

**NEWS AT A GLANCE**

■ **Rashid Baz was sentenced to nearly 142 years in prison for the murder of Aaron Halberstam, the 16-year-old Lubavitch student who was killed when Baz opened fire on the Brooklyn Bridge. Halberstam's mother said the sentence was a "statement for the world." But her family's lives are still destroyed, she said, and "our arms are still empty." [Page 3]**

■ **Jewish organizations rallied to organize relief efforts on behalf of the victims of this week's devastating earthquake in western Japan. Kobe, the city that lay at the center of the quake, is home to some 30 Jewish families. The fate of the community, which supports a synagogue and mikvah, was unknown.**

■ **British police arrested five suspects in connection with two bomb attacks against Jewish targets in London last summer. Israeli and Jewish organization expressed appreciation for progress in the investigation. In Buenos Aires, meanwhile, the Jewish community announced plans to rebuild its headquarters, six months after a terrorist attack ripped through the heart of the community. Officials said the new building, which will cost an estimated \$3 million, would open its doors in just over a year. [Page 3]**

■ **Hugo Princz, the New Jersey resident who has been seeking reparations from Germany for his suffering during the Holocaust, was dealt a major legal blow when the Supreme Court let stand a lower court decision that he cannot sue Germany. But Princz vowed to fight on. His best chance for action may lie with Congress, where legislation on his behalf almost passed last year. [Page 2]**

■ **Nayef Hawatmeh, the head of the Damascus-based Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, has reportedly asked to move to the Gaza Strip. Hawatmeh, whose group was involved in the horrific Ma'alot attack, opposes the self-rule accord with Israel. Israeli officials said they had received no request. He reportedly made his request in a message conveyed by Russian officials to the Israeli Embassy in Moscow. DFLP officials in the territories denied the the report about Hawatmeh's request. [Page 4]**

**NEW ANALYSIS****Crisis in relations with Egypt could herald new trend in ties***By David Landau*

JERUSALEM, Jan. 18 (JTA) — Israeli President Ezer Weizman stepped in this week in an effort to halt a dangerous deterioration in relations with Egypt.

In a personal telephone call to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Weizman urged the Egyptian leader to help turn things around.

"We mustn't let the peace between us turn cold," Weizman declared.

According to Israeli sources, Weizman's move is likely to be followed by a direct meeting between Mubarak and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in the near future.

Before that takes place, Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin is scheduled to fly to Cairo on Sunday for two days of high-level talks in which he, too, will seek to ease the tensions that have developed in the relationship between the two countries.

The latest in a chain of awkward incidents between the two governments occurred last weekend, when Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa convened a news briefing in Cairo to condemn certain unnamed Israeli Foreign Ministry officials as "retards."

Moussa was reacting to a leaked report in Israel of a policy paper prepared by the ministry's research and analysis unit advising "punishment" of Egypt for its diplomatic hostility toward Israel.

In Jerusalem, Moussa's words were taken as a deliberate and serious escalation in the war of words, and it elicited sharp, though anonymous expressions of anger and contempt from ministry staffers.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Beilin publicly rejected the policy paper.

But Beilin insisted on the unit's right to draft such a paper and blamed the unknown sources who leaked it for fomenting the trouble with Egypt.

**Egypt viewed as hostile to Israel**

This is not the first time that the research and analysis unit, under Harry Knei-Tal, embarrassed the ministry. Last November, after the Republicans won stunning victories in the U.S. congressional elections, the unit leaked a policy paper in which it virtually wrote off President Clinton as an unsalvageable lame duck.

The latest paper, regarding Egypt, reflects a long-standing feeling both among Israeli diplomats abroad and officials at home that Egyptian diplomacy is hostile toward the Jewish state.

Among the examples used to illustrate Cairo's frosty attitude toward Israel:

- Israeli diplomats have detected an Egyptian influence — despite Cairo's denials — in decisions made by various Muslim states in Asia and Africa to slow down their steps toward normalization of relations with Israel.

- At a recent summit conference in Alexandria, Mubarak, along with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, was widely believed to have acceded to Syrian President Hafez Assad's urging that Arab countries, too, slow the pace of their normalization with Israel until Syria concludes a peace treaty with the Israelis.

In the wake of that tripartite gathering, Gulf states such as Oman and Qatar, which had previously indicated they would establish diplomatic relations with Israel, are now signaling they will delay any move.

- Egypt has been in the forefront of an Arab and Third World demand that Israel sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, which comes up for renewal this year.

Dismissing all of Israel's arguments and explanations about why it needs a non-conventional deterrent capability, Egypt has gone so far as to threaten that unless Israel signs on to the international treaty, Egypt will not renew its own signature.

As Israeli officials see it, Egypt's campaign on this delicate issue is attracting widespread sympathy among both non-aligned and Western nations.

Moreover, it is weakening Israel's own international campaign to

warn about the dangers of Iran's persistent efforts to acquire or build a nuclear capacity.

For its part, Egypt has taken umbrage over statements by Israeli political and military leaders, including some by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, about the possibility of a future war pitting Israel against some or all of the states in the region.

Mubarak was reported to have voiced his resentment about these statements, and about the leaked Foreign Ministry policy paper, during his telephone conversation with Weizman.

The Israeli president, for his part, reportedly recalled the "wonderful" reception he had been accorded during a recent state visit to Egypt. He called for further top-level meetings in the near future to ensure that misunderstandings are cleared before they fester.

Looking beyond the present spate of unpleasantness, some observers here suggest that the current relationship between Israel and Egypt, which signed their historic peace treaty in 1979, is a realistic indicator of things to come in terms of peace treaties with other Arab states.

On the one hand, the clauses of the peace treaty with Egypt have largely been scrupulously adhered to — especially the security provisions. The formal provisions relating to diplomatic, commercial and cultural exchanges have also been observed by both sides.

But there is little "warmth" in the peace, as evidenced by the fact that Egyptian tourists hardly flock to Tel Aviv.

A similar "cold peace" is probably the best that can be expected, these observers say, in any future accord with Syria and Lebanon.

In the words of one leading analyst, these peace agreements are being concluded between vastly disparate societies — with Israel's advanced, industrialized society reaching out to Third World Arab societies. It would be naive, therefore, to expect a quick or easy spanning of civilizations.

Even the peace with Jordan, infused as it is with the personal warmth and enthusiasm of King Hussein and Rabin, is experiencing problems of "coolness."

The two leaders met late last week in an effort to expedite post-treaty negotiations and breathe more life into their recently normalized relations. □

## Holocaust survivor blames U.S. for court ruling on German suit

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18 (JTA) — Fifty years ago today, Hugo Princz, a U.S. citizen, was languishing in the Dachau concentration camp and feeling abandoned by the American government.

On Tuesday, only hours after the Supreme Court ended his legal fight to win reparations from the German government, the 71-year-old survivor said he is "being stabbed in the back" by the same government which, he believes, refused to come to his aid both then and now.

Without comment, the Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to hear an appeal of a lower court ruling that Princz, a Highland Park, N.J. resident, cannot sue Germany. In March 1992, Princz filed a lawsuit seeking \$17 million from the German government.

Last summer, a federal appeals court ruled that the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act of 1976, which limits the rights of U.S. citizens to sue foreign governments, prevents Princz from taking Germany to court.

When the United States declared war against Germany, Princz and seven members of his family, all American citizens, were living in Czechoslovakia, where they were turned over to the Nazis.

Princz, who later spent three years in Auschwitz, is the only member of his immediate family who survived the Holocaust. Liberated by U.S. forces at the end of the war, he was taken to a U.S. military hospital, thereby bypassing the displaced persons camps. As a result, he was never registered as a Holocaust victim.

Despite Germany's policy of paying thousands of dollars in reparations to victims of the Nazis, the German government has denied reparations to Princz because, the Germans say, he did not meet the requirement that recipients be "stateless."

Princz blames the U.S. government both for his fate during the war and his lack of compensation today.

"This is a repetition of what happened to my father in 1939," Princz said, explaining that his father had tried to secure safe passage from Prague for his family, but U.S. officials had been denied the necessary papers.

Today, Princz and his attorney, Bill Marks, say the State Department has "abandoned" them in their legal quest. They say the State Department refused to file a brief on his behalf in the court case.

Furthermore, in papers filed with the Supreme Court, Germany claimed that the State Department "implicitly agreed" with its position that Princz is not entitled to reparations, Marks said.

The State Department's "silence may well have sent a signal to the court that the German assertion was correct," Marks said.

"It is a dark chapter in the history of America when our government can not side with an American citizen in a case like this," Princz said.

President Clinton did raise the matter in a private meeting with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl last year, but no details were revealed at the time.

While the court's decision ends Princz's legal quest, two other avenues remain to fight his battle.

One avenue is legal, the other legislative.

### 'Congress must act quickly'

In addition to filing for legal recourse against Germany, Princz is seeking to sue the four German companies he was forced to work for during the Holocaust.

A series of legal complications and motions have delayed the judge's decision on whether he has the right to sue. A ruling is expected in the coming weeks.

But Princz's best hope, according to his attorneys, lies with Capitol Hill.

In the final moments of the last Congress, the Senate ran out of time to vote on a bill that would have allowed Princz to sue the German government. The House had unanimously approved the same measure, which would amend the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act to allow victims of genocide to sue foreign governments.

Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) announced after the Supreme Court decision that he will reintroduce the bill next week. "In the interest of fairness and justice to Mr. Princz for the horrors he suffered during the Holocaust, Congress must act quickly and allow him to claim his just reparations," Schumer said.

The Anti-Defamation League plans to lobby aggressively for Congress to pass the new legislation.

Calling the battle for reparations a "game of cat and mouse," Princz supporters say they hope that swift action by Congress and the White House support will prompt the German government to settle the case out of court.

In any case, Princz vowed to "go on fighting as long as I have breath.

"I'm not asking for special treatment," the survivor said. "I'm asking for what an average German national would get." □

## 'Our arms are still empty,' says mother after sentencing

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Jan. 18 (JTA) — Devorah Halberstam found little relief in this week's sentencing of the man responsible for the murder of her son.

"My son is dead, and that is the bottom line for us," said the mother of Aaron Halberstam, whose life was cut short at age 16 from bullets fired by Rashid Baz in March 1994.

Judge Harold Rothwax of the Manhattan Supreme Court sentenced Baz, 29, on Wednesday to a total of 141 years and 8 months on his murder conviction and 14 counts of attempted murder.

Baz was also fined \$5,000 for each of the 17 felony counts on which he was convicted.

"The sentence is a statement for the world, to criminals and to the justice system," Devorah Halberstam said in an interview.

"But for me and my family, we're just destroyed people. Our lives have been torn apart. Our arms are still empty," she said.

Baz killed Halberstam and wounded other Lubavitch teenagers when he opened fire at their van on the Brooklyn Bridge. They were returning to Crown Heights after praying at the Manhattan hospital where the Lubavitcher rebbe, the late Menachem Schneerson, had undergone eye surgery.

One of the boys in the van, Nachum Sosonkin, now 18, still has a 9 mm bullet in his head and is slowly recovering his physical and speech skills, which were severely damaged in the shooting.

Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, spokesman for the worldwide Lubavitch movement, responded to the sentence, saying, "We hope the sentencing will deter further bloodshed and expressions of senseless hatred." □

## Jews laud British police for arrests in London bombings

By Bernard Josephs

London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, Jan. 18 (JTA) — Israeli diplomats and Jewish organizations are applauding the efforts of British police, who this week arrested five people in connection with two bomb attacks against Jewish targets here last July.

Tuesday's arrests came nearly six months after the July 26, 1994, terrorist bombing of the Israeli Embassy here and the bombing a day later of the offices of the Joint Israel Appeal. At least 18 people were injured in the two blasts.

An Israeli official expressed "sincere appreciation" to the British government and to Scotland Yard for their efforts in apprehending those believed responsible for the bombings.

The Jewish Board of Deputies also had words of praise for the investigators, saying the police were conducting the hunt for the bombers "in a thorough and tenacious manner."

As police were questioning the suspects, the Board of Deputy's Community Security Organization warned against any reduction in the current high state of alert against further acts of terrorism.

In a message sent to all Jewish communal organizations, the organization stressed: "There can be no relaxation of vigilance or protective security measures. The threat to Israeli and Jewish interests from those opposed to peace in the Middle East remains significant."

The three male and two female suspects, rounded up in raids on their homes in North and West London, are

being held in custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. All are Palestinians born in Jordan or Lebanon.

Police sources said that no weapons were found at any of the addresses.

The men — two in their 20s and another aged about 40 — were described as businessmen. One of the women was in her 50s and was said to be a housewife. The other woman was said to be about 30. □

## Buenos Aires community plans to rebuild on site of bombing

By Grace Donati

BUENOS AIRES, Jan. 18 (JTA) — Six months after a terrorist attack struck the heart of the Jewish community here, Argentina's largest Jewish communal organization is planning to rebuild its offices in the near future.

Alberto Crupnicoff, the president of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA), said in a statement issued last Friday that the organization is planning to construct its new headquarters at the site of the building razed in last July's bombing attack.

Nearly 99 people were killed in that attack, which left more than 200 wounded.

The association said the new community center would be set back some 50 feet from the street to avoid a second attack.

AMIA will lay the cornerstone as soon as the Buenos Aires municipal government grants the zoning papers necessary to begin construction, the organization said.

Crupnicoff predicted that AMIA's new building would open its doors in just over a year. He estimated the project's construction costs at roughly \$3 million.

Since the attack, AMIA has been operating out of temporary offices located several blocks away from its former headquarters.

Fearing another terrorist attack, shopkeepers near the devastated headquarters have reportedly stated that they will move if AMIA attempts to rebuild there.

Security at all Jewish locations in Buenos Aires has been stepped up in the wake of last year's bombing. Concrete barricades were erected at entrances to synagogues, Jewish schools and clubs, and police maintain a 24-hour presence at all Jewish sites. □

## Israeli volunteer contingent returns from service in Haiti

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Jan. 18 (JTA) — The Israeli police contingent that was dispatched to Haiti last October as part of an international peacekeeping force returned to Israel this week.

During their three months of service in the Caribbean island nation, the 28 Israeli volunteers worked to help create better relations between the community and local police.

The Israeli detachment was part of a 1,500-member international team of police that took over civilian peacekeeping duties in Haiti following the arrival of American forces there in late September.

The police volunteers arrived Wednesday at Ben-Gurion Airport, where they were greeted by family and friends.

One of the volunteers, Monte Sagi, told Israel Television that he never felt that his life was in danger during his stay there. "As in all police work, you have to be extra alert, but I felt nothing you could describe as danger," he said. □

## Palestinian opposed to peace said to be seeking home in Gaza

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Jan. 18 (JTA) — A hard-line Palestinian leader, whose group was responsible for one of the bloodiest terrorist attacks against Israelis, has reportedly asked to move to the Gaza Strip.

Israel Radio reported Monday that Nayef Hawatmeh, the head of the Damascus-based Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, made his request via a message that was conveyed by Russian officials to the Israeli Embassy in Moscow.

In Jerusalem, Foreign Ministry officials said no official request had been received. But they said that a third party had informed Israel that Hawatmeh was rumored to be interested in setting up a residence in Gaza.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin told Israel Radio on Tuesday that the Israeli military administration generally deals with all formal requests by those Palestinians seeking to move to Gaza or the West Bank Jericho enclave, both of which fell under Palestinian autonomy last May.

But Beilin added that no action would be taken since there had been no formal request.

Meanwhile, local DFLP officials in the territories denied the report about Hawatmeh's request.

"Nayef Hawatmeh didn't apply" for permission to move to Gaza, Mohammed Jadalla, a Democratic Front activist in eastern Jerusalem, told Israel Radio.

He said Hawatmeh held talks with a Russian official who visited Damascus last week and they discussed "many other Palestinians who are supposed to go back home and were not allowed to do so by the Israeli security forces."

The Democratic Front issued a memorandum in Damascus on Monday calling on Russia, the United States and the European Union to press Israel to allow opponents of the self-rule accord to return to the Gaza Strip.

Hawatmeh told Radio Monte Carlo that he still opposed the Palestinian self-rule accord, but that he would not interfere with Palestinian autonomy in Gaza.

He said his supporters were ready to move to Gaza, but would not end their opposition to the agreement because it falls short of Palestinian demands for statehood.

Hawatmeh, 59, was born in Jordan. In 1969, he established the Marxist Democratic Front as a breakaway group from other Palestinian factions.

The group was responsible for some of the bloodiest terror attacks against Israelis, including the 1974 attack on a school in the northern Israeli town of Ma'alot. Twenty-four Israelis, most of them teen-agers, were killed.

In July of last year, four Palestinian terrorists involved in the Ma'alot attack were expelled to Egypt after they had been smuggled into Gaza. □

## On visit to Argentina, Peres pays respects, offers support

By Grace Donati

BUENOS AIRES, Jan. 18 (JTA) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres used a visit here last week to pay his respects to the victims of last year's terrorist bombing and to offer his government's support to Argentina's ongoing investigation into the attack.

Argentina's courts are still investigating the July 18, 1994, bombing of the country's largest Jewish community organization, as well as the March 1992 attack on the Israeli Embassy here. The two attacks claimed more than 100 lives and injured hundreds more.

Peres told reporters during a brief stopover here

last Friday that his trip served both as a goodwill visit and an attempt to "support local intelligence services' efforts to find the contacts in this country of terrorist groups that planned the attacks."

Under heavy security, Peres met Argentine President Carlos Menem, during which he reportedly put pressure on Argentina to find those responsible for the two attacks.

Peres also laid wreaths at the sites of the two attacks and met with relatives of some of the victims.

In interviews in Buenos Aires and Punta del Este, Uruguay, Peres said his government is convinced that Iran was behind the attacks. But Peres declined to divulge the specifics of his talks with Menem.

Intelligence agents from Argentina, the United States, Israel and neighboring Latin American nations are reported to be searching for suspects in the border region between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, an area that is home to large Arab communities.

Peres said he believed Argentina was committed to solving the attacks, but added that the authorities should be vigilant to prevent yet another terrorist incident.

"The most important thing is to keep a very careful watch to obtain information about suspicious people or suspicious movements" to prevent a third such attack in Argentina, he said.

So far, two Argentine men are the only suspects who have been jailed for either attack.

Carlos Telleldin is accused of selling a Renault van to the terrorists who blew up the offices of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA) last July. The other man, Hugo Perez, is Telleldin's former housemate.

Over the weekend, Peres met with Uruguayan President-elect Julio Maria Sanguinetti and Jewish leaders from Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Paraguay in Punta del Este. According to the Buenos Aires daily Clarin, Peres discussed the current status of the Middle East peace process with the Jewish leaders. □

## Hebron settlers request security in wake of rocket attack on home

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Jan. 18 (JTA) — Jewish settlers are urging the government to beef up security in the West Bank town of Hebron after an unarmed anti-tank rocket slammed into a Jewish home there.

Israeli army officials suspected that Palestinians had fired the rocket, which tore into the apartment of the Meshulam family in Hebron over the weekend.

The rocket pierced a metal shutter, went through the window, and hit the opposite kitchen wall. There were no reported injuries.

The shoulder-launched rocket was of the type used for army training exercises and did not have an explosive tip, an army spokesman said.

Army officials were investigating whether it was among a number of rockets recently stolen from an army base.

Bat-El Meshulam, 10, was the only family member home at the time. "I was reading a book in my room, and then I heard a boom through the window, and then another boom and the sound of something hitting the floor," she told Israel Radio.

Deputy Defense Minister Mordecai Gur met with representatives of Jewish settlers in Hebron and promised that the government would take steps to ensure their protection.

Settler leader Noam Arnon criticized the government for neglecting the security of settlers in Hebron, the site of ongoing Israeli-Palestinian tensions. □