

**NEWS AT A GLANCE**

- Leah Rabin, the slain Israeli prime minister's widow, blamed Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu and his party for her husband's death. Speaking of the "horrible language and horrible pictures" of her husband at right-wing rallies, she told a CNN interviewer that Netanyahu "was there, and he didn't stop it."
- Israeli Justice Minister David Libai urged revisions to Israel's freedom of speech law to exclude incitement as a form of protected speech. Current laws are "not enough to provide efficient answers for protecting democracy" Libai said in a statement.
- Some 3,000 New Yorkers filled Carnegie Hall to pay tribute to the memory of slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and to find comfort by sharing their loss. Speeches by a host of officials celebrated Rabin as a great and courageous hero at the same time that they portrayed him as humble, shy and impatient with pomp and pretense.
- The House of Representatives was set to extend the Middle East Peace Facilitation Act, the legislation that enables U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority. The move will allow the Palestine Liberation Organization to reopen its office in Washington, which was temporarily closed when the measure expired last week.
- Israeli and Palestinian officials met to discuss the stationing of Palestinian police in the Jenin area. The meeting came as Israel partially lifted the closure imposed on the West Bank and Gaza Strip after the Rabin assassination.
- Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan visited Israel to offer condolences to the nation and to the family of Yitzhak Rabin in the wake of the assassination. It was Hassan's first official visit to Jerusalem and came a day after his brother, King Hussein, attended Rabin's funeral.
- Labor Party officials began unofficial consultations on forming a new government. Political jockeying began, with the fervently Orthodox Shas Party saying that it would not join the coalition unless another party joined.

**NEWS ANALYSIS****Decision to give up Youth Aliyah will focus Jewish Agency mission***By Jacob Schreiber*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — In striking a dramatic deal last week to transfer the Youth Aliyah Department of the Jewish Agency for Israel to the Israeli government, the agency's Board of Governors basically decided to amputate a leg to save the patient.

The bleeding was that bad.

Faced with runaway deficits that could doom the Jewish Agency to financial insolvency, the Board of Governors had little choice but to enter into this gut-wrenching deal with the government.

The move is an integral part of a radical recovery plan approved by the Board of Governors to slash a half billion dollars over the next five years from the budget of the agency, a huge social-service organization supported by Diaspora fund-raising dollars.

The decision, according to Jewish Agency brass, emerged from a consensus belief that the organization would be better off if it divested itself totally of one division rather than hobble all the others through unremitting bloodletting.

By transferring Youth Aliyah and the 15,000 children now studying under the aegis of the department to the government in September 1996, the Jewish Agency will save \$60 million annually.

During the next few weeks, the agency will cut another \$50 million from its budget to reduce expenditures by \$110 million during the 1996-97 fiscal year.

Agency and government officials promised that the changeover would not adversely affect Youth Aliyah youngsters and that each Youth Aliyah village would maintain its unique educational and religious identity.

As for the Na'aleh 16 program, which brings teen-agers from the Soviet successor states to Israel on a study program aimed at encouraging aliyah, the government will assume all funding, and Jewish Agency personnel will continue to canvass for candidates.

In return, the Jewish Agency has agreed to assume full responsibility for the Student Authority, a \$45 million program whose total cost has been split until now between the government's Absorption Ministry and the Jewish Agency.

Jewish Agency Chairman Avraham Burg promises to turn the Student Authority into a highly attractive "flag bearer" for the agency, to lure talented young people from the Diaspora to make aliyah.

Two basic principles lay behind the Youth Aliyah-Student Authority swap.

First, whoever funds an operation should run it.

Second, the Jewish Agency should concentrate on aliyah and initial absorption of immigrants, while the sovereign government of Israel assumes full responsibility for the long-term absorption of its citizens, including settlement, education and welfare.

**Overlap hurt the agency**

In the past, overlap between the government and the Jewish Agency in the area of immigrant absorption hurt the agency, "causing an erosion in our reputation," said Burg.

The key to recovery, said Charles "Corky" Goodman of Chicago, chairman of the Board of Governors, is creating a "new, long-term partnership" with the government that draws "clear lines defining our separate responsibilities."

But how does one define the "clear line" between where "initial absorption" ends and "long-term absorption" begins?

One example, said Uri Gordon, director of the Jewish Agency's Immigration and Absorption Department, is funding of Hebrew instruction for new immigrants.

The Jewish Agency will continue to fund initial "ulpan" classes for new arrivals, but the government will have to find ways to support immigrants wishing to continue on to the next level, he said.

But some fear that the division of authority will not always be so

clear and that, as a result, some program beneficiaries may fall through the gaps.

For instance, Ethiopians, because of their unique background, require considerable help beyond their initial absorption.

Because they have all been in Israel for some time, does Diaspora Jewry simply hand over full responsibility for their absorption to the government? Is the government capable and willing to take on this sensitive, extended challenge?

Jewish Agency officials admit that they do not yet have solid answers to these questions.

One reason may be that, according to agency insiders, they simply were not ready for the kind of deal the government offered.

These insiders say Burg and his allies never expected to surrender all of Youth Aliyah; they expected some sort of government "partnership" in it.

Just two months ago, Burg was quoted as saying that Youth Aliyah is "more than just a good program — it serves our target" and is "essential to the education of new immigrants."

So why, a month later, would he agree to give up the whole program?

Because, Jewish Agency sources say, the government gave his team a take-it-or-leave-it offer, engineered by Youth Aliyah Chairman Yehiel Leket.

Recall that before being beaten by Burg, Leket was the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's choice for Jewish Agency chairman.

He is said to still have a loyal following in Jewish Agency and Labor Party circles.

Sources say Leket was not interested in having his division be under the influence of Chairman Burg in any way, and his allies complied.

Although seemingly outflanked on the political end, Burg can "still come out smelling like roses," said one Jewish Agency insider.

### **Something radical needed to be done**

The chairman had said something radical needed to be done to save the Jewish Agency, and he "produced a deal that will free up dollars for him to use as he sees fit," the insider said.

But that's all Israeli politics.

In in the Diaspora camp, fund-raisers were generally upbeat.

Many expressed the belief that a more concentrated focus would be good for fund raising, because it will help them market the Jewish Agency's activities more effectively.

This is something the United Jewish Appeal and Jewish federations in North America "have not been able to do effectively until now," said Bennett Aaron of Philadelphia, a member of the agency's Board of Governors.

The Jewish Agency is the primary recipient of funds raised for overseas needs by the UJA and Jewish community federations.

The agency received \$201 million in funding in 1994, \$30 million less than in 1993.

Most federations have reduced the percentage of annual campaign proceeds they allocate to Israel from 60 percent in years past to a current average of about 40 percent.

Federations will now be expected to do more to save the Jewish Agency.

In fact, the viability of the recovery program rests on Diaspora fund-raisers' pledge to raise an additional \$230 million over the next five years.

But considering the environment in which they

work, the challenge to Diaspora fund-raisers to keep their end of the bargain will be formidable.

Here's why:

- Trends indicate that federations are leaning toward reducing allocations to Israel in order to deal with growing problems at home, such as rapid assimilation and Republican-driven budget cuts that are crippling local social services.

- Many donors are now more inclined to give to specific causes, as indicated in the significant rise in giving to hospitals, schools and universities over the years, and not to a broad menu of services, such as those supported by the UJA.

- In jettisoning Youth Aliyah from the Jewish Agency umbrella, the UJA may have lost one of its best-selling "kishka" programs.

So how will the recovery plan, while an impressive budget buster, help fund-raisers put more money back into the pipeline?

By improving the Jewish Agency's focus and marketability, say agency leaders.

"Our leadership wants to see a healthy instrument which is strong and has vision," said Rabbi Harvey Fields of Los Angeles, a member of the Board of Governors. "Approval of this plan gives the agency this."

Richard Pearlstone, national chairman of the UJA, agrees.

"Now we have a focus — aliyah and absorption — and that's what sells," he said.

Still, a few fund-raisers voiced doubts as to the immediate impact of the Board of Governors' decisions on local communities.

"Most donors are totally tuned out to the details of the agency's programs and would give me a blank stare if I told them Youth Aliyah was cut out," said Aaron of Philadelphia. "They simply trust the leadership and follow their guidance."

Still, most agreed that the impact of the recovery plan would, sooner or later, be positive for communal fund raising.

"If nothing else, we prepared the solid ground to move into the future," said Tom Falik of Atlanta, chairman of the Board of Governors' Budget Subcommittee on Aliyah and Absorption. "We are now positioned to do aliyah and absorption the way it's supposed to be done — and our donors will like that." □

### **Jordan's crown prince pays respects**

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan visited Israel on Tuesday to offer condolences to the nation and to the family of Yitzhak Rabin in the wake of the prime minister's assassination.

It was Hassan's first official visit to Jerusalem.

As his brother King Hussein said the day before at Rabin's funeral, Hassan said he regretted the circumstances that had brought him to the Israeli capital.

"But what is lasting for us is the contribution and continuity of building peace," he said.

"Rabin was an architect of that peace, and it is a great source of privilege and honor for me to be here to honor his memory."

Hassan met privately with Acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres and later, with President Ezer Weizman.

He later traveled to the Rabin household in Ramat Aviv, where he visited Rabin's widow, Leah, for more than half an hour.

He said that after the visit "I feel today more and more committed to give more of myself" to the peace process. □

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES**
**Ignored as an average Israeli, confessed assassin fits profile**

By Jacob Schreiber

JERUSALEM (JTA) — For weeks, Israel's security services had been warning that the prime minister or another high-ranking government official might be the target of a political assassin.

According to media reports, the profile they provided of the potential assailant was that of an unassuming, right-wing, religious Israeli Jew.

Yigal Amir, the law student from Bar-Ilan University who confessed to pumping two 9 mm bullets into Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Saturday night, fit the profile exactly.

So how did Rabin's security agents allow an assassin to get near their charge?

Apart from an apparent lapse in the security forces' vigilance — which will be the subject of an official investigation — most Israelis did not really expect someone who dressed and looked like an average Israeli to kill the prime minister.

Israel's first political assassin was raised in a religious home in a middle-class neighborhood in Herzliya, just north of Tel Aviv, served in the army and was educated in an elite track of the country's religious Zionist system.

Questions that baffle Israelis include how such a young man came to commit, as he himself reportedly confessed to police, what is arguably the most heinous act ever perpetrated by an Israeli against his people?

And how does one explain Amir's statement to a Tel Aviv judge at his custody hearing that he had no remorse for his crime and that he could not understand why anyone was upset over the death of a man who dared trade parts of the Holy Land for peace?

Even Amir's friends are perplexed by his actions.

"He was a wonderful person," Avner Goldshmidt, a personal friend, told reporters.

"I don't understand how he could do this. I'm stunned."

"Yigal was quiet, sensitive and very smart," said Yaron Yehoshua, a fellow student at Bar-Ilan who grew up near Amir. "We would have some political arguments, but he never seemed radical."

But, according to police reports of statements given them by Amir, he was patient — and calculating.

**'God told me to kill'**

Amir reportedly surprised his interrogators by telling them that his decision to assassinate the prime minister was made nearly a year ago when, as he reportedly said, "God told me" to kill Rabin.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, he reportedly admitted, was No. 2 on his hit list.

Amir waited for the right opportunity to strike, according to the police.

Foiled last January when Rabin canceled a visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, Amir told police investigators that he again stalked the prime minister at the opening of a highway interchange during the summer.

He aborted that attempt, he reportedly told his interrogators, because security was too tight.

The young Israeli who eluded security Saturday night was born into a religious Yemenite family. Amir was the second of eight children. His mother, Geula, is a kindergarten teacher; his father, Shlomo, is a scribe known for his religious piety.

Amir attended an Agudat Yisrael religious elemen-

tary school before moving on to a state religious high school.

He then opted to enroll in a Hesder Yeshiva near Ashdod, where his rabbis called him a gifted and friendly student. He also served in the Israel Defense Force's elite Golani Brigade.

After being discharged from the army, Amir was sent by the government to Russia to teach Hebrew and Judaism, as part of a program for Hesder graduates.

He then enrolled in a prestigious "kollel" program at Bar-Ilan University, in which he studied Talmud and other Jewish disciplines in a yeshiva atmosphere in the mornings, and law and computers in the afternoons.

Bar-Ilan officials said Amir was a good student who never got into trouble.

In the wake of the assassination, the school reportedly expelled Amir.

On Sunday, while Rabin's body lay in state outside the Knesset, school officials and students held a prayer service to mourn the loss of Rabin.

Bar-Ilan President Shlomo Eckstein issued a statement condemning the assassination as "simply the most un-Jewish act imaginable. It runs contrary to everything Bar-Ilan stands for."

A bodyguard wounded during the assassination is a second-year student at Bar-Ilan.

Amir reportedly attended Shabbat group activities at Jewish settlements in the West Bank and right-wing rallies during the past year.

Two weeks ago, he reportedly attended a rally where Rabin was compared to a Nazi and was called a murderer and traitor — rhetoric that has become increasingly frequent in extreme right-wing circles in recent months.

But Amir's anti-Rabin activism was thought to possess neither bark nor bite, according to those who knew him.

"Amir always stood in the back at rallies," an unnamed friend reportedly said. "No one ever dreamed he would come to this."

But in recent months, Amir reportedly became open about his desire to see the prime minister dead.

Amir participated in demonstrations during the summer at a hillside near the West Bank settlement of Efrat, where settlers staged repeated protests against Rabin's peace moves with the Palestinians.

After being dragged off the hill by Israeli soldiers, Amir reportedly told his friend Goldshmidt, "If someone killed Rabin, he'd be a man, and I'd salute him."

Goldshmidt said he did not pay much attention to what he considered an isolated outburst.

Soon after, Amir reportedly joined Ayal — a Hebrew acronym for "Jewish Fighter's Organization" — a shadowy radical right-wing group.

Amir began to openly advocate killing Rabin and Peres in conversations with his kollel colleagues, according to the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot.

**'Cutting off snakes' heads'**

One of these colleagues told the paper that Amir would manipulate one of Maimonides' teachings in such a way as to create a halachic justification for "cutting off the heads" of Rabin and Peres, whom Amir referred to as "snakes."

Is Amir a product of a religious, right-wing environment whose rhetorical excesses helped nourish his sense of right and wrong? Or is he just a lone madman?

These are questions Israelis will grapple with in the coming months. No matter how they are answered, Rabin's assassin will remain, in some ways, a reflection of the society from which he emerged. □

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES**
**A nation in mourning bids farewell to its veteran leader**

By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM (JTA) — When confessed assassin Yigal Amir shot Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the 25-year-old extremist killed not only the nation's leader.

He also shattered the lives of millions of Israelis.

In the time since the shooting, grief-stricken Israelis have tried to come to terms with Rabin's death.

The first assassination of a Jewish leader in the history of the state, the act itself touched off an overwhelming sense of vulnerability among Israelis.

At the same time, the assassination has forced the public to confront many painful issues.

Long divided over the issues of land, peace and national security, extremists on both sides of the political divide have steadily escalated their war of words against each other. Since Saturday's shooting, people have begun to ask themselves whether using words such as "traitor," "Gestapo" or "fascist" can incite people to violence.

Upset whenever there is a terrorist attack, people here say they are doubly heartsick because Rabin's assassin is Jewish.

Within hours of hearing the tragic news late Saturday, people from the northern town of Kiryat Shmona to the southern seaport of Eilat held candlelight vigils throughout the long, dark night. Thousands of young Israelis turned the site of the ill-fated Tel Aviv peace rally at which Rabin was slain into a candle-lit memorial.

Despite the great outpouring of grief, not all Israelis were heartbroken by the murder.

On a popular call-in radio program, one caller said Rabin had "gotten what he deserved."

And, according to a newspaper report, a yeshiva student in the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba, home to some of the most heated opponents to the peace process, declared that "Rabin was responsible for every death" since the signing of the Declaration of Principles in Washington in September 1993. "This seems to be heavenly retribution," the yeshiva student reportedly said.

**Graveside scuffle**

And on Monday afternoon, when the gathering of dignitaries had left Rabin's funeral and ordinary Israelis were allowed to pay their respects, a scuffle reportedly broke out at his graveside when an Israeli man opined that the assailant should also have killed Rabin's partner in the peace process, now Acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

However, such sentiments appeared to be in the minority. Numerous Orthodox rabbis, including several in the West Bank, unequivocally denounced the slaying on both halachic and moral grounds.

Quoting rabbinic sources in an opinion piece published Tuesday, Rabbi Jonathan Blass, head of the West Bank yeshiva of Neveh Tzuf, said violence among Jews could be "compared to the case of one hand stabbing another to avenge the injury the other inflicted first.

"We are all limbs of the same body — the nation of Israel. Even when terrible wrongs are being committed, that unity must be maintained."

The day after the shooting, Israel's daily newspapers eulogized the slain prime minister and pleaded with their readers to pull together in the name of unity.

Ha'aretz, a newspaper that supports the peace process, called Rabin "a great leader who served his country in both war and peace."

The Jerusalem Post, which was often critical of the prime minister during his lifetime, nonetheless described Rabin as a "war hero and a peacemaker."

Although the media universally denounced violence, the right-wing Hatzofeh warned that "the terrible and abominable murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin must light red lights in the Israeli political arena," and added that the political leadership "cannot — and may not — ignore the deep rift that is splitting the people."

Overwhelmed by feelings of helplessness, most people went to work half-dazed in the days after the assassination. Their children, upset by round-the-clock newscasts and their parents' inexplicable tears, wanted to know why someone would want to hurt the prime minister, and how one Jew could kill another.

Sensing the public's need to grieve, the government took immediate action.

The Education Ministry told homeroom teachers to devote Monday, the day of Rabin's funeral, to special educational sessions related to the murder. The directive, which went out to all state-funded schools, said, "Teachers will explain to their students the severity of political murder and will emphasize the damage inherent in such acts to the fabric of society and to Israeli democracy."

A ministry spokesman said a teacher in Rosh Ha'ayin was suspended after she told pupils that, in her opinion, Rabin was a traitor and Amir was a saint.

With the country in official national mourning up to the time of the funeral, Rabin's flag-draped coffin was put on public view at the Knesset in Jerusalem, providing a place where the public could express its sorrow.

Within a 24-hour period, more than a million Israelis tearfully filed past Rabin's simple wooden casket, waiting for up to five hours to say goodbye to the prime minister.

Teen-agers placed handwritten poems at the site; preschoolers brought pictures they had drawn. One of the contributions, written in Hebrew, asked the question "Why?"

Joanne Murag, who emigrated from the United States 22 years ago, said she felt "betrayed" by the assassination.

Murag, who came to the Knesset with her 20-year-old soldier daughter, said, "The murder was the ultimate Americanization of Israel — exactly what I came to Israel to get away from."

Eyala Werner, a 21-year-old student from Ra'anana who was paying her respects, said, "This attack has been a bad dream, and it didn't quite seem real until I came here today."

"We must find a way to say what we think without resorting to violence," she said. "Politically, I'm not on Rabin's side, but he was our leader, and the assassination didn't only kill him. It kills our democracy."

**Nation stood still**

Such nonpartisan expressions of sadness were also evident when hundreds of thousands of citizens, secular and religious, left- and right-wing, lined the streets of Jerusalem on Monday to watch Rabin's casket driven to its final resting place at the Mount Herzl Military Cemetery.

At 2 p.m. the nation stood still for two minutes as a mournful air-raid siren wailed throughout the country.

The majority of people went home to watch the funeral on television, but thousands remained in order to visit the prime minister's grave later that afternoon.

Israelis said they were moved that 80 world leaders, among them President Clinton, King Hussein of Jordan and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, had come to Jerusalem to pay their respects.

"Five years ago, this kind of gathering would have been impossible," said Yael, a secretary who did not give her last name. "Their coming here shows a lot of respect both for Rabin and the State of Israel." □