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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Attack in Petach Tikvah

At least two people were killed in a suicide bombing Monday in a Tel Aviv suburb.

The attack took place in the central shopping center in Petach Tikvah. The two died after they were taken to a local hospital.

At least 27 people were wounded, six of them seriously. The injured included an 18-month-old baby who was reported to be in critical condition.

The Al-Aksa Brigade claimed responsibility for the attack.

Bush praises Russian Jews

President Bush praised Russia's Jewish community after spending nearly an hour in St. Petersburg's historic Choral Synagogue.

Bush, his wife, Laura, and aides were met Sunday morning by St. Petersburg Chief Rabbi Menachem-Mendel Pewzner and about a dozen Jewish leaders and officials representing a broad spectrum of Russian Jews.

Speaking to journalists near the entrance to the building, Bush said he was impressed by the synagogue and by the achievements of the Russian Jewish community, and praised the Russian government's tolerance for religion. [Page 4]

Ottawa Jews warned

Police increased their surveillance of Jewish institutions in Ottawa after warning that a local synagogue could be attacked in June.

The warning, given to the Jewish community last Friday, was based on an intelligence report police received about a "possible incident" against an unspecified synagogue. In reaction, community officials have taken additional security measures but say they will not postpone any planned events.

The Canadian capital has 11 synagogues and a Jewish population of about 13,000.

The Israeli Embassy and the national headquarters of the Canadian Jewish Congress also are in Ottawa.

B'nai Brith Canada has announced it will hold its upcoming general meeting in Ottawa as planned, and has called on the government to aggressively pursue all leads and "to enforce all the provisions of its anti-terrorism legislation so that every ethnic and religious group in Canada can feel safe."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Israeli Arab involvement in terror grows as Palestinian intifada blazes

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Once it was considered unthinkable that Israel's Arab citizens would lend a hand to Palestinian terror.

But that red line is among the illusions that have been shattered by the 20-month-old Palestinian intifada.

In the latest incident, two Bedouin brothers from the town of Rahat near Beersheba were detained this week on suspicion that a Palestinian militant paid them to kill a senior Israeli police officer.

The Rahat case is one in a steadily growing chain of incidents where Israeli Arabs are suspected of collaborating with Palestinian terrorists.

Last week, five Israeli Arabs were indicted at the Nazareth District Court on charges that they assembled bombs.

The five allegedly watched an "educational program" on Saudi television that showed viewers how to manufacture bombs from common household chemicals.

The Israeli Arabs carefully followed the instructions and prepared some samples for future use against Israeli targets, police allege.

Is Israel's nightmare scenario — Israeli citizens being recruited to the service of Palestinian terror — being realized?

Or, as some of the suspects claim, is the General Security Service pestering them just because they are Arabs?

Previously, police detained four residents of the town of Taibeh, near Kfar Saba, suspected of having planted a bomb underneath a nearby bridge. The bomb exploded, but no one was hurt.

Two weeks ago, police detained Lina and Lamis Jarabouni, 29 and 28 years old respectively, from the Galilee village of Arrabeh. The sisters were suspected of "contacts with a foreign agent and assistance to the enemy."

According to the charge sheet, the sisters engaged in initial assistance to terrorists — such as copying Israeli identity cards for use by Palestinian terrorists — and Lina Jarabouni was ready to help terrorists cross the "Green Line" separating Israel from the West Bank.

Earlier, police detained Latifa and Buheisseh Sa'adi, two sisters from the nearby town of Sakhnin, on similar charges.

Since the intifada began in September 2000 — and Israeli Arabs rioted in sympathy — scores of Israeli Arabs have been detained for alleged contacts with Palestinian terrorists.

In most cases they were suspected of having used their freedom of movement within Israel to help terrorists reach their targets.

In one case last September, a resident of the Arab village of Abu-Snan served as a suicide bomber near the Nahariya train station, killing three Israelis.

There are no official figures on the detention and indictment of Arab citizens. According to a national police command spokesperson, police statistics do not distinguish among Jewish and Arab Israelis.

However, according to unofficial figures based on sources in the defense establishment, at least 110 Israeli Arabs were detained last year on suspicion of involvement in terrorist activities — a record high, and about three times the number in the previous year.

Some of the suspects allegedly engaged in terrorist acts themselves, while others

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israel makes West Bank arrests

Israeli forces arrested a suspected terrorist during a raid Monday in Bethlehem. The detainee was identified as Ahmed Mughrabi, a militia leader allegedly involved in a number of terrorist attacks against Israel.

Israel Radio reported that Israeli forces also detained the sister of a suicide bomber who blew herself up in a Jerusalem supermarket during a wave of attacks over the Passover holiday.

Israel to relocate gas depot

The Israeli government ordered the relocation of the country's largest gas and fuel depot following an attempted terror attack there last week. The attack renewed calls to close down the depot, which is located in a heavily populated area at the northern end of Tel Aviv, because of security risks. The relocation is not expected to be completed for several months.

Israel to launch spy satellite

Israel plans to launch a new spy satellite. The Ofek-5 satellite is to be launched in Israel from an Israeli-made launcher, defense sources said.

The satellite will replace its predecessor, the Ofek-3, which burned up in space after five years in service. The launch of an Ofek-4 failed.

Bibi for P.M. — again

Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed that he will run for prime minister in the next elections. Netanyahu, 52, made the statement when asked after a speech in Berlin last week about his political ambitions. Netanyahu could try to unseat Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as leader of the Likud Party, or might head a bloc further to the right.

In his speech, Netanyahu defended the Likud Central Committee's opposition to a future Palestinian state, saying the Palestinians "can have all their rights except the right to destroy Israel."



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assisted Palestinian terrorists from the West Bank or Gaza Strip.

By comparison, only 400 files were opened against Israeli Arabs in the previous six years.

"These figures are a clear sign of the growing tendency among young Israeli Arabs to join the ranks of Palestinian terrorism," Eli Rekhess, a professor at Tel Aviv University's Dayan Center and an advisor to the Abraham Fund, told JTA.

However, security sources said they still consider Israeli Arab involvement with terrorism to be the exception rather than the rule. The rule is that the vast majority of Israeli Arabs, regardless of their political viewpoints, see terrorism as the red line.

Yet that could be changing. Since the signing of the Oslo accords and the rise of Palestinian autonomy just yards away from some Israeli Arab cities and towns, Arab politics in Israel has been radicalized.

Polls show a marked increase in the number of Israeli Arabs identifying themselves as Palestinians who happen to reside in Israel, rather than as Israeli citizens. The Palestinian Authority has sponsored efforts to deepen this identification. Arab members of the Knesset have become increasingly provocative in denouncing Israel and sympathizing with the Palestinian Authority.

In addition, the Israeli Arab riots of October 2000 — when police shot dead 13 rioters — have deepened the community's feelings of alienation.

In an interview last week in the *New York Review of Books*, former Prime Minister Ehud Barak told historian Benny Morris of Ben-Gurion University that Israeli Arabs might serve as the spearhead of the Palestinians' national struggle.

That could necessitate "changes in the rules of the democratic game," Barak said, perhaps even the transfer of areas heavily populated with Arabs — like the city of Umm al-Fahm, a stronghold of the radical Islamic Movement — to a future Palestinian state.

Are such views merely a reflection of Barak's frustration? In the 1999 elections, Barak won almost total support from Israel's Arabs. In 2000, however, they boycotted the elections, contributing to Barak's landslide defeat.

Barak's role as prime minister during the October 2000 riots is still being reviewed by a commission investigating the events.

"Ever since the beginning of the intifada, the Arab Knesset members are busy with the 'national' issue," Rekhess said, referring to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "Undoubtedly, the high profile of their activities created an atmosphere of unrest."

This is particularly true in areas where the Islamic Movement is strong.

Leaders of the Arab community, however, insist that authorities are intentionally exaggerating the Israeli Arab role in terrorism.

"What is happening in these very days is a case of political mutiny by the establishment against the Arab minority," said Yassin Yassin, the mayor of Arrabeh. "As long as the leaders of this country regard the Arab minority as hostile citizens and judge the entire community based on one case, this country has a problem."

"The truth is that I have no trust in the establishment," added Shauki Khatib, head of a steering committee for Israeli Arabs. "As long as I am boycotted by the establishment, how can I have any trust in it?"

Rekhess agrees.

Frustration has grown, particularly among the young, due to continued government neglect of the Arab sector, he said.

"The link between socioeconomic discrimination and national awakening creates violence," Rekhess said. "If one does not wake up for a comprehensive treatment of the entire spectrum of relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel, the situation might only deteriorate further." □

Anti-Semitic sign blows up

MOSCOW (JTA) — A Russian woman suffered severe burns when a bomb went off while she was trying to take down an anti-Semitic sign.

The woman spotted the sign, which read "Death to Jews," while driving Monday along a highway outside Moscow.

When the woman stopped her car and tried to remove the sign, she was hit by the blast. The incident came amid heightened fears of racist violence in Moscow in recent weeks. □

JEWISH WORLD

Mistrial in Chasidic student death

A mistrial was declared in a Pittsburgh case involving a slain Chasidic Jew. A jury said it could not decide whether Steven Tielsch killed Neal Rosenblum, a visiting Canadian rabbinical student, as Rosenblum left a Pittsburgh synagogue in 1986.

The May 23 deadlock was the third mistrial in the case. Several of Tielsch's former cell mates said he had made anti-Semitic comments and bragged that he killed Rosenblum. It is unclear whether the case will be tried again.

Synagogue opens in Germany

A new synagogue was inaugurated last Friday in the eastern German city of Chemnitz.

The building, which cost \$4.1 million, replaces a synagogue destroyed by the Nazis. The building also houses a library and center for the city's 500-member Jewish community.

Holocaust memoir wows Cannes

A Jewish-themed film won the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival. "The Pianist," directed by Roman Polanski, is based on the memoirs of Wladislaw Szpilman, a Jewish musician who survived World War II in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Judges awarded the festival's Jury Prize to "Divine Intervention," an absurdist look at Palestinian life.

Nazi collaborator deported

A U.S. immigration court ordered a Nazi collaborator deported to Lithuania. The Department of Justice argued that Algimantas Dailide, 81, was a member of the Nazi-sponsored Lithuanian security police and that he took part in arresting Jews who tried to escape from forced confinement in the Vilna Ghetto.

Dailide immigrated illegally to the United States after World War II, and his citizenship was revoked in 1997.

Yiddish theater stalwart dies

Zyora Spaisman, one of the mainstays of post-World War II Yiddish theater, died May 18 at 86. Spaisman, who supported herself by working as a recreation director at senior centers, earned several awards for her acting with the Folksbiene Theater. She also served as the Yiddish acting company's executive producer.

Born in Poland, Spaisman survived World War II in a labor camp in central Russia, where she delivered more than 1,000 babies and organized Yiddish productions in the barracks, according to her son Ben-Ami.

"My whole life has been about preserving the Yiddish language," Spaisman once said in an interview. "Hitler didn't kill it. Neither did Stalin."

Large German party in turmoil over accusations of anti-Semitism

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — A leading German political party has come under attack for allegedly using anti-Semitism to attract support.

The Free Democratic Party also became an object of controversy after the party's head, Guido Westerwelle, said he is willing to attract extremist voters.

Westerwelle, who left Germany on Sunday for a visit to Israel and the Palestinian-controlled areas, suggested in an interview that it would be discriminatory to rule out potential supporters just because they may have voted "in protest" in the past for extremist parties.

"If we, as a party of the center, can win these voters, then it is a respectable goal and serves the goals of democracy," he told the *Bild am Sonntag* newspaper.

The positions of FDP officials are coming under increased scrutiny because the party is widely predicted to get the No. 2 spot in a coalition government after Germany national elections are held in September.

Increasingly, the politics of the extreme right and extreme left in Germany appear to converge when it comes to condemnation of Israel.

Even Neo-Nazis have begun to wear the kaffiyeh, or Arab headdress, as a scarf — a fashion associated more with left-wing anti-Zionists.

Party Vice President Jurgen Mollemann has expressed sympathy for Palestinian suicide bombers. He recently charged that the "hateful style" of Michel Friedman, a vice president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, is partly responsible for growing German anti-Semitism.

Paul Spiegel, head of the Central Council, said he would not accept an invitation to meet with the FDP leadership until Mollemann apologizes.

In the meantime, the FDP is now dealing with another embarrassment: a barrage of anti-Semitic mail on its Internet pages.

Some 1,000 letters out of 7,000 were removed by Monday, according to the party spokesman responsible for the FDP Internet site.

In the "speakers corner" on the home page, readers used expressions such as "revolting, slimy Jew-lout" to describe Friedman.

The offensive Internet letters lend credence to concerns expressed by Israeli President Moshe Katsav, ahead of Westerwelle's Israel visit, that problems within the FDP might reflect growing anti-Semitism in Germany.

When Westerwelle visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem on Monday, officials there condemned the use of anti-Semitic comments by FDP members.

Such concerns now appear to be shared by political leaders across the mainstream spectrum in Germany.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has expressed doubts that the FDP is prepared for a leadership role in the nation's government.

Green Party leader Claudia Roth has filed a lawsuit charging Mollemann with slander for his comments about Friedman.

Leaders of the opposition Christian Democratic Union increasingly seem prepared to criticize their potential government coalition partner.

CDU General Secretary Laurenz Meyer did not rule out a CDU-FDP coalition, but said Mollemann's behavior put him out of the running for a ministerial position.

Edmund Stoiber of the Christian Social Union has challenged the FDP to remove all suspicion that it is using anti-Semitism to win votes.

"Otherwise, the central consensus of all German democratic parties since World War II will be in question," he said.

Though Westerwelle denied his party is using anti-Semitism as a political tool, he said it would be unfair to turn his back on those who voted for extremist parties in the past.

Those who voted for the PDS — Party of Democratic Socialism, the reconstituted Communist Party — or the Republicans, an extreme-right-wing party, "are not necessarily extremists," Westerwelle told *Bild am Sonntag*. "It can simply be people seeking to vent their frustration." □

Symbolism is heavy as Bush visits St. Petersburg synagogue

By Lev Gorodetsky

ST. PETERSBURG (JTA) — President Bush closed his eyes, listening intently as Rabbi Itzhak Kogan recited the ancient priestly blessing.

Then Bush shook Kogan's hand and said, "God bless you."

The symbolism was heavy at Sunday's event at St. Petersburg's Choral Synagogue, a place once monitored closely by the KGB. Not only was it believed to be the first time a U.S. president visited a Russian synagogue, but Bush even traded blessings with a former refusenik and Lubavitch activist who was allowed to emigrate to Israel, in part because of U.S. pressure.

Rabbi Berel Lazar, one of Russia's two chief rabbis, called this visit "the closing of a circle."

"The present freedom of the Russian Jews is due to the efforts of U.S. Jewry and the United States as a whole," Lazar told JTA. "Moreover, acting on behalf of the Jews, America helped the Russians to understand that it's possible to change Russia and make it a free country."

For several decades, the situation of Jews in Russia has been something of a litmus test for Russian-American relations.

In 1974, the United States passed the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which linked U.S.-Soviet trade relations to the loosening of restrictions on Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union.

As a result, during the last decade or so of the Cold War, Russian Jews became an ethnicity friendly to the United States in a country that was an American enemy.

U.S. officials used to stress their support for Soviet Jewry by inviting hundreds of underground Jewish activists to a Passover seder at Spasso House, the Moscow residence of the American ambassador to the Soviet Union.

It was considered a must for visiting U.S. officials and legislators to meet with Jewish underground activists, provoking the wrath of the KGB. Some of the activists paid for such meetings with years in prison or exile. For others, contacts with U.S. officials meant protection — and sometimes an emigration visa.

In fact, ordinary Soviet Jews often felt like they were under America's protective wing. Some of this perspective still lingers.

A Public Opinion Foundation survey from last week found that nearly 58 percent of Russians view the United States as an unfriendly nation, while 25 percent regard it as a friend.

The numbers weren't broken down according to ethnicity, but it's clear to observers that Russian Jews are still overwhelmingly pro-American. It therefore was expected that Bush would do something to demonstrate this "special relationship" with the Russian Jewish community.

The question was how — and the way it was done on Sunday spoke volumes about the maturation of the Russian Jewish community.

Lazar suggested that Bush visit the St. Petersburg synagogue. The offer was accepted — on condition that all factions of the Russian Jewish community be represented.

"Even if the event had only a symbolic significance, it's very good to the Jewish community as a whole" to see support from the American administration, Rabbi Grigory Kotlyar, a leader of Reform Jews in Russia, told JTA.

During their talks with Bush, Russian Jewish leaders discussed

the issue of anti-Semitism in Russia, as well as the situation in the Middle East. "It is very good that the meeting took place and that the Jewish representation was pluralistic," Yevgeny Satanovsky, president of the umbrella Russian Jewish Congress, told JTA.

That Bush could meet with Russian Jewish representatives of all stripes in the synagogue — and with human rights leaders, including Jewish leaders, earlier at Spasso House — is a good sign, agreed Mark Levin, the executive director of the NCSJ: Advocates on Behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia.

"It demonstrates the maturation of the community, that roots are taking hold," Levin said from Washington. □

(JTA Staff Writer Peter Ephross in New York contributed to this report.)

U.S. House passes spending bill that gives \$200 million to Israel

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Continuing its strong support of Israel, the U.S. House of Representatives has approved \$200 million for Israel's counterterrorism effort as part of its emergency spending bill.

The \$28.8 billion spending bill passed last Friday after a rancorous debate that lasted all day May 23. The bill also includes \$50 million in humanitarian aid for the Palestinians.

The main part of the bill includes funding for defense, homeland security and aid for New York City. Lawmakers were angry over the addition of other amendments, and Democrats mainly objected to raising the debt ceiling.

Rep. Sonny Callahan (R-Ala.), a former chairman of the foreign operations subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, did not want aid to Israel included in the bill. Callahan has tried to block foreign aid to Israel before, calling for American money to be spread more evenly in the Middle East.

On May 22, Callahan had pledged to lead an effort to strip the Israel aid out of the bill because it had not been requested by the Bush administration or Israel. Someone decided to "get some pork in it for Israel," he said of the bill.

The National Jewish Democratic Council denounced Callahan's comment, saying all legislators should "come together and stand in solidarity with Israel at this difficult time."

Debate was cut off shortly before midnight May 23 and no further amendments were allowed, stopping Callahan's efforts.

Many lawmakers objected to amendments that did not deal directly with the U.S. war on terrorism. But Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) said "providing assistance for Israel, our ally in that part of the world, is just one part of the campaign."

The money for the Palestinians will go into an international disaster assistance account for humanitarian and refugee programs. USAID, the American foreign aid agency, will distribute the money to groups operating on the ground. In keeping with U.S. policy, the funds will not go through the Palestinian Authority.

Dozens of Palestinian groups and leaders have called to reject aid from the U.S. government because of its support for Israel. Palestinian human rights activist Khader Shkirat said the United States "supports Israeli crimes, and with the other hand gives humanitarian aid to the Palestinians, and that is not acceptable."

The Senate is expected to take up its \$31 billion version of the aid legislation in June. □