

VOL. 69 - 74th YEAR

TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 1991

NO. 20

**NEW SCUD MISSILES FALL ON ISRAEL
AS PUBLIC BEGINS ASKING QUESTIONS**

By Hugh Orgel and David Landau

TEL AVIV, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Once again air raid sirens wailed throughout Israel on Monday night, as Iraq fired another batch of Scud missiles at the Jewish state.

In what has become an all-too-familiar ritual, Israelis dashed to their chemical weapons-proof rooms, donned gas masks and waited for word about whether the alert presaged another devastating attack or whether it would turn out to be merely another false alarm.

An Israel Defense Force spokesman later announced that "several Scud missiles" equipped with conventional high-explosive warheads had impacted in an unspecified area.

But this time, unlike four of the last six attacks, there were no casualties.

The fear and disruption of ordinary life that has been the lot of urban dwellers since the first Iraqi missiles slammed into Tel Aviv on Jan. 18 has exhausted the populace and raised angry questions.

Some focus on the lack of preparation for attacks the national leadership long expected.

Others challenge the civil defense authorities' continued reliance on gas-proof rooms, instead of underground bomb shelters, to protect the populace from missiles that to date have carried high explosives, not chemical warheads.

Israelis are asking why densely populated Tel Aviv and Haifa were left naked to missile attack after government and military figures had warned for years that Iraq and Syria possessed long-range missiles and were prepared to use them.

They want to know why the U.S. Patriot missiles, so far the only effective weapon against Scuds, were not deployed and operational in Israel until after the first two Scud attacks caused casualties and extensive damage.

Arens May Be Blamed For Patriot Delay

Sources said former Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin did not order Patriots from the Americans years ago because he was shown only the anti-aircraft models. The missile-killing versions became operational only since he left office, the sources said.

That leaves his successor, Arens, "on the firing line" for not making sure the Patriot batteries were in place before the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait expired.

Observers have pointed out that the Patriots were deployed in Saudi Arabia by then.

Media reports say Arens and the IDF wanted to wait until Israeli crews were trained to operate them. Commentators noted that undertrained Israeli crews were apparently responsible for less-than-effective Patriot missile launches last week during the Jan. 22 Scud attack on Ramat Gan, the worst to date in terms of casualties and damage.

Viewed in terms of cold arithmetic, the casualties sustained after the more than two dozen Scud firings at Israel have been minimal. More people are killed and injured in road accidents than fell victim to the Scuds in a comparable period of time, analysts say.

Nevertheless, many Israelis are convinced

more casualties could have been prevented if civilians had been told to go to underground bomb shelters rather than sealed rooms above ground.

The sealed rooms and gas masks are designed to save Israel from massive casualties in the event of a chemical attack, but they offer little protection against blast, wreckage and shrapnel.

IDF Still Fears Chemical Attack

The IDF, however, refused again Sunday to review its basic civil defense thesis, which is that the primary danger is still a chemical strike.

Gen. Nachman Shai, the army spokesman, reflected the policy of the IDF high command when he categorically ruled out a proposal that people head for their bomb shelters when the sirens sound or, much worse, move into shelters every night as a matter of course for the duration of the emergency.

He insisted that the sealed rooms remain the best protection, given the higher number of deaths a chemical device could cause compared with high-explosive missile warheads.

The IDF fears shelters would become death traps in case of gas attack unless they have sophisticated air-purifying equipment, which most do not.

Unlike U.S. analysts, Israeli experts are still far from convinced that Saddam Hussein does not have the ability to fit his Scuds with poison gas.

They believe Israel must base its defenses on the chance that a gas-carrying missile could pierce the air force's airborne and ground-to-air defenses.

At this point, residents of Tel Aviv and Haifa have little choice but to put their doubts to rest and have faith in the army.

**THE WORSE MAY BE YET TO COME,
VISITING JEWISH LEADERS TOLD**

By Charles Hoffman

TEL AVIV, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Tel Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat warned a visiting delegation of American Jewish leaders Monday that "the worst hasn't happened yet. There will be more missiles and probably even chemical weapons" aimed at Israel.

"We must get rid of Saddam Hussein," Lahat stressed, "for if we don't, the results will be like another Hitler, and millions of people will be killed."

Lahat spoke to a delegation of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which came for a two-day fact-finding and solidarity visit. The group met Lahat in a neighborhood of the city where several public buildings were damaged, two of them severely, by Iraqi missiles.

Members of the delegation said that warnings about further missile attacks and the possible use of non-conventional weapons had also been voiced in briefings by senior military officers.

The group also visited one of the residential areas hit by a missile in Ramat Gan, a comfortable suburb adjacent to Tel Aviv.

Shoshana Cardin, chairman of the Conference of Presidents, stood on a site in Ramat Gan that took a direct hit on the first weekend of war.

A three-story apartment building that had

stood next to the spot was heavily damaged and torn down last week. Close to 100 people were wounded in that attack, and three died of heart attacks.

Next to the empty lot was a three-story apartment house with one half of the building completely caved in and the back walls ripped off. A stairway running up the middle of the building was exposed. Books, bottles, toys, clothes and other personal belongings peeked through heaps of plaster, cement blocks and pieces of furniture piled on the ground.

In nearby buildings, shutters and roofing tiles had been ripped off, and windows shattered.

'Shocked At The Destruction'

Surveying the damage and debris in the surrounding buildings, Cardin said: "I am shocked at the destruction one missile can create and at the number of people whose personal possessions were wiped out.

"It is important for us to see this, so we understand what Israel faces on a daily basis," she said. "This is war. It is difficult for Americans to understand what this means just by looking at it on television."

Cardin vowed that American Jewry would help in the reconstruction. "American Jewry should realize that not only Soviet immigrants should be helped. This is also a real need at this time -- helping those made homeless by the missile attacks. I can't say yet what form this assistance will take."

Ramat Gan Mayor Zvi Bar said that 650 people in his town had to be housed temporarily in hotels and that 1,300 apartments had been damaged, 120 of them beyond repair. Ironically, a majority of the town's residents are of Iraqi origin.

The damage in the Tel Aviv neighborhood the conference visited was mainly to public buildings funded by New York philanthropists through the United Jewish Appeal's Project Renewal program. Among the buildings damaged were a gymnasium, community center, auditorium and school for those with mental disabilities.

Mayor Lahat said that about 2,500 apartments in Tel Aviv had been damaged and that 1,100 people had to be evacuated to hotels. "Thank God that there were not so many killed and wounded," he said. "Buildings can always be put up again."

U.S. Envoy Praises Restraint

The Conference of Presidents delegates had lunch with U.S. Ambassador William Brown, who praised Israel's leaders for the restraint they have shown in not retaliating for the repeated Iraqi missile attacks.

"I must ask," he said, "whether any nation under such provocation had exercised as much restraint and maintained it under such circumstances. Other nations have shown such restraint, but these were weak ones. Israel, however, has the capability and the courage to respond, which it has demonstrated over and over."

He said the United States is "going after those Scuds, and the results (of allied air strikes) will continue to improve."

Earlier in the day, the delegation visited a Patriot missile installation near Tel Aviv, which is operated jointly by Israeli and American crews. Some of the delegates met with the American soldiers and sang "God Bless America" to express their thanks for the job they are doing.

ONGOING MISSILE ATTACKS PRODUCE AN EXODUS, SOME BIZARRE STORIES

By Hugh Orgel and David Landau

TEL AVIV, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- The exodus from Tel Aviv goes on as Iraqi missiles continue to rain down on the metropolitan area.

Every evening, tens of thousands of Tel Aviv residents jam the exits from the city to get out of Scud range in the evening hours, when most of the Iraqi missile attacks have occurred.

By late afternoon, thousands of cars clog the roads and highways out of Tel Aviv. Most of them, crawling northward bumper-to-bumper as dusk falls, seem to contain just the driver, usually male.

Many men must still work here everyday but have temporarily moved their families to Jerusalem or other safe havens.

Tel Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat, a former Israel Defense Force general, has generated controversy in recent days by branding people who flee the city "deserters."

"I was not talking about families with young children," Lahat explained Monday to a delegation of American Jewish leaders whom he took on a tour of badly damaged neighborhoods.

"My main problem is with older families whose children are grown. People who leave their city will also leave their country. What we need now is more self-control and a sense of duty to our country," he told members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

The Scud attacks have produced some bizarre tales.

One newspaper reported Monday about a man who underwent surgery before the U.N.-imposed Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. American and allied forces started their air assault on Iraq on Jan. 17 and the first Scud missile fell on Tel Aviv the following day.

Patient Thought He Was Dead

The surgical patient did not regain consciousness for over a week. When he came to, it was in the middle of an air raid alert. The patient saw what seemed to be devils who looked like ants, and he concluded he was dead.

The man was not hallucinating. The doctors and nurses attending him wore gas masks, which made them resemble arthropods. When they saw his bewilderment, they removed the masks to reassure him.

But the patient reportedly fainted from shock when the doctor said his father and mother were waiting outside to see him. The man's mother had died five years earlier, and he was now surely convinced he was dead, the newspaper reported.

As it turned out, the doctor had been only slightly mistaken. The woman waiting with the patient's father was the man's second wife.

Another story making the rounds is of a family that was taping their favorite television show, "The Cosbys," when an air raid alert sent them scurrying into their gas-proof room.

After the "all clear," they resumed watching the show, this time on videotape. When it came to the point where it was interrupted by the air raid alert, the family forgot they were watching a recording and went back to the sealed room.

According to the newspaper story, they sat there for an hour wondering why no "all clear" was broadcast on their transistor radio.

LIFE SENTENCE GIVEN TO EX-NAZI FOR KILLING GYPSIES AT AUSCHWITZ

BONN, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- A former Nazi SS guard has received a life sentence for killing Gypsies at Auschwitz.

Ernst-August Koenig, 71, was convicted last Thursday in Siegen, Germany, a town east of Bonn, following a 44-month trial.

Koenig was a retired fosterer who referred to himself as an "angel of Auschwitz" who never hurt anyone. He was found guilty of killing three Gypsies with his own hands and of aiding in two instances of mass gassing of 3,258 Gypsies.

Some 160 witnesses were heard at the trial, which was the first to sentence someone explicitly for killing Gypsies.

Trials were conducted in the 1950s against Nazis accused of killing Gypsies, but they were all abandoned for one reason or another, according to the judge in the trial, Dirk Batz.

Charges were brought against him by a Gypsy group called the German Sinti and Romany Council. The Sinti and Romany are two ethnic groups of Gypsies living in Germany.

Koenig was found not guilty of helping gas more than 21,000 Gypsies and 50 Jews between 1943 and 1944, due to insufficient evidence.

Defense attorneys argued it was too late to charge him under a law that states that only crimes committed before 1945 under Nazi instructions can still be tried.

The prosecutor general of the Cologne Office for the Prosecution of Nazi Crimes, Hans-Joachim Roseler, in his closing statement two months ago, said, "The ugliest murder in the history of crime cannot surpass the atrocities of National Socialism. What happened 47 years ago in Auschwitz puts everything else in the shadow" and is beyond "any human comprehension."

Ironically, an accusation made erroneously against Koenig, that he was commander of the "Canada section" of Auschwitz, helped in locating another SS guard.

Three Canadian Holocaust survivors who were summoned to Koenig's trial as witnesses confirmed Koenig "killed untold numbers of Gypsies, but he wasn't the Canada Koenig of the SS," Dr. Rudolf Vrba of Vancouver said in October 1989.

Not The Last Nazi Trial

Verba helped identify Heinrich Johannes Kuehnemann, a well-known opera singer from Essen, as the man known at Auschwitz as the "koenig" or king of Canada.

Kuehnemann was called as a witness against Koenig and was himself fingered as a war criminal when he took the witness stand.

Gypsies say some 20,000 Gypsies died at Auschwitz-Birkenau and that some 250,000 Gypsies were killed in the Holocaust.

Gypsies, like Jews, were deported to Eastern Europe. Several thousand Gypsies were sent to the Lodz Ghetto. In 1942, Gypsies were sent to Auschwitz, Chelmo and Mauthausen death camps.

The Koenig trial has been reported in Germany as probably the last big Nazi trial because most Nazi suspects are believed to be dead. That is disputed by Elliot Welles, director of the Nazi Task Force of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in New York.

This trial is "not going to be the last one," said Welles. "There are other investigations, too," regarding "certain cases that were found in the

U.N. war crimes archives. Those cases were sent to different prosecutors."

The suspects are all at least in their early 60s but with many a good deal older.

There are currently other accused former Nazis either on or awaiting trial in Germany, including Boleslavs Maikovskis, 85, a former commander of a Latvian pro-Nazi police force, and Josef Schwammberger, 79, accused of brutally killing at least 6,000 Jews at several concentration camps in Poland.

The Maikovskis trial, which began a year ago and is expected to continue until June, is held every Monday and Thursday in Munster. "The files are so heavy and so thick and go back to 1965, when he was sentenced to death in Riga, Latvia," said Welles of ADL.

The Schwammberger trial is slated to begin in Stuttgart in about three months. Close to 100 surviving witnesses are expected to testify.

(JTA staff writer Susan Birnbaum in New York contributed to this report.)

WALESA AGREES TO SET UP TASK FORCE TO COMBAT ANTI-SEMITISM IN POLAND

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Polish President Lech Walesa has agreed to name a permanent task force to combat anti-Semitism in his country, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council announced here.

Walesa agreed to the task force during an hour-long meeting last Friday at his official residence with Miles Lerman, a Holocaust survivor and chairman of the Memorial Council's international relations committee.

Lerman, a native of Poland, had proposed the task force during a meeting Jan. 9 with Kazimierz Dziejanski, the Polish ambassador here.

"As someone who has lived through the Holocaust, I came to President Walesa to speak candidly about issues that had been weighing heavily on my heart," said Lerman, who led a resistance group in southeastern Poland during World War II.

"The reappearance of various forms of anti-Semitism, in a Poland that has hardly any Jews left, that resurfaced in Poland's recent election campaign must be eradicated."

Walesa was himself accused during the election campaign of allowing anti-Semitic innuendoes to be used in his successful bid for the presidency.

The task force will be made up of members of the Polish government, professors, journalists and at least one top Polish Catholic clergyman.

The establishment of the panel will be "a giant step toward healing the dangerous misunderstandings between our two peoples," Lerman said.

Walesa also told Lerman that on his first state visit to the United States he would meet with officials of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, which the council is establishing, and with Polish Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. No date has been set for the visit, which is expected to occur in the spring.

Lerman negotiated an agreement with the Polish government in 1988 to provide the museum, scheduled to open in 1993, with access to the Polish archives on the Holocaust.

The Polish government, the state museums at Auschwitz and Majdanek, and the Polish Jewish Historical Institute have provided several important artifacts to the museum.

PAPAL ENCYCLICAL ON CONVERSION NOT AIMED AT JEWS, BUT TROUBLING

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Pope John Paul II's recent call for more active efforts to convert non-Christians to Roman Catholicism does not seem to be a mandate to convert Jews, say Jewish specialists on interfaith affairs.

But according to Jewish and Catholic leaders, the papal encyclical raises some troubling questions that require clarification.

The encyclical, which carries the highest level of papal authority, is titled "Redemptoris Missio" (The Church's Missionary Mandate).

It reportedly was issued in response to the weakened position of missionary work as a central Christian goal and the rapid growth of Islam in areas in the Middle East and Africa that were once strongholds of Christianity.

It also was prompted by barriers placed in the way of church work in Asia and the rise of Protestant denominations in Latin America, where fundamentalist groups are targeting Catholic audiences, according to Sister Mary Boys, a Catholic theologian and associate professor of theology at Boston College.

The encyclical refers "to the mission ad gentes," or "to gentiles," a term that has its roots in the Christian Bible and literally means "to the nations," but is usually used in church circles to mean non-Christians and non-Jews.

The Vatican's position on Jews since the Second Vatican Council's "Nostra Aetate" statement of 1965 has been that the Jewish people maintain a special relationship with God and that God's covenant with the Jews has not been revoked.

Since the latest encyclical mentions Moslems, Buddhists and Hindus but does not specifically mention Jews, Jewish leaders in interfaith dialogue are not worried about Jews being targeted for an overt missionary campaign.

"The Vatican-Jewish dialogue of the past 25 years since 'Nostra Aetate' has given no evidence of a Catholic intent to convert the Jewish people," said Rabbi Jack Bemporad, chairman of the Synagogue Council of America's Interreligious Affairs Committee.

Stance On Interfaith Dialogue Unclear

But some Jewish leaders are concerned about statements in the encyclical, such as one saying that "interreligious dialogue is a part of the church evangelizing mission."

The encyclical goes into some detail about the need for interreligious dialogue while insisting there is "no conflict between proclaiming Christ and engaging in interreligious dialogue."

"These two elements must maintain both their intimate connection and their distinctiveness; therefore, they should not be confused, manipulated or regarded as identical, as though they were interchangeable," the encyclical says.

The document is not clear on the relationship between dialogue and evangelization, Rabbi A. James Rudin, national director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, said in a statement issued after a preliminary reading of the encyclical.

He said the encyclical does not answer whether it is "possible to fully affirm one's own unique and sacred religious tradition without seeking, either actively or passively, the conversion of those who do not share that tradition."

The Rev. Michael McGarry, rector of St. Paul's College in Washington and an expert on missionizing, agreed that "the tension is there" between the papal call to evangelize and interfaith dialogue.

Rudin called for the development of a theological commitment by the church to religious pluralism among peoples of all faiths, in order to provide a firm basis for interreligious dialogue.

"As we are in a more turbulent religious era with factionalism and extremism, we need a theological commitment to religious pluralism more than ever.

"If we are not careful, we could end up with theological warfare between religions," he said. But, Rudin added, "this encyclical will not contribute to that war."

B'NAI B'RITH OPENS IN PRAGUE, FIRST SINCE NAZI OCCUPATION

By Josef Klansky

PRAGUE, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- The first B'nai B'rith lodge in Czechoslovakia since the Nazi occupation 53 years ago was inaugurated Sunday at quiet ceremonies attended by B'nai B'rith leaders from the United States and western Europe.

It was named the Renaissance Lodge because it will resume the educational, social and charitable activities cruelly ended after Czechoslovakia was forced to cede the Sudetenland, its fortified western region, to the Third Reich in September 1938.

The Nazis occupied the rest of the Czech republic the following March, dooming the 17 B'nai B'rith lodges that had been active in Czechoslovakia during the interwar years.

The originally planned festive inauguration, to have been attended by a large number of guests, was scaled down and muted because of the Persian Gulf war in which Israel, a non-combatant, has been a target of Iraqi missile attacks.

The officers of the new lodge were installed provisionally. A charter will be presented at a future date.

Zeno Dostal, a writer and film director, became the first president of Prague's Renaissance Lodge, which has more than 50 founding members.

Czechoslovakia is the 47th country with a B'nai B'rith presence.

The ceremonies were led by Kent Schiner, president of B'nai B'rith International; Joseph Domberger of Munich, senior international vice president; and Maurice Honigbaum of Nice, France, president of Continental Europe District 19 of B'nai B'rith.

Also there were Daniel Mariaschin, director of B'nai B'rith's international and public affairs department; Lutz Ehrlich, director of District 19; Henry Schneider, international vice president of District 19; and Alan Cohen of England, vice chairman of B'nai B'rith's International Council, and Ernest Bello, a member of England's first lodge, both representing District 15, the United Kingdom.

The Israeli ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Yoel Sher, also attended.

A delegation led by Schiner was received Monday by President Vaclav Havel at Prague's Hradcany Castle. Schiner expressed his gratitude for Czechoslovakia's resumption last year of diplomatic relations with Israel and its strong support of Israel during the current crisis with Iraq.