

## No Limits?

It's time to take another look at Joseph Sobran, the syndicated far-right columnist whose opinion pieces appear in some 67 major newspapers throughout the country.

Last year during the Bitburg affair, Sobran attacked the American Jewish community for opposing the Presidential visit to the German war cemetery. He derided Jews for their concern about Bitburg noting that "you would think (President Reagan) had called Elie Wiesel 'Hymie.'" He called Martin Peretz, owner of the New Republic a "bearded Jewish McGovernite" and he described a party given in honor of the magazine as being "as Jewish as Fiddler on the Roof." Sobran also stated that his view of Nazi war crimes was that "bygones were bygones." As for the State of Israel, Sobran despises it and the "Jewish lobby" which applies "political pressure" on its behalf.

In short, young Sobran has quite a record when it comes to Jews (not to mention women, blacks, Italians and others he enjoys smearing). Still, his latest syndicated outburst deserves special mention because in it Sobran demonstrates that he is not merely someone who doesn't much like Jews. He also gives evidence of adhering to a classic, almost European-style anti-Semitism.

Sobran's subject was the Pope's visit to a Rome synagogue, a spectacle that clearly dismayed the columnist. Sobran was offended by the Pope's "capitulation" to the Jewish view that Christian Europe has 2,000 years of persecution of Jews to live down. Not so, writes Sobran. "Millions of Jews chose to migrate to Christian Europe. They lived there for centuries." He concedes that European gentiles were "sometimes hostile to Jews" but then suggests that such Christian anti-Semitism pales when compared to Jewish bigotry toward Christians.

Sobran then sets out to prove that Jews have always treated Christians badly. For instance, he says that "some rabbinical authorities" held "that it was permissible to cheat and even kill gentiles." (Really, Sobran, which "rabbinical authorities?") He says that Jews have always thought of Christians as "stupid"; that they deride Jesus Christ; and that they have practiced 2,000 years of

anti-Christianism. He contends that the only reason we hear more about "Christian anti-Semitism" than about Jewish racism is because "Christians have been self-critical." Jews are not.

The most novel aspect of Sobran's diatribe is his amazing view that "Christian philo-Semitism" is more significant than Christian anti-Semitism. The proof of that, he says, is "the long Jewish presence in Christian Europe..."

Interesting. There was, in fact, a long Jewish presence in "Christian Europe" which basically ended when 6,000,000 European Jews were sent to gas chambers. (That was during that Holocaust which Sobran dismisses as just another "bygone.") However, for some 1,900 years before the Nazi period, Jews in Europe were victims of thousands of pogroms and anti-Semitic outbursts. Some of these attacks had their origins in secular or state-sponsored anti-Semitism. Many more (like the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition) were religiously inspired attacks on Jews. There were openly anti-Semitic popes. Martin Luther, the founder of Protestantism, became an unabashed anti-Semite who called on Christians to attack Jews. Pope John Paul II knows that. That is why he visited the Rome synagogue. Sobran knows that too. He just doesn't give a damn.

It is hard to know how best to respond to a guy like Sobran. After all, neither American Jews nor most American Christians have much experience with his type. America is a country without a widespread anti-Semitic tradition. For Americans, Sobran is a throw-back to another time, another place. The one question worth asking is why respectable magazines like the National Review and the American Spectator, and good news chains like the Hearst press print his stuff. Isn't anything beyond the pale anymore? Is every bigot who can string a sentence together entitled to a place on an editorial page? Aren't the newspapers that run Sobran's views giving them tacit endorsement by not spiking a particularly offensive column? There are dozens and dozens of good provocative columnists to choose from. Why run this guy?

— M.J.R.

(From NEAR EAST REPORT, May 5, 1986.)

## Thoughts From Adrienne

By Adrienne Rosenberg  
JSS Director

I have recently returned from attending the National Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies annual meeting. In attendance were directors and presidents of Jewish family agencies from all over the country and Canada. It was a good opportunity to learn what is happening program-wise and administratively with similar agencies, to compare notes and to glean new ideas, as well as to discuss common concerns and issues.

As you might assume, many of the sessions held involved discussions of problems facing the Jewish family and programs to help meet these problem areas. It was stressed that mobility and society's trends have affected the Jewish family and the Jewish experience. It is not that the Jewish family has fallen by the wayside, but that stereotyping of the Jewish family experience can isolate even more those persons who do not fit the mold. By not addressing certain problems or assuming they are non-existent, this

might make people feel they can not come to a Jewish agency to discuss their particular problem.

For example, one of the sessions I attended was entitled "Skeletons in the Closet", where the areas of family abuse and violence, intermarriage, homosexuality, and substance abuse were addressed. Poverty, divorce, single parenthood, the developmentally disabled, the rising number of Jewish elderly, children raised away from grandparents, infertility, single life, all were areas discussed as stressful areas Jewish family agencies and Jewish communities should be aware of. It is not that the Jewish family is no more, it is that it can not be defined in terms different from the broader society. Yet it can be isolating to be Jewish and face the above problems.

As I listened to these sessions and the others I attended, I am aware that our Jewish family agency does not have some of the administrative or community headaches that other agencies of our size face. We have excellent Federation and community support from

Jewish professionals, organizations, and are seen in principle as a vital, helping agency.

Actually, only two things stand in our way of meeting the needs of Jewish persons and families: those persons who want to bury their heads that Jews in Charlotte have problems, and those persons who are embarrassed to call us because they feel guilty or embarrassed to admit they need help.

We may not have the "big bucks" of some agencies nor big staffs or extensive programming, but Elaine and I have the expertise, the concern, and the belief that we are there to listen to anyone Jewish who has a problem. For we accept that it is OK to be Jewish and not fit the stereotype; it is OK to have a problem; it is OK to ask for help.

We are aware that some people may have trouble wanting to see us in the new facility, feeling it is too public, although we have taken every step to ensure confidentiality. We can arrange to meet with a client elsewhere than our offices. All one has to do is call us at 366-5007.




# Morrocrofts

## SUNDAY BRUNCH

# "You'll Kvell"

364-8220  
2200 REXFORD ROAD

The Park Hotel

PREFERRED HOTELS  
WORLDWIDE



## MANN TRAVELS

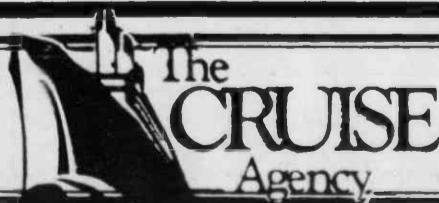
FOR ALL YOUR TRAVEL NEEDS  
BUSINESS OR VACATION...

ONE PHONE CALL DOES IT ALL

600 MATTHEWS-MINT HILL RD.  
SUITE 136 - MATTHEWS, NC 28105  
TELEPHONE 704/847-1542

201 S. COLLEGE STREET  
2010 CHARLOTTE PLAZA  
TELEPHONE 704/333-1511

FREE DELIVERY



A DIVISION OF MANN TRAVELS  
WE REPRESENT ALL THE CRUISE LINES

2010 CHARLOTTE PLAZA, 201 S. COLLEGE STREET  
CHARLOTTE, N.C. 28244  
TELEPHONE (704) 372-0646

MATTHEWS OFFICE  
(704) 847-1542

**Greenspon**  
& Associates Inc.  
125 Cottage Place  
376-7434

Providing a complete line of life insurance products,  
medical plans, disability plans, group-employee  
benefit plans.

STAN GREENSPON

DAVID SWIMMER