

**NEWS AT A GLANCE**

■ Residents of northern Israel spent part of the day in bomb shelters after dozens of Katyushas fell in the area. [Page 1]

■ Israeli security officials believe the explosives used in the twin bombing in Jerusalem last month were similar to those manufactured at an alleged Hamas bomb-making factory, according to Israeli media. The Palestinian Authority recently passed samples of explosives from the factory to Israel.

■ Israel released some \$12 million, about one-third of the tax revenues it has withheld from the Palestinian Authority since the terrorist attack in Jerusalem. The move came after the Palestinians' "partial cooperation" into the investigation of last month's attack and its swift conviction of three Palestinians who admitted to killing a Jerusalem taxi driver.

■ A delegation of Jewish leaders opened negotiations with Germany with a top agenda item of reparations for Eastern European survivors of the Holocaust. [Page 3]

■ An accused Nazi war criminal who was stripped of his U.S. citizenship and returned to Lithuania may stand trial there later this year. [Page 2]

■ Canada ordered the deportation to Australia of a man accused of war crimes in Latvia during World War II. Konrad Kalejs, 84, was ordered deported from the United States to Australia in 1994, but stopped en route in Canada, where he has managed to stay since then.

■ Immigration to Israel dropped 16 percent from the same period last year, with 33,000 people arriving since the beginning of the year. A Jewish Agency for Israel official attributed the drop to a shrinking base for potential newcomers, particularly from the former Soviet Union.

■ Israeli archaeologists discovered a mass grave in the Galilee dating from a Jewish revolt against the Romans in 67 B.C.E., according to news reports. The discovery appears to confirm the reports of the historian Flavius Josephus.

**NEWS ANALYSIS****Beyond escalation in Lebanon, a chance at renewed Syria talks?**

By David Landau and Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The worst flare-up on Israel's northern border in more than a year has prompted concerns about a major military confrontation.

For an Israeli public weary of the seemingly interminable embroilment in southern Lebanon, Hezbollah's massive assault on northern Israel this week has also rekindled debate here over Israel's role in Lebanon.

The fact that no one was killed when Israel sustained its heaviest Hezbollah rocket attack since April 1996 enabled the Israel Defense Force to refrain for now from carrying out a massive response.

But with Israeli northern residents in bomb shelters — and with civilians dead in Lebanon — the area seemed poised for further conflict.

Ironically, the tensions in the north came amid subtle indications of movement in the long-dormant Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations.

Rumors abounded this week about U.S. contacts with Israel and Syria that could enable U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to pursue the Israeli-Syrian track along with the negotiations with the Palestinians.

Albright is expected to visit the region next month.

Tuesday's twin rocket assault was the latest — and most serious — in a series of incidents in the past few weeks that have raised the temperature on Israel's northern border.

Touring a damaged house in Kiryat Shmona, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah to halt attacks on civilians.

"If there is quiet on the Israeli side of the border, there will be quiet on the Lebanese side. One can draw the appropriate conclusion," Netanyahu said. "We don't seek an escalation, but equally, we can't accept this as a way of life."

Three people were lightly injured in the attack, including one woman who was treated for shock.

Hezbollah said it fired the rockets to avenge Monday's shelling of the Lebanese port city of Sidon by Israel's ally, the South Lebanon Army. At least seven people were reported killed in that attack.

Israel condemned the SLA shelling, saying it was contrary to the understandings in a U.S.-brokered cease-fire established in April 1996 that was an effort to protect civilians on both sides of the Israeli-Lebanese border.

The five-nation committee formed to monitor the cease-fire was scheduled to convene Wednesday to discuss complaints lodged by Israel and Lebanon over the recent violence.

**'It was a miracle that we weren't here'**

The Israel Defense Force estimated that some 40 rockets landed inside Israel, most in open areas. A smaller number fell inside the security zone across the border.

The first of Tuesday's two bombardments came shortly after 7 a.m. and the second hit about 90 minutes later, with rockets landing in the Upper and Western Galilee.

A number of buildings were damaged and a child's room in one Kiryat Shmona apartment sustained a direct hit. The apartment's occupants were not at home and no one was hurt.

"It was a miracle that we weren't here, that's the only way I can explain it," said Yaron Kalita, who was in Tel Aviv with his wife and 18-month-old daughter.

"If we were here, we probably would have been dead or injured."

The Israeli army allowed northern residents to leave shelters hours after Tuesday's assault, and the prime minister convened senior ministers to discuss what steps to take.

Netanyahu called on the Syrian and Lebanese governments "to exercise control" over the Iranian-backed fundamentalist group.

But it appeared that Israel was intent on not allowing itself to be drawn into what began earlier this week as a firefight between factions in Lebanon. Monday's shelling of Sidon by the SLA came after a 12-year-old

Lebanese girl and her teen-age brother were killed by a Hezbollah roadside bomb in the area of Jezzine.

Reports from Lebanon said the two were believed to be the orphaned children of an SLA commander who was killed by a Hezbollah bomb four years ago.

Israeli officials quickly distanced themselves from the SLA attack.

"Israel did not, I repeat, did not, fire on Sidon," the Israel Defense Force's chief spokesman, Brig. Gen. Oded Ben-Ami, told reporters Monday.

Hezbollah was unwilling to make that distinction.

After the shelling of Sidon, Hezbollah forces fired Katyusha rockets at the southern Lebanese towns of Jezzine and Marjayoun. Some of the rockets were reported to have fallen close to IDF communications positions near Marjayoun, but there were no casualties.

A senior Hezbollah official in Lebanon, Nabil Kawouk, called for attacks against Israel in retaliation for the SLA shelling.

"We must speak in the language that the Israeli enemy understands, and it is not possible to keep silent about what happened," he said.

Coincidentally, the escalation in Lebanon occurred as Yediot Achronot, Israel's mass circulation daily, has been publishing a multipart series on the pros and cons of Israel's deployment in southern Lebanon, where it maintains a 9-mile-wide security zone intended to prevent attacks on the Jewish state.

The weight of opinions cited in the series, including opinions from within the governing coalition, seems to be moving toward an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon.

But most of the politicians and military officials insist that a pullout has to come in the context of an overall peace accord with Syria, which is the power broker in Lebanon.

A couple of recent developments indicated that there may be a chance of resuming Israeli-Syrian talks, which have been suspended since March 1996.

Netanyahu has adopted a new and significantly flexible formula regarding Syria, according to Yediot Achronot. The depth of Israeli withdrawal on the Golan Heights, he is said to have signaled, would correspond to the depth of security provisions on the ground.

That stance contrasts with the government's long-standing opposition to any pullback on the Golan.

From the Syrian side, there have been hopeful words as well. Syrian President Hafez Assad and Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa, in meetings with an Israeli Arabs last week, were negative about Netanyahu. But they went out of their way to voice confidence that peace would eventually be achieved with the 'peace camp' in Israel.

These latest subtle indications may in the end not amount to any progress, but for the Clinton administration, looking for a way to jump-start the stalled peace process throughout the region, movement on the Syria-Israel track, however slight, would be encouraging. □

## **Lithuanian Parliament action needed for war criminal trials**

*By Lev Krichevsky*

VILNIUS, Lithuania (JTA) — An accused Nazi war criminal who was stripped of his U.S. citizenship before returning to Lithuania may finally stand trial here later this year.

Legal proceedings against Aleksandras Lileikis were postponed last month after medical experts determined that he was not fit to stand trial. Under Lithuanian law, suspects cannot be brought to trial if medical experts rule that they are too ill.

Emmanuel Zingeris, the only Jewish member of the 141-seat Parliament, recently launched a campaign to change that law. His amendment will be introduced next month after Parliament returns from recess.

Lileikis, 90, is accused of having handed Jews over to death squads in Vilnius during World War II when he was head of the Nazi-sponsored Lithuanian security police, known as the Saugumas, from 1941 to 1944.

Some 55,000 of Vilnius' 60,000 Jews perished during the war. Leaders of the Lithuanian Jewish community say that the tragedy of Vilnius' Jewry, one of Europe's most vibrant Jewish communities, remains practically unknown in Lithuania.

"The Lileikis case has an important educational meaning for this country's history and future," Zingeris said.

Lileikis, who immigrated to the United States in 1955, was stripped of his U.S. citizenship in May. He returned to Lithuania a month later, proclaiming that he was innocent.

He was to have been indicted for genocide shortly after his return. No charges have been filed.

The Lithuanian prosecutor general's statement last month that the case will go to court "as soon as Lileikis recovers" has outraged Nazi hunters abroad.

They maintain that the Lithuanian government has been moving too slowly in prosecuting Lileikis and other alleged war criminals.

According to Efraim Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's office in Israel, Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas' pledge to prosecute alleged war criminals, made during a 1995 visit to Israel, stands as a hollow declaration.

There are currently at least five Lithuanians living in their homeland who have been stripped of their American citizenship, and American prosecutors are building cases against several more.

One of the alleged criminals who returned to Lithuania from the United States several years ago is Kazys Gimzauskas, who served as Lileikis' wartime deputy. His U.S. citizenship was revoked in June 1996.

The prosecutor-general's office said it does not have any evidence that Gimzauskas participated in the genocide of the Jewish nation. More than two years ago Gimzauskas "denied that he had persecuted Jews" in a note submitted to the authorities, the prosecutor-generals' office said in a statement.

Lithuanian prosecutors have complained that building cases more than 50 years after the crimes were committed is not an easy task.

Vytautas Landsbergis, chairman of the Parliament, told a visiting Anti-Defamation League delegation last week that such cases cannot be prosecuted "just because Jewish organizations, America have pressed us."

Landsbergis swept aside allegations by Nazi hunters that the Baltic nation might still have a number of former Nazi collaborators that were responsible for massacring Jews.

"If it were not for the cases from the United States, we wouldn't have known of people who are responsible" for helping Nazis to kill Jews, he said.

But one Lithuanian Jewish leader disagreed.

"The postwar generation of Lithuanians can not even imagine the level of collaboration" with the Nazis, said Simon Davidovich, chairman of the Jewish community of Kaunas, the second biggest in the country.

A source in Lithuania has recently indicated that the list of alleged Lithuanian war criminals who participated in the genocide of the Jews consists of about 3,000 names. It is not clear how many of them are in Lithuania or abroad. □

**Germany negotiates reparations for Eastern European survivors***By Daniel Kurtzman*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A Jewish delegation negotiating Holocaust reparations in Bonn this week urged Germany to pay long overdue compensation to Eastern European survivors.

How Germany would respond to mounting international pressure to reach an agreement remained unclear, although the head of the Jewish delegation said Tuesday he had received assurances of support from German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

"We are very optimistic," Israel Singer, secretary-general of the World Jewish Congress and leader of the delegation representing the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, said in Bonn on Tuesday.

"We have great hopes that these talks will indeed serve to deal with those people who are aging rapidly."

The delegation, made up of Holocaust survivors and officials from the United States, Israel and Eastern Europe, was scheduled to hold talks Tuesday and Wednesday with German Chancellery Minister Friedrich Bohl and with Finance Ministry officials.

The negotiations mark the most concerted effort to date to seek justice for the so-called double victims of World War II — individuals who suffered at the hands of the Nazis and then, because they were living under Communist regimes, never received reparations.

Germany has paid more than \$54 billion in compensation to Holocaust survivors since World War II.

**Germany compensates its veterans**

However, those living in Soviet bloc countries were unable to apply for compensation during the Cold War, and Communist East Germany refused to make any payments.

The Claims Conference and other Jewish groups are now demanding that those survivors, estimated to number between 15,000 and 40,000, be deemed eligible for compensation.

Germany has come under increasing pressure to reach an agreement amid revelations that it is paying pensions to thousands of SS and Nazi police veterans living in Eastern Europe and outside of Germany while refusing to compensate Eastern European Holocaust survivors.

Last year alone, Germany paid 1.1 million veterans and dependents of Nazi Germany's armed forces "disability pensions" totaling nearly \$8 billion, according to recently published figures. The recipients included tens of thousands of suspected war criminals.

"World public opinion has been moved on this question, particularly in view of the irony that the murderers — the very jailers of some of these people — are receiving pensions while the victims are denied," said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the WJC.

Germany began allocating some money to Eastern European victims after the collapse of communism.

But Jewish groups have complained that the one-time lump payments of up to several hundred dollars amount to only a fraction of payments to Western victims.

Bonn, for its part, says the payments went far in the poor economies of the former Eastern bloc.

In addition to seeking justice for elderly and destitute Eastern European survivors, the delegation is hoping to secure an agreement on less restrictive criteria under which Holocaust survivors would be eligible to receive reparations.

In order to receive payments today, an individual must have spent at least six months in a concentration

camp or 18 months in a ghetto and have an annual income of less than \$14,000.

Officials would not specify what the revised criteria might entail.

In advance of this week's negotiations in Bonn, Washington made sure its position on the matter was clear.

President Clinton brought the issue up with Kohl during a visit here this spring. And earlier this month, 82 senators signed onto a letter urging Germany to make immediate payments to Eastern European survivors. A resolution attached to the foreign operations bill in the House also calls for immediate payments.

"We find it distressing that your government has refused to provide any meaningful compensation to this forgotten group of Holocaust survivors," states the senators' letter to Kohl, which was circulated by Sens. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) and Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.), whose father, the late Sen. Thomas Dodd, was a leading prosecutor at the postwar Nuremberg trials.

"We hope you will address this matter with the utmost speed so these remaining survivors of mankind's darkest hours are able to live out their final years with some measure of comfort and dignity," the letter said.

The American Jewish Committee, which also has been outspoken on the issue, placed the letter in ads in American and international newspapers last week as part of a public campaign to pressure Germany into agreeing to a quick settlement.

"This is an opportunity for the government of Germany to continue in the tradition that it has followed in other matters of reparations over the years, where their record of facing the history of that era has in many ways demonstrated a desire to move ahead and to do what's right," said Jason Isaacson, director of the AJCommittee's office of governmental and international affairs.

For his part, the WJC's Steinberg said, "It's now or never. Frankly we're talking about an aged population which simply can't wait for mechanisms to be established for further negotiations," he said. □

**Italian Jewish tourists flee from anti-Semitic innkeeper***By Ruth E. Gruber*

ROME (JTA) — A group of Italian Jews has cut short its vacation in Austria, complaining that they were forced out of their hotel by its owner.

The travelers, 23 families from several Italian cities, were on a two-week religious retreat organized by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities.

The union had rented an entire hotel in the Austrian city of Salzburg so that the group could have kosher food and participate in religious observances and study.

According to complaints by members of the group published in the Italian press Tuesday, the first 10 days of the holiday were satisfactory, although the owner, according to Dante De Paz of Bologna, Italy, increasingly was upset over having to maintain the rules of kashrut.

Late on the night of Aug. 14, however, the innkeeper, visibly drunk, shouted anti-Semitic insults at the Jewish guests and roughed up two of them. According to news accounts, the hotel owner's wife told the guests to lock themselves in their rooms for their own safety "as if she had already seen other scenes like this."

Police were called to the scene, but Eli Sassum, a leader of the Rome Jewish community, told reporters that "they did not accept our complaint."

The police did not remain at the hotel, Sassum said. "But the man had not calmed down, and we knew that he kept a rifle in his living quarters." In the morning, the tourists packed their bags and left. □

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****Druse bent on participating in Zionism educational programs***By Michele Chabin*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — How do you teach “100 Years of Zionism” to non-Jewish Israeli students?

That was the challenge facing Saleh Alsheich, the Ministry of Education’s director of education for the country’s Druse community.

Instead of shying away from the ministry’s most recent “theme of the year,” which marks the 100th anniversary of the First Zionist Congress, Alsheich tailored the theme to his students’ needs. Alsheich instructed teachers in Druse schools to stress their community’s contribution to Israeli society, as well as the good relations Druse and Jews enjoyed in the years preceding statehood.

“The Druse of Israel have a connection with the state prior to 1948, but most Druse and Jews don’t know it,” Alsheich says. “So we created a workbook and a curriculum on the subject and offered courses to Druse teachers to acquaint them with the material.”

**Program promotes Druse-Jewish understanding**

To encourage Druse and Jewish teen-agers to get to know each other, Alsheich helped develop a program that brings them together. Participants met seven times last year to discuss a broad range of topics, including the Holocaust and the question of why Druse men serve in the Israeli army. The program calls for the students to continue meeting during the upcoming school year.

“The goal has been to provide materials and a framework appropriate for both groups, and it hasn’t been easy,” says Alsheich. “We don’t yet fully know each other, but we are learning.”

Dalia Goren, the Education Ministry official who supervises the annual “theme of the year” curriculum, says finding common ground on a topic as politically charged as Zionism “has been one of life’s great challenges.”

Israeli pupils come from “a vast variety of backgrounds, and we need to be sensitive when planning our programs,” says Goren. “Not all programs are appropriate for all students.”

Approximately 20 percent of Israel’s 1.5 million schoolchildren are Arab, according to Goren. Druse are a secret non-Muslim Arab sect that formed several hundred years ago.

Many Jewish students are immigrants from the former Soviet Union, Ethiopia and elsewhere, while approximately 30 percent of the Jewish students are Orthodox: 20 percent of them define themselves as “national religious,” while another 10 percent call themselves “haredi,” or fervently Orthodox.

The ministry encourages schools to use the curriculum developed for each year’s theme, but it is up to each principal to decide whether and how it will be taught. It came as no surprise, Goren says, when the Israeli Arab and haredi school systems decided not to participate in the program commemorating Zionism’s 100th anniversary, called “Zionism 100.”

Referring to the Arab schools, she says, “It was a bit awkward for them. If you look at Zionism as a mirror, whatever we see as a positive Zionist act can be viewed as negative by an Arab.”

Members of the Druse community, on the other hand, “insisted that they are part of Israeli society and insisted on being part of the program.”

Although other Arab students did not celebrate Zionism this past year, Goren expects them to participate fully in what she calls the second installment of “Zionism

100” — Israel’s 50th anniversary, which will be celebrated next year.

Whether fervently Orthodox children will take part “is still under negotiation,” Goren says. “There are many groups within the haredi community and some want to join and others don’t. There is a minority who don’t want to celebrate 50 years of Israeli sovereignty.”

The goal of the ministry’s effort, Goren says, is to teach the nation’s schoolchildren not only about the State of Israel and its roots, but about its people. “All segments of Israeli society contributed to Israel being what it is today. We want the children — all children — to know about their roots and to have pride in them.”

This goal was embraced by Rahamim Melamed Cohen, the coordinator of curriculum planning for the public religious school system.

“You read textbooks and don’t find any reference to Gush Etzion or the fact that there were religious people who settled in the Galilee,” says Cohen. “Even religious students don’t know enough about their heritage.”

Cohen, who stresses that the vast majority of his male students serve in the army after graduation, says that the challenge for the religious schools has been to show where religion and Zionism overlap. “We see Zionism as 2,000 years old, as a backdrop for the Zionist Congress at Basel and everything that has come after it. Not all Israelis view things the same way.”

Like his counterparts in the non-religious and Druse school systems, Cohen encouraged students to talk to family members about their past. “We asked students to ask their parents and grandparents whether they participated in a religious youth group or helped create a religious settlement,” he says. “This personal connection to the past gives them a sense of belonging.”

**Sense of belonging tenuous among Israeli Arabs**

That sense of belonging is more tenuous in the Israeli Arab community, according to Ali Assadi, director of Arab education in Israel.

“Last year, when the other students were learning about Zionism, we decided to concentrate on pluralism and equal rights,” Assadi says. “Since our students learn Zionist history in school every year, we decided that pluralism was more timely.”

When studying Israel’s 50th anniversary in the coming year, Assadi says, “our emphasis will be on how we, Israeli Arabs, forged our way culturally, religiously, linguistically. Again, we will stress coexistence and the fact that we must learn to live together.”

Assadi stresses that the decision not to teach “Zionism 100” had nothing to do with national loyalty.

“Our students and teachers feel a dual identity. On the one side, we are Arabs and have relations with the Palestinian people. On the other, we are Israeli inhabitants and respect and obey the state. We want to live here.”

While “Zionism 100” has prompted many non-Jewish students to examine their relationship to Zionism, it has encouraged many Jewish students to examine their relationship to the Diaspora.

In one successful pilot program, a group of American high school students studying in Israel for the year visited Tel Aviv high schools.

“Our students had a lot of questions about Jewish communities abroad and how they operate,” says Goren. “We encouraged them to look at the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora and to acknowledge the fact that many Jews will never move to Israel.”

With new questions come new perspectives.

For perhaps the first time, Goren says, “Israeli students aren’t asking, ‘What can the world do for Israel?’ but, ‘What can Israel contribute to the world?’ ” □