

# Murphy and Marchi pushed Bergman facility

By S. LAINE GOLDSTEIN

State Sen. John J. Marchi and Congressman John M. Murphy, beneficiaries of election-year contributions from the nursing home industry, both intervened on behalf of a Staten Island facility that is controlled by Bernard Bergman.

An examination of state Health Department files revealed that the two lawmakers wrote to state officials in support of an unopened facility at 1000 Targee St., Concord, now known as the Island View Care Center.

Island View has been named part of the Bergman empire by investigators for Manhattan Assemblyman Andrew Stein's Temporary State Commission on Living Costs.

Marchi and Murphy deny knowing Bergman and his interests in Island View. Murphy said he had acted when the facility was called the Victory Habilitation Center and was seeking to become a residential home for mental retardates.

"I resent being tied in with Bergman," the congressman told the Advance.

Nevertheless, Murphy has disclosed that the man primarily responsible for nursing home contributions to his 1972 campaign was Irwin Karassik. Karassik, former executive director and now labor counsel of the Metropolitan New York Nursing Home Association, is a member of the law firm that has represented Bergman's interest in the Targee St. home.

The vacant four-story brick building adjacent to Doctors Hospital was completed in 1972. It has been known variously as the Danube Nursing Home, the Victory Habilitation Center and the Island View Care Center.

Despite the name changes, the 240-bed facility is owned by Bernard Bergman, according to the state Health Department and the Stein investigators. Doctors Hospital reportedly once negotiated with Bergman with a view toward purchasing the dormant facility.

The building was originally called the Danube Nursing Home and was constructed without a license, according to the Health Department. When approval was sought for the finished product to open as a nursing home, some questions were raised by health officials, specifically the financial arrangement with Bergman.

Sen. Marchi apparently sought approval for the Danube, for in the memoranda recently released by Deputy Health Commissioner Dr. Andrew C. Fleck Jr. there is a letter to Marchi, dated Feb. 16, 1973. The letter opens:

"We have reviewed the additional material you forwarded in support of the subject application." The application is listed as Danube Nursing Home, NYC-142.

The letter, signed by Fleck, goes on to mention the one aspect of the submission which would be questioned by members of the Public Health Council — "the basis for the payment of a sum of \$240,000 to Mr. Bergman."

Fleck concludes: "Can you be of any help in resolving this matter?"

Marchi says that he does not recall the letter concerning Danube. "Undoubtedly, I did support the nursing home, but the name Bergman means nothing to me," he explains. "I never even knew of the existence of a Bergman until the Stein investigation."

In a related matter, Marchi admits that he nominated Samuel Hausman, a textile industrialist, to the state Hospital Review and Planning Council. Hausman, who numbers Vice President Rockefeller and Attorney General Louis J. Lefkowitz among his friends, has been described as a Bergman ally.

One published report said a nephew of Hausman sought a license to operate a Bergman nursing home in Manhattan.

Murphy's relationship with 1000 Targee St. came during the building's incarnation as the Victory Habilitation Center, when it was being considered by the state Department of Mental Hygiene as a care center for mentally retarded adults.

A plan to transfer patients there from the Willowbrook Developmental Center was opposed by many Staten Island officials, including Sen. Marchi.

In a letter to former Hygiene Commissioner Dr. Alan D. Miller on June 9, 1973, Murphy wrote:

"I am writing to you on behalf of Rabbi Schulem Rubin, executive director of the Victory Residential Habilitation Center..."

"Rabbi Rubin informs me that an application was filed with your department for an Operating Certificate for a proposed center.

"Any information or assistance you may be able to render to me regarding the status of application for the above mentioned Operating Certificate will be greatly ap-

preciated by me."

A reply by Miller's assistant on June 22, 1973, informed Murphy that there were some funding problems, but added:

"If funding can be arranged through the Department of Social Services we will be able to complete quickly our approval of this worthwhile program."

Murphy said he was not aware that the Victory Habilitation Center was controlled by Bergman, nor that the building had been erected without a license.

"I only knew it as connected with Schulem Rubin when it

was to become a facility for the retarded," Murphy said. "My intercession was for the people who came to me and I referred these people to the agencies responsible.

"I have no knowledge or interest in the ownership of Victory," Murphy said. "I do not know Bergman and I would resent being tied in with Bergman."

The status of 1000 Targee St. is still unclear. Following community and official opposition to the idea of making the facility a center for retardates, Bergman and his law-

yers have revived the application for nursing home certification.

On Oct. 1, Stanley Lowell, a Bergman lawyer (and a member of the same firm that includes Irwin Karassik), requested a new hearing on the Danube application. A reply by Health Department counsel Donald A. MacHarg stated that Danube must supply updated information on its financial setup before a hearing can be scheduled.

There has been no further communication between the department and Lowell, a spokesman for MacHarg said.