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Sunday Journal-News

Sunday, Oct. 12, 1980 With TODAY's Sports Peach and Business Peach 50 cents

20,000 feared dead in Algerian quake

Rescue attempts hindered by rubble



Residents of El Asnam, Algeria, overlook the ruins of their city Saturday.

By MICHAEL GOLDSMITH
Associated Press Writer

AL ASNAM, Algeria (AP) — Ambulance sirens wailed ceaselessly through this devastated Algerian city Saturday after the second killer earthquake in 26 years flattened most of the buildings and officials feared as many as 20,000 people may have perished.

The cries and moans of trapped victims could be heard from under tons of rubble more than 24 hours after Friday's midday quake largely destroyed this normally quiet market city.

Rescuers amputated arms or legs of some of the victims in order to free them. Food and drink was passed to some of those trapped.

In Algiers, officials said between 5,000 and 20,000 inhabitants of Al Asnam and surrounding towns may have died in the disaster.

There was no official toll of the victims and a spokesman of the Algerian Red Crescent, the equivalent of the Red Cross, said it was impossible to make an accurate estimate. Medical teams and supplies were being sent from many nations at the appeal of the Red Crescent.

Roads to the city were scarred by gigantic cracks and clogged with convicts of cranes, bulldozers, ambulances, water trucks and relief supplies converging from all parts of the country. There was almost no equipment available locally to move the giant blocks of steel and concrete that held many of the victims.

The city of 125,000 inhabitants, located astride a major seismic fault 130 miles west of Algiers, was devastated by an earthquake 20 years ago. On Sept. 9, 1964, Al Asnam — then called Orléansville — was virtually destroyed. More than 1,600 inhabitants were killed and some 15,000 seriously injured.

"This was far worse than 1964," lamented an old man grimly surveying the wreckage from a street corner.

Friday's quake registered 7.3 on the Richter scale, according to a seismological station in France.

Some of the seriously injured were taken to distant hospitals by helicopter.

Four camps were set up for the homeless survivors. More than 8,000 tents were distributed by the military authorities, together with blankets, clothing and emergency food supplies.

Throughout the city, electricity,

water supplies, telephones and sewers were cut and officials said they could give no estimate of how long it would take to restore them.

There were reports of serious damage and heavy casualties in mountain villages between Al Asnam and the Mediterranean coast. The towns of Oued Fodja, El Atifi and Senghaj were reported hardest hit. The reports could not be confirmed because highways and bridges suffered extensively and many of the villages remained cut off from the outside world.

(Please turn to back page)

Clarkstown teacher talks resume today

By LEN MANIACE
Staff Writer

Clarkstown teachers and district officials return to the bargaining table this afternoon for the first of two negotiating sessions set for this holiday weekend, hoping to reach a contract settlement that will send striking teachers back to school Tuesday.

The two sides, said to be still far apart after a 10-hour, all-night session last week, will meet at the Sheraton Motor Inn in Nanuet at 5 p.m. in an effort to end the strike that has disrupted the county's second largest school system for eight school days.

As the talks begin, there will be added pressure on the Clarkstown Teachers Association (CTA) to end its strike in the form of a preliminary injunction against the walkout, issued by state Supreme Court Justice William A. Walsh Jr. Friday morning.

But leaders of the teachers have said they plan to remain on strike if no settlement is reached, thereby risking the possibility of additional fines and even jail sentences. The strikers already face a \$100,000 penalty which amounts to two days' pay for every day on strike under the state's Taylor Law.

For about a week district officials pointed to this weekend's talks as the key sessions at which they hoped to reach a settlement and to end the strike by about 750 teachers, secretaries and teaching assistants.

(Please turn to back page)

Were there accomplices?

'Son of Sam' questions still abound

This, the first of a four-part series, was researched by Maury Terry and M.J. Zerkman, and by Thomas McNamara, who also wrote the article.

In an isolated wing of Attica state prison, security looked away from the populace he once tormented, sits the demon New York City spent \$1 million to exorcise from its midst.

The days pass but there's no reason for him to count them. The sentence is 315 years and the chance of parole non-existent.

So David Berkowitz, a full beard framing his enigmatic smile, sits in his shagreened cell, segregated from the other prisoners, listening to his stereo, writing letters and reading.

The killings that drove tens of thousands of young women from the streets in the sweltering summer of 1977 stopped once Berkowitz was captured. He has never contested his guilt, freely admitting that he was the specter of evil called the "Son of Sam."

Yet the "Son of Sam" case remains open, the subject of an active probe by the Queens District Attorney's Office, whose investigators are attempting to answer the one question that was never fully answered: "Was David Berkowitz the only 'Son of Sam'?"

Queens began the investigation one year ago this month after the Gannett Westchester Rockland Newspapers conducted its own investigation of the "Son of Sam" case and documented the

probability that Berkowitz was aided by others in the homicidal rampage that left six dead and seven wounded.

Gannett's independent investigation, begun in 1978, pointed out the numerous contradictions in the angle "Son of Sam" theory and raised some nagging questions in the matter of "David Berkowitz, lone killer."

The Gannett probe has shown — and some New York City investigators and prosecutors have confirmed — that had it not been for Berkowitz's confessions and guilty pleas to all the Son of Sam slayings there probably would not have been sufficient evidence to win murder convictions at trial.

In the year since the Queens probe began, investigators have sifted thousands of pages of documents, conducted more than a hundred interviews and followed possible leads to such backwater stops as Mink, N.D., and Beaumont, Texas.

That Berkowitz acted alone in each of the slayings has not been proven. That he was not alone has not been proven either.

But the leads that have been developed by Gannett, Queens and other investigators — including the suspected involvement of a Satanic cult in the killing, the possibility that Berkowitz

was "set up" by potential accomplices, the mysterious deaths of several persons tied to the probe and the development of at least 10 possible accomplices — continue to point to the existence of accomplices.

The possibility that there was more than one "Son of Sam" was not even considered three years ago when Berkowitz walked quietly out of his apartment building in northwest Yonkers, bounded easily up the front steps to street level and entered into one of the most bizarre and intriguing chapters in American criminal history.

Moments before, he was an anonymous, middle-class civil servant, a former security guard, construction worker, cab driver, Army veteran, adopted son, stepbrother. A guy who, just months earlier, read about an apartment fire in which he didn't know a letter of condolence and a check for \$10 to help him out.

And then, as he walked into the arms of waiting detectives, David Berkowitz faded into the night and the portly, unassuming figure in jeans and a short-sleeved dress shirt was transformed into that of "Son of Sam," the "44-caliber Killer."

(Please turn to 11A)

Keeping warm may be easier than paying for it

By PAUL CARLAEN
Business Writer

First, the good news about keeping warm this winter: There's plenty of home heating oil and natural gas.

Now, the bad news. Orange and Rockland Utilities' natural gas costs about 24 percent more than a year ago, and home heating oil is 20 percent more.

And O&R estimates there will be another 15 percent increase by the end of the winter. The outlook for oil is less clear but if the Iran-Iraq war continues even the current oil glut won't keep prices from rising. In fact spot market oil prices are already above the official OPEC level.

There has been a bit of relief since last year, however. The state sales tax on residential energy bills was eliminated effective Oct. 1.

Rockland is fortunate in that O&R has among the lowest natural gas rates in the state.

In 1979, O&R's average cost to residential users for 1,000 cubic feet of natural gas was \$1.14, compared to \$1.30 for Consolidated Edison and \$1.03 for Brooklyn Union Gas.

Right now, according to O&R Vice President of Gas and Electric Operations Victor Blanchet, the average cost per 1,000 cubic feet for residential customers is \$1.20, 24 percent more than in 1979. "We expect it to go up by another 15 percent."

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Debate scheduled on exec proposal

A public debate on the merits of the proposal to change Rockland County's form of government is to be held Tuesday night at Spring Valley High School, beginning at 8.

Open to the public, the debate is being sponsored by The Journal-News and the League of Women Voters. It will focus on the county proposition that goes to voters on Nov. 4, calling for adoption of a county charter and creation of the post of Rockland County Executive.

The debate will be one of three being sponsored by The Journal-News and the league. Others are scheduled for Oct. 21 at North Rockland High School in thielis and Oct. 28 at Nyack High School.

A look back at Nyack teachers' strike

See page 1AA

'Son of Sam' 'accomplice' theory unresolved

(Continued from 1A)

The murderous spree had begun on July 29, 1976. Before it was stillled one year and eight attacks later, the largest and most expensive manhunt in New York history — at times involving more than 300 police officers and costing more than \$1 million — struggled for months in what insiders now acknowledge was a poorly coordinated effort to halt the ever-increasing flow of innocent blood.

The elite of the police department, lauded throughout their investigation by the killer, had come up empty, but a Brooklyn widow's recollection of a parking ticket near a shooting scene had led back to Yonkers and suddenly David Berkowitz wasn't anonymous any longer.

Berkowitz became known as the "Son of Sam" for two reasons: — Most importantly, he said he was. "You got me," he told New York City detectives when he was arrested. Within hours of that arrest he had recited a full confession to all the murders.

And, in a brown paper bag he carried as he left 35 Pine St. in Yonkers for the last time that hot night in August of 1977 was a gun — a .44-caliber Charter Arms Bulldog revolver, serial number 21207. It was the trademark weapon of the Son of Sam. And although it couldn't be matched to all the killings, it was deemed enough, especially when coupled with Berkowitz's explanation for the killings.

The murders had apparently been the work of a madman and Berkowitz's irrational explanation of his motive furthered the perception of him as a demented lunatic.

He said demons and the barking dog of an elderly neighbor, Sam Carr, ordered him to kill. He said Carr's dog was really the spirit of a 6,000-year-old man. He said the demons demanded young blood. He said he did it all and that he did it alone. He said a lot of things, but in time not all of them would prove to be true.

Perpetrator caught. Confession in hand. Promotions secure. Case closed. There was now nothing left to do, but bang the gavel and get him out of sight — quickly.

It didn't take long. Within a year of his arrest, Berkowitz stood in a lightly guarded Brooklyn courtroom, ignoring the advice of his two attorneys, who had urged him to plead not guilty by reason of insanity, he confessed to all six "Son of Sam" murders and was sentenced to serve six consecutive life terms in state prison.

"Berkowitz was definitely involved," says an assistant district attorney who was involved in the case. "But was he alone? That's the big question. It was easy to believe he was because that's what everyone wanted to believe. Now, it looks different. Or rather, it really always looked different, but no one wanted to pay attention."

As the probe of the "Son of Sam" case continues, there are four primary areas that suggest the involvement of accomplices.

The sketches. Eyebrows were first raised when Berkowitz was arrested and resembled only one of the police composites of the killer, but police said such discrepancies were not unusual given the fact that witnesses often provided unreliable physical details of a suspect's features.

The fact remains, however, that during the murder spree, witnesses and surviving victims had described assailants whose descriptions were so markedly different that The New York Times, before Berkowitz's arrest, had written: "The descriptions vary so widely that police are considering that the killer might have gained weight and altered his appearance through the use of various disguises, including wigs and mustaches."

But what has most aroused investigators' suspicions is that at least two of the composites bear striking resemblances to persons that have been connected either directly to Berkowitz or to persons who have been the subject of the renewed "Son of Sam" investigation.

John Carr. The name of John Carr repeatedly turns up in the renewed probe and has become a key element, which some investigators believe could resolve many lingering doubts. He was the son of Sam Carr — Berkowitz's neighbor and so-called imaginary "master."

John Carr's nickname was "Whistles" — the same as an alias of the killer in a Son of Sam letter — "John Wheaties; rapist and suffocator of young girls." Carr also closely resembled the police sketches of "Son of Sam" that depicted the killer with long, straight hair, totally unlike Berkowitz. And, authorities have detailed Carr's travels to and from New York, finding that his visits here corresponded with some of the "Son of Sam" slayings.

But most importantly, police have been told by Carr's therapist and others that Carr spoke about the "Son of Sam" killings even before Berkowitz was arrested and demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the shootings. And shortly after Berkowitz's arrest, Carr told his girlfriend the police were looking for him in connection with the "Son of Sam" case. Carr's friends told police he feared he would be "fried in the electric chair" if New York authorities caught up with him.

Carr died before police ever got to question him. His death in North Dakota, where he was living after serving a 12-year hitch there in the U.S. Air Force, was initially termed a suicide. However, it is now being probed as a possible murder. "We have a motive for both murder and suicide," says Ward County (N.D.) police Lieutenant Terry Gardner. "Murder to silence him and suicide because he knew he was wanted for questioning in the Son of Sam case."

59 workers evacuated from rig fire

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Fifty-nine workers evacuated safely in escape capsules Saturday night when a fire broke out in the engine room of a drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico, said a spokesman for the exploration company.

No one was injured when the fire broke out shortly after 7 p.m. on the semi-submersible rig Ocean Tractor, located about 50 miles southeast of Corpus Christi, Texas, said spokesman Al Spindler of Ocean Drilling and Exploration Co. Spindler said the rig was not on the well itself — was still burning hours later, in 100 feet of water in an area known as the Mustang Island Block A-15. He said one work boat



David Berkowitz is arrested by New York City police in 1977.

The Moskowitz shooting. The July 31, 1977 murder of Stacy Moskowitz and blinding of Robert Violante in Brooklyn — the final "Son of Sam" attack and the one that led to Berkowitz's arrest — has produced some of the most damaging evidence against the "Berkowitz alone" position.

In brief, these newspapers were able to frame the scenario with the time on a parking ticket Berkowitz received before the shots rang out and the time the police #1 computer was notified of the shooting. Additionally, an eyewitness who had seen Berkowitz and checked the time on his watch provided corroborating information.

Through the analysis of the time, and interviews with

witnesses, it was established that Berkowitz was blocks away from the shooting scene at the same time as he said he was stalking his victims in a playground adjacent to the shooting location.

Further, eyewitnesses interviewed by Gannett revealed critical details — withheld by authorities — which demonstrated Berkowitz lied in his confession and apparently acted as a lookout for a long-haired killer who fled the scene in a yellow Volkswagen.

The VW was chased by a witness for some nine blocks before it escaped. The Volkswagen driver's description matched that of the gunman which was provided by the key witness to the shooting itself. The description of the

killer and VW driver, both in physical appearance and clothing, was totally at odds with that of Berkowitz.

Another suppressed report was that of a witness who positively identified Berkowitz as driving his own Ford Galaxie away from the scene to follow a police car shortly before the shots were fired. That report effectively put Berkowitz in two places at the same time.

Cult connection. From the outset, the "Son of Sam" case has been peppered with occult references, beginning with the letter to columnist Jim J. Breslin in which "Son of Sam" bestowed greetings "from the gutters of NYC, which are filled with dog manure, vomit, stale wine, urine and blood." The statement apparently refers to a satanic "Black Mass," in which the host is frequently smeared with excrement, blood is drunk; participants may also vomit on the altar and drink urine or stale wine as a substitute for sacramental wine.

After Berkowitz was captured and began serving his sentence, he told reporters that there was a cult active near his home in Yonkers — but stopped short of saying he was a member of it.

Berkowitz said that John Carr was "a devil worshiper," a statement that was later confirmed by Carr, his friends and a therapist in North Dakota, who said he was a member of satanic cults in Yonkers and in North Dakota.

The cult's turf, a section of Untermyer Park in Yonkers, just blocks from Carr's and Berkowitz's homes, was located in early 1979 by Gannett after interviews with area residents and workers who described strange caped figures chanting and burning torches at night.

Throughout Berkowitz's Pine Street neighborhood authorities found dead German shepherds, commonly used as occult sacrifices, both before and after his arrest.

In addition, an animal placement worker in the Bronx said she received a call from a person who identified himself as David Berkowitz two days before Berkowitz was arrested. The caller wanted to adopt a German shepherd. The call further suggests links between Berkowitz and satanic cults.

In North Dakota, members of a cult Carr belonged to were known to use German shepherds as sacrifices.

Monday in The Journal-News and TODAY: Prior to Berkowitz pleading guilty to being the lone "Son of Sam" prosecutor in Brooklyn apparently chose to disregard evidence indicating others played a role in the case. Had they investigated they would have found convincing evidence of an accomplice.

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