

Guest Editorial

Jewish Leaders Share Concern Over 'Iranscam'

By Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

Like the rest of America, Jewish leaders have been preoccupied with trying to sort out the bizarre Iran-U.S.-Israel arms connections.

In the face of the firestorm of charges of denials, few responsible Jewish leaders with whom I spoke were prepared to make any public statement about this incredibly complicated mess. But some internal consensus appears to be emerging.

First, most serious Jewish leaders believe that only the principal actors in this drama — in the United States, in Israel and in Iran — have authority to shed light on these events. Then, Jewish leaders support other Americans in welcoming the several investigations of the "Iranscam." And the general feeling is to let the chips fall where they may.

Beyond that, Jewish leaders are concerned that the office of the presidency and secretary of state among others not be undermined. While no person is above the law, due process must be pursued in a way that does not enfeeble American leadership. And then Jewish leaders are concerned that in the desperate confusion, the scapegoating of Israel for the failure of others is not allowed to take place. Clearly, Israel shares America's convictions about the value of human life, and did everything it could to save three American hostages.

As for the Swiss bank accounts, the Contras and the secret Soviet arms to Iran, let the investigations uncover everything that needs to be uncovered before any of us make snap and wrong judgments.

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum is director of international relations for the American Jewish Committee.

From the Editor's Desk

Tzedakah

The Charlotte community, as a whole, really extended itself to help the many homeless and indigent individuals during this past holiday season. They came forth with money, food, warm clothes, toys and even blankets to brighten the lives of the less fortunate.

It promises to be a long, cold winter, especially for our "street people" and the many families without working members in their households. It is up to all of us to continue to help them.

The Jews have never separated charity from a "duty". Tzedakah is the obligation to establish justice by being righteous, upright, compassionate...and above all, helping one's fellow man. The word *Tzedakah* comes from the Hebrew word *tzedek* which means righteous. In Hebrew and Yiddish there is no separate word for "charity".

Both Temples have noted the desperate need this year and have been asking congregants to drop off foodstuffs and canned goods to be distributed through the various agencies, such as the Crisis Assistance Ministry. Temple Israel has established "Rachel House", a temporary haven for homeless women and their children. Temple Beth El V'Shalom has a "Caring Committee" (see page 13). Both congregations need all the help they can get.

Maimonides set down a rated list of *tzedakah*. The highest form of charity, he said, is to help someone to help himself; after that, to help anonymously and secretly, so that the benefactor does not know whom he helps and the recipient does not know who has helped.

Jews are flatly forbidden to ignore or turn away anyone who asks for help. "Wealth is fleeting, honor winged, but charity abides" — Joshua Steinberg (1839-1908).

Let's hope that '87 will be a better year for all.
— R.M.

"It's a Small World"....

By Marvin Bienstock
Director of Charlotte
Jewish Federation

It was a Sunday morning at Shalom Park and the young couple had come by to ask questions about the Jewish community.

They were contemplating a move from upstate New York and were worried that they would feel out of place and isolated in a southern community.

When I asked where they were from they said "Poughkeepsie."

"Really," said the receptionist for the JCC. She had been listening to see if she could be of assistance. "I grew up there. Do you know ..."

She named the street she had lived on, and, of course,

they had lived not too far away.

We were commenting on the coincidence when Ron and Ellie Katz came up.

"You think that's a coincidence," said Ron, "We are from Poughkeepsie."

After listening to the two couples swap Poughkeepsie stories, I walked away and got as far as a recent newcomer, Shirlee Wadsworth. I couldn't resist telling her what was happening and said I hope she wasn't from Poughkeepsie.

"Of course not," said Shirlee, "It's my brother who has been teaching college there for 15 years!"

Coincidence? Not really! I have found it easier to play Jewish geography here than in any other of the five cities in

which I have worked. The Charlotte Jewish community is truly intracontinental. No longer can we think of newcomers as just from the Northeast, like the Poughkeepsie couple. Every day the Federation learns of newcomers from California and Texas and the state of Washington and all points on the map.

We are clearly a sunbelt city, a product of the blending of ideas and attitudes of all the various communities which have contributed to our growing Jewish population.

There is so much we have created here, but there is so much still to be created. If we listen and learn from the newcomers we can be much more successful in charting a successful growth pattern, and one that is responsive to our newest community members and their needs.

The young couple left Shalom Park that morning with their fears overcome. They will be moving here this month. In fact, their last words to me were, "After making all these contacts this morning we don't feel as if we will be moving to a new city. We feel as if we will be coming back to a friendly and familiar place."

But wait, that's not the end of my column.

Recently, the Federation was able to acquire the assistance in Campaign of a wonderful Israeli couple, Shalom and Nachama Dror. The Drors spent a week talking with people about needs in Israel and around the world. As a result they obtained almost \$40,000 in pledges to the FEDERATION/UJA '87 CAMPAIGN.

On one of the visits Shalom Dror made, he thought he detected a familiar accent. When he asked where this member of our Charlotte Jewish community was born, the answer he received was the name of a small city in Germany.

"That's where I was born," said Mr. Dror.

It turned out Shalom had lived there a number of years after the other man had left. He knew the man's family and was able to tell him stories of what had happened in the last years before that family was lost in the Holocaust. You can imagine the emotion the two of them felt.

Perhaps I underestimated when I said we are an intracontinental community. Like all Jewish communities, we are part and parcel of an entire Jewish world.



Letters to the Editor

Hadassah Has Exciting Study Group

Just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the Hadassah Study Group on Nov. 6 at Marcia Simon's home. Maurice Weinstein was full of fascinating facts about the Mid-East and the social hour afterwards was just like "old times". Hope Raenea Siegel has some more exciting Study Groups planned for the near future.

— Fay Green

(See page 15 for future study groups — The Editor.)

We encourage our readers' viewpoints. Letters should be submitted typewritten and double-spaced and signed. Please include your address and phone number. We reserve the right to edit.

Deadline for Feb.
is
Jan. 10

Happy Birthday

Dear Rita:

Congratulations on the birthday of "The CJN" and all your hard work.

Fondly,
Hadassah

(Editor's note: Thank you for your kind words and the beautiful flowering plant — it really "made my day.")

THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

Published monthly by:

- Charlotte Jewish Federation.....Marvin Bienstock, Director
- Foundation of Charlotte Jewish Community & Jewish Community Center.....Barry Hantman, Director
- N.C. Hebrew Academy.....Berta Straz, Administrator
- Lubavitch of N.C.....Rabbi Yossi Groner, Director
- Editor.....Rita Mond
- Advertising.....Blanche Yarus

Copy deadline the 10th of each month
P.O. Box 13369, Charlotte, N.C. 28211

The appearance of advertising in The News does not constitute a kashruth endorsement.