

# Jews' Bombs Kill 14 Arabs in Jaffa, 20 in Jerusalem

# Hotel in Jerusalem Used by Arabs Destroyed in Underground's Attack

## Sternists Demolish Building at Jaffa

### 100 Injured, 40 Gravely; Rain Halts Siege in Jerusalem Walled City

*By The Associated Press*

JERUSALEM, Monday, Jan. 5.—The Semiramis Hotel in this city, believed to be a transit headquarters for Arab leaders, was wrecked early today by a heavy explosion which police said had killed at least twenty Arabs and wounded twelve others. Six additional persons were believed buried in the debris.

Police said the blast was touched off by members of the Jewish underground, who yesterday were blamed for the explosion which brought death to fourteen persons and injury to 100 others at Jaffa.

The Semiramis Hotel is a three-story stone structure where, the Jews have contended, Arab leaders stayed during visits to Palestine.

Heavy gunfire was heard in the vicinity of the hotel after the explosion, indicating that Arab guards had engaged the attackers.

The scene after the blast was reminiscent of the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on the night of July 22, 1946, when nearly 100 persons, including many Britons, were killed by a bomb planted by Irgun Zvai Leumi, Jewish underground organization.

### 14 Die in Jaffa Blast

*By Fitzhugh Turner*

*By Wireless to the Herald Tribune*

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JAFFA, Palestine, Jan. 4.—Jews infiltrated into this heavily guarded port city today with a large bomb which exploded in an alley and demolished most of the headquarters of the Arab National Committee in Palestine's largest Arab community.

Hospitals here reported that fourteen persons were killed by the explosion and 100 were injured, forty of them seriously. The British mandate government cordoned off an area a block square in which buildings were damaged, and soldiers and police were searching the ruins for more bodies. An Arab leader who was in the neighborhood at the time of the blast said he believed the dead might total as many as thirty.

The Arab National Committee directs Arab military matters in Jaffa, particularly defenses against the adjoining all-Jewish city of Tel Aviv.

**Sternists Take Credit**

## Sternists Take Credit

Jewish sources in Tel Aviv said the Stern Group (Fighters for the Freedom of Israel) had claimed responsibility for the bombing, but this was not confirmed immediately. Sternists have been active with bombs here for several days, cutting the government railroad between Tel Aviv and Jaffa, to isolate the Arab city by rail from the northern port of Haifa.

[At Jerusalem rain halted the two-day Arab siege of the Jewish quarter within the Old Walled City, The Associated Press reported, but a Jewish Agency spokesman said the Jews would "shoot up" Arab roadblocks to the area if necessary.]

Today's bombing occurred in the midst of the heaviest storm in recent years. There was lightning, thunder and enough rain to flood the streets. A howling west wind drove breakers from the normally calm Mediterranean over the sea wall a few blocks off.

The explosion, which blasted out windows a half-mile distant, centered in the Town Hall Square, in the heart of Jaffa, and had it not been for the weather keeping people indoors, Jaffa residents said, many more persons would have been killed.

### Building Blown to Rubble

The Arab National Committee Building, a three-story structure of stone built originally by the Turks as a government office, was half reduced to rubble. The walls of the other half were shaky, and no one except soldiers were allowed in the ruins. A wall of Barclays Bank on the other side of the alley was damaged, as were fifteen

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# Jews' Bombs

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shops in the neighborhood. The Jaffa central police station and prison 100 feet across the square from the committee building also were damaged heavily.

Part of the committee building was used by the municipality as a child welfare center, but it was not known tonight whether mothers and children were there at the time of the explosion. One member of the twenty-one-man national committee was hurt, Dr. Auni Hannoun, a nephew of Jaffa's Mayor, Yusef Haeckel.

There were four versions of what happened.

The most credible, and the one accepted by police, was that two Jews dressed as Arabs parked a truckload of oranges in the alley and departed for Tel Aviv in a sedan driven by a third man. The bomb concealed in the oranges exploded a few minutes later.

The other stories were that Jews dressed as Arabs had left a donkey in the alley with the bomb in his pack; that Jews disguised as soldiers had parked a jeep containing the bomb, and that the blast was caused by a time-bomb left there during the previous night.

This reporter was in the middle of a political interview in Tel Aviv, which is about a mile distant, when the bomb exploded at 12:40 p. m. The explosion seemed to be only a few hundred feet off; it was loud and sharp enough to shake the building and rattle the windows. This was followed by a long volley of gunfire.

Tonight it was reported that British soldiers blew up an Arab snipers' nest on the Tel Aviv-Jaffa border, after a soldier was wounded fatally by gunfire from a house. This explosion apparently occurred at almost the same instant as the Jaffa blast, and it was followed by an exchange of shots between soldiers and Arabs in which another soldier was wounded.

About three weeks ago Dr. Hannoun, the Arab committeeman who was injured today, told a

group of visiting American reporters that the old committee building in Jaffa was inadequate for national committee headquarters and that the committee was trying to find another location. At that time it was a warm, sunny day; the square in front of the building was crowded with people.

Arabs in civilian dress and armed with pistols guarded the stairway leading to committee headquarters on the second floor, and in an open hallway in front of the committee offices there were about a dozen persons waiting to see committee members. In addition, there were two guards armed with shotguns and two uniformed members of the junior division of the Arab Youth Organization.

## Rain Halts Jerusalem Siege

JERUSALEM, Jan. 4 (AP).—Rain halted today a bitter two-day Arab siege of the Jewish quarter within the Old Walled City of Jerusalem, but the lull seemed likely to be brief.

A Jewish Agency spokesman said that Jews would "shoot up" the Arab roadblock to the Old City if necessary. He explained that no food convoy has reached approximately fifteen hundred surrounded Jews since Thursday, and added: "Naturally, the Old City won't be blocked for any length of time with us looking on as spectators."

Earlier, British troops moved back into the sacred area and drove a wedge between the Jews and Arabs, who fought for nearly twelve hours last night in squalid streets and alleys. Gunfire and the throwing of hand grenades halted just before dawn, according to Old City residents.

The number of casualties among the Jews and Arabs is still undetermined. Both sides contend they inflicted a "heavy toll."

The Arabs asserted guerrillas from Syria, Lebanon and Trans-Jordan had slipped into the Walled City to bolster the Palestine Arabs. One informant said seventy-five empty Arab interurban buses went to Amman, Trans-Jordan, yesterday and this morning, presumably to transport more Arab fighters to Palestine.