

**NEWS AT A GLANCE**

- **Two bombs exploded near Tel Aviv's old central bus station, injuring at least 13 people.** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said "all signs indicate that this was a terrorist attack," but police officials were not ruling out criminal motives. [Page 3]
- **U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross continued his efforts to mediate an agreement on Hebron.** Meanwhile, in the tense West Bank town, Jewish settlers cleared rubble and put up scaffolding for a new apartment building. [Page 3]
- **Most Palestinians support the peace process with Israel, but a rising number also back attacks on Israeli targets, according to a new poll.** The survey, by the Nablus-based Center for Palestine Research and Studies, said four out of five Palestinians supported peace with the Jewish state.
- **The Allies were so outraged at massive Swiss supplies of munitions to Germany during World War II that they considered mounting an economic boycott against the country, newly released documents showed.** [Page 4]
- **Leaders of the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform movements in the United States met in New York under the aegis of Shvil Hazahav, an Orthodox group, to try to defuse tensions among them as well as the strains on the relationship between Israel and U.S. Jewry.**
- **Argentina announced the creation of a special police unit that will probe possible police involvement in anti-Semitic attacks.** The decision came in the wake of criticism by the Argentine Jewish community, which alleged police complicity in recent attacks on Jewish targets.
- **The American Jewish Committee called on Florida officials to change a proposed policy that would use a cross as the only permanent memorial sign for accident victims along the state's highways.**
- **Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai appointed Brig. Gen. Ya'acov Orr as the next coordinator of government activities in the territories.**

**FOCUS ON ISSUES****Building a house of one's own:  
Archive reclaims women's history***By Debra Nussbaum Cohen*

NEW YORK (JTA) — Long before there were cameras, a woman known by the single name of Gluckel lived in Hameln, Germany, and gave the world seven volumes filled with clear pictures of life in her time.

She wrote of her and her husband's business dealings, her children and their spouses, of petty fighting among her community's wealthy leaders and of the wisdom she accumulated in 44 years of a life lived fully.

What she penned of her world was invaluable for the light it shed on the life of a Jewish woman of her time.

That was 300 years ago and few women since have committed to paper the details of their daily lives.

The papers, publications and artifacts that women leave in their wake, the material that gives enduring testimony to the contributions made by their lives is scattered, inaccessible and, in most cases, lost forever.

While feminism and the advent of religious egalitarianism have led to a recent explosion of publications exploring new women's rituals, interpretations of the Bible and Jewish theology, little has been done to preserve information about Jewish women's contributions to social history — both Jewish and American.

Gail Twersky Reimer wants to fix all that.

She has founded the Jewish Women's Archives.

Until now, "not a single Jewish archive has been dedicated to collecting the record of Jewish women's lives," said Reimer, co-author of "Reading Ruth: Contemporary Women Reclaim a Sacred Story" and author of the forthcoming "Beginning Anew: A Woman's Companion to the High Holidays."

"The stuff remains buried," she said. "As a result, we have very little sense of the history of Jewish women and the impact they've made. Men say all the time, 'Who are the Jewish women?' No one can name anyone but Golda Meir."

The archive now consists of a two-person staff in Boston and a board of directors in formation, which met for the first time in November and is in the process of defining its strategy.

The archive has already raised \$250,000, and the final touches are being put on an agreement that will give it a seven-figure challenge grant, Reimer said.

**Focus on North American Jewish women**

While Reimer has scheduled a small invitational conference for June to work out the archive's long-term strategy, the nascent institution has already decided to focus on documents from and about North American Jewish women of the 20th century.

The first step will be to develop what she called a "virtual archive," providing access to materials about Jewish women.

Those materials are now sitting in hundreds of widely dispersed family attics, local historical societies, community and college archives and national institutions.

"We want to make sure that the material is being collected, and that it's accessible," Reimer said.

"Our role will be to create a database that enables people to know where all the material on Jewish women is located."

Eventually, she said, actual documents will be scanned into digital form so that someone sitting at a computer anywhere in the world will be able to access them.

The archive also plans to find a physical space, so it can decide whether to begin its own collections, and so that it can be a physical center for scholarship, research and program development.

A building is also important because it "grants a presence to women that nothing else can," said Reimer.

"The Jewish community has built institutions" devoted to collecting information, she said.

"Now it's time for us to build one that will allow us to not forget

half of our history, half of the Jews who have perished because we have no documentation."

Reimer believes now is the time for such a venture.

"We're just at the moment where we can claim not just a room of our own, but a house of our own," she said.

"It couldn't have happened 10 years ago because no one was ready for it. Today women are willing to claim their power in a way they never have been before," Reimer added.

Adult Bat Mitzvah sermons are an example of the type of document Reimer wants to see preserved.

Adult women becoming Bat Mitzvah is a phenomenon bound to die out in the space of a single generation, because today even Orthodox girls formally celebrate the rite of passage at an early age.

And though the Jewish Women's Archives is not yet encouraging anyone to think of it as a repository for documents, some people — from author Esther Broner to women looking for a place to send their grandmothers' diaries — have already expressed interest in preserving their material at the archive.

Why create something new rather than help established archives focus more on Jewish women?

The Jewish Women's Archives was invited to be part of the new Center for Jewish History, which is bringing together under one Manhattan roof YIVO, the Institute for Jewish Research, the Leo Baeck Institute, the American Jewish Historical Society and the Yeshiva University Museum.

But Reimer said the Jewish Women's Archives was wary of being swallowed up by such giants as they work out the internal politics of merging.

"There's potential for us getting lost at the Center for Jewish History," she said, adding that she is glad that there is an open invitation to join down the road.

Some of the work of Jewish Women's Archives is already under way.

It has sponsored one academic conference and is planning more, exploring the contribution of Jewish women to various endeavors and with Ma'ayan, New York's Jewish feminist center, is working to add a Jewish component to women's history month.

National Women's History Month is in March.

This year, synagogues, day schools and Jewish community centers will receive three posters, each featuring a Jewish woman who made important contributions to history.

Gluckel of Hameln, Henrietta Szold, who established Hadassah, and Rose Schneiderman, a labor activist, are the first three women to get posters of their own.

#### **Friction over turf issues**

The idea for the archive was born two years ago, after Reimer published "Reading Ruth," which explores women's perspectives of the biblical story of Judaism's first convert.

"I kept feeling a tremendous burst out there to know about Jewish women."

Beyond the Bible, she said, "there are heroines in our history who can serve as role models if women only knew about them."

She approached Wellesley and Brandeis, which gave her the seed money needed to research the project's viability.

During most of 1995, a committee of faculty and administrators from both colleges — one devoted to women and the other primarily to Jews — explored whether they could jointly own the Jewish Women's Archives.

It soon became clear that friction over turf issues would preclude it, Reimer said.

Then the Dobkin Family Foundation donated \$25,000 to further the project.

A few months ago, Reimer left her job as associate director of the Massachusetts State Humanities Foundation to devote herself full time to creating the Jewish Women's Archives.

Reimer is motivated by a concern about continuity as well as by an ideological and philosophical commitment to preserving history.

She wants her two daughters, who are 12 and 17, to see material about Jewish women on the walls of their day school, which they never have before.

Their self-perception as Jewish women will be a result, in large measure, "of what's in history books and the school's curriculum."

"If we want to keep Jewish girls involved, we need to make them feel positive about what they have to contribute as Jewish women to Jewish culture.

"If we don't make them feel positive, they'll go elsewhere," she said.

"We saw it in previous generations and we'll see it again unless we do something about it." □

#### **Belarus Jewish editor's home set ablaze in anti-Semitic act**

NEW YORK (JTA) — Vandals set fire to the home of the editor of the Jewish newspaper in Minsk, Belarus, according to the National Conference on Soviet Jewry.

The Association of Jewish Communities of Belarus met Thursday and issued a statement calling on the government to condemn the arson and to prohibit pro-fascist groups from operating in Belarus.

The Jan. 2 attack, in which vandals also daubed swastikas on Mikhail Nordshtein's vacation cottage, comes as concerns have increased about a rise in anti-Semitism in the former Soviet republic.

Nordshtein is the editor of the Jewish newspaper *Aviv*.

Earlier this year, Jewish fears were heightened because of a controversial referendum giving Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko virtually unlimited powers.

He has cracked down on the opposition and curbed civil liberties, prompting outrage from human rights watchers.

And in an interview with a German newspaper, Lukashenko expressed praise for Hitler's economic policies.

He later downplayed his remarks.

Jewish leaders in Belarus also have expressed concerns that Russian anti-Semitic groups have become active in their nation.

Police, meanwhile, have been investigating the attack on the editor's house.

Rabbi Mark Staitman, chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, in a statement commended the police for their swift response.

He also called on the government of Belarus "to condemn such acts of ethnic violence and to apprehend the individual or individuals behind this action."

The NCSJ has contacted the government of Belarus.

Officials from the group will visit the nation later this month.

The Jewish community of Belarus is estimated to number about 100,000, or 1 percent of the general population.

Some 20,000 to 30,000 Jews live in the capital of Minsk. □

## Israel suspects terrorists planted 2 bombs in Tel Aviv

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Two bomb explosions this week in Tel Aviv added new tensions to a region already suffering from badly frayed nerves.

The explosions, which took place within minutes of each other Thursday night near Tel Aviv's former central bus station, occurred as Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on Hebron appeared to have reached an impasse.

They also came amid warnings from Israeli officials of terrorist attacks timed to coincide with the anniversary of the slaying of Yehiya Ayash, a Hamas fugitive who was killed Jan. 5, 1996, in the Gaza Strip by a booby-trapped cellular phone.

With prospects for a Hebron agreement looking gloomier with each passing day, both Israeli and Palestinian officials have warned that the confrontational atmosphere surrounding the stalled talks was conducive to acts of violence by extremist elements from either side.

In one such act, Noam Friedman, an off-duty Israeli soldier, last week opened fire in Hebron, wounding seven Palestinians, in an effort to thwart an agreement for redeploying Israeli troops in the tension-filled West Bank town.

Islamic militants have threatened to avenge last week's attack.

The Tel Aviv bombings took place on the eve of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, a period of intense religious fervor.

Israeli security officials said it was likely that the bombs, which were packed with nails and caused at least 13 injuries, were the work of Arab terrorists.

But at the same time, they did not rule out criminal motives for the blasts, which went off in garbage cans next to a theater that shows pornographic movies.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, after visiting the wounded at Tel Aviv's Ichilov Hospital, said, "All signs indicate that this was a terrorist attack and not something else."

### More active during daytime

Netanyahu said Israel would respond gravely if it was discovered that the terrorists came from the Palestinian self-rule areas.

"If it becomes clear that the terrorists came from the Palestinian autonomous areas, we will not let this pass," he said.

The explosions took place near Neve Sha'anani Street, a low-income area populated primarily by foreign laborers.

The south Tel Aviv neighborhood, generally more active during the daytime hours when a vegetable market is open, was mostly deserted when the first blast occurred about 8:20 p.m.

Police and rescue workers arrived within minutes to cordon off the area, when the second explosion went off nearby.

Two police were among the wounded.

"We are lucky it was at this hour and not in the middle of the day when there are thousands of people here," Tel Aviv Mayor Ronni Milo told Israel Radio.

In the hours before the explosions, U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross continued his efforts to mediate a Hebron deal, meeting with Netanyahu and senior Palestinian officials.

Netanyahu cut short his meeting with Ross to visit the wounded.

Ross met Tuesday with Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat to discuss a U.S. compromise aimed at

bringing 13 weeks of negotiations regarding the redeployment of Israeli forces from most of Hebron to fruition.

Palestinian officials described that session as stormy, with Arafat flatly rejecting the compromise.

No further talks have yet been scheduled between Ross and Arafat, who was due to fly Friday to Paris to attend a conference in memory of the late French President Francois Mitterrand.

Israeli officials said this week that the sides had wrapped up an agreement for an Israeli troop redeployment in Hebron and that what was holding up an agreement had nothing to do with the pullback itself.

The Palestinians, looking beyond Hebron, were seeking an Israeli commitment to carry out further troop redeployments in rural parts of the West Bank according to the timetable spelled out in the Interim Agreement signed in September 1995.

Netanyahu charged Wednesday that the Palestinians had been "trying unceasingly to postpone the implementation of the agreement."

"The other side has apparently decided not to conclude the negotiations," he told reporters. "When the other side decides, then we will conclude the negotiations."

Arafat spokesman Nabil Abu Irdeineh said Thursday that the Palestinians would continue to demand that Israel stick to completing three phased redeployments in the rural West Bank by September 1997.

Under the terms of the Interim Agreement, Israel was to begin the first of the three redeployments within six months after the inauguration of the Palestinian legislative council last March. The third and final redeployment was to take place this September, but Netanyahu has said the timetable was thrown off by events that were not under Israel's control — such as the series of Hamas suicide bombings in Israel last February and March.

Netanyahu said he would agree to a first pullback within weeks of the implementation of the Hebron agreement. He added that the final redeployment would be completed by September 1999. Ross proposed a compromise date of mid-1998, but Arafat rejected the proposal. The Palestinians want the series of redeployments to be completed before the final-status talks get into full swing.

### Cleared away rubble

They are concerned that the Netanyahu government will attempt to use the redeployments as a bargaining chip in those talks, which are scheduled to be completed by May 1999.

Meanwhile, settlers living in Hebron were continuing their campaign against the redeployment.

On Thursday, settlers cleared away rubble for the construction of a new apartment building in the Jewish Quarter.

Opposition Knesset members criticized the construction plans, saying that they had not received the requisite government permits.

Settlers also blocked Shuhada Street, a thoroughfare near the Jewish Quarter that Israel closed off for security reasons and that the Palestinians want reopened as part of the Hebron agreement.

Hebron, with its population of 500 settlers living among 130,000 Palestinians, has long been a flashpoint for violence.

Palestinian security officials have recently confiscated some 500 weapons from Arabs in Hebron, according to Jabril Bachri, head of Palestinian security forces in the area.

There are some 5,000 weapons still being held illegally by Hebron Arabs, Bachri said in an interview with the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. □

**Spat with Switzerland persists; letter reveals Nazi collaboration***By Daniel Kurtzman*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — One week after Switzerland's president accused Jewish officials of trying to blackmail Switzerland into paying Holocaust victims \$250 million, the World Jewish Congress said it was Switzerland's idea to begin with.

Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, whose term as president ended Jan. 1, "was not only insulting, but he couldn't even get his facts straight," said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the WJC.

The public spat with Switzerland comes as newly released World War II-era documents reveal that collaboration between Switzerland and Nazi Germany went beyond the economic sphere to the military.

In late November and early December, Jewish and Swiss officials began discussing the creation of a preliminary fund to begin compensating Holocaust victims and their heirs who might be entitled to assets deposited in Swiss banks during World War II, according to the WJC.

"The Jewish side never attached a figure to the good-faith gesture that was proposed," Steinberg said. "The offer of \$250 million came from the Swiss side."

A spokesman for the Swiss Embassy in Washington said Thomas Borer, Switzerland's pointman on the controversy surrounding missing assets, held discussions with Jewish officials about the issue. But he said Borer maintained "that he did not mention this figure."

Delamuraz, now the Swiss economics minister, told the Tribune de Geneve newspaper last week: "If we agreed now to a compensation fund, this would be taken as an admission of guilt. This is nothing less than extortion and blackmail." Delamuraz's statements caused an international uproar, with some Jewish officials charging that the remarks bordered on anti-Semitism.

Delamuraz has said his remarks were misrepresented. But he has not retracted the statement, and the government has not apologized for or criticized him for it.

Jewish Agency for Israel Chairman Avraham Burg, for his part, said he is refusing to meet with any Swiss officials "until such time as the appalling statement made by the former president is retracted."

**Series of retaliatory measures**

In addition, the World Jewish Restitution Organization this week announced a series of retaliatory measures that it will take next month if Swiss authorities did not denounce Delamuraz's statements and accelerate their investigation into Swiss-held Jewish assets from the Holocaust. The organization is the central Jewish body coordinating restitution efforts around the world.

The measures would include calls for a withdrawal of investments in Swiss banks, cancellation of the banks' operating licenses and a class action suit against banks.

Switzerland, in an attempt to ease tension surrounding Delamuraz's remarks, said this week that it would support the creation of a fund to compensate Holocaust survivors provided that it comes from dormant bank accounts, not government money.

Jewish officials have rejected the offer, saying that the money is not Switzerland's to offer and should come from the government.

Meanwhile, newly released documents demonstrate an evolving picture of Swiss-Nazi collaboration.

In 1943, the United States considered imposing a total economic blockade of Switzerland because it said Swiss military aid to Nazi Germany was damaging the Allied war effort.

An Oct. 4, 1943, letter from the joint chiefs of

staff, Adm. William Leahy, to Secretary of State Cordell Hull cites an increase in Swiss military aid to Germany despite an agreement to the contrary with Britain and the United States.

"It is particularly significant that at the very time that the British and American combined bomber offensive is beginning to substantially affect German production of munitions," the letter states, "Swiss exports of munitions to Germany have been considerably increased, thus materially decreasing the military effectiveness of our air attacks on the Axis." The letter goes on to state: "It is the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that Switzerland should not be permitted to receive any imports whatsoever which we can control so long as she continues to lend material aid to the German war effort."

The WJC said, however, it had not yet been able to determine through its research whether sanctions were ever imposed on Switzerland.

Kalman Sultanik, vice president of the WJC, said the document "makes it very clear that the portrait of Swiss collaboration with the Nazis is not simply restricted to the economic sphere, that indeed they collaborated even at the military level." He added, "Swiss military aid to Nazi Germany effectively lengthened the war and cost precious Allied and Jewish blood." □

**Labor Party decides to limit who can select new chairman***By David Landau*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Ehud Barak, the frontrunner for the Labor Party leadership, has won important support for his proposal on how the party's chairman should be chosen.

His proposal was approved Wednesday at a meeting of the Labor Party Congress, which voted down another motion submitted by Haim Ramon, another contender for the party leadership. Ramon told the session that he would likely not run against Barak when the leadership contest is held in June.

Under Barak's proposal, only paid-up party members would be entitled to vote for the leader in the June primaries.

Ramon had wanted open primaries in which any Israeli citizen who was not a registered member of another political party could vote.

The candidates for the Labor Party leadership who have formally thrown their hats into the ring are Barak, a former Israel Defense Force chief of staff who served as foreign minister in the 1995-1996 government of Prime Minister Shimon Peres; Yossi Beilin, a longtime Peres acolyte who served as minister without portfolio in the previous government; and Ephraim Sneh, a doctor and former brigadier general who was minister of health in the Peres government.

First-term Labor Knesset member Shlomo Ben-Ami, a history professor and former ambassador to Spain, is also considering running.

Peres has said he would not seek the party leadership, but has left open the possibility that he would serve in a leading role if a national unity government were formed this year.

At Wednesday's session of the Labor Party Congress, Barak maintained that the result of the primary would be unaffected by the voting system chosen.

But Ramon claimed that a "closed primary" reserved for party members would be heavily influenced by the 30,000 to 40,000 party machine officials. He said an open primary would test candidates' strength in the broader public and thereby better approximate the fight against Netanyahu for the premiership in the year 2000. □