

NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **With his government closer than ever to collapse in the aftermath of the latest terrorist attack, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is reportedly considering building a border fence between Israel proper and the West Bank. There is a need for "separation" between Israelis and Palestinians, he told the Israeli people in a special television address. [Page 3]**

■ **The Clinton administration launched its war on terrorism, banning charitable contributions to Middle Eastern terrorist groups and freezing their U.S. assets. The 12 groups include the Muslim fundamentalist groups, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The list also includes two Jewish militant groups, Kach and Kahane Chai. However, only the Israeli branches of those groups are involved.**

■ **The Israeli Cabinet appointed a ministerial committee to monitor future construction in the territories and in communities surrounding Jerusalem. The Cabinet also reaffirmed the government's decision to strengthen the unification of Jerusalem through development within the municipal borders of the city. Opposition leaders, including Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu said the government should continue building around the capital as a response to terror. [Page 2]**

■ **Hillary Rodham Clinton denounced the latest terrorist attack against Israelis. Addressing an Israel Bonds dinner in Miami, she said, "The enemies of peace cannot, will not and must not succeed." The First Lady also drew parallels between Israel and the United States and between Jewish and U.S. history. [Page 4]**

■ **Israeli newspapers cited the British publication Foreign Report to reveal that the Muslim region from where Jews and Muslims have been emigrating in recent weeks is Kurdistan in Iraq. According to the Foreign Report, Israel over the years maintained, through Iran, good relations with one of the Kurdish rebel groups in northern Iraq. The current aliyah, believed to include a majority of non-Jewish relatives of Jews, began in 1992, according to the British Daily Telegraph, and has totaled approximately 1,000 individuals.**

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Site of attack turns into memorial as Israelis come to mourn and pray**

By Uriel Masad

BEIT LID JUNCTION, Israel, Jan. 24 (JTA) — Days after two bombs exploded here, killing at least 19 and wounding 62, this normally busy bus station became a memorial site.

Cordoned off by police and cleared of most traces of the tragedy, some bloodstains remain on the cement floor and an unused military bandage can be seen lying in a ditch.

Close to the main road stands what is left of the roadside kiosk where the devastating explosions took place. Legend has it that no Israeli soldier finished his or her tour of duty without tasting a sandwich made by the Tzioni family, which ran the place. But now there are large blackened holes in the walls, and the entire structure seems unsafe. Workers are putting up a metal and barbed wire fence around it.

Hundreds of *yahrzeit* (memorial) candles burn at the bus stops, whose walls are covered in newspaper cuttings with photos of the dead. A hand-printed note was added, calling for divine retribution.

Flowers lay beside the candles; some wreaths, some hand-picked in a hurry. A few already are wilting under the warm winter sun. Prayerbooks lay atop a folding table. Above each bus stop hangs a sign with information on the buses and their destinations, and underneath each one is a sign in Hebrew and in English: "Beware Suspicious Objects."

Those on official duty here — security personnel and municipal workers — move around busily and purposefully. Others meander around in a daze. It is quiet.

A mourner recites the Kaddish, the prayer for the dead, and others gather around to say, "amen." Someone else begins to sob at the sight of the young faces framed in black on the walls.

Erez Bilovsky, a farmer, came to pay his respects, and "to witness the stupidity of our people."

He is short and stocky, and does not mince words. "This makes me feel so bad. It was clear that this would happen, and it will again. Ever since we signed that stinking agreement, this is the price we pay," he says, referring to the peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

'We shall shed a lot of blood'

"And we'll continue to pay until we bring this government down! This government has its head up its ass," he spits in anger. "Two more years to the elections, and we shall shed a lot of blood until then. But after that our time will come. And when we come to power, there won't be a single Arab left here. We shall move them all across the river, and have our country for ourselves. I tell you, by then even those who vote Likud will be considered leftists."

At the other end of the junction, a group of some 40 yeshiva students sit on folding chairs and listen to their rabbi. Some are attentive, others bored and sleepy. "The fate of the Jewish people is the Torah, the Land of Israel and the hereafter. And all three are obtained with great sufferings," lectures the rabbi.

Two students sneak out, and want to speak. Amit Sterl and Amit Yedidya, both 17, are students at the Kfar Haroeh Yeshivah, a National Religious Party stronghold. They have been here since 6:30 a.m., and will stay here until after sundown to recite all three prayers of the day.

"The people are apathetic," Sterl says, and Yedidya agrees with him. "The people must rise and do something. Just because we have skullcaps doesn't make us fanatics, but the people must do something. Their voice must be heard. If 300,000 came out in protest something will happen. It may not stop terrorist attacks like this, but something will happen."

Yedidya says, "This government is crazy, agreeing to give up parts of our homeland. Of course I do want peace, but only peace for peace."

Sterl disagrees. "If we don't give up territories, there will never be peace," he says.

Then they decide to agree again, recite their demand that the people

awake and do something, and return to their lesson, in which the rabbi explains how the sufferings are meant to bring us together, not apart.

Yael, a sergeant in a base nearby, declines to give her last name, as she is not allowed to discuss politics while in uniform.

"It is painful. It is sad. And it is so frightening. I didn't know any of them, but what does it matter?" she says.

"What should be done next? Peace. Only peace can bring an end to things like this. There is no other way. It's very difficult to come here and see this, and still believe in peace. But there is no other choice. There is no other way but peace," the soldier says.

Yanai Shlomo, an Egged bus inspector, is here to help passengers find their way to the new bus stops. "I am from Netanya," he says, "and this is part of my beat. And I can tell you, what I see here is scary. I keep shivering all the time."

Although it is rather warm, Shlomo keeps on his sweater and winter jacket. "Sometimes I am here on Sunday mornings. You should see what's happening then: Hundreds of soldiers come here for their transportation back to their bases. Hundreds, the entire place is full with heads of young soldiers. Every Sunday morning.

"But things have changed," Shlomo says. "We have become fearful people. Once these soldiers came here by buses or hitched rides. Now their parents bring them in their cars. The parents are afraid to let them come here by themselves. They don't even trust our buses. What has become of us?"

A car slowly pulls out of the parking lot, displaying two stickers on its back window: "The People Are With the Peace," and "Peace Is A Different Height," referring to the Golan Heights.

The young people inside are Mali Pinhas, from Ra'anana, and her boyfriend, Yaron Toledano, from Migdal Ha'emek. "No, we were not afraid to come here with our peace stickers. Why should we be?" Toledano asks.

"Look, I just got out of the army two months ago. I served as a combat officer and spent a lot of time in Gaza and the West Bank. This is horrible, what happened here," he says.

"But this is the price of peace. And peace is the only solution.

"It can be done. The right will not give us any more security. They can't. The future, our future lies in peace. The future of our children depends on it," says Toledano. □

Cabinet appoints committee to deal with expansion issues

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Jan. 24 (JTA) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has appointed a ministerial committee to monitor future construction in the territories and in communities surrounding Jerusalem.

In a decision adopted at Sunday's weekly meeting, the Cabinet created the committee, which will include Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Finance Minister Avraham Shohat, Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, Justice Minister David Libai and Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni.

Although the other committee members were drawn from the ranks of Labor ministers, Aloni was the sole representative from the Meretz bloc, the government's coalition partner that opposes all settlement expansion.

In a statement issued after the meeting, the Cabinet again backed Rabin's affirmation last week that the government would move to strengthen the unification of

Jerusalem through development within the municipal borders of the city.

The new ministerial committee will approve any government building plans within existing settlements and will monitor private construction in the territories. Any expropriation of Arab lands for construction will require committee approval.

But the Cabinet members agreed Sunday that for security reasons, the government can take lands to build roads for Israeli settlers to bypass Arab communities in the West Bank.

The week before Sunday's meeting, political observers expected that the Cabinet discussion on settlement activity would become a battle about Jerusalem and the belt of communities — such as Ma'aleh Adumim, Givat Ze'ev and Betar — around the capital.

Last week, Peres said "Greater Jerusalem" was a literary concept and that all building beyond the city's 1967 borders should be halted.

"Building which is necessary for normal life, like schools, private apartments, we are not going to stop," he told Israel Radio. "But we are not going to build new settlements, to confiscate land or to enlarge territorially the existing settlements."

Meretz ministers, who are against continued building beyond Jerusalem's municipal borders, met last week with the prime minister to present their demands, which included a call to stop all settlement construction in the West Bank.

Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer recently announced an ambitious plan for building some 30,000 housing units in the Jerusalem area as well as in the Gush Etzion bloc of settlements south of Jerusalem.

An attempt at compromise

The government committee established Sunday was seen as an attempt to reach a compromise between Ben-Eliezer's plans and the left-wing Meretz ministers' demand that all settlement activity be stopped.

Opposition members and residents from Jerusalem's satellite communities met in Ma'aleh Adumim on Sunday to discuss the government decision. They pledged to take a strong response if building were halted in their areas.

Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu said the government should continue building around the capital as a response to terror. "I think that you only have to listen to the statements of terrorist organizations who say outright they will expel us from Jerusalem," he told Israel Television.

"I think the government should respond to this terrorism with a powerful message that we will not freeze or curtail building of Jerusalem. We will increase it."

On Tuesday, the government narrowly survived a no-confidence motion on Jerusalem. The fervently Orthodox Shas Party joined the opposition in the 61-53 vote.

The internal debate came after last week's meeting with Rabin, Peres and Palestine Liberation Chairman Yasser Arafat.

During the Jan. 19 meeting, Rabin clarified the government's stand on settlements, saying that it stood by its decision to freeze all new government building in the territories, with the exception of building four bypass roads in preparation for an Israeli army withdrawal from Arab population centers in the West Bank.

Last week, Palestinians protesting Israeli settlement activity launched demonstrations in several West Bank towns, including Hebron, Tulkarm and Nablus.

In one demonstration last week near the West Bank settlement of Pesagot, Israeli army troops used stun grenades to disperse hundreds of Palestinian protesters. □

NEWS ANALYSIS

Rabin pushes 'separation' concept after attack leaves government reeling

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 24 (JTA) — The suicide bomb that took at least 19 young lives at the Beit Lid Junction on Sunday has left the nation with an overwhelming sense of bereavement and despair, and has brought the Rabin government closer than ever to collapse.

"If I were an insurance company," columnist Yoel Markus wrote in the Israeli daily Ha'aretz this week, "I wouldn't issue this government a life-insurance policy."

Despite Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Knesset majority, the veteran journalist predicted, something will happen to bring him down. He has lost both the public's confidence and the confidence of his own party.

Yet this latest Islamic fundamentalist terror outrage, while further sapping the government's political strength, may be providing Rabin and his ministers with the opportunity — perhaps their last — to take momentous and confidence-restoring decisions.

According to Cabinet sources midweek, the prime minister, together with senior ministers and defense aides, is actively considering proposals to build a border fence between Israel proper and the West Bank.

This idea is replete, of course, with complex political and practical ramifications. Inevitably, it would be seen as an Israeli move to delineate unilaterally its vision, of the "permanent status" of Israel's borders.

And it would catapult to front and center the issues of the settlements and Jerusalem — the very issues that Israel and the Palestinians, in their 1993 agreement, agreed to defer to the last stage of their negotiated peace process.

Rabin himself, in a rare and not wholly successful television address to the nation Monday night, spoke of the need for "separation" between Israelis and Palestinians.

"I am convinced that the course which this government is steering, the course that seeks to bring to an end our forcible rule over another nation — and the Palestinians in the territories are another nation, different from us religiously, politically and nationally — this course must lead to separation, though not along the lines of the 1967 border," Rabin said.

"Jerusalem will remain united forever, and the defense border of Israel will be situated on the Jordan River.

"We want to bring about separation between you and us," the premier continued, addressing the Palestinian people. "We do not wish that the great bulk of the Jewish populace, 98 percent of whom live within the Green Line, be prone to terror attacks. In the short term and in the longer term, we will reach separation between us."

Rabin's words not specific

Rabin's words were less than specific. Where precisely will the separation be? And when? And how?

Informed sources say the premier was reflecting an ongoing debate in his highest policy-making circles, a debate that has been greatly accelerated and intensified by the mass murder perpetrated Sunday at Beit Lid.

These sources say the scheme, in principle, has the strong support of the army, the police and Shin Bet, Israel's domestic intelligence agency.

The concept of a physical division between, on the one hand — sovereign Israel, greater Jerusalem and the bloc of settlements just across the Green Line near Kfar Saba — and, on the other hand — the rest of the West Bank — is tenable, of course, only in the context of an eventual elimination of Palestinian "guest workers" in Israel.

But both the idea of a fence and the idea of banning Palestinian workers contravene the vision of a regional common market, with a free flow of people and goods, that underlies the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles and much of the subsequent negotiations.

For this reason, the scheme has encountered reservations from such a die-hard dove as Foreign Minister Shimon Peres — despite the fact that its implementation would catalyze the peace process.

The Cabinet, in an initial discussion of the "separation" idea in the immediate aftermath of Sunday's bombing, found itself divided along unfamiliar lines.

While many of the most dovish ministers — including Meretz leader Shulamit Aloni and her colleague Amnon Rubinstein — broadly favored the idea (as did some of the more hawkish ministers), other soft-liners like Peres were circumspect.

In the absence of a specific and detailed proposal from the prime minister on a long-term separation, the debate among the ministers focused on whether the closure of territories, imposed almost immediately after the Beit Lid attack, should be of short or long duration.

Those favoring the "separation" concept also supported an open-ended closure — despite the economic hardship this would inevitably bring upon Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank who work in Israel.

Separation proposal may come soon

Their support also comes despite the fact that a closure can be seen — and indeed has already been defined by the Palestinian Authority — as a violation of the Declaration of Principles.

Informed sources say Rabin and his advisers will continue their secret deliberations in the days ahead, with the premier having to decide whether to put up a comprehensive, long-term separation proposal for Cabinet approval.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet has approved a series of measures intended to intensify the war against the fundamentalists:

- Widespread arrests of known Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists throughout the territories;
- Closure by the army of religious and social centers run by these two movements — marking the first time action is being taken against these institutions;
- Cancellation of budget cuts affecting Shin Bet and the police that had been agreed upon just a week earlier in the context of overall spending reductions by the government;
- A forceful demand to the Palestinian Authority to take its own tough measures against the fundamentalist movements inside the autonomous areas.

The prime minister, in his address, sought to comfort the nation and at the same time instill it with a renewed faith in the overall movement toward peace.

But the effect of his appearance was weakened because of the uncertainty over the implications of his "separation" concept and because he refused to take questions from reporters waiting outside his office.

Government sources maintain, though, that the "separation" concept presents the opposition, too, with awkward choices.

The rightist and religious parties are ideologically committed to a Greater Israel and are also committed in practice to preserving all of the settlements.

Yet, as Rabin pointedly mentioned, most Israelis live inside Israel proper — and their chief concern is personal security.

If "separation" can enhance that security for the majority — the Likud and Orthodox parties would be hard put to oppose it. □

First lady draws parallels between U.S. and Israeli challenges

By Marsha Fischer

PALM BEACH, Fla., Jan. 24 (JTA) — Hours after the terrorist bombing attack in Israel that left at least 19 dead, Hillary Rodham Clinton repeated the words her husband spoke at the signing of the peace treaty last summer between Israel and Jordan.

“The enemies of peace cannot, will not and must not succeed,” she said, denouncing the attack but calling for the peace process to continue.

The bombing cast a pall over the launch of the 1995 Israel Bonds campaign, at which the first lady gave the keynote address Sunday night.

In her speech, Clinton drew parallels between Israel and the United States and between Jewish and U.S. history.

She referred to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who said that how Israel handled the challenges of the peace process would determine what kind of people Israelis would become.

Of the American people, Clinton said: “How we handle the challenges we confront speaks to who we are and what we will become as well.

“We don’t face the same kind of challenges that Israel does on a daily basis,” she also said, “but we have to decide whether we go forward or backward as a nation.”

The United States needs to build up its families and communities, and could turn to Jewish teachers and scholars such as Hillel and Martin Buber for guidance, the first lady said. “These scholars show us how to dialogue, discuss and learn, and how central family, culture and community are,” she said. “I wish we could clone this and make it available to all people.”

In stating her vision of the future, Clinton called for a United States where people have opportunity and are responsible for their actions. For example, she said, “A tax cut should be tied to whether or not people invest in the future, in education, in homes, in putting away money for future medical expenses.” She also stressed that President Clinton did not support an across-the-board tax cut that would “just be a couple of hundred dollars in people’s pockets.”

In the keynote address, the first lady also called the violence in American streets “our own type of terrorism.” The audience applauded when she noted that Bill Clinton was the first president to stand up to the National Rifle Association.

The first lady said Israel was a beacon of hope and inspiration to people around the world, and she asked the 700 Jewish leaders at the reception to help the United States to continue being a beacon of light. □

German Jewish survivors see progress — but not enough

By Miriam Widman

BERLIN, Jan. 24 (JTA) — Kurt Goldstein found himself in a French internment camp in 1939 after fighting in the Spanish Civil War.

In 1942, he was denounced by the French, turned over to the Germans and sent to the Auschwitz death camp.

Maria Koenig was deported to Auschwitz from Lodz, Poland, where she grew up.

Her husband, Adam, was arrested in Frankfurt and sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp near Berlin.

After World War II, the three did what to many was the unthinkable: They decided to stay in the country that tried to exterminate them.

Believing that a more humanistic Germany could

grow out of the ashes at Auschwitz, they settled in the former East Germany.

Today, 50 years after the liberation of the Auschwitz camp, all three individuals see some progress in Germany’s ability to deal with its past.

But not enough.

They are not only worried about the rise of radical-right politicians and parties, but about neo-Nazi sympathies in the German justice system. Still, these survivors — not only of the Nazi death camps, but also of the failed attempt at a Communist state in East Germany — criticize, but stop short of condemning their fellow citizens. The three spoke to a group of foreign reporters here a few days before this week’s commemorations of the liberation of Auschwitz.

“I don’t believe in making generalities,” said Maria Koenig, a soft-spoken woman. “German children today have just the same chance as children from other countries to grow up in a democracy.”

Adam Koenig focused his criticism on the German justice system, which he felt does not sufficiently pursue neo-Nazis. He cited a case that generated a worldwide uproar last year, when a judge serving on a state court in the southwestern German city of Mannheim voiced sympathy for Gunter Deckert, the chairman of the extreme right-wing National Democratic Party.

Goldstein, vice president of the International Auschwitz Committee, said the spontaneous chain of candles that popped up in major German cities several years ago to protest arson attacks by neo-Nazi skinheads on homes belonging to Turkish immigrants was a positive sign. But overall, he said, “there have not been enough lessons learned from Auschwitz.”

Citing two specific cases, he questioned why a former guard at the Ravensbruck women’s concentration camp was given a reparations payment by the German government while a former concentration camp inmate from Eastern Europe could not receive asylum here.

Goldstein said he believed that the ongoing public discussion as to whether Germans have mastered their past is ill-focused. “A past cannot be mastered,” Goldstein said. “It has to be confronted.”

And 50 years after the war, he said, the Germans have yet to confront their past. □

Numerous events in Poland to mark Auschwitz liberation

By Ruth E. Gruber

KRAKOW, Poland, Jan. 24 (JTA) — Numerous concerts, lectures, exhibits and conferences have been scheduled in Krakow and elsewhere in Poland to coincide with this week’s commemorations marking the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

In addition, Jewish organizations and others are using the occasion to launch separate initiatives of their own. These include the opening of a youth club and education center here by the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, a New York-based organization sponsoring Jewish education efforts in central and eastern Europe.

It will be the fourth such center in Poland, providing social, cultural and educational programs for young Jews seeking to discover their heritage.

Activist New York Rabbi Avi Weiss announced that he would stage a demonstration during the official commemoration ceremony at Birkenau on Friday, to protest against Christian symbols at Auschwitz.

Weiss, who for years led a militant campaign against the Carmelite convent just outside the fence of the Auschwitz camp, said he and supporters would stand in front of the cross that still stands near the former convent, which nuns vacated in 1993. □