



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 79, No. 165

Wednesday, September 5, 2001

84th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Suicide bomber wounds 16

A Palestinian suicide bomber disguised as a fervently Orthodox Jew blew himself up outside a hospital entrance in downtown Jerusalem, wounding 16 people, one of them critically.

Jerusalem Police Chief Mickey Levy said Tuesday the bomber detonated his explosives when two border policemen approached him.

Police said that several minutes before the explosion, a number of civilians had reported a suspicious figure in the area. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

### Jewish caucus leaves U.N. forum

The Jewish caucus at the U.N. World Conference Against Racism announced it was withdrawing because of the conference's anti-Israel bias and refusal to speak out against anti-Semitism.

The United States and Israel withdrew Monday. "The United Nations was founded to promote human rights and international security," the group's statement read Tuesday.

"This conference, though, has undermined these principles. We now call upon the United Nations to abide by its own mission. Failure to do so compromises the very essence of the United Nations." [Page 1]

### Russia/Iran connection to deepen

Russia announced it would soon send a team to Iran to assemble at least one more nuclear reactor there.

The announcement came as Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon met in Moscow with top Russian leaders.

Israel and the United States believe that the nuclear technology Russia shares with Tehran may help Iran produce nuclear weapons.

### Scotland won't extradite suspect

Scotland refused to extradite to Lithuania a man suspected of collaborating with the Nazis.

Scottish officials said Anton Gecas, 85, is too ill to stand trial.

Gecas is alleged to have committed atrocities as a member of a World War II police battalion in Lithuania and Belarus.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center called on Lithuania to prosecute Gecas in absentia.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Faced with hostility at U.N. forum, Jewish activists seek to place blame

By Michael J. Jordan

DURBAN, South Africa (JTA) — As the U.N. World Conference Against Racism lurches toward a conclusion, shell-shocked Jewish officials are lashing out at the parties they hold responsible for the virulent anti-Semitic and anti-Israel attacks here.

The Palestinians and the Arab world would be an obvious target for the Israel-bashing, except that the only surprising thing about their well-orchestrated propaganda campaign was its scope and intensity. Rather, Jewish politicians and activists are venting their anger at the United Nations, governments, human rights groups and thousands of nongovernmental organizations perceived as complicit in the anti-Israel attacks, either by their support or by their silence.

The incidents are too numerous to count, activists say.

On the grounds of the U.N. conference itself, the Arab Lawyers Union distributed pamphlets filled with grotesque caricatures of hook-nosed Jews depicted as Nazis, spearing Palestinian children, dripping blood from their fangs, with missiles bulging from their eyes or with pots of money nearby. Attempts to have the group's U.N. accreditation revoked were refused.

Under the tent where the final NGO declaration was approved over the weekend — a document that indicts Israel as a "racist, apartheid state" guilty of genocide and ethnic cleansing — fliers were found with a photo of Hitler and the following question: "What if Hitler had won? There would be no Israel, and no Palestinian bloodshed."

In a Palestinian-led march with thousands of participants, a placard was held aloft that read "Hitler Should Have Finished the Job." Nearby, someone was selling the most notorious of anti-Jewish tracts, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

Many participants have sought to explain away such incidents as political speech or the work of "extremists."

In fact, there has been a confluence of factors, Jewish observers say. Among them:

- Many delegates who are ignorant or naive about the Middle East have been bombarded with extreme demonization of Israel and the Jews.

- An anti-America, anti-globalization animus from the Third World — fueled by a speech from Cuban President Fidel Castro and the perceived U.S. refusal to discuss reparations for slavery — may have been projected onto Israel as America's ally.

- The ambitions of U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, who may need to curry favor with the Arab world if she hopes to replace Kofi Annan as U.N. secretary-general.

- The ease and convenience of scapegoating a tiny minority — 13 million Jews — for many of the world's ills.

Throughout the conference's first week, Jews complained of being constantly under threat and attack, verbally if not physically.

After a day in which she felt under siege as a Jew and defender of Israel, one activist burst into tears while singing Hatikvah, Israel's national anthem, at a Shabbat dinner hosted by Durban's Jewish community.

A Dutch delegate said she was stunned by the atmosphere.

"My father survived the Holocaust and my mother was hidden, so when I see these cartoons I see what was going on in 1930s Germany," said Hadassa Hirschfeld, the adjunct director of the Hague-based Center Information and Documentation Israel.

"No one's speaking out for us against the hate. I'm so sick of it. It's all covered up, that it's 'against Israel,'" Hirschfeld said. "But this is against the Jews. And if they

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### SLA soldiers want to go home

The families of 54 former members of the South Lebanon Army are asking the Israeli government for financial assistance to return to Lebanon.

Most members of the Israel-allied army left Lebanon after Israel withdrew its forces in May 2000.

### Arrest made in Turkish murder

Turkish police arrested a man accused of murdering a leading Turkish Jewish businessman at an Istanbul cemetery last month. Tuesday's arrest came after a teen-age boy previously arrested in the Aug. 22 death of Uzeyir Garib was released.

### El Al luggage defaced in Belgium

Passengers on an El Al flight to Belgium found swastikas and anti-Semitic graffiti such as "Death to the Jews" on their luggage when they arrived at the Brussels airport. Passengers filed a complaint with local police, and El Al complained to the Belgian airport authority over the matter.

### Israel sentences soldier to jail

An Israeli soldier who refused to brief students in Jerusalem's Gilo neighborhood on how to respond to a shooting attack was sentenced to 28 days in military prison. The soldier said she could not fulfill the assignment because she herself had not undergone appropriate training.

### NBA allowed to score in Israel

The National Basketball Association can sell candy and cereal in Israel with its logo after an Israeli judge rejected an appeal by an Israeli textile company that shares the NBA's initials.

The judge ruled that there is no chance that someone might believe that the products with the U.S. basketball logo are sponsored by the textile company NBA.



## Daily News Bulletin

Shoshana S. Cardin, *President*

Mark J. Joffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*

Lisa Hostein, *Editor (on leave)*

Michael S. Arnold, *Managing Editor*

Lenore A. Silverstein, *Business Manager*

Paula Simmonds, *Marketing and Development Director*

JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).

© JTA Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

don't speak out, then the world is silent again."

The U.S. delegation did its talking with its feet, walking out Monday when it appeared that the official governmental declaration would single out Israel for criticism. The Israeli delegation followed suit.

The Jewish caucus announced its official withdrawal on Tuesday, although some activists indicated they would remain as unofficial observers. The U.S. protest might torpedo the entire conference. On Tuesday, there were rumors that other Western countries were considering withdrawing.

In a press conference Tuesday, Robinson, the former president of Ireland, defended herself against the suggestion that she could be blamed if the conference collapses.

"I have been distressed and disturbed by the vitriolic words and inappropriate content in the NGO document," Robinson said. As a result, she said she could not recommend the entire document to the governmental delegates, only passages of it. "Unacceptable," she said, were accusations that Israel was guilty of "genocide."

Nevertheless, she reiterated that she believes reference must be made in the final declaration to "the suffering of the Palestinian people."

Jewish activists remained skeptical. Robinson and other organizers knew what was coming down the pike, the activists said, and could have intervened. Likewise, they said, human rights groups could have worked to defuse the crisis before it hit Durban.

Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel was invited to Durban to speak, and initially accepted before reading the draft declarations. He withdrew and said Tuesday that the United Nations would now be associated with "shame."

"I do not believe I can dialogue with hatred," Wiesel said, answering critics who believed the United States should have stayed at the conference and debated the controversial language. "Hatred stops dialogue, and there was so much hatred there that I got frightened."

A group like Amnesty International may have fanned the flames by accusing Israel of war crimes in its response to the past year of Palestinian violence. An Amnesty press release handed out during the NGO conference cited several examples of racism and human rights abuses around the world, but mentioned only Israel by name.

Irene Khan, secretary general of Amnesty International, allowed that "there are very serious human rights issues in the Middle East. If we name one country, we should name them all."

That response was too little, too late for Felice Gaer, a human rights expert for the American Jewish Committee. "The human rights movement above all is about speaking out," Gaer said. "The tepid, after-the-fact remarks about the unquestionable hate-filled language and spreading of hate propaganda is an extraordinary disappointment."

For the Jewish delegates, who arrived from some two dozen countries and represent roughly two dozen Jewish NGOs, their only sanctuary has been the Durban Jewish Club, where they gather each day for briefings and strategy meetings. They are also treated to lunch and dinner, courtesy of the Durban Jewish community.

It's a different story on the conference grounds. Jewish activists speculate that the Palestinians, presumably funded by the Arab world, spent millions for the conference.

Activists say they saw workers unloading huge cartons of posters, banners and free T-shirts bearing slogans such as "Israel Is an Apartheid State" and "Zionism Is Racism."

The Palestinians also handed out thousands of free kaffiyeh scarves in Palestinian national colors, which many participants happily draped around their necks. One blond woman, a Bosnian from Sarajevo, was spotted wearing the scarf like a bandana.

"The Israelis should give it up, and the Palestinians should have their own state; they've lived there so long," said 29-year-old Ira, who works for an international refugee organization.

"Look at all the NGOs here from around the world, and nobody's supporting Israel except for the Jewish group. I'm just wondering how come Jews aren't questioning themselves."

As for the NGOs themselves, one troubling fact hasn't been lost on the Jewish delegates.

NGO-types generally are among the most liberal and enlightened folks in their societies, fighting for the rights of the oppressed, the afflicted, the downtrodden.

With "liberals" like these, some wondered, what was the potential for these NGO delegates to return home and further spread anti-Israel, anti-Jewish hatred? □

(JTA Correspondent Matthew E. Berger in New York contributed to this report.)

## JEWISH WORLD

### Carter blasts U.S. withdrawal

Former President Carter criticized the U.S. decision to withdraw from the U.N. World Conference Against Racism over resolutions that called Israel's policies toward the Palestinians a new form of apartheid.

"Symbolically, we have a very strong commitment to Israel," Carter said. "But we could have set that point aside, saying we would not participate or endorse anything related to Israel."

### Students seek Israel divestment

Pro-Palestinian students plan to launch a national campaign this fall urging universities to divest from companies doing business in Israel.

Jewish leaders criticize the effort and say it is unlikely to gain momentum, but a University of California at Berkeley group hopes to launch a national movement at an Oct. 12-14 conference called "Holding the University Accountable: Divesting from Israeli Apartheid."

### Israel trip has high enrollment

One youth group's yearlong study program in Israel has more people than usual enrolled this fall, despite a large drop in tourism to Israel.

Young Judea's Year Course began Monday with 225 recent high school graduates — 150 from the United States and 75 from Great Britain — compared to the usual enrollment of approximately 200 people.

### Embassies reopen after threat

The U.S. Embassy in Romania reopened Tuesday after a two-day closure provoked by threats connected to the Middle East, diplomats said.

The U.S. Embassy in Sofia, in neighboring Bulgaria, which also closed last week after terrorist threats, resumed operations last Friday.

### Russia won't charge church

A Russian prosecutor will not charge a local diocese with inciting ethnic and religious hatred for publishing and distributing anti-Semitic literature, according to a human rights watchdog group.

This is the fourth time in recent weeks that Russian officials have refused to take legal action against publishers of anti-Semitic material, according to the Union of Councils for Jews in the FSU.

### Jews for Jesus monkeying around

The publisher of the Curious George children's books is suing Jews for Jesus over the missionary group's use of the irrepressible monkey.

Houghton Mifflin says Jews for Jesus is infringing on the Curious George copyright by using the monkey's image in pamphlets used for proselytizing.

## AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

### Ten years after fall of USSR, Jews say it's been a mixed bag

By Lev Gorodetsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — On the rainy evening of Aug. 20, 1991, Leonid Kartashov brought an Israeli flag when he joined the 50,000 people who mobilized to defend the Moscow White House against a possible attack from anti-democratic forces.

As Kartashov waved the Star of David over the crowd — a number of other flags, including a Muslim green banner, also fluttered over the huge square — he was greeted by cheerful shouts of "The Jews are with us."

In retrospect, Kartashov says, only half-jokingly, that he wished he had helped those who wanted to restore the Soviet Union, or that he simply had stayed at home.

"Instead of getting a European-style liberal society, we just helped Yeltsin and his thievish cabal seize power, ruin the state and steal its property," he says.

His 18-year-old son, Daniel, disagrees. "You want the KGB back, eh? You would be immediately put in prison for your Zionist activities," he says.

Ten years after the fall of the Soviet Union — which put the finishing touches on the collapse of the Communist empire that began with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 — most of the million Jews across the former Soviet Union would side with Daniel.

The anti-Israel rhetoric and the state-sponsored anti-Semitism that once were a regular feature of life across the former Soviet Union largely have disappeared. And with financial help from Jews abroad, Jewish life in many areas of the former Soviet Union has mushroomed, offering Jews a variety of cultural opportunities.

Particularly in larger cities such as Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kiev, Jews have benefited from economic liberalization. "Without the liberal reforms under Yeltsin, we would today stay in line, as in Gorbachev's days, for a package of sausages," says Galina, 47, an accountant at one of Moscow's commercial firms.

Despite the gains, however, many Jews, particularly those who live outside the major cities or outside Russia, have some nostalgia for the USSR. What they miss is not communism but the stability of the Soviet empire and the interethnic calm it provided, according to professor Vladimir Shapiro, a Moscow-based Jewish sociologist.

"We Jews in the former Soviet Union have come a long way since Gorbachev, with Jewish universities and cafes and all that," says Shimon Gurov, sipping kosher wine at a luxurious Jewish restaurant 200 yards from Red Square and the Kremlin.

Gurov is a professor at the Jewish University in Kiev. He was in Moscow to teach midrash to students specializing in Jewish studies, and was talking to two American professors teaching rabbinics and Holocaust history at the same Moscow university.

While anti-Semitic incidents occur less frequently outside of Russia, antipathy for Jews has not vanished completely. Many of the new states that emerged from the Soviet Union have attempted to rid themselves of Russian influences in order to establish a national culture, often instituting language laws for employment. Many people in these states view Jews as "carriers" of Russian influence.

"We identify ourselves as Jews but as Russian Jews, Jews of Russian culture," says Volodya Albert, 41, a Ukrainian Jewish researcher-turned-businessman. "I am not anti-Ukrainian; I simply don't need their national culture, their language. For me, the collapse of the Soviet Union meant that overnight my native country turned alien to me."

Albert, whose parents left Ukraine for Germany last month, is planning to join them soon. An estimated 1 million people have left the former Soviet Union in the past decade, primarily for Germany, the United States or Israel.

Nostalgia for the Soviet Union is most pronounced among older Jews, many of whom struggle to subsist on measly or nonexistent state pensions. But Jews of all ages have suffered from the interethnic tensions that followed the collapse of the USSR.

Sasha Feldman, 16, a Jewish high schooler from the trans-Carpathian region of Ukraine, had to leave Central Asia because of the growth of nationalism in her native Kazakhstan. She settled in western Ukraine.

"I like it here, but some local Ukrainians are rather anti-Semitic, especially toward Jews like us, who don't speak Ukrainian," Feldman said.

Wherever they lived in the former Soviet Union, Jews generally spoke Russian as their first language and identified with the largest of the Soviet Union's 15 republics. □

## Jewish studies center in Sweden opens with a conference on exile

By Sandra H. Lustig

STOCKHOLM (JTA) — Fulfilling a pledge that Sweden's prime minister made a year and a half ago, a Jewish college has been inaugurated in Sweden. Paideia, the European Institute for Jewish Studies, opened its doors here over the weekend with an academic conference, filling in another piece of the puzzle of contemporary Jewish life in Europe.

The institute, which will offer nondegree programs ranging from one week to one year, stemmed from a Holocaust education conference held in Sweden's capital in January 2000.

At the time, Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson declared that his government would support research on World War II-era Swedish history, and pledged some \$5 million to promote Jewish culture, identity and history.

The theme of Paideia's inaugural conference was "Exile, The Jewish People and Reflections on the European Context."

In his opening remarks, professor Moshe Halbertal of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem emphasized that the concept of "exile" carries two meanings for Jews, as the antonyms of both "home" and "redemption."

Speakers at the conference, sponsored by Sweden's Annika Urwitz Foundation, explored theological, ethical, political, European and Jewish dimensions of exile. A lively debate arose over the complex relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jews.

Just a year and a half in the planning, Paideia already has received 50 applications for 16 one-year fellowships.

The institute has received support from Sweden's government and its business and Jewish communities, along with the World Jewish Congress. Persson was expected to attend the institute's official inauguration on Sept. 4.

The institute's name means "culture and learning" in Greek, and is very close to the Hebrew "poh deyah," which means "here is knowledge," noted Israeli Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein, who serves on Paideia's board of trustees.

The name fits the purpose, Director Barbara Spectre said.

"Paideia's mission is twofold — to give nourishment and be part of the regeneration of European Jewish culture, and to act as an avenue of discussion of Jewish and European culture," Spectre told JTA.

According to the institute's newsletter, Paideia is "dedicated to the renewal of Jewish cultural life in Europe," and to serving "as an intellectual and academic base for European cultural renewal." The institute has a Web site, [www.paideia.eu.com](http://www.paideia.eu.com).

Sweden's Jewish community numbers 15,000.

"Paideia will also be an 'einheitsgemeinde' — German for "united community" — "in the sense that there will be no ideological or denominational bias imposed upon the students other than the survival and vitality of the Jewish people," the institute's chairman, Gabriel Urwitz, wrote in its newsletter.

Paideia will offer three programs in its first academic year. The one-year Wallenberg fellowship, named after the Swedish diplomat who saved tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews during World War II, provides an intensive course in Jewish studies.

The "Month of the Arts" program for Europeans in the creative arts features the study of film, text interpretation, music, art, architecture and memory. The "Week of Discovery" is designed as an introduction to Jewish sources for the general public. □

## Terror suspect cleaned Toronto JCC, but wasn't on center's payroll

By Bill Gladstone

TORONTO (JTA) — Jewish officials are dismissing as misleading a newspaper report that suspected terrorist Mahmoud Jaballah supported himself by cleaning the Bathurst Street Jewish Community Center when he landed in Toronto three years ago.

The officials acknowledge that Jaballah — arrested in mid-August on evidence of involvement with the Egyptian Islamic terrorist organization Al Jihad — worked for an independent cleaning company that held a contract to clean the BJC, a large Jewish recreational facility in north Toronto.

"He was part of a night crew of about six or seven cleaners that came in about two and a half years ago," the director of the center, Sherry Kulman, said. "He was not an employee of ours."

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada's federal police force, tipped off communal officials about the Egyptian refugee's connections to the Osama bin Laden-financed terrorist faction that is believed to be responsible for the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed more than 200 people.

Acting on the RCMP information, BJC management "immediately spoke with the cleaning company to ensure that Mr. Jaballah would not be on the list of cleaners sent to the BJC," said Bernie Farber, executive director of the Ontario region of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Communal officials never believed any malicious plot was in the works when they learned that Jaballah was part of the cleaning staff.

"It appears to have been just a coincidence," Farber said.

However, he acknowledged that the incident, reported last week in the Globe and Mail newspaper, sparked a review of security precautions at all Jewish institutions in Toronto, for which the Canadian Jewish Congress takes primary responsibility.

"Changes have been put in place to ensure that this sort of thing won't happen again," he said, declining to provide further details for security reasons. "It was a lesson well learned."

Jaballah, who was working as a teacher at an Islamic school at the time of his recent arrest, served 10 months in jail on suspicion of terrorist activities before a judge found his denials credible and ordered him released in 1999.

He was jailed again when the Canadian Security Intelligence Service recently presented new evidence against him to several Canadian Cabinet ministers, who signed a new certificate declaring Jaballah a threat to national security.

CSIS has linked Jaballah to an array of Al Jihad members in Canada and internationally, but details remain secret.

In conjunction with the opening of the federal case in Toronto, CSIS has released a 21-page summary of its evidence against Jaballah. His lawyer, Rocco Galati, has complained that it contains nothing new.

Meanwhile, Galati said, his client is being held in a small maximum-security cell and permitted visitors for only two hours a day.

"He's very distraught," Galati said. "He and his family can't understand why this is happening."

Jaballah is wanted on terrorism charges by the Egyptian government and could be deported to Egypt if the Canadian government's case against him is upheld. □