

**WJC ALERTS JEWS TO POSSIBLE THREAT
AS GERMANY REPORTS ABU NIDAL WARNING**
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- In the wake of a threat of an impending terrorist attack against the German Jewish community, the World Jewish Congress has issued an alert to its offices around the world to be on guard against potential terrorist acts.

The threat that the Abu Nidal terrorist organization would attack in Germany included a specific day -- Sept. 25 -- and a specific target -- Ignatz Bubis, the head of the German Jewish community, according to Elan Steinberg, WJC executive director.

Steinberg said WJC was alerted last Friday by both Israeli and German authorities about the threat in Germany.

"The German Jewish leadership from Bubis on down was made aware of what the German government officials described as concrete threats," Steinberg said.

"The nature of the threat is such that there was even an indication of a specific date, Sept. 25," Steinberg said.

"While the specific information related to Germany, it did not necessarily mean that other targets in other places were exempt," he added.

As result, he said, "we sent an urgent fax to all WJC regional offices around the world alerting them to the information, and providing whatever details we had to take whatever precautions they could."

Steinberg said the attacks in Germany were being traced to the so-called Abu Nidal group.

Abu Nidal is the *nomme de guerre* of Sabri al-Banna, a rejectionist Palestinian whose group has been accused of masterminding various murderous attacks, such as those on the Vienna and Rome airports in 1985 and on an Istanbul synagogue in 1986.

Armored Personnel Carriers Posted

The warning in Germany was extended to Jewish leaders, businesses and community centers, and has prompted stepped up security at Jewish sites around the country.

German authorities posted armored personnel carriers at Jewish and Israeli institutions in Bonn and Berlin. For over a week, police in bulletproof vests carrying automatic weapons have been posted along the Kurfurstendamm, Berlin's main shopping boulevard, where Jewish-owned businesses are located.

Police are also guarding Berlin's Oranienstrasse synagogue, which was recently re-opened after extensive renovations. The synagogue was heavily damaged on Kristallnacht, Nov. 9-10, 1938, when the Nazis went on a rampage against Jewish institutions.

In Bonn, police closed off the streets on which the Israeli Embassy and Jewish community center are located.

Steinberg said there were no known threats to Jewish communities elsewhere but that precautions are being taken.

"Even in our discussions with various officials in various countries, including the United States, we were not made aware of any specific Abu Nidal threats to any institutions throughout the world, but it could not be discounted," Steinberg said.

Maram Stern, a former German Jew who now heads the WJC office in Brussels, said that German officials had publicized the threat from the Abu Nidal group about three weeks ago.

Stern, who is regularly in touch with Bubis, said that the threat to Bubis and the German Jewish community was "a major headline" in the German media on Saturday.

In a telephone interview Sunday from Brussels, Stern said that Bubis had been aware of the general threat but was surprised by its personal element.

Bubis, chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, is a well-known figure in Germany and has been outspoken against the neo-Nazi danger to the Jews in Germany.

He was even touted as a possible presidential candidate, but said he was not interested in the position.

The latest threats come just months after reports that Abu Nidal had smuggled four activists into Germany to carry out attacks against Israeli targets there.

Last week, German officials arrested seven men in Berlin said to be of Arab origin, but released them the following day because of insufficient evidence against them.

**MIRED IN CONTROVERSY, L'OREAL
ANNOUNCES NEW INVESTMENTS IN ISRAEL**
By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- Mired in controversy over its alleged compliance with the Arab boycott of Israel, the international cosmetics giant L'Oreal is about to make a multimillion dollar series of investments in several Israeli ventures.

The plans, which include a manufacturing plant, an export agreement and a focus on research and development, represent a bold departure for the company, which has been criticized for bowing to Arab pressure not to do business with Israel.

The question remains, however, whether these investments will mollify opponents of the company, who include several Jewish groups and at least two members of Congress.

In a telephone interview from his Paris office, L'Oreal Vice President Jean Pierre Valeriola said the company is taking these steps because "Israel is a country with a good economy, and we are trying to develop our market."

L'Oreal has come under heated criticism since the 1980s for alleged compliance with the Arab boycott of Israel. As recently as this past July, New York Democratic Reps. Charles Schumer and Jerrold Nadler were calling for a boycott of the company to protest its policies toward Israel.

During a French investigation of charges against L'oreal, French police raided the company's

Paris office and unearthed correspondence between L'Oreal and the Arab League's boycott authorities. In the exchange of letters, the cosmetics giant said it would comply with the league's demands in order to be able to resume doing business with Arab states.

One of the demands was for L'Oreal to close the Helena Rubinstein manufacturing plant in Israel. L'Oreal had purchased the Rubinstein company in 1984. The plant was closed in 1988.

L'Oreal officials have repeatedly denied that the company or any of its subsidiaries have ever complied with the boycott. "I understand the emotional side of the issue," Valeriola said, "but I am confident that we never severed business with Israel, but increased it."

The question of how to deal with L'Oreal -- a company that despite its denials has been privately categorized by Jewish leaders as "vile," "repulsive," and "the worst boycott case ever seen" -- comes as progress in the Middle East peace process has diminished the boycott's effectiveness and importance.

"The boycott is slowly collapsing," said Will Maslow, editor of the American Jewish Congress' Boycott Report newsletter. "The Arab states are not strictly enforcing the boycott, but they have not made a public declaration that it's over."

Now, with this new commitment by L'Oreal to invest in Israel coupled with the new realities in the Middle East, how to approach the difficult question of when to forgive a company for alleged past transgressions is putting those who have long fought the boycott on different sides of this thorny issue.

'You Judge A Company By What It Does'

After an initial \$7 million investment in Israel in May, the Anti-Defamation League and B'nai B'rith sent letters to L'Oreal praising it for its move. After learning this week of L'Oreal's most recent plans, Jess Hordes, the ADL Washington representative, explained his organization's approach.

"You judge a company by what it does. L'Oreal is investing in Israel directly and openly," Hordes said. "This is a signal that the boycott is not part of the company's policy."

B'nai B'rith also praised L'Oreal. "You don't forget that the adherence (to the boycott) took place, but like the process of making peace, you move to a new plane with new realities," said Dan Mariaschin, director of international, government and Israel affairs for B'nai B'rith.

But not everyone was as willing to look past the company's history and believe that the fight is over.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, said Valeriola told him in March that L'Oreal would send a delegation to Israel to study stepped-up production of its products -- but it never happened.

"We've heard this before, and we're concerned about the foot-dragging," Cooper said. "At least they are talking about moving in the right direction, but we've got to wonder why is it taking so long?"

Schumer called L'Oreal's new plans a "good step, but only a first step."

The congressman said he would be meeting with L'Oreal officials in the coming weeks to discuss their investments.

The issue of L'Oreal compliance with the boycott has made headlines recently in part because of a suit brought in the United States earlier this year against the company by a French-Israeli businessman, Jean Frydman.

In his \$100 million lawsuit, Frydman echoed charges he first brought in France in 1989 that he and his brother were ousted from a joint venture with a L'Oreal executive in order to appease the Arabs.

Frydman took out a full-page advertisement in The New York Times last month detailing the charges against L'Oreal, and the case has been the subject of major news articles in Business Week, the Washington Post and Newsweek.

The Frydmans lost their criminal case in France, but a subsequent French government investigation found that L'Oreal did, in fact, comply with the Arab boycott.

The French media also turned the spotlight on the company's Nazi ties. Jacques Correze, chairman of L'Oreal's Helena Rubinstein unit, resigned in 1991 after French papers publicized his 1948 conviction for wartime crimes.

L'Oreal made its first step toward reconciliation with Israel this past May, with a \$7 million investment in its Israeli distributor, Interbeauty.

In July, L'Oreal pledged \$1 million to help finance a campaign to stamp out the high rate of road accidents in Israel.

Later that month, the Wiesenthal Center and the National Council of Jewish Women joined Schumer and Nadler at a rally in New York, where the congressmen called for a boycott of L'Oreal.

The groups also called for the Commerce Department's Office of Anti-Boycott Compliance to step up its ongoing investigation of the company's American subsidiary, Cosmair. Officials at the Commerce Department refused to comment on the investigation.

The Jewish groups participating in the rally later distanced themselves from Schumer's call for a boycott, but nonetheless maintained that L'Oreal was still in compliance with the boycott.

L'Oreal Plans Four New Israeli Projects

In preparation for its new push in Israel, L'Oreal is now putting the final touches on four new Israeli projects.

According to Valeriola, the L'Oreal executive, the company plans to invest \$3 million to \$4 million in an Israeli distribution company, independent of its investment in Interbeauty.

L'Oreal also plans to import to France from Israel at least \$500,000 worth of jojoba oil a year for use in the manufacture of shampoo products.

Another project has L'Oreal officials traveling to Israel in early October to determine which shampoo and hair care products to begin producing in Israel.

L'Oreal will also enter into a research and development cooperative with Hadassah Hospital for three studies on product development.

When asked if the company has heard from the Arab boycott authorities since its May investment in Israel, Valeriola said there have been "no questions and no comments. Maybe I should say not yet."

He added, "But we are developing our business without any consideration of contacts from other countries."

IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS, TERRORISTS TARGET TWO VICTIMS IN HEART OF ISRAEL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- Reflecting continuing Israeli-Palestinian tensions, terrorists wounded two Israelis in two separate stabbing attacks carried out within Israel's borders on Sunday.

In the first incident, Elad Sabban, an Israeli soldier on vacation, was stabbed in the back as he was walking to a bus stop at a highway intersection on the outskirts of Petach Tikva.

Sabban was rushed by ambulance, with the knife still sticking out of his back, to the nearby Beilinson Hospital, where he was operated on and reported to be out of danger.

A passerby said she was walking to the same bus stop when she heard a shout behind her and turned to see an Arab attacking the soldier.

Soldiers at a nearby hitchhiking station rushed to aid the injured man. They overpowered the assailant, holding him down until police and other soldiers came to arrest him.

It was not immediately clear whether the assailant had any ties to organized groups opposed to the Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative.

In the second incident -- which took place at about the same time as the first, but without any apparent connection -- Shimon Strau, a fruit and vegetable dealer from Netanya, was stabbed by two Arab farmers when he went to the Arab village of Ibtan near Netanya.

Strau, who had gone to the Israeli Arab farming village to buy vegetables, was invited by two farmers to come with them to visit their fields. As he was inspecting their produce, he was stabbed twice in the chest by the two men, who ran away.

Strau managed to summon help, and was taken to the Hillel Yaffee Hospital, where he was reported to be out of danger after receiving medical treatment.

AFTER LONG DELAY, 'SCHINDLER'S LIST' MAKES ITS DEBUT IN RUSSIAN THEATERS

By Lisa Glazer

MOSCOW, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- After months of delay and the threat of danger, the epic Holocaust film "Schindler's List" is finally appearing on Russian movie screens.

The Oscar-winning film about a German Nazi industrialist who saved Jews during the Holocaust had originally been scheduled to open in June, but the premiere was postponed because producer-director Steven Spielberg was too busy to attend the event.

A month later, security forces arrested members of the Werewolf gang of Russian neo-Nazis, who had planned to burn down Moscow cinemas screening the film.

Nicolette Kirk, the film's distributor in Russia for East-West Creative Associates, said she had recently made contact with the American and Israeli embassies as well as the Russian Interior Ministry, and "they had no information about attacks on cinemas."

The film opened Sept. 12 in Moscow with relatively little fanfare: Spielberg was not present, nor were any of the actors.

Yet public interest appears to be vast. The

daily newspaper Izvestia recently published a favorable, full-page preview, and the film has attracted comment from such prominent Russians as economist Yegor Gaidar, who said, "The inoculation against fascism is only good for 50 years. I would like wholeheartedly to thank the artist for understanding this ahead of time."

After opening in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the film is scheduled to roll out to 20 Russian cities, including Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Samara and Murmansk.

Kirk said she expects the film to be greatly successful, despite the fact that many Russians have already seen it on pirated videocassettes.

CANADA DROPS CHARGES AGAINST AILING MAN ACCUSED OF NAZI CRIMES

By Gil Kezwer

TORONTO, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- Marking the fourth unsuccessful bid to convict a Canadian for wartime atrocities, an Ontario court has dropped charges against an alleged Nazi war criminal because of his failing health.

Radislav Grujicic, an 83-year-old retired bookseller, had a leg amputated in August after gangrene set in following complications from diabetes. He is reportedly not lucid and is unfit to stand trial.

Though technically the charges against the Windsor, Ontario, man could be reactivated within a year, it is unlikely that will occur, according to Ivan Whitehall, the Justice Department's most senior prosecutor, who had been assigned to the case.

Grujicic, 83, was charged in December 1992 with 10 counts of premeditated murder and one count each of conspiracy to murder and kidnap.

His indictment stated that as a senior official of a special section of the Belgrade police in wartime Serbia from June 22, 1941, to Oct. 1, 1944, he conspired with civil authorities and the German occupying forces in the arrest and interrogation of suspected Communists.

As a result of his activities, his victims were deported to Nazi Germany and elsewhere for forced labor. Also resulting from his activities, 10 people are alleged to have been shot in Belgrade on May 25, 1943.

Grujicic reportedly was employed by the CIA and for a very short time by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, for whom he used his intelligence skills to ferret out Communists among Yugoslav immigrants to the United States and Canada.

Sol Littman of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Canadian office commended the Justice Department for dropping the case against the terminally ill man.

In a statement, Littman, who had first brought Grujicic to the attention of Canadian authorities in 1985, reiterated his earlier opposition to the trial.

"No matter how eager we are to see war criminals punished, our own sense of justice militates against subjection of a man who may be near death to the rigors of a trial," he wrote.

Grujicic was the fourth man tried in Canada for Nazi war crimes since the country's Criminal Code was amended in 1987 to allow for the prosecution of war crimes committed outside Canadian jurisdiction against non-Canadians.

None have been successfully prosecuted.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
STRUGGLING FORMER SOVIET REPUBLIC
BOASTS RICHES IN JEWISH LITERARY GEMS**
By Lisa Glazer

KISHINEV, Moldova (JTA) -- Located anywhere else in the world, the Jewish Municipal Library on Avenue Renashterii would be a special place. But situated here in the capital of Moldova, it is extraordinary.

Three years after its independence from the Soviet Union, this former republic is only beginning to restore its economy after a bitter civil war.

Yet its Jewish library boasts thousands of books in Romanian, Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian, a children's collection, a small theater, audio and video resources, a welfare office, a Jewish museum and 11 professionally trained librarians.

The library's cozy, beckoning presence is a testament to the creativity and diligence of one woman. It also reflects a turnaround of attitudes in a region with a brutal history of anti-Semitism.

Dominated alternately by Romania and Russia, Moldova was once a place where Jew-baiting publications flourished. It was also the site of treacherous pogroms in 1903 and 1905.

During World War II, an estimated 53,000 Jews were killed in the Kishinev area. Anti-Semitic repression continued under Soviet rule, when all but one of the city's synagogues were closed, the Bar Mitzvah ceremony was forbidden and the old Jewish cemetery destroyed.

But then everything changed: perestroika, the breakup of the Soviet Union, independence for Moldova and war with the breakaway republic of Transdnester.

The new Moldovan government, led by President Mircea Snegur, speaks of market reform, but what makes his government unique is its policy to fund institutions for Moldova's many ethnic minorities, including 68,000 Jews in a country of 4.3 million.

"The Jews have been the most active" among the country's minority populations, said Victor Grebensciov, an adviser to the president on ethnic affairs.

Helped By President, Government Measures

The Jewish community has been helped by a presidential decree supporting the Jewish Cultural Society, as well as by other governmental measures that helped establish a Judaica department in the Moldovan State University and led to the opening of government-backed Jewish day schools. Even the street where the city's sole synagogue stands has been renamed Chabad Lubavitch Street.

Why has the Snegur-led government been so supportive of these communal initiatives? Government officials say that recognition of the national rights of Moldovans calls for the establishment of equal rights for other minorities as well. Cynical observers suggest this is a ploy to put Moldova on the map and win foreign investment.

Whatever the reason, the Jewish community is in the midst of a renaissance, even while emigration surges.

"It's a very interesting phenomenon," observed Simeon Shoichet, a leader of the Jewish Cultural Society. "The more that Jews leave for other countries, the more active the Jews in Moldova become, and the more Jews emerge to

say they are Jewish." This phenomenon is exemplified by the Jewish library and the efforts of Anna Batsmanova.

Batsmanova, director of Kishinev's Jewish library, grew up in an environment where Pesach was the only reminder of Jewish heritage. She trained as a librarian, became the head of a municipal children's library and had a family.

In 1988, she joined the Jewish Cultural Society because "I have Jewish roots and blood."

Soon, the energetic librarian decided to move the children's books in her library to a larger library that would become the first in a new network of government libraries for the country's ethnic minorities. But how would she acquire books in a cash-poor country?

Undaunted, she placed ads in the local Jewish media -- and the books poured in. Paradoxically, the Jewish exodus helped. As families left, they unloaded their books at the library.

The library officially opened on Feb. 4, 1991 and has been growing ever since, with crucial financial aid provided from the Kishinev office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Remembering Yiddish After All These Years

As it expanded, the library has been the recipient of several honors. In 1993, it was named the best library in the country by the Municipal Library Association, and it was recently chosen as a model library during a conference on Jewish libraries in the former Soviet Union.

For visitors, the library is a place to meet people, find a book or the answer to a question.

On a recent rainy day, Zoya Michaelova, 50, came for information about moving to Germany after rejecting Israel because of the climate.

"I get information about Israel, social affairs. It's very important," she said.

Another visitor, Ida Bruchis, 71, said, "Someone told me about the library, and when I heard about it, I came right away. Now I read books in Yiddish by Sholem Aleichem with great pleasure. And I thought I forgot the language!"

Bruchis then asked about the working hours of the local welfare office. With a pension of about \$10, she depends on aid for food and rent.

Her situation is not unique.

Although the average salary is only about \$21 per month, the Moldovan Economic Ministry recently determined that average monthly household expenses were about \$65.

The librarians at the Jewish Municipal Library earn about \$17 a month. Asked how she manages on such a sum, Batsmanova shrugs as if to say she cannot figure it out. Others suggest that aid from relatives abroad is essential for Moldova's Jews.

Dreams of life in Israel tug at the hearts of nearly every Jewish family here.

Many young people predict there is no future for Kishinev's Jewish community.

"We can't say how long we will exist in the future," said Batsmanova. "But as long as the process goes on, we will be here. The majority of our readers consider this to be their home."

The Kishinev Jewish Library is interested in chronicling the lives of Moldovan Jews now living in the United States and Israel. To contact the library, write to: Jewish Municipal Library, 4 Avenue Renashterii, Kishinev 277005, Moldova.