

**POLICE ARREST LEBANESE MAN
IN SHOOTING OF LUBAVITCH YOUTH****By Pamela Druckerman
and Susan Birnbaum**

NEW YORK, March 2 (JTA) -- Police have charged a 28-year-old Lebanese national in Tuesday's shooting of four Lubavitcher students on the Brooklyn Bridge.

The man, Brooklyn resident Rashad Baz, has been charged with 15 counts of attempted murder, various assault charges and numerous weapons violations.

Police have impounded the suspect's car, a 1978 Chevrolet Impala, as well as a weapons cache that included a submachine pistol, a semi-automatic shotgun and 50 rounds of ammunition.

Police Commissioner William Bratton said at a news conference Wednesday that preliminary ballistic tests have linked the weapons, which were found in the suspect's car, to Tuesday's shooting.

Police would not comment on a possible motive for the shootings, including whether there are links to last Friday's killing of at least 40 Muslims by a Jewish settler in Israel's West Bank.

Officials at the news conference, who included Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, would also not comment on whether the suspect was tied to any group, although they did say they were questioning other individuals.

But Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau said it was clear the suspect was "not going deer hunting."

The four Chasidic victims of the attack were passengers in a white van that had been part of a convoy accompanying the Lubavitcher rebbe back to the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn from successful eye surgery in Manhattan.

The van, carrying 15 people, was shot at by a gunman in a car as it approached the Brooklyn Bridge on the Manhattan side. The car pursued the van and fired at it two more times.

Suspect Car Taken To Body Shop For Repairs

Two of the victims, Aaron Halberstam, 16, and Nachum Sossonkin, 18, were reported in very critical condition from gunshot wounds to the head, and were not expected to live.

At the news conference, the district attorney said there would be an ongoing investigation into the shootings. He added that the police department is now questioning several other people in connection with the case.

The alleged gunman was apprehended by police after he left his car in a Brooklyn body shop to have its window repaired. Reports say someone from the body shop tipped off police that a vehicle, fitting the police description of a blue car with a shattered window, had been left in the shop. The window was apparently shattered when the suspect fired through it and into the van in Tuesday's attack.

At Wednesday's news conference, Giuliani praised the New York City police department for its "massive and swift" response to the attack.

The police apparently apprehended the

suspect -- who they say entered the United States in 1984 on a student visa -- within 24 hours of the attack.

Giuliani also praised the Jewish community for its cooperation in the incident, and called on New Yorkers not to view the shootings along racial lines.

"This act of evil is not the act of a people, it's the act of a person or persons," Giuliani said.

Commissioner Bratton said members of the Arab American community gave "significant" assistance in locating the suspect.

Members of the Chasidic community and other visitors maintained a prayer vigil at St. Vincent's Hospital, where the victims were taken, throughout Tuesday night.

Halberstam was pronounced brain dead. A spokesman for the hospital said the boy is being kept alive on life-support systems, in accordance with his family's religious beliefs.

Halberstam, who was known to his classmates at the Oholei Torah Yeshiva as "Ari," was said to be a favorite of the Lubavitcher rebbe. A classmate described him as a quiet, athletic boy who was very involved in the Lubavitch movement's Jewish outreach programs.

President Called Victim's Family

Halberstam's father, Chesed, was a butler and aid to the Rebbe's late wife, Chaya Moussia.

A spokesman for the Lubavitch community said President Clinton had telephoned the Halberstam family to express his anguish over the incident and to vow to pursue justice vigorously.

Sossonkin, who is from Israel, was also in very critical condition following surgery. His parents arrived from Israel on Tuesday night.

Yaakov Schapiro, a third victim, was treated at the same hospital in Manhattan for minor wounds to the head and hands and released.

A fourth student, Levi Wilhelm, was in stable condition at Caledonian Hospital in Brooklyn with a bullet wound to the buttocks.

Jewish leaders met in closed session Wednesday morning with Giuliani to discuss what is being done on the case and what the Jewish community can do to assist the police and protect itself from possible further attacks.

The Jewish leaders praised the mayor for his handling of events. The Mayor's Office has established a hot line for information connected to the case, as well as a \$30,000 reward.

Police say security has been beefed up at Jewish schools and synagogues, and news reports say 500 additional police were sent to Crown Heights on Tuesday night, where the Lubavitch movement is based.

Meanwhile, in an unrelated incident, police in the Midwood section of Brooklyn were holding two youths for a bias attack that took place late Tuesday night against a religious Jewish man, a 23-year-old student at Brooklyn college.

Two male Hispanics struck the man in the head with a piece of wood while shouting anti-Semitic epithets at him. The victim, who was unidentified, was treated for head wounds, received four stitches and was released from the hospital.

UNREST CONTINUES IN TERRITORIES AS ISRAEL GETS PESSIMISTIC ON TALKS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 2 (JTA) -- Amid vigorous diplomatic efforts to restart the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, Israeli soldiers killed two Palestinians during the sixth consecutive day of unrest following Friday's massacre at a Hebron mosque.

A 17-year-old Palestinian youth was killed by army gunfire in Hebron on Wednesday in a new round of violence that erupted following the lifting of a curfew in force since Friday's attack at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, where a Jewish settler killed at least 40 Palestinians.

Israel Defense Force troops killed a second Palestinian youth in Jericho. Residents there reportedly described Wednesday's violence as the worst to take place in the town in years.

There were other violent clashes between Palestinians and the IDF in other towns and villages in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Hebron killing was seen as especially grave, not only because it was the site of Friday's massacre, but also because it took place in the presence of a leading Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat.

Erekat was in Washington last week for talks with Israel. But he was recalled Monday, along with the other Arab delegation heads, to register grief and outrage following the killings.

President Clinton and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher have both said publicly that they hope and believe the talks can be restarted, and vigorous behind-the-scenes diplomacy is under way to achieve that goal.

But in Jerusalem, Israeli officials are less optimistic. They think that the leadership of Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat is more precarious than ever. Arafat is facing a rising tide of anger and resentment from hard-liners within the PLO, who cite Friday's massacre as proof the Israelis cannot be trusted.

In an effort to get the negotiations restarted with a show of good will, Israel released 500 Palestinian prisoners on Tuesday, with the release of 300 more promised for this week.

Compensation Is Less Than To Israelis

Government officials also announced that Israel would pay compensation to families of those killed during the attack in Hebron on Friday, and to the wounded.

About \$1,700 will be paid as an advance to bereaved families, with the amount of subsequent payments to be determined by the size of the victim's family. The wounded will receive lesser sums. The compensation reportedly was not as large as government payments to Israeli victims of Arab violence.

PLO leaders denounced these moves as too little, too late to make up for Friday's killings.

The PLO has been demanding wider concessions from Israel before resuming negotiations on implementing Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

Among its demands, the PLO has been calling on Israel to disarm all Jewish settlers, to end the expansion of settlements and the creation of new ones in the territories and to dismantle settlements where anti-Arab extremism is highest.

In Israel, meanwhile, the atmosphere further darkened midweek following the fatal shooting by the IDF of a Jewish settler from Ariel, David Beracha, late Tuesday night.

Beracha's car was shot at from a roadblock and from motorized patrols as he sped along the Trans-Samaria Highway, which links Ariel and Tel Aviv.

He was taking his wife for a kidney treatment at a hospital in Petach Tikvah. His wife, Ravit, suffered medium injuries.

Ravit later denied claims that her husband had opened fire at a roadblock.

The shooting was the second on the same road this week.

On Sunday night, another vehicle was shot at, but there were no casualties.

The two incidents reflect the highly charged state of alert throughout the territories, among both soldiers and civilians, in the wake of the Hebron massacre.

Security officials at Jewish settlements in the West Bank have been formally warned by the prime minister's terrorism adviser that an attempt by Palestinians to stage a mass attack on or near a settlement is considered likely in revenge for the massacre.

The army and police, meanwhile, are moving to implement the series of crackdown measures taken by the Cabinet earlier in the week against Kach and Kahane Chai, two militantly anti-Arab groups inspired by the teachings of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane.

On Wednesday evening, the army announced the capture of Eyal Noked, the second of five Kach activists against whom administrative detention orders have been issued.

Three others, including the well-known Hebron figure Baruch Merzel, are still on the run.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal said Tuesday that up to 100 other extremists would have their army-issue weapons confiscated and their gun licenses revoked.

There is no evidence, however, of any softening in Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's opposition to the demand raised by several dovish Cabinet ministers that Jewish settlements inside Hebron be dismantled.

The three Hebron settlement sites -- at Avraham Avinu Synagogue, Tel Romeida and Beit Hadassah -- are home to 42 Jewish families.

TOURISM MAY DROP AFTER HEBRON ATTACK By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 2 (JTA) -- Israeli Tourism Ministry officials and travel agents are reporting that they have already detected hesitation on the part of tourists to visit Israel, following the mass killings last week at a mosque in Hebron.

Those familiar with travel trends say the tendency to postpone plans to visit Israel is not serious yet, but that the trend may well snowball in the future.

They report that a growing number of would-be tourists are phoning friends and relations in Israel, asking if they should come.

Passover and Palm Sunday both fall this year on March 27, with Easter a week later, and the current unsettled climate in Israel has the potential to disrupt what is one of the busiest travel seasons here.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
ISRAELIS LEFT DEMORALIZED
IN WAKE OF ATTACK IN HEBRON**
By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- On Saturdays, the shops in the Arab Quarter of the Old City are traditionally filled with tourists and locals looking for a bargain.

Last Saturday, a day after West Bank settler Baruch Goldstein gunned down dozens of Arab worshipers in the town of Hebron, the winding alleyways of the quarter were virtually deserted.

Fewer people than usual visited the Old City for fear of being stoned by Palestinian protesters. Those who did venture beyond the high stone walls did so via the Jaffa Gate, where scores of police officers stood guard.

The murder, and the Palestinian violence that has come in its wake, have demoralized Israelis from all sides of the political and religious spectrum.

Right-wing or left-wing, religious or secular, people here are clearly shocked by the massacre. How, they ask, could something like this happen in our country? How could a Jew do such a thing?

Ordinarily a nation of extroverts, Israelis this week turned inward as they searched for answers. The local press devoted full coverage to the attack and the reasons behind it. Psychologists offered their opinions, politicians offered theirs. In the end, there were more questions than answers.

The despair manifested itself in many ways. In some synagogues, worshipers said two special prayers -- one in memory of the murder victims, another to ward off retaliatory acts by Arabs against Jews.

Immediately following the attack, frightened parents in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City whisked their children from the streets and set about reciting psalms.

"I decided to take a taxi rather than wait at my bus stop, which is across from an Arab village," said a 30-year-old Jerusalemite. "I just hope things calm down in a few days."

Attack May Have Deeper Effect

The mood of introspection turned Purim, the day the murders took place, into a low-key affair. Cities and towns usually packed with children in costumes were uncharacteristically quiet.

Such was the case at Kibbutz Afik on the Golan Heights. "People here have been very sad," said kibbutz member Marla van Meter. "We felt the effects on Purim, when the entire kibbutz usually comes out to celebrate. This year, only half of our members celebrated the holiday."

According to van Meter, the attack may have a deeper, more lasting effect. "Morale has been damaged," she said.

"The attack was the act of only one crazy man, not an incursion into Lebanon, but this one man took away the whole atmosphere of progress (on the political front). There is the fear that the government might try 'quick-peddling' a political solution just to ease the tension," she said. Rabin "may make concessions to appease the Arabs."

There are some who believe that concessions are in Israel's best interests. Saka, a middle-aged Tel Aviv resident, asserted, "If this murder

taught us anything, it is that we need to get out of the West Bank and Gaza. It will be better for Israel, better for the Palestinians."

No one has been more affected by the attack than settlers on the West Bank. "We are a peaceful people," said Leora Hasson, a resident of Moshav Na'ama, near Jericho. "We all feel sorry for the deaths. But each society has its crazy people, including Muslims and Christians."

Since the murders, she said, "We have been very frightened. Our children are frightened to go to school. We're afraid that we will have to leave our homes. If that happens, we're not going to fight with the government," she said.

For Anna Meler, also of Moshav Na'ama, "insecurity is the worst thing. After the attack, I was afraid to travel on the roads with my children, so I canceled a trip to Tel Aviv.

"I don't carry a gun -- I know I couldn't shoot someone. I felt insecure even before the attack, but now it is even worse. I want peace and will leave the West Bank if I have to."

**RIOTING BREAKS OUT IN BRUSSELS
TO PROTEST KILLINGS IN HEBRON**
By Joseph Kopel

BRUSSELS, March 2 (JTA) -- A pro-Palestinian rally organized by North-African immigrants in the center of Brussels this week turned into a serious riot, with a synagogue among the targets.

Also targeted by the rioters, who destroyed property and clashed with police on Sunday evening, was the hotel where Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal was guest of honor at a reception for the premiere here of Steven Spielberg's film "Schindler's List."

The rally, which had not been permitted by the city's authorities, had been organized by two local groups, the Anti-Imperialist League and the General Union of Students of Palestine. It was staged to protest last Friday's massacre at a mosque in the West Bank town of Hebron, where an Israeli settler killed at least 40 Palestinians.

At least 250 people took part in the rally, which turned sour after a few dozen masked youths mingled with the crowd.

Police forces in riot gear rushed to the area to try to restore order when serious disturbances broke out. The demonstrators hurled stones and bottles at police, damaged dozens of cars, including police vehicles, and smashed shop windows in Brussels' main shopping area.

"There were some 100 to 150 very young rioters who used this occasion to cause trouble," Brussels Police Commissioner Pierre van Doorselaer said later.

Some of the rioters tried to march to a synagogue but were stopped by the police. Others targeted the Metropole Hotel, on Brussels' main boulevard, where Wiesenthal was attending the reception for "Schindler's List."

Wiesenthal and the other guests at the reception had to be protected by police when the protesters crossed the boulevard toward the hotel.

Seven rioters were arrested, police officials said, adding that no one was injured during the clashes.

Later Sunday evening, police set up heightened security around Jewish schools, synagogues and Israeli diplomatic buildings in the Belgian capital.

**JEWISH GROUPS RELIEVED AT DEFEAT
IN SENATE OF BALANCED BUDGET BILL**
By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, March 2 (JTA) -- Many in the organized Jewish community heaved a sigh of relief this week as the Senate failed to pass a balanced budget amendment.

The close Senate vote late Tuesday, 63-37, came just four votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to pass the controversial constitutional amendment.

"This is a partial victory," said Diana Aviv, who heads the Council of Jewish Federations' Washington office. Opponents of the bill are hoping for a more decisive victory in an upcoming vote in the House.

"It's more of a relief than anything else," Aviv said.

Voicing both practical and philosophical objections to the amendment, some Jewish groups had joined with other organizations in a broad coalition opposing the legislation.

The Jewish officials feared that a mandated balanced budget could result in cuts in foreign and domestic programs supported by the Jewish community, from aid to Israel to social programs.

For the Jewish federations around the country, a balanced budget amendment would mean "large cuts in a host of social services," Aviv said.

In addition, some were concerned that the amendment would tamper with the Constitution for political reasons, and said that there were more appropriate ways for Congress to tackle the deficit than to amend the Constitution.

Congress "should take a long hard look at the ways" it allocates spending and raises revenue, and should not use "sleight-of-hand" methods like the amendment to address the deficit, said Richard Foltin, counsel for the American Jewish Committee.

'An Important Message'

"We are very pleased with last night's vote," said Mark Pelavin, Washington representative for the American Jewish Congress. "It sends an important message that the U.S. Senate will not allow the Constitution to be used for political purposes."

Pelavin said Wednesday that his group had devoted "a great deal of time and energy" to fighting the balanced budget amendment because the issue "cuts across all of our concerns."

The amendment -- variations of which have popped up in Congress for decades -- was proposed by Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) and Rep. Charles Stenholm (D-Texas).

In order to pass a constitutional amendment, a proposal must pass both houses of Congress by a two-thirds majority, and be ratified by three-fourths of the states.

Although the Senate vote seemed to kill the chances for passage this session, opponents of the amendment are awaiting an upcoming House vote.

While the House vote does not pose a practical threat now that the Senate has already defeated the amendment, it is "still important for the House to defeat this amendment by the largest margin possible," said Foltin.

If the House vote proves close, Aviv said, it would give additional impetus to supporters of the

amendment to push for it in the future. "They can try again until they prevail," she said.

Aviv said she felt President Clinton's fiscal 1995 budget already "takes a big stab at reducing the federal deficit."

The amendment is opposed by the Clinton administration and by Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Maine), who has vowed that the matter will not come up again this session in the Senate.

The Senate also rejected a weaker alternative proposal this week.

Jewish groups involved in the Coalition for Budget Integrity, which opposes the amendment, included AJCongress, AJCommittee, the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, the Council of Jewish Federations, the Jewish Labor Committee, the National Council of Jewish Women and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

**SYRIAN JEWS WHO SEEK TO LEAVE
HAVE VISAS IN HAND, REPORTS SAY**
By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, March 2 (JTA) -- Virtually all Syrian Jews who applied for exit visas have received them, according to reports reaching Jewish groups here.

However, the president of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews, Alice Harary, said there are still five or six members of the Jewish community without a desired visa in hand.

But, she said, "We are not expecting a problem." In recent weeks, she added, the process of granting visas was slowed first by the death of Syrian President Hafez Assad's son Bassel and now by the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

After decades in which travel was extremely limited for the 3,500 Jews then living in Syria, Assad announced a policy of free travel in April 1992.

While more than 2,000 Jews left the country, most moving to join Brooklyn's large Syrian Jewish community, Assad sharply reined in the issuing of travel permits starting in October 1992.

Last December, Assad promised U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher that he would grant the permits by the end of the month. While he failed to meet that self-imposed deadline, it seems as if official American assurances that Assad would deliver are being borne out.

The issuing of visas, however, has not yet resulted in a renewed flow of Syrian Jews to these shores.

"They're not leaving," said Seymour Reich, who heads a task force on Syrian Jewry for the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

One factor holding them back is the need to pack and to sell their property. The unusually cold winter has also delayed travel.

"I think before Pesach we'll see a lot, and the rest afterward," said Harary.

In fact, not all of the 1,000 remaining Jews plan on leaving. Estimates of those who plan to remain in Syria range from a few dozen to a few hundred.

Harary cautioned that despite the apparent victory of the quest for freedom for Syrian Jews, "it ain't over till it's over, until everyone who wants to come is out."