity to intergroup relations or knowledge of European history has never been among them," Rapp said.

A fan boycott or forcing Schott to sell the team are not realistic responses, said Rapp. "Fans didn't boycott three years ago when she made remarks about Japanese and blacks. By and large, boycotts don't work. And there's no way you can force her to sell the team."

Symbolic achievements like yelling and screaming and picketing may make people feel better, but at the end of the day, there is no real change, Rapp added.

The American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League issued statements calling on the acting baseball commissioner and other baseball team owners to take action against Schott.

But Rapp said such statements from national Jewish organizations which do not have offices in Cincinnati "are public relations gimmicks and headline grabbers.

"They might play well in New York where their contributors might be."

### 'An affront to common decency'

Community relations for the Jewish community of Cincinnati must be determined by Jews who live along the Ohio River, not the East River, said Rapp.

"I want an unequivocal public apology to the Jewish community, an acknowledgment that what she said was wrong, hateful and hurtful, and a declaration that she won't repeat this sort of bigotry again."

In her apology Tuesday for "offending many people," Schott did not mention Jews and the Holocaust.

In February 1993, Major League Baseball's Executive Council suspended Schott for one year and fined her \$25,000 because her repeated ethnic and racial slurs brought "disrepute and embarrassment to the sport."

Another suspension would be "pointless because she will return as unrepentant as ever," said Phil Baum, AJCongress' executive director, in a statement. Selig "should put together a committee at once to find a buyer for the team who would make Schott an offer she can't possibly refuse and get her out of baseball's executive suites."

Alva "Ted" Bonda, majority owner of the Cleveland Indians from 1972 to 1978, said, "I don't see how this can be tolerated."

While he thinks Major League Baseball should suspend Schott, Bonda does not know if it can force her out of the business.

Schott's outrageous and insensitive behavior during the last six weeks "has been an affront to common decency," said Tom Sudow, host of local radio show "Sports Talk for Kids." □

**Schindler's widow criticized for book attacking husband***By Tom Tugend*

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — The three men most responsible for bringing the story of Oskar Schindler, the flawed hero of "Schindler's List," to world attention have taken strong issue with Emilie Schindler's outspoken attack on her late husband.

In her book, "Memoirs," written in Spanish and published last month in Argentina, the 88-year-old widow describes her husband as a non-stop womanizer and a "selfish coward," who saved 1,300 Jews working in his factory solely for their cheap labor and to avoid being drafted into the German army if he ceased to be an industrialist.

At a news conference in Buenos Aires, Schindler also attacked Thomas Keneally, who wrote "Schindler's List," and Steven Spielberg, who turned the book into an Academy Award-winning movie.

She charged that the book was "packed with lies" and that the movie "idealized" her husband's role in protecting Jews, while underplaying her own contribution.

The strongest rebuttal to these charges comes from Los Angeles businessman Leopold Page who, as the young Polish Jew Leopold (Poldek) Pfefferberg, worked for Oskar Schindler from 1939 to 1945. It was Page who first told the Schindler story to Keneally and persuaded him to write the book.

Page terms Schindler's remarks "a disgrace to the memory of one of the true heroes of the century" and vouches for the accuracy of both the book and the movie.

He acknowledged the widow's own heroism in nursing frozen and starved prisoners back to health, but said she only appeared on the scene during the last six months of the war, while her husband protected his Jewish employees for almost six years.

Spielberg expressed his perplexity that "three years after publicly supporting [and praising] the film and its contents at numerous public events, Emilie Schindler has chosen to reverse herself with recent public statements to promote her book."

The most serious criticism she leveled at him in private conversations, said Spielberg, was that her husband had many more extramarital affairs than shown in the film.

Spielberg acknowledged that some of the scenes portraying her care of prisoners were cut to keep the movie at a manageable length. However, "the most important fact is that [Oskar] Schindler saved over 1,300 lives and made it possible for them to survive, and for 6,000 members of their families to be alive today," Spielberg said.

Author Keneally said Schindler's statements that her husband was opportunistic and selfish, that he wanted Jewish labor for its cheapness, and that he was an appalling husband "are the very arguments of the book and the film.

"Mixed motives were the mainspring of our personal fascination with Oskar, and ultimately of the public's fascination with him."

Oskar Schindler was declared a Righteous Gentile by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem in 1962, and Emilie Schindler, who lives in Argentina, received the same recognition in 1994. □

**European leaders troubled by U.S. role in peace process***By Joseph Kopel*

BRUSSELS (JTA) — European officials, feeling shut out of the Middle East peace process, are complaining about the role of the United States in that region.

Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli, whose

country currently holds the rotating presidency of the 15-member European Union, said Sunday in Jordan that the European Union should play a larger role in seeking a lasting Middle East peace because it is more familiar than the United States with the realities of the region.

Her remarks came during a visit to the Middle East this week by a delegation of European foreign ministers.

The visit occurred just weeks after several European officials had unsuccessfully joined efforts to broker a cease-fire agreement between Israel, Syria and Lebanon. At the request of Israel, the United States became the sole player involved in concluding a deal.

"The role of the Europeans is different from the role of the Americans because as Mediterraneans, we feel ourselves close to the peoples of the region and there are a lot of questions that we do understand better than the Americans," Agnelli said.

Agnelli said during a visit earlier on Sunday to Egypt that President Hosni Mubarak had complained that the United States was too biased toward Israel to play the role of an honest broker in the Middle East.

She said Mubarak had expressed "a feeling of injustice" in the region because "there has been too much bending towards Israel" by the United States. □

**South African Muslims riot at Israeli Consulate protest***By Suzanne Belling*

JOHANNESBURG (JTA) — An anti-Semitic demonstration by Muslim fundamentalists outside the Israeli Consulate in Cape Town turned violent when police, attempting to control the 500 protestors, were attacked with stones, bricks and iron rods.

Israeli flags, set afire by the demonstrators, were also hurled at police.

At least nine people were injured in last week's demonstration, which the organizers, the Islamic Unity Convention, claim was "against Israeli aggression." Police responded by opening fire with rubber bullets and birdshot.

The protest followed a demonstration by a group of Muslim fundamentalists on April 16, when Jews around the world marked Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The demonstrators, carrying anti-Israel posters, confronted Jews attending a memorial service for the 6 million victims of the Holocaust at a cemetery in Cape Town. There was a strong police presence at this protest, and there were no incidents of violence.

Parliamentarian Tony Leon, leader of the Democratic Party and himself a victim of anti-Semitism during a recent strike by the Congress of South African Trade Unions, cited the recent activities of Islamic fundamentalists as part of a growing trend here of militancy by many groups.

"It is being articulated in a very ugly and offensive way, particularly as far as the Jews are concerned," he said, adding that it was important to take a stand on these issues and intervene where necessary.

Leon was assaulted during the strike, during which demonstrators bore posters proclaiming "Tony Leon Has an Illegal Nose" and "Leon is an Illegal Immigrant."

Mervyn Smith, national president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, reacted sharply to the anti-Semitic protests, characterizing them as "a show of aggression which gets the anger and the resistance of the Jews of South Africa up as well."

But Smith downplayed the strength of the demonstrators, saying they had "minuscule support" within the local Muslim community. He added that the majority of Muslims living here were peace-loving and did not support the militant Hezbollah or Hamas movements. □