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ESHKOL GETS MORE TIME TO FORM COALITION; RELIGIOUS DISPUTE GOES ON

JERUSALEM, Dec. 26. (JTA) -- President Zalman Shazar this weekend granted to Prime Minister Levi Eshkol a two-week extension, to January 9, of his original mandate to form a new Government. Israel must have a new Cabinet as a result of the elections last month in which the Mapai-Achdut Avoda alignment won a plurality of 45 of the 120 seats in the Knesset (Parliament). The original mandate expired today. Under Israeli law, the mandate cannot be extended beyond the new deadline. The present Cabinet forms a caretaker Government.

The main obstacle to Mr. Eshkol's efforts to form a broad coalition continues to be the insistence by the National Religious Party that Israel's newly built port at Ashdod, south of Tel Aviv, shut down all operations on Saturdays. Mr. Eshkol insists that permits to operate the Ashdod facilities on the Sabbath be ruled on by the Ministerial Committee, as is the case with Israel's other ports.

Without the National Religious Party and the Poalei Agudat Israel, which were part of the outgoing coalition, Mr. Eshkol could form only a very narrow coalition comprising, in addition to the alignment, the Independent Liberals, Mapam and the Mapai-affiliated Arab lists. This coalition would have only a slim majority in the current Knesset.

The Mapai Secretariat authorized Mr. Eshkol to go ahead with a new coalition without the religious parties if the latter continue to insist on conditions unacceptable to the Premier. The Secretariat also urged the Premier to present a new Government next week.

ISRAELI GENERAL WARNS OF STEPPED-UP MISSILE THREATS FROM EGYPT

TEL AVIV, Dec. 26. (JTA) -- Egypt now has at least 10 surface-to-air missile launching bases similar to those set up by the Soviet Union in Viet Nam. This was disclosed here this weekend by Israel's Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Rabin, who warned that Egypt was now also expected to be receiving newer and better aircraft, new T-55 tanks and modern naval equipment. Addressing a luncheon meeting of the Engineers Club here, Gen. Rabin said that Arab hostility toward Israel remains unabated, and Israel's basic security problems remain unchanged.

Referring to Israel's efforts to meet the challenge of the improved Egyptian armaments, the general said that, while he could not disclose publicly how Israel hopes to achieve superiority, "all I can say is that many vast efforts are being made. We are not content with leaving the balance as it is, but we intend to improve it further to our advantage."

The problems involved, Gen. Rabin declared, are no longer political but fiscal. "If I had to single out outstanding issues of recent past and the predictable future," he said, "I would pick four subjects: The first involves the water struggle in which Israel appears to have retained the upper hand; the second concerns developments in inter-Arab relations, showing the clearcut decline of Nasser's influence; the third issue involves the renewed and intensified armament drive of the Arab countries; and the fourth is the new wave of Palestinian nationalism -- the outcome of frustrated hopes and disappointments."

CHRISTIAN ARABS IN ISRAEL CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS; 5,000 CROSS TO JORDAN

JERUSALEM, Dec. 26. (JTA) -- A record number of Christian Arabs, tourists and pilgrims, estimated at over 5,000, crossed into Jordan this weekend to spend Christmas with relatives and to visit Christian shrines.

In accordance with the yearly practice, the visitors spent 48 hours in Jordan before returning to Israel through the Mandelbaum Gate.

In Israel, Christmas was celebrated at Christian centers of worship throughout the country. The major observance took place at the New Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth. In that city hotels and tourist accommodations were filled to capacity. Over 1,100 British tourists including 600 school children, landed in Haifa shortly before Christmas eve to spend three days sightseeing in Israel.

ISRAELI TEXTILE STRIKERS RETURN TO WORK; NEGOTIATIONS UNDER WAY

TEL AVIV, Dec. 26: (JTA) -- A month-long strike at the Argaman Textile Works ended here today with the return to work this morning of 500 employes of the plant in Bnei Brak. The workers walked out last month in support of their demands for compensation for those employes who would lose their jobs when the plant moves to a new site in the Galilee.

The strikers decided to return to work after the Histadrut, Israel's labor federation, which had opposed the strike, agreed to open negotiations today with the company's management on terms for compensation of workers losing their jobs.

According to the terms of the tentative settlement, the Histadrut agreed to report to the employes on the results of the negotiations within six weeks with a provision for any disagreements to be referred to the trade union department of the Histadrut. The employes will have the right to appeal any decisions to the Histadrut Central Committee.

FRENCH AUTOMOBILE FIRM TO BUY PARTS IN ISRAEL FOR ITS ASSEMBLY PLANT

TEL AVIV, Dec. 26: (JTA) -- The Renault automobile company, of France, is expected to buy auto parts in Israel for its assembly plant in this country, in an effort to re-establish the Israel market for its automobiles, it was revealed here today.

Several years ago, Renault stopped assembling cars in its plant at Haifa, capitulating to the demands of the Arab boycott office. As a result of that move, Renault lost not only its Israeli market, but also suffered losses in sales around the world -- without making any significant sales gains in Arab countries. Now the company is reportedly ready to try to recoup its market in Israel. It is assumed that it might advance that aim by buying parts from Israeli suppliers.

Meanwhile it was announced here that another French automobile firm, Simca, is "interested" in assembling cars in this country for the Israeli market. The announcement was made by the management of Traffic Tools, Ltd., a firm here that builds trucks and has an assembly plant at Nazareth. Israel has four automobile assembly plants now. These put cars together for manufacturers of British, Japanese and American cars.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT MAY ACT AGAINST ARAB BLACKLIST OF 13 FIRMS

NEW DELHI, Dec. 26: (JTA) -- Thirteen Indian firms, including one under Government sponsorship, were disclosed today to have been blacklisted by the Arab League because foreign associates of the firms have connections with Israel.

Efforts to have the firms removed from the Arab blacklist on grounds that the companies did not deal directly with Israel have failed, the Arab League apparently insisting that the firms drop their connections with those associates. Political sources said that the Government had taken up the issue with the Arab League and that, if efforts to end the blacklisting continued to fail, serious diplomatic consequences might arise.

The daily newspaper Pratap, meanwhile, sharply criticized the Arab League this weekend for advocating a policy of neutrality in India's dispute with Pakistan, in an effort to induce this country to continue withholding diplomatic recognition of Israel. The paper declared in an editorial that the Arab states profess friendship towards India to make this country a tool for gaining their own political objectives.

SAUDI ARABIA MOVES TOWARD BUYING U. S. HAWKS WORTH \$100,000,000

WASHINGTON, Dec. 26: (JTA) -- The Raytheon Company, of Lexington, Mass., has received a letter of intent from Saudi Arabia for supply of Hawk missiles for a total of over \$100,000,000, it was learned here. A letter of intent usually precedes a firm order.

Raytheon Co. officials said that included in the order for the missile systems, authorized by the United States Government for export, will be vehicles and other associated equipment, spare components, program management assistance and a maintenance training program. The Hawk missiles will be produced mainly at Andover, Mass. The transaction is in line with a recent British-American consortium arranged to provide Saudi Arabia with the finest air defense system of any Western-supplied Arab state.

VANDALS RUN AMOK IN RAMAT GAN, CAUSING HEAVY DAMAGE; 3 ARRESTED

TEL AVIV, Dec. 26: (JTA) -- Three youths were arrested this morning in connection with large-scale acts of vandalism at Ramat Gan. A gang of youngsters smashed automobile windows, ripped out telephones from public booths, and broke shop windows, causing thousands of pounds of damage.

CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT ISSUES CALL FOR MORE SUPPORT FOR DAY SCHOOLS

NEW YORK, Dec. 26; (JTA) -- A call urging the rabbis, educators and lay leaders of the Conservative movement to fully support the growth of Conservative day schools was issued here today at the North American Conference on Day School Education, sponsored by the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education.

The religious and educational leaders attending the two-day conference, at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, noted that, in the past decade, 23 Conservative day schools have been established in the United States and Canada.

Dr. Louis Finkelstein, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America opened the conference. The evening session was addressed by Dr. Simon Greenberg, vice-chancellor of the seminary, who stressed the importance of providing the child enrolled in a day school with a "complete" sense of Jewish identity. He said that the strength of religious faith depends upon the depth of religious knowledge.

Among the educators reading papers at the conference were Dr. Shimon Frost, principal of the Brandeis School, Lawrence, N.Y.; Dr. Milton Gold, professor of education, Hunter College, and Dr. Nathan Winter, director of the United Synagogue regional education commission for Northern New Jersey.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE PROTESTS U. S. SALE OF SEIZED NAZI ITEMS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 26; (JTA) -- The American Jewish Committee has raised the issue of a contemplated auction of Nazi paraphernalia by the United States Internal Revenue Service, and indicated that, under constitutional considerations, the Government might either destroy the Nazis' goods, giving the Nazi Party a "fair value" tax credit, or return the items to George Lincoln Rockwell.

An IRS auction of the Nazi Party property has been temporarily deferred because of Rockwell's pending hearing in which he is appealing for an injunction, and owing to a complaint by Sen. Clifford P. Case, New Jersey Republican. Sen. Case said that sale by the Government of such items as swastikas and hate literature, seized to meet unpaid taxes, would put Federal authorities "in the position of purveying for profit the same stock-in-trade as the American Nazi Party."

Sanford H. Bolz, Washington counsel of the American Jewish Committee, said his group agreed with Sen. Case but "we would go further." He said he has conveyed to IRS Commissioner Sheldon Cohen the view of his organization that it is one thing for Rockwell to circulate and sell hate literature, swastikas, and so forth -- "but quite another matter for the Government of the United States to become a party to the sale to satisfy a tax lien or for any other purpose."

Mr. Bolz said: "It is entirely likely that such action by the Government to sell or distribute racist material is unconstitutional Government action, forbidden by the Fifth Amendment. Surely a Government like ours, which is dedicated to equality and to elimination of all forms of discrimination and prejudice from our national life, should never become a party to the circulation or purveying of racist material, literature, or mailing lists designed for their distribution to willing and eager recipients, for the raising of funds or any other reason."

He stressed that "if the Government cannot and should not sell this material, it should destroy it in the same way as it would other contraband material it would not wish to purvey or distribute in the channels of trade or commerce. But in deference to First Amendment rights which Rockwell may have to possess and use such material, the Internal Revenue Service should give him an appropriate credit against his tax in the amount of the fair value of such items, without placing them on public auction and selling them to others. There are procedures which the Service might use to achieve this result; If, for any reason, this could not be done, then the Service should return the material to Rockwell, rather than to sell it to others. This is a dirty business, and the Government should have no part of it."

Mr. Bolz added that "we are starting down a dangerous road, indeed, if the Government is permitted to purvey racist material on the excuse that it is merely raising money, rather than promoting racism." He said he had stated these views to the IRS commissioner, and "sincerely trust" they will be adopted.

SAMUEL CAPLAN RETIRES TODAY; EDITED CONGRESS MAGAZINE 25 YEARS

NEW YORK, Dec. 26; (JTA) -- Samuel Caplan, editor of Congress Bi-Weekly since its establishment as a weekly 25 years ago, will retire from that post with the final issue under his editorship, appearing tomorrow. The issue will be a special 32-page literary edition of the magazine, which is published by the American Jewish Congress.

YONKERS PROBES SUSPICIONS OF ARSON IN FATAL FIRE AT JEWISH CENTER

YONKERS, Dec. 26. (JTA) -- Police here today continued to investigate the possibility that last week's fire at the Jewish Community Center here, which killed 12 persons including nine children, may have been set deliberately. Officials of both the municipality and the Jewish Center, who would not permit their names to be used, said that the tragedy appeared to be a case of arson.

Over the weekend, police released two teenagers who were questioned about the fire for 12 hours. One of the youths was reported to have confessed, but latter withdrew his confession. The names of the youths, who are reported to be under surveillance, were not disclosed. Both are believed to have been employed at the Jewish Center.

Officially, however, city authorities declined to confirm suspicions of arson in the case. City Manager Frederick Adler and County District Attorney Leonard Rubinfeld, who are heading the major investigations, said they would release no more information until their probes were completed.

DETROIT JEWISH COMMUNITY UNIT JOINS INTERFAITH 'PROJECT EQUALITY'

DETROIT, Dec. 26. (JTA) -- The Jewish Community Council here has joined three Christian groups representing the Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox communities, to form an interfaith action for the use of the purchasing power of all the religious organizations toward implementation of racial justice and equal job opportunities for all races in this city. Announcement of the joint action was made here this weekend by Dr. Samuel Krohn, president of the JCC; the Most Rev. John F. Dearden, Catholic Archbishop of Detroit; Dr. Joseph L. Roberts, president of the Metropolitan Detroit Council of Churches (Protestant); and the Very Rev. Thomas Ruffin, president of the Detroit Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The Project Equality program was launched several months ago by the Catholic archdioceses of St. Louis, Detroit, San Antonio and Hartford, Conn., and called on all religious groupings in the United States to join a common effort to end discriminatory employment practices and to require similar agreements from their suppliers of goods and services. But Detroit is the first city where this plan has matured toward unified action.

Control of the interfaith program will be vested in a 12-man board of directors, three appointed by each faith. John H. Shephard, of the Jewish Community Council, was named legal advisor.

Dr. Krohn said that the Jewish Community Council was very pleased to join with the archdiocese as a founding member. He noted that, since its establishment almost 30 years ago, the Jewish Community Council had been "deeply committed to the effort to achieve equal rights and opportunities for all men, and to eliminate all traces of discrimination based on religion, race or national origin."

YIDDISH WRITERS UNION CELEBRATES 50th ANNIVERSARY IN NEW YORK

NEW YORK, Dec. 26. (JTA) -- The Yiddish Writers Union, central body of all the writers in the Jewish press in the United States, celebrated its 50th anniversary at a concert-meeting this afternoon at the Statler Hilton Hotel. An audience of 1,000 heard prominent Yiddish writers, including Dr. L. Hendin, A. Glantz-Leyeles, Moshe Rivlin, and Leib Feinberg extol the role of the organization of Yiddish writers in the cultural life of the Jewish community.

Among those sending felicitations to the gathering was Ambassador Avraham Harman of Israel, who was unable to attend due to a prior commitment. He was represented by Avraham Avidar, Israel Consul in New York. Greetings from sister organizations in Israel, Argentina and many other countries were read by Shimon Weber, president of the Yiddish Writers Union, who presided at the affair.

Actor Joseph Buloff and composer Sholom Secunda headed a list of outstanding Jewish artists who provided entertainment.

HARRY ROBERT SCHEWITZ, LEADER AMONG SO. AFRICAN JEWRY, DEAD AT 65

JOHANNESBURG, Dec. 26. (JTA) -- Harry Robert Schewitz, a leader of the Jewish community here, was killed this weekend when he was hit by a car in the resort town of Muizenberg, Cape Province. He was 65.

Mr. Schewitz was active in several Zionist organizations and was the national organizer of South African Jewry's United Communal Fund, the central organization raising monies needed by the national Jewish organizations for domestic purposes in this country. He was also grand president of the Hebrew Order of David, a fraternal movement, and former president of the order's lodges in Pretoria and in this city.