

**AFTER 2 BOMBS DEFUSED IN NEW YORK,
DEBATE RAGES OVER RHETORIC'S IMPACT**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- Two bombs left outside the Manhattan buildings that house Americans for Peace Now and the New Israel Fund did not damage their targets.

But they raised the specter of Jews fighting other Jews and ignited a debate: Have opponents of the accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization gone too far in their rhetoric?

"This is, for the first time, crossing a red line," Israeli Consul General Colette Avital said Monday.

But she criticized those who persist in verbally attacking the Israeli government as "traitors," saying such remarks are "not within civility."

Speaking the night before on CBS Television's "60 Minutes," Avital appeared to draw a closer connection between the bombs, the name-calling and the throwing of tomatoes and eggs at representatives of the Israeli government in America.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir fueled the fire last week with his comments about the bombs, which were discovered early on the morning of Jan. 5.

Shamir told Israel Radio that the damage done to Israel by Peace Now exceeded that which would have been caused by the bombs, had they gone off.

He later retracted his remark, calling the bombs an insane act by insane people who did not know what they were doing and explaining that his radio remarks had come out backward.

'What He Meant To Say'

"What he meant to say is that he didn't see much activity by Peace Now, since their views are now those of the government, so the bombs did more damage" than did the organization, explained Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Hoenlein had called Shamir after reports of the remarks, since the Conference of Presidents was prepared to condemn them.

"A statement like that is of great concern, anything that would appear to indicate in any way that this (the bombs) was not a serious attack, or not condemned by everybody," said Hoenlein.

At Peace Now, the retraction was greeted with skepticism. "It's nice he was politically savvy enough to retract," said Letty Cottin Pogrebin, the organization's chair.

But, she said, "I still can't get away from the fact that he said it in the first place."

Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, was a harsher critic.

Noting as well the recent statement by the head of the opposition Likud party, Benjamin Netanyahu, that the Likud did not see itself bound by the accord reached with the PLO, Siegman said, "One would have to conclude that the current leadership of Likud is thinking of alternatives to democratic government for the State of Israel."

Siegman dismissed the significance of the bombs themselves, saying he believed they were planted "by some marginal individuals."

The bombs were found with rambling handwritten notes, attacking the Israeli government for being too liberal. They were signed Maccabee Squad and Shield of David -- groups that recently claimed responsibility for killing two Palestinians in the West Bank, but were hitherto unknown.

Binyamin Zev Kahane, son of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane who was the central figure in violent Jewish extremism both in New York and Israel, denied responsibility for the two bombs, but he refused to condemn the act.

Groups that did condemn the attack fall all along the political spectrum. They include the Jewish Defense Organization, the Zionist Organization of America, the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the Conference of Presidents, and the targeted organizations themselves.

The younger Kahane, who serves as international director of Kahane Chai, which succeeded his father's Jewish Defense League, blamed "Yitzhak Rabin and his treasonous government for the bombing, which may be the first shot in a bloody civil war which Rabin is causing by his abandonment of the security of the Jews in Israel and his violations of the Torah."

Both Siegman and Pogrebin say such rhetoric -- and its apparent acceptance by mainstream organizations on the right -- is the real problem.

"Supporters of the Likud and other rightist parties continue to up the ante on incendiary verbal attacks, using words like 'traitor' to delegitimize the Rabin government and its supporters," said Pogrebin.

But Herb Zweibon, director of Americans for a Safe Israel, which strongly opposes the accord with the Palestinians, disputed the connection between rhetoric and violence. "It's rather ridiculous," said Zweibon, who also condemned the bombs as "stupid and counterproductive."

"For years the right has been characterized as fascist and Nazis and all the rest, so this kind of rhetoric has been on both sides."

**RABIN HINTS ISRAEL AND PLO MAY FAIL
TO REACH AGREEMENT BY APRIL DEADLINE**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- Although Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organization negotiators have resumed their talks at the Sinai border town of Taba, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has left open the possibility that the two sides may not be able to reach an agreement by the April 13 deadline for the pullback of Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

"The basis for the target date is the ability to reach a signed, orderly agreement," Rabin told Israel Radio on Monday. "Each stage depends on negotiations, agreement, signing and then implementation."

"The dates," he said, "they are trends, target dates. They are not decisive, they are not sacred." The Dec. 13 date for the phased start of the troop withdrawal "was not sacred, and neither is the April 13 date."

Considerable disagreements over security issues have stymied the two sides. The disagreements led to a breakup two weeks ago of negotiations, which had moved to Cairo to avoid the glare and distraction of the media.

The two sides have given widely different interpretations of the talks. While the Israelis claimed they had reached a broad agreement, the PLO denied any meeting of the minds had occurred.

Nabil Sha'ath, the chief Palestinian negotiator, told reporters Monday that it had been "a useful day" of talks. But he warned that missing the April deadline could have a devastating effect on the negotiations.

"If we are going to play havoc with this second date, we are playing havoc with the whole agreement," Sha'ath said.

Sha'ath spoke of the prospect of reaching an agreement within two weeks. But a spokesman for the Israeli delegation, Ami Gluska, said it would take much longer.

Amnon Shahak, the Israel Defense Force deputy chief of staff who heads the negotiating team, steered clear of the issue. He told reporters only that "if we work, we'll get there eventually. It will take as long as it needs to take."

Two Sides Said To Agree On Jericho

Despite PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's denial two weeks ago that any agreement had been reached in Cairo, Israel affirms that the Taba talks will proceed on the basis of "understandings" reached in the Egyptian capital.

Those understandings provided for joint Israeli-Palestinian border controls between Gaza and Egypt and between Jericho and Jordan.

The Cairo understandings also reportedly went into detail on the much-debated size of Jericho's borders. The two sides reportedly specified that the Jericho enclave would be some 21 square miles, from Deir el-Kuruntul to the west to Mahru Musa Alami on the east.

According to a report in the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, Rabin instructed the Israeli delegation Sunday not to deviate from the understandings reached in Cairo.

The Taba talks were scheduled to continue indefinitely until an agreement is reached.

Meanwhile, on Monday, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres successfully led a government counterattack in the Knesset against a no-confidence motion introduced by the National Religious Party and the nationalist Tsomet party.

A hot point flashed when Agriculture Minister Ya'acov Tsur and Knesset member Yossi Katz, both of the Labor Party, clearly implied that the accord with the PLO would likely lead to eventual creation of an independent Palestinian state.

"I respect them," Tsomet Knesset member Gonen Segev said. "At least they had the guts to tell the truth."

ISRAELI HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION TURNS ITS ATTENTION TO PALESTINIANS By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- Following years of criticizing abuses allegedly perpetrated by the Israel Defense Force in the territories, Israel's leading human rights organization this week turned its attention on abuses allegedly committed by Palestinians on their brethren during the past six years.

The rights group, B'Tselem, called for a halt

to the torture and killings of Palestinians alleged to be collaborators by other Palestinians.

B'Tselem made the call in a 200-page report, which estimated that since the start of the intifada in December 1987, Palestinians have killed between 750 and 950 of their own people accused of collaborating with Israeli authorities.

B'Tselem said most of the killings had been carried out by the militant Islamic Hamas movement. But it also blamed the Palestine Liberation Organization for doing little to prevent the killings.

More than half of the Palestinians killed on charges of collaboration had not worked with the Israeli authorities, the report said.

B'Tselem also charged that many Palestinians had been killed as a result of personal disputes or after being called "morals offenders" -- for dealing in drugs, or on accusations of prostitution or homosexuality -- and were later branded as collaborators.

B'Tselem, which is Hebrew for "in the image," is a reference to biblical passages stating that men and women were created in God's image.

B'Tselem, which has traditionally focused on alleged human rights abuses committed by the IDF in the territories, also criticized Israeli policies in this week's report, describing the IDF's recruitment of Palestinian collaborators as exploitative and in violation of international law.

The report accused Israel of taking advantage of members of the lower echelons of Palestinian society, such as drug users and criminals, to recruit them as informers.

The report also charged Israel with blackmailing Palestinians into serving as informers and with using torture during interrogations.

B'Tselem said Israeli soldiers had killed 1,067 Palestinian from the start of the intifada through the end of 1993. But the report made clear that in the past three or four years, Palestinian killings of suspected collaborators have outnumbered Israeli army killings of Palestinians.

An IDF spokesman said the majority of Palestinians killed "did not cooperate in any way with the IDF."

The IDF gave a higher estimate than B'Tselem, saying 964 Palestinians had been killed by other Palestinians since the start of the intifada.

The IDF spokesman said Israel emphasized "its obligation to do all that is required and possible in order to support those individuals who have aided the Israeli authorities over the years."

WRITER ROBERT FRIEDMAN ATTACKED

JERUSALEM, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- American author Robert Friedman, who has written unflattering portraits of Israel's right wing, was attacked by residents of a West Bank settlement.

Friedman and an escort were assaulted Monday by members of the Kahane Chai movement, who accused Friedman of inciting the murder of their leader, Rabbi Meir Kahane, more than two years ago through his writings.

Friedman, author of books and articles portraying settlers and nationalists as zealots, was attacked by five men armed with pistols at the West Bank settlement of Tapuach. Friedman and the escort were unhurt.

In Brooklyn, Kahane Chai spokesman Mike Guzofsky said Monday, "Kahane Chai respects the valuable role of journalists in the dissemination of information to the public," but "we applaud the reception given to Friedman in Israel."

**BROOKLYN OFFICIAL MEETS WITH RENO
TO PURSUE CROWN HEIGHTS PROSECUTION**
By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes came out of his meeting with Janet Reno on Monday saying that the U.S. attorney general was "receptive" to his proposal that they jointly prosecute two of the men who attacked Yankel Rosenbaum during 1991's Crown Heights crisis.

Hynes proposed to Reno that their offices work together to prosecute Lemrick Nelson and one other person, believed to be Ernesto Edwards, on federal charges that the two violated Rosenbaum's civil rights by attacking him solely because he was a Jew.

Reno's spokesperson, Julie Anbender, said that the attorney general had not responded to Hynes' proposal, but that the two officials agreed to work together to gather evidence.

The meeting with Hynes was "an opportunity for us to review the evidence gathered so far and discuss the investigation," said Anbender.

When asked when Reno would announce her decision, Anbender said, "it is premature to announce anything now."

Edwards, 24, has been named by a witness for stabbing Rosenbaum, an Australian Lubavitcher who had been living in Crown Heights, with the same knife used by Nelson, who was acquitted of the murder in 1992.

Three other witnesses have also reportedly come forward against Edwards.

Edwards is a felon serving 2-to-6 year prison term for attempted robbery and attempted drug sales.

A Brooklyn grand jury has been hearing evidence since Jan. 7 to determine if he will face prosecution.

Joint prosecution, which would allow local officials to work on a case to be tried in federal court, has been used before, primarily in drug cases, said Patrick Clark, a spokesman for Hynes.

Hynes met with Reno for an hour and described the meeting as "positive," said Clark.

New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, in a television interview on Sunday, said it was "incomprehensible" that Reno has not yet decided whether to pursue the civil rights charges.

He called for her to impanel a federal grand jury in the matter.

"I have urged her over and over again," the mayor said on the WNBC-TV program "News Forum."

"I don't think there is any point to urging any longer," he said. "Now she's got to make a decision."

(Contributing to this report was JTA staff writer Deborah Kalb in Washington.)

**AN IRANIAN JEW WINS AN APPEAL
FOR REFUGEE STATUS IN AUSTRALIA**
By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- An Iranian Jewish woman won an appeal here this week of an earlier decision by the Australian Immigration Department, which had refused to grant her refugee status.

The woman, who cannot be named under Australian law, will now be allowed to remain in Australia as a refugee.

Making her appeal before Australia's Refugee Review Tribunal, the woman testified that the

lives of Iranian Jews were marked by intimidation, persecution and physical harassment, particularly at the hands of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Testifying on her behalf at the hearing were Parliament member Clyde Holding and a lecturer on Middle East politics at Monash University, Colin Rubenstein. They stated that if the woman were returned to Iran she would be accused of being a Zionist and subject to punishment.

They also maintained that since she had married in Australia, Iranian authorities might bring her up on morals charges, serious business in the Muslim fundamentalist state.

Rubenstein also argued that in Iran, where the authorities have overtly expressed anti-Semitic and anti-Israel attitudes, the status of the 20,000 Jews remaining there is, at best, that of an inferior but "protected" people.

In a worst-case scenario, he said, Jews who leave and return would be subject to arrest, torture and even execution.

In making its decision, the tribunal also took into account detailed reports by human rights monitoring organizations on the status of Jews in Iran, as well as the appellant's specific circumstances.

Australia has stringent guidelines for granting refugee status. For the tribunal to overturn a decision by the Immigration Department, it is necessary for the applicant to demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution.

**PLO CHIEF IN AUSTRALIA APPEALS
TO STATE TO FINANCE LOCAL OFFICE**
By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, Jan. 9 (JTA) -- The Palestine Liberation Organization has asked the government of Australia to finance its office here, claiming an acute shortage of funds.

Ali Kazak, the PLO's Australia representative, said his office might be forced to close because of the cutoff last June of funds that had been supplied by the organization's Tunis headquarters.

A government spokesman said Kazak's request will be examined, but noted that there appeared to be little the government could do to assist the PLO.

He said the government has in the past made financial concessions to diplomatic missions here, but the gestures are generally made on a reciprocal basis.

Along with the request to the Australian government, Kazak has circulated a letter to "friends and supporters" of the PLO, requesting donations of up to \$3,500 to help clear debts, pay staff and contribute to the local office's operating costs.

Kazak claimed his appeal came at the direction of "President" Yasser Arafat, the PLO chairman, who had asked him "to call on all our friends and supporters to help alleviate our current difficulties, which we hope will be temporary" and were due to "the savage economic war Israel is conducting against the Palestinian people."

Greg Sheridan, foreign editor of the daily newspaper *The Australian*, has called on the government to reject out-of-hand Kazak's call for assistance.

"It would be preposterous, and morally offensive, for Canberra (the Australian capital) to give it any financial assistance whatsoever, whether money or cheap premises," Sheridan said.

NARKISS, AS WZO TENURE ENDS, SEES RIFT GROW BETWEEN ISRAEL, DIASPORA

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Jan. 9 (JTA) -- As Uzi Narkiss winds up 27 years with the World Zionist Organization, and a two-year stint heading its American office here, the retired general thinks it is time for the organization to change.

Narkiss believes that as the WZO moves toward its 1997 centenary, the organization founded to implement Theodor Herzl's vision of a Jewish state must shed some of its political structure and gear itself to ensuring a connection between Israel and the Diaspora.

"The State of Israel without the Diaspora is not the same Israel, and the Diaspora without Israel is not the same Diaspora," Narkiss said in a recent interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency as he prepared for his new post as chairman of Israel's Coins and Medals Authority.

But the two communities could well drift apart, said Narkiss, and not only because of declining Jewish identity in the Diaspora.

Narkiss fears that in another decade, as Israel finds itself the largest single Jewish community in the world, it could grow less interested in Jews outside its borders.

Adding to his fear is the possibility that Israel's reaching peace with its neighbors could lead Israel to "become more interested with its Arab neighbors than with the Jews."

"I am very concerned that Israel will not turn, God forbid, Canaanite," said Narkiss, referring to an anti-Diaspora ideology that sought to create an Israeli identity rooted in the Middle East and separate from the Jewish religion.

In the years just before and after the founding of the State of Israel, a group of intellectuals sought common cause with Arabs in forming a new culture. They were often disparaged as "Canaanites," pagans who lived in the land before being conquered by the biblical Israelites.

"The WZO has to take on itself, as its main goal, that Israel not turn into Canaan, and that the peace process not come between Israel and the Diaspora," he said.

Helping the Diaspora remain connected to Israel may be the easiest challenge.

"It's very possible that Israel will get much more involved in the Jewish community, sending more teachers to the Diaspora, ensuring that every Bar Mitzvah child will visit Israel," said Narkiss.

A Complicated Question

"All of these can be the mission of the WZO," he said.

But how to help the Israelis is a more complicated question.

"The Jewishness (of Israelis) is that we live in Israel, go to the army, make a circumcision and say Kaddish," said Narkiss.

"If all the borders are open, the Jewish nature of the state will be diluted," he said.

He cites his own grandchildren as an example of the Israel-Diaspora gap.

"It's hard to get them to listen to what I say -- if it's not about computer games -- when I say there are young Jews in America.

"They want to go to America, but for Disneyland. They want to go to Paris, for Euro-Disney. But it doesn't interest them that there are young Jews around the world," he said.

If the WZO is going to take on the bold task of reversing this apathy, said Narkiss, it cannot continue business as usual. Its organizational structure, based on nearly a century of Zionist history, has to change, he believes.

One example: Currently, the WZO operates along divisions based on the type of program being operated, not the region being served.

As a result, representatives promoting aliyah report to a different boss in Jerusalem than do their colleagues, at the next desk in New York, who are promoting student programs.

The frequent result is confusion.

Narkiss wants divisions to serve the different regions in the Diaspora: Europe, North America, South America.

(The WZO's sister organization, the Jewish Agency, has already begun moving toward a geographic orientation. A unit for the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe operates directly under the agency's chief executive, overseeing the work of the different functional divisions.)

Narkiss has added his voice to those calling for a new means of deciding on representation in the WZO.

The WZO calls itself the only democratic institution in Jewish life because its representatives are elected, on party lines, by all members of Zionist organizations.

In the United States, these organizations include Hadassah, the Zionist Organization of America and Americans for Progressive Israel, as well as Zionist groups linked with the Reform, Conservative and Orthodox movements.

But the elections, last held in 1987 and circumvented before the WZO's 1992 Zionist Congress, are expensive. And whether because of expense or, perhaps, because of fear of losing clout, some of the largest and most established Zionist organizations are opposing elections for the next Zionist Congress, expected in 1997.

Advocating elections are the younger Zionist groups linked to the American religious movements, such as the Association of Reform Zionists of America.

Underlying the old system is the WZO's history as the Jewish people's parliament-in-exile.

With the creation of the State of Israel, the political tasks went to the state, and then most of the work of bringing immigrants went to the WZO's twin, the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Today, the Jewish Agency has a \$500 million annual budget, and the WZO around \$30 million. Another \$33 million is budgeted for Jewish education in the Diaspora, under the joint authority of the WZO and the Jewish Agency.

"I don't think that today elections (for WZO) are the most efficient and rational method to establish representation, because the political bodies of old, that built the state of Israel, don't exist anymore in the Diaspora," said Narkiss.

He called on the WZO to create a committee to study new forms of representation ("not according to dollars, like the federations") so that the organized Jewish community will be represented.

"It might be according to profession. Intellectuals, writers, poets, lay people. Also important forces, like the women's organizations," said Narkiss.