

NEWS AT A GLANCE

- **A triple bomb blast rocked the Ben Yehuda pedestrian mall in downtown Jerusalem, killing at least seven and wounding more than 180. Three of the dead were believed to be the suicide bombers. Israel immediately resealed the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas claimed responsibility. [Page 1]**
- **President Clinton said U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright would go ahead with her visit to the Middle East next week, her first to the region as America's top diplomat, despite the triple suicide bombing. Clinton's decision was made after consultations between the U.S. State Department and senior Israeli officials. [Page 2]**
- **The organized Jewish world weighed in with harsh words for Yasser Arafat after Thursday's bombing. One group, B'nai B'rith, went as far as urging the U.S. government to stop all contact with the Palestinian Authority until Israel is assured of its security. [Page 3]**
- **Israel engaged in a verbal sparring match with Iraq and Iran at an international arms control conference in Geneva. An Israeli official said the Jewish state could not ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty because it does not think that the pact protects it.**
- **Israel established relations with Croatia during a formal ceremony in New York. The move came amid criticism from Israeli officials and Jewish leaders that Croatia has not done enough to renounce its fascist past.**
- **Croatia decided to cede to Holocaust survivors its share of gold held by the Tripartite Commission, which is charged with returning Nazi-seized gold to European central banks. Britain, France and the United States agreed to freeze the gold while they review evidence that some of it was stripped by the Nazis from concentration camp victims.**

The JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Wednesday, Sept. 10.

TERROR IN ISRAEL**Reeling from shock and anger, Israelis ask: 'When will this end?'**

By Michael S. Arnold

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Dan Vered had planned a nice Thursday evening in downtown Jerusalem: a meal at his favorite restaurant one block from Ben Yehuda Street, a cigar from a nearby tobacconist and then a stroll up and down the pedestrian mall that is the heart of the city's commercial area.

Vered's evening did not turn out as pleasantly as he had planned.

A trio of suicide bombers, standing roughly 11 yards apart in the shape of a triangle, had turned "the salon of Jerusalem" into a scene of carnage and destruction.

As the casualty toll reached at least seven dead, including the suspected bombers — and more than 180 injured — residents, shopkeepers and spectators on the scene tried to make sense of the bombing as they watched police and burial-society workers clean glass, charred flesh and bits of merchandise from the street.

Teen-age girls sat on doorsteps, crying and consoling one another.

A group of Orthodox Jews stepped off a bus near downtown and began praying.

Stunned civilians walked aimlessly, hands pressed to their chests. And shopkeepers on the streets adjacent to Ben Yehuda engaged in heated arguments about the political process.

"If the Israeli powers don't go inside to the territories, there will be no peace in this country," said Efi Hasut, standing in the doorway of his Charisma hair salon 30 feet from the site of the bombing.

"If they don't kick Arafat out of the country, it will be a disaster for this generation and the next generation."

Outside Hasut's shop, nervous spectators strained from behind police barricades to catch a glimpse of Ben Yehuda Street, which was littered with overturned cafe tables and chairs, broken glass and random pieces of clothing.

Workers from the Chevra Kadisha, the religious burial society, picked pieces of human flesh from sewer grates, iron grills and tree branches.

Police gingerly cut a green shirt from the torso of one of the alleged suicide bombers, pulling back an orange sheet to reveal the man's black curly hair and a face half blown away by the powerful bomb.

Policemen occasionally stooped to pick up 2-inch nails, packed inside the bombs, from the sidewalk.

"Who did we make peace with? With garbage, with the devil," said taxi driver Yoav Zaken, gesturing animatedly to his friend Itzhak Shabbat.

'Asking the cat to guard the milk'

Asking Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat to provide security for Israelis, he said, "is like asking the cat to guard the milk."

"This will never end," Shabbat responded. "They don't want us here in this land."

Hours after the bombing, police still were working to clean up as a crowd of people stared dumbfounded at the area.

Normally bustling in the evening hours with families strolling and tourists sipping cappuccino, Ben Yehuda on Thursday night was lit up by television spotlights.

"For hours afterward, I couldn't get out of my chair. I was shaking — like this," a woman who identified herself only as Yaffa said, fluttering her hands. "My heart is broken."

Yaffa's friend, Aviva Shako, sat in her jewelry store, three storefronts from the deadly intersection, and pointed out objects broken in the blast.

A broken bronze menorah lay at her feet. The ground outside her store had been littered with severed body parts, Shako said, shuddering at the memory.

Across the street, Sam Henke continued serving a trickle of customers at his sweets-and-tobacco shop.

In the minutes after the blasts, Henke said, dazed victims had flooded into his store, ducking behind counters, seeking any kind of shelter. He had dispensed water and food to calm them and was now trying to come to terms

with the catastrophe himself. "We're still in shock. We're still not thinking straight," Henke said, pointing out a dark stain on the sidewalk that he said had come from a chunk of bloody flesh that landed outside his store.

"Business will suffer a lot, but we'll stay open. If we close, they win."

Outside the store, Vered, a regular customer, said he would follow through with as much of his evening plan — dinner and a cigar — as he could.

"This is my lawyer's office here, this is my bank, this is where I sit and drink coffee and read the paper. This is really my area," Vered said. "The reason I came down here is to prove that they're not going to kill Jerusalem. They can't kill our plans, that's the bottom line."

Others, however, said the psychological fallout from the attack was more severe.

American Leah Colmer, who was eating lunch a few blocks from Ben Yehuda and reached the scene just after the bombings, said she would never be able to look at the area in the same way.

"I said to myself, this is happening, this is really happening. I couldn't pretend that I was living at Disneyland just because I have an American passport," said Colmer, who had rushed to Ben Yehuda, where she helped comfort dazed survivors.

To walk down the lively pedestrian mall "usually is a fun and social scene," she said. "Today it wasn't — it was a life-and-death experience. It cost people their lives." □

TERROR IN ISRAEL

Albright to go ahead with visit despite triple bombing in Israel

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will go ahead with her trip to the Middle East despite a triple terror bombing here.

At least seven people were killed Thursday, including three suspected bombers, and more than 180 wounded in the near-simultaneous explosions that rocked Jerusalem's Ben Yehuda pedestrian mall in the heart of the capital.

The blasts occurred less than a week before Albright's scheduled arrival and little more than a month after 15 Israelis were killed in a July 30 twin suicide bombing at the nearby Mahane Yehuda market.

The military wing of Hamas claimed responsibility for the latest attack and vowed to carry out more attacks if its members held in Israeli jails were not released by Sept. 14.

Jerusalem Police Chief Yair Yitzhaki said that injuries on three of the bodies showed "signs of being very close to the impact, which leads us to believe that they were the bombers."

Israeli security officials were quoted Thursday night as saying that at least one of the bombers was disguised as a woman.

Security officials said the bombs used in the blasts appeared to have been nearly identical to those in the Mahane Yehuda bombing.

The way in which the bombers positioned themselves within sight of each other and detonated their explosives at a pre-arranged signal also mirrored the July bombing.

Israeli investigators have yet to definitively conclude who was responsible for the July attack.

Israel's Channel 2 news, quoting a senior security source, said the nails and screws used in the two terrorist attacks were identical and that officials had reason to believe the bombs were assembled in the Gaza Strip.

President Clinton, who condemned the bombings as an "outrageous and inhumane act," said Albright would stress the need for security when she makes her first visit to the region as America's top diplomat.

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian officials condemned the attack.

Israeli officials holding talks this week in Washington prior to Albright's trip informed their American counterparts that the negotiations could not move forward unless Arafat cracked down on Islamic militants — a point underscored by Thursday's blasts.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned Thursday that Israel would crack down on terrorists if the Palestinians did not do so themselves.

"We are reiterating that the Palestinian Authority is not fighting terrorism, is not dismantling their infrastructure. If someone needed to be reminded of this, they were — in blood," Netanyahu said during a visit to the wounded at Jerusalem's Sha'are Zedek Hospital.

Referring to Arafat's meetings last month with Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders for "national unity" talks, Netanyahu said Arafat was "kissing and hugging Hamas instead of fighting them."

"The Palestinian Authority is signaling to [Hamas] that they can hurt us. We are not going to continue in this way."

Netanyahu met with the heads of the security establishment Thursday night and planned to convene the Inner Security Cabinet on Friday to discuss Israel's next steps.

President Ezer Weizman called on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to use his influence to press Arafat to take action against Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Israel resealed the West Bank and Gaza Strip immediately after the blasts.

Earlier this week, Israel had partially lifted the closure it imposed on the West Bank and Gaza after the July 30 attack.

Netanyahu spokesman David Bar-Illan linked the move with the latest attack.

"Obviously, the lifting of the closure could have had something to do with the ability of the bombers to do what they did," Bar-Illan told Israel Radio.

The three loud explosions occurred one after another around 3:15 p.m.

Debris flying in all directions

The blasts took place about halfway up the pedestrian mall, which was crowded with shoppers and people sitting at cafes. The force of the blasts sent debris and body parts flying in all directions.

The explosions also caused extensive damage to property, shattering windows and doors and scattering furniture from restaurants in all directions.

Many of those at the pedestrian mall were tourists.

At least two Americans were among the injured, according to news reports — Abie Mendelson, 18, of Los Angeles, and Gregg Salzman, 25, of East Brunswick, N.J.

Police and rescue crews arrived at the site almost immediately after the blasts and began evacuating the wounded. Ambulances shuttled the injured to Jerusalem hospitals.

Doctors said most of the victims suffered light to moderate injuries. One person was listed in critical condition; eight were in serious condition.

Authorities said that the fact that the explosions occurred in an open area limited the extent of the casualties.

Israeli, Palestinian and American security officials were scheduled to meet Thursday night to discuss the bombings. □

TERROR IN ISRAEL

U.S. officials condemn Arafat in wake of latest suicide attack

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Condemnation of the Palestinian Authority came swiftly from Capitol Hill — only moments after President Clinton called on the Palestinians to do “everything possible” to stop terrorists.

In the wake of the triple suicide bombing in Israel on Thursday, four U.S. senators squarely laid the blame for the attack on Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

“We have an obligation to stand up and say, ‘Mr. Arafat we hold you responsible,’ ” Sen. Alfonse D’Amato (R-N.Y.) said on the Senate floor.

D’Amato stood in front of a poster-sized replica of a New York Times photo of Arafat kissing a Hamas leader at a Palestinian unity gathering last month.

“Mr. Arafat coddles terrorists and provides them sanctuary,” he said.

Three Democratic members also criticized the Palestinians during a half-hour of speeches.

Clinton was equally firm, but more diplomatic.

“Everything possible must be done to stop” the terrorists, Clinton told reporters from his vacation on Martha’s Vineyard.

In a thinly veiled criticism of Arafat, Clinton said the Palestinian Authority must “do all it can to create an environment that leaves no doubt that terror will not be tolerated.”

“Hamas and the other terrorists, they thrive on anger and uncertainty and being able to inject their murderers into this situation,” Clinton said.

After a conference call with top aides and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who is in Czechoslovakia, Clinton decided that the secretary’s planned trip to the Middle East next week should go ahead as scheduled.

Albright is scheduled to meet with Israeli officials on Wednesday.

‘We stand with the people of Israel’

In a statement released from the U.S. Embassy in Prague, Albright said, “Fighting terror is a 24-hour-a-day job. Security cooperation must be accompanied by unilateral Palestinian action to pre-empt terror, destroy infrastructure as well as to create a political climate where there is no tolerance for terror.”

After speaking with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Albright said, “We stand with the people of Israel in the fight against terror and in their efforts to combat those who seek to destroy the hope for peace. Clearly, peace without security is not achievable.”

“The peace process can only move forward in a secure environment,” Clinton said. “This is a message that Secretary Albright will emphasize when she travels to the region next week.”

While many members of Congress praised Clinton’s decision, at least one senator questioned it.

“I’m not sure that going to the Middle East at this time sends the signal that we resist terrorism,” said Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.).

“This peace can be brokered elsewhere than on Israeli soil.”

Feinstein also questioned the future of the U.S. foreign aid program to the Palestinians, which has sent about \$100 million a year since the peace accords were signed in 1993.

Feinstein, who until this week had been a vocal advocate of U.S. aid to the Palestinians said, “The aid should cease.”

She also referred to the fact that the Palestinian office in Washington is symbolically closed because legislation that allows the Palestinians to have official representation in the United States expired in August.

The Palestinians are still operating there, however. “The Palestinian office in Washington is closed and I believe that it should remain closed,” said the senator, who sits on the Foreign Relations Committee.

Sens. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) and Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) also spoke out on the bombing and questioned future aid to the Palestinians.

On the other side of the Capitol, members of the House were debating the foreign aid bill when news of the attack broke.

Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) asked his colleagues to sign a letter to Albright urging her to focus exclusively on terrorism and security during her upcoming trip. He wants Albright to return from Israel “with a plan signed by Yasser Arafat to eliminate the terrorism of Hamas.”

“It’s time to get results, not just promises,” he said at an afternoon news conference.

Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), the chairman of the House International Relations Committee, expressed the sentiments of many members of Congress who issued statements Thursday when he questioned Arafat’s commitment to peace.

“The coincidence between Arafat’s public embrace of Hamas and this latest bombing raises a very disturbing question: Was that kiss yet another green light? Arafat’s words of concern and condolence following previous bombings now ring hollow in light of that embrace,” Gilman said.

“The time has come to ask the ultimate question of whether Arafat really wants a just and lasting peace with Israel or is merely paying lip service to this goal.”

The House overwhelmingly passed the foreign aid bill on Thursday afternoon.

The Senate passed a similar bill earlier this year.

Members of the House and Senate will now meet to hammer out differences in the versions. A vote on a final bill will likely be held before the end of the month.

The measure includes more than \$3 billion in U.S. aid to Israel and \$2.1 billion for Egypt. While the foreign aid bill has never specifically earmarked aid for the Palestinians, about \$100 million a year goes to the Palestinians through various programs.

‘Mere condemnation has no meaning’

Clinton plans to provide undesignated aid to the Palestinians from the larger foreign aid budget this year as well.

The organized Jewish world also weighed in with harsh words for Arafat, saying he could no longer get away with giving lip service to the fight against terrorism, but must act forcefully and shut down the terrorists’ infrastructure.

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations released a statement saying that, “Chairman Yasir Arafat must chose the partner he wants for peace.

“It is either Israel or Hamas and Islamic Jihad,” the statement added.

American Jewish Congress leaders said in a statement, “Mere condemnation has no meaning.”

They called on the Palestinian Authority “to actively, publicly and unequivocally dissociate themselves from all terrorist organizations.”

B’nai B’rith went as far as urging the U.S. government to stop all contact with the Palestinian Authority until Israel is assured of its security. □

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD
Holocaust awareness lacking
in former Communist nations*By Lev Krichevsky*

RIGA, Latvia (JTA) — Fifty years after the Holocaust — and six years after the fall of communism — the tragic fate of local Jewish communities during World War II remains a repressed issue in many of the countries that comprised the former Soviet Union.

Local collaborators, often with passionate zeal, helped the Nazis kill 800,000 Jews in Belarus, more than 200,000 in Lithuania and 75,000 in Latvia.

Indeed, more than 90 percent of Lithuanian and Latvian Jews perished in the Holocaust, the highest percentage in Europe.

During the years of Soviet rule, the government largely ignored the specific Jewish nature of the tragedy, preferring instead to focus memorials and educational lessons on all of the “victims of fascist crimes.”

And since the demise of communism, several former Soviet republics have sent conflicting signals about their willingness to come to terms with the Holocaust.

But some steps have been taken to acknowledge their complicity in the Holocaust.

Indeed, during a visit to Israel in 1995, Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas publicly apologized for his country’s involvement in the Holocaust, and both Lithuania and Latvia have established national days of mourning for Holocaust victims.

But local Jewish leaders say that little has been done to educate people about the extent of local participation in the Holocaust.

The event is given only a brief mention in Belarusian, Lithuanian and Latvian history textbooks.

In Lithuania, no legal action has been taken against several alleged war criminals who were stripped of their U.S. citizenship and deported to their homeland in recent years.

Since the fall of communism, the Lithuanian government has pardoned more than 50,000 citizens who were convicted as war criminals by the Soviet courts after World War II, including persons suspected of participating in the Holocaust.

Desire to settle historical accounts

Lithuanian and Latvian ultranationalists who participated in the mass killings of Jews are now glorified in books and articles, as well as in public ceremonies honoring Nazi collaborators as anti-Soviet fighters.

Last month, a delegation from the Anti-Defamation League visiting Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia spoke about one such case to a high-ranking Lithuanian official.

On the eve of the Nazi invasion of Soviet-occupied Lithuania, Kazys Skirpa, Lithuania’s prewar ambassador to Germany, called on Lithuanians to liberate their land “from the long-standing Jewish yoke.” From Germany, he coordinated the operations of Lithuanian fascists who took an active role in brutally murdering Jews.

Recently, a street in Kaunas, the nation’s second largest city, was named after Skirpa — who is considered a national hero by many in Lithuania.

Neris Germanis, the foreign affairs adviser to the Lithuanian president, explained to the ADL delegation that Skirpa “also did some good things for his country” as a diplomat and a member of the prewar Cabinet.

Soon after the Baltic republics gained their independence six years ago, nationalism flourished along with a desire to settle historical accounts for the 50 years of Soviet occupation.

As has often been the case in this part of the

world, Jews were made the scapegoats, accused of collaborating with the Communists, especially in the 1940-1941 Soviet campaign to exile thousands of residents of the Baltic republics to Siberia.

This charge served as a thinly veiled justification for the collaboration of local residents with the Nazis.

While the wave of nationalism has diminished in the last few years, “There is a need to come to grips with the painful past,” said Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League.

The ADL offered to involve these countries in several ADL-sponsored programs, including a project honoring righteous gentiles and an educational seminar aimed at reducing prejudices.

Another Jewish organization, B’nai B’rith, teamed up with the Lithuanian Ministry of Education last year to organize Holocaust awareness programs in Lithuanian schools.

The ADL mission was assured that the Baltic states and Belarus will continue to support local Jewish organizations.

Authorities in these countries do not hinder organized Jewish activities, even those aimed at encouraging immigration to Israel.

But Foxman maintains that the governments have to be more vigilant in opposing anti-Jewish prejudice and condemning anti-Semitic acts.

Jewish communities here, for example, expect the return of communal property that was nationalized during the Communist regime.

Belarus does not have a law regarding restitution. As a result, the 100,000-strong Jewish community has been able to reclaim only five synagogues out of several dozen former communal buildings across the country.

In a meeting with the ADL delegation in Minsk, Ivan Pashkevich, deputy head of the Belarussian presidential administration, said the major obstacle to restitution is the reluctance of local officials to give up the property.

In Lithuania and Latvia, Jewish communities have been relatively successful in reclaiming synagogues. However, other communal property has been difficult to reclaim.

Foxman believes that by resolving the restitution problem in a manner that would satisfy the Jewish communities, these states could demonstrate their desire to cope with the past. “These are unresolved questions that relate to the past, but still haunt the present,” he said.

Foxman is uncertain that future generations will ever learn what happened to Jews here.

“The question is how much of an investment in time, money, energy is it worth? Will the youth of Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus ever know the truth?” □

German musician sues opera

BONN (JTA) — A German musician has filed a lawsuit against the Berlin Opera for firing him during a May tour of Israel.

The 54-year-old bassist, Gerd Reinke, was in a hotel bar in Herzliya when a waiter came up with the check. He insulted the waiter and then signed “Adolf Hitler” on the bill.

The highly publicized incident triggered a storm of protests at the time and nearly caused the cancellation of the Berlin Opera’s scheduled performances in Israel.

Reinke said this week that he was drunk and denied that his behavior reflected an anti-Semitic bias. “It was just a joke,” he told a German judge, who unsuccessfully tried to work out a financial settlement of the matter.

The Berlin Opera management said it could not re-employ Reinke because it had lost trust in him. □