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FIREBOMB ATTACK THAT KILLED FOUR MAY HAVE IMPACT ON ISRAELI VOTE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 31 (JTA) -- Israelis, shocked and sickened by the firebomb attack on a bus that killed a woman and three small children Sunday evening outside the West Bank town of Jericho, could not help but speculate whether the tragedy would affect the outcome of Tuesday's Knesset elections.

Both Premier Yitzhak Shamir, leader of Likud bloc, and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, his Labor Party rival, condemned the attack, the worst in terms of civilian casualties since the Palestinian uprising in the administered territories began more than 10 months ago.

Neither politician referred to the election. But Labor sources did not conceal their concern that public outrage might tip the scales in favor of hard-liners on the right.

"The horrible incident at Jericho requires an appropriate response," Shamir said Monday. "The murderers will be punished and their murderous intentions eradicated."

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin of the Labor Party remarked that "this is part of the price paid for our rule in the territories."

The Israel Defense Force clamped a curfew on Jericho, a town northeast of Jerusalem with a population of 18,000. Soldiers scoured the town and surrounding countryside for the attackers.

The IDF chief of staff, Gen. Dan Shomron, said Monday he had reason to believe the perpetrators had been captured. He offered no details.

Israel Radio reported that a gang of seven suspects was seized, some with past records of anti-Israel activities. Three of them reportedly have admitted their part in the attack, and sappers moved quickly to blow up their homes.

The victims were buried Monday afternoon in Jerusalem's Mount of Olives cemetery. They were identified as Rachel Weiss, reported variously to be 26 or 27, and her children: Netanel, 3; Rafael, 2; and Ephraim, 10 months old.

Orthodox Jews From Tiberias

The family members, Orthodox Jews from Tiberias, were traveling to a Bar Mitzvah in Jerusalem when their bus was blocked by a barricade of rocks across the road at the northern entrance to Jericho. It was about 8 p.m. local time.

As the vehicle slowed down, it was attacked from the rear with two Molotov cocktails, which set it on fire.

All 22 of the passengers except Weiss and her children managed to escape from the burning vehicle, though five of them were injured, one seriously.

The woman's husband, who got out unhurt, watched helplessly as his family died.

All of the injured were hospitalized.

They were identified as David Dolorosa, 20, a soldier who is reported in serious condition at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem; Hilla Lugger, 19, a soldier from Kibbutz Beit Hashita who suffered slight burns; and Sgt. Ron Leinwald, 21, of Kibbutz Reshafim, who was treated for burns and sent home.

Also injured were Dov and Sandy Bloom, a couple from Kibbutz Ma'aleh Gilboa, who were reported in fair condition Monday. Dov Bloom, 35, is a native of Pittsburgh; Sandy Bloom, 33, is a native of Brooklyn.

Lugger told reporters she was asleep at the time of the attack. She recalled "waking up to screams and the sight of smoke and fire." She escaped from the bus through a window.

Leinwald, who also escaped from the bus but crawled back inside when he heard a woman scream, described how he tried to rescue Weiss and her children.

He said the woman seemed to be in a state of shock.

'What About My Baby?'

"I was suffocating from the smoke. I could hardly see anything," he said. "I counted the number of seats on toward the place where the voice came from. And then I saw her, a religious woman, wearing a head scarf, holding a baby in her hand, with another child sitting next to her."

"I grabbed her head and yelled, 'Come with me,' but she resisted, grabbed the seat and said, 'What about my baby? I have another baby.'"

"With the last of my strength I tried to pull her out, but she resisted," Leinwald said. "I knew if I stayed in the bus both she and I would die. There was no chance. Almost unconscious, I managed to find the back door of the bus and pushed myself outside."

The father was standing near the bus screaming, "But there's a woman inside, there's a woman inside," Leinwald recalled saying, "Yes, I know. But there is nothing we can do about it."

Gen. Amram Mitzna, IDF commander of the central region, which includes the West Bank, said grimly on Monday, "We have failed to protect the bus." He said new measures would be taken to prevent further attacks.

IDF soldiers have already uprooted trees on both sides of the road near the site of the attack to remove concealment for bomb-throwers.

In recent months, more than 100 Molotov cocktails have been thrown at Israeli vehicles near Jericho, without causing casualties. Until the Palestinian uprising began nearly a year ago, Jericho and the Beit She'an-Jerusalem Road that passes through it were among the most tranquil parts of the West Bank.

Jericho's restaurants have been popular with visiting Israelis, especially during the winter months when the temperature there is usually warm.

Some 10,000 mourners assembled in Jerusalem's Sha'arei Hessed neighborhood Monday for the funeral. Among the eulogizers were the dead woman's father, Rabbi Yitzhak Shlomo Silverman, and the chief rabbi of Jerusalem, Rabbi Yitzhak Kolitz.

Meanwhile, Former IDF Gen. Rehavam Zeevi, leader of the new, far right-wing Mokedet party, claimed Monday that the tragedy vindicated his proposed approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is to transfer all Arabs out of Israel and the territories.

With shock and anger fresh in the minds of voters Tuesday, extremist parties may do better than expected at the polls, analysts said.

RABIN CALLS FOR DEATH PENALTY AGAINST JERICHO BUS FIREBOMBERS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 31 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin will ask the death penalty for the firebombers of a bus outside Jericho Sunday evening in which an Israeli woman and her three small children died.

Rabin said Monday he would instruct the army's legal department to investigate the possibility.

Capital punishment is permissible under Israeli law, although it has been applied only in the case of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann, who was hanged in 1961.

Rabin, along with most of his predecessors, has been reluctant to execute terrorists for capital offenses, partly for fear of retaliation against captured Israeli prisoners of war.

But there is growing public sentiment in favor of the death penalty for heinous crimes in which the victims are women and children.

Some observers say Rabin is supporting it now to prevent an erosion of Labor Party votes in the Knesset elections Tuesday.

The tragedy, on the eve of the balloting, is believed to have so infuriated the public that many "undecideds" will cast their votes for the hard-line Likud or parties even further to the right.

Justice Minister Avraham Sharir of Likud's Liberal Party wing also said he would urge the Cabinet at its next meeting to authorize implementation of the death penalty.

Likud circles were silent Monday on the possible impact of the bus tragedy on the elections. Laborites and their allies were deeply apprehensive.

Amnon Rubinstein, leader of the Center-Shinui Party, said the bus bombing was "the best gift that the extreme right could receive on election day."

REAGAN, AT WIESENTHAL DINNER, PROCLAIMS COMMITMENT WITH ISRAEL

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 31 (JTA) -- Looking back 50 years on the horrors of Kristallnacht in Nazi Germany, President Reagan on Sunday pledged his country's vigilance "in the battle against those who would follow Hitler's example" and declared that Americans "have no better friends than the people of Israel."

In a departure from his prepared text, Reagan announced that he will shortly sign legislation which will finally allow American participation in the international convention against genocide.

Reagan's remarks were frequently interrupted by extended applause from 2,000 supporters of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, who were at a dinner to mark Wiesenthal's 80th birthday and to confer the center's 1988 Humanitarian Award on the president.

Reagan used the occasion to reiterate the need for a strong U.S. defense posture. "The fact is that a strong Israel depends on a strong America," he said.

Such strength and resolve, he added, "coupled with diplomatic vision and a commitment to political reconciliation, are essential if Israel is to help achieve a negotiated settlement among the war-weary people of the Middle East."

The president reviewed relations between Israel and the United States over the last five years, pointing to successful negotiations of a strategic understanding and free-trade area.

Reagan spoke of "the promise that we would not permit Israel to lose its qualitative edge in the Middle East -- and we delivered on that promise," he declared.

Wiesenthal, whose energetic delivery belied his 80 years, recalled his 40-year battle to bring Nazi war criminals to justice.

The motive, he said, was not an unattainable revenge for the murder of 6 million Jews, but "as a warning to all those who might be tempted to participate in another genocide."

"We proved that there is no escape, not even 40 or 50 years later, and there is no place on the face of the Earth where they can ever feel safe and secure."

Sharing in the evening's honors was Nancy Reagan, who accepted the Wiesenthal Center's first Beit Hashoah-Museum of Tolerance Award for Public Service.

Ben Kingsley served as the master of ceremonies. The British actor portrays Wiesenthal in the forthcoming HBO film "Murderers Among Us," based on the Nazi-hunter's life.

REFORM GROUP TO VISIT E. GERMANY FOR KRISTALLNACHT COMMEMORATION

NEW YORK, Oct. 31 (JTA) -- The first official delegation of American Jewish religious leaders to visit East Germany since the end of World War II will take place next week, when leaders of American Reform Judaism will mark the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht in East Berlin.

A group of 50, who will fly there Nov. 6 for a week, are members of the board of trustees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the congregational body of the Reform movement.

The group, headed by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, the UAHC president, will be the guests of the American ambassador.

Kristallnacht, or night of broken glass, occurred during the night of Nov. 9-10, 1938. It was the first organized pogrom in Nazi Germany and is regarded as the precursor of the Holocaust.

The anniversary is being marked with appropriate observances in both East and West Germany.

The group will participate in the cornerstone-laying of a new synagogue on the site of the famed Oranienburgerstrasse synagogue in East Berlin.

A Reform temple, it was desecrated on Kristallnacht and bombed during World War II. The East German government has agreed to allocate money toward its reconstruction. It will also house a Jewish museum and serve as a community center.

The Reform group will be the guests of the East German parliament on Nov. 8, and that afternoon will join a silent march to the site in East Berlin where books were burned by the Nazis.

Schindler, who was born in Munich and fled Germany with his family in 1938, will officiate at Sabbath services on Nov. 11 at the last remaining synagogue in East Berlin.

The entire Jewish population of East Germany is estimated at no more than 3,000.

The Reform delegation also will recite Kaddish at the former Nazi concentration camps of Ravensbruck and Sachsenhausen, outside Berlin.

KAHANE WILL REORGANIZE KACH PARTY TO RUN IN ISRAEL'S NEXT ELECTION

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Oct. 31 (JTA) — Rabbi Meir Kahane, whose Kach party was banned by Israel's highest court from running in Tuesday's Knesset elections, said Monday that he intends to change the name of his party and make some "cosmetic changes" in the party's platform so he can run in Israel's next election.

Speaking at a news conference at the Grand Hyatt Hotel here, the American-born rabbi said he will change the name of his party from Kach, or "thus," to Koach, or "strength."

"On the political level we will make only cosmetic changes," he said. "We will not change our principles."

Kahane said that the newly named party will use only quotes from the Bible to advocate its policies.

Kahane said that he will announce the formation of Koach when he returns to Israel next week. He predicted that no party will win a decisive majority and that Israelis will have to go to the polls again in the near future.

Kahane claimed that Kach would have captured between eight and 10 seats in the next Knesset.

"Likud was terrified that I would take away from them at least five seats," Kahane said.

He blamed the Likud and its leader, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, for being "the major force" behind the move to ban Kach.

Kach was banned from running in the elections on the grounds that it is racist and opposed to the democratic nature of the state.

"I am not a racist," Kahane said. "Every law I proposed in the Knesset was based on Judaism." He charged that the banning of Kach is "a blow to democracy."

"Even if I were a racist," Kahane argued, "how can they ban me and still be a democracy?"

No Answers

Kahane, who appeared composed and confident, said that "it is not relevant whether the Labor or Likud" will be victorious in the elections because neither has the answers to Israel's problems.

Kahane predicted that soon the Palestinian uprising will spill into Israel proper. "The Arabs within the Green Lines are completely behind the intifada," he maintained, warning that sooner or later the Jews in Israel will start reacting with violence against the rioting Arabs.

Kahane, who renounced his American citizenship in order to run for the Knesset, said that he now seeks to regain his citizenship because "the U.S. will never allow me in America on a visa."

The U.S. State Department had barred Kahane's entry into the United States because of his renouncement.

But a U.S. district judge issued a temporary restraining order Oct. 26, which allows Kahane to enter this country until a federal court rules on his lawsuit.

Kahane, who believes he will win his case in court early next year, said he entered the United States last week on his American passport.

Kahane said that now that he is no longer in the Knesset, he intends to come more often to the United States to speak on campuses and before other audiences. "I have much to say to young people in America."

SOVIET HEBREW TEACHERS NO LONGER HARASSED, BUT NOT YET RECOGNIZED

By David Kantor

MOSCOW, Oct. 31 (JTA) — Hebrew teachers and other Jewish activists face a serious dilemma, despite the more liberal policies of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

At present, they are not bothered by the Soviet authorities. But they live in constant fear of persecution, harassment and even imprisonment, because Hebrew teaching is not recognized as an occupation in the USSR.

Consequently, those who practice it are considered jobless and unwilling to work. That is a serious offense under Soviet law, punishable by long prison terms, Mikhail Chlenov, a veteran Hebrew teacher, explained to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency here.

Chlenov and his colleagues are striving, so far without success, to gain official recognition for Hebrew teachers. Official sanction would remove one of the major obstacles to revitalizing Jewish cultural life in the Soviet Union.

Chlenov said he and his fellow Hebrew teachers want state certification and professional recognition. That implies permission to import textbooks from Israel and elsewhere and to have professional exchanges with other Hebrew teachers.

But some quarters in Moscow oppose the extension of recognition to Hebrew teachers. They want to be able to suppress Hebrew studies whenever they think it necessary, Chlenov said.

Another activist, 17-year refusenik Yuli Kosharovskiy, told the JTA, "There has been a change here. But it has to be institutionalized to give us a guarantee against further repression. One of the important points is certainly the recognition of Hebrew teaching as a normal occupation," Kosharovskiy said.

Demonstrations Restricted

He called attention to another problem, which he said has worsened since Gorbachev proclaimed his policy of glasnost (openness).

Kosharovskiy said it has become almost impossible to protest publicly against repression and anti-Semitic activities. "Formerly, we took to the streets rather often to demonstrate against anti-Jewish activities or to demand freedom for refuseniks."

"Today," he said, "Gorbachev has made such demonstrations all but impossible. According to a new Soviet law, unauthorized demonstrations carry a penalty of one year in prison."

"This makes it impossible for us to stage such protests, since we have no chance of receiving permits to demonstrate against anti-Jewish manifestations, let alone against the regime and its policies," Kosharovskiy said.

In fact, Gorbachev seems to have adopted a carrot-and-stick policy toward the Jewish community.

On one hand, he allowed the staging of a Jewish play with strong nationalistic, if not Zionist elements at Moscow's city-owned Hermitage theater last week.

He also permitted the opening of a Jewish cultural center in Moscow, which is fully recognized by the Communist authorities.

At the same time, he has put an end to public demonstrations, a form of protest that in the past has helped mobilize support for change, and even forced the regime to be more flexible.

JEWISH PACS LARGELY SUPPORTING INCUMBENTS IN U.S. SENATE RACES

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Oct. 31 (JTA) — With a couple of notable exceptions, most of the millions of dollars raised by U.S. Jewish groups this year on behalf of candidates for the U.S. Senate is going to incumbents of both parties, rather than to their challengers, Federal Election Commission records show.

The preference for incumbents can be largely attributed to both a desire to "go with the winners" and a perception that the choices this year are mainly between good candidates and better ones, as opposed to friends versus foes of the Jewish community.

The 46 largest pro-Israel political action committees awarded more than \$2.8 million to candidates through June 30. Of that money, \$300,000 came from four multi-issue PACs, which evaluate candidates' stands on domestic issues, as well as support for Israel.

Roughly half of the 33 seats up for election in the Senate are considered close races, with Jews most closely watching the re-election bids of Jewish Democrats Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio and Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey.

The other Jewish senatorial incumbent, Republican Chic Hecht of Nevada, is in disfavor with many Jewish groups for voting to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia and Jordan. He is being largely ignored by the pro-Israel PACs.

Hecht Challenger Favored

Hecht's challenger, Democratic Gov. Richard Bryan, received \$29,000 to Hecht's \$6,500 from the 42 largest Jewish single-issue PACs through June 30. That trend held in analyzing subsequent contributions through Sept. 30 of six of the largest PACs, which donated \$1.5 million of the \$2.8 million distributed by June 30.

The four major multi-issue Jewish PACs, which object to Hecht's conservative views, gave Bryan \$16,000 by June 30, and \$24,000 through Sept. 30.

The other major Senate race in which Jews largely are favoring the challenger over the incumbent is the contest in Rhode Island, where Lt. Gov. Richard Licht, a Democrat, is trying to unseat Republican Sen. John Chafee.

Licht, who has been active in United Jewish Appeal campaigns, has raised \$190,000 from pro-Israel PACs, and reportedly at least another \$500,000 in private Jewish contributions.

Such a Jewish consensus does not exist in California and Minnesota, where the single-issue Jewish PACs are backing the Republican incumbent, while the multi-issue Jewish PACs are mainly supporting the Democratic challenger.

In Minnesota, Democrat Hubert "Skip" Humphrey III received \$7,000 from three multi-issue PACs through Sept. 30, federal records show. But the largest of the multi-issue PACs, the Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs, gave \$7,500 to incumbent Sen. David Durenberger, a Republican who also received support from the Jewish single-issue PACs.

In California, the 42 Jewish single-issue PACs contributed \$54,600 to conservative Sen. Pete Wilson through June 30. But two of the multi-issue PACs are supporting Democratic challenger Leo McCarthy, based on what they say is his better record on church-state issues.

In Indiana, one of the smaller of the Jewish

multi-issue PACs, the Fund for Freedom, gave \$1,000 to incumbent Sen. Richard Lugar, a Republican.

But Lugar received a mere \$5,000 from the Jewish single-issue PACs through June 30, and no additional money from six of the largest ones followed through Sept. 30.

Shoo-Ins In 16 States

In 16 states where incumbents are considered shoo-ins to be re-elected, the challengers received no PAC money: Arizona, Hawaii, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New York, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia and West Virginia.

Only one of the incumbents in those states, Republican Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah, apparently did not receive any pro-Israel PAC money.

The races in Connecticut and Wisconsin are considered no-lose propositions.

In Wisconsin, very little PAC money has been spent on the race between Republican Susan Engleleiter and Democrat Herbert Kohl, with Kohl, who is a Jewish multimillionaire, not accepting PAC money. They are battling for the seat vacated by Democratic Sen. William Proxmire.

In Connecticut, all of the pro-Israel PAC money, single- and multi-issue alike, has gone to incumbent Sen. Lowell Weicker Jr., a maverick Republican liberal. The multi-issue PACs prefer having Weicker hold a Republican seat on key committees than have a freshman Democratic seat held by challenger Joseph Lieberman, the state attorney general.

Other interesting Senate races not involving Jewish candidates are in Mississippi, Florida, Nebraska, Vermont and Washington.

In Mississippi, the PACs are betting more than \$50,000 on Democratic Rep. Wayne Dowdy. Dowdy is facing an uphill climb against Republican Rep. Trent Lott, the House minority whip, who received around \$10,000, apparently most of that for the primary election. They are seeking the seat vacated by Democratic Sen. John Stennis.

In Florida, Nebraska and Vermont, the PACs are divided, and are spending comparatively few dollars because of late primaries.

Split In Florida

In Florida, they are split between Democratic Rep. Buddy MacKay and Republican Rep. Connie Mack III, to fill the seat vacated by Democratic Sen. Lawton Chiles. Both had received about \$5,000 each from the 46 Jewish PACs through June 30, and no additional money from six of the largest ones through Sept. 30.

In Nebraska, the PACs are split between Democratic Gov. Robert Kerrey and incumbent Republican Sen. David Karnes. Kerrey received \$29,000 from the 46 PACs through June 30, while Karnes received \$20,250, but analysts asserted that much of that money was used to defeat "unfriendly" Republican Rep. Hal Daub in the primary.

In Vermont, the PACs are split between Democratic hopeful William Gray and Republican Rep. James Jeffords. Jeffords received \$14,250 from the PACs through June 30, while Gray received \$6,000.

Only \$1,000 has been expended by pro-Israel PACs in Washington state. All of it has gone to former Republican Sen. Slade Gorton, who did not run for re-election in 1986, but is running this year against Democrat Rep. Mike Lowry for the seat vacated by Republican Sen. Daniel Evans.