



# daily news bulletin

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## SOME 2 MILLION GO TO THE POLLS IN MOST CRUCIAL, HOTLY CONTESTED ELECTION By Yitzhak Shargil (Tel Aviv), David Landau and Gil Sedan (Jerusalem)

Dec. 30 (JTA) -- Israelis will go to the polls tomorrow to elect their eighth Knesset in what, it is generally conceded by all parties, will be the closest and most crucial election in the nation's 25 year history. There are 2,040,000 eligible voters and despite polls showing large numbers to be still undecided on election eve, the turn-out is expected to be heavy. The forecast for tomorrow is for unseasonably mild weather. The day has been declared a national holiday and the National Elections Committee is making prodigious efforts to get out the vote, including free transportation to polling stations for persons in outlying areas. The 5,150 polling stations throughout the country will open at 7 a.m. and close 11 p.m. Soldiers on active duty will have until midnight to vote at 1150 polling stations provided for them from the Golan Heights to the Suez Canal. Should shooting incidents on any of the fronts prevent soldiers from voting tomorrow, they will be given until Wednesday to cast their ballots.

With Israel's citizen army still in a high state of mobilization, the soldiers' vote may be decisive. The number of men in uniform is a closely guarded secret. But until all the soldiers' votes are in and counted no election returns will be broadcast. That precaution was taken to avoid influencing soldiers who will be voting later than their civilian fellow-citizens. Israeli merchant seamen aboard ships at sea and in foreign ports began voting last Sunday in portable election booths provided to each ship. But their votes will not reach home until several days after the elections. Counting the soldiers' vote may take two days and it may be two weeks before the final official results are published.

Israeli voters will have a choice of 21 party lists, nine of them new parties which did not participate in the seventh Knesset elections four years ago. The principal contenders are Premier Golda Meir's Labor Alignment and the non-Labor alignment, Likud, headed by Menachem Begin (Herut) and Elimelech Rimalt (Liberals). For the first time in Israel's history, a Labor victory is not being taken for granted. Tomorrow's elections are being held in the aftermath of Israel's longest, bloodiest, costliest and most indecisive war, and in the middle of the first peace conference

with the Arabs since the establishment of the State. The Geneva Conference, which opened Dec. 21 and is marking time until after the Israeli elections, will have an important effect on tomorrow's voting, most experts agree. The results of the voting in turn will effect the course of the conference. The Israeli-Egyptian military Committee held its second session of disengagement talks in Geneva last Friday and scheduled its next session for late Wednesday, Jan. 2. (See separate story.)

Under these circumstances, Israelis will be going to the polls with a mixture of hopefulness and apprehension. They are hopeful that the Geneva Conference will lead to a genuine peace settlement. But they are fearful that Israel may be asked to make concessions it regards inimical to its security. This is the major question that overshadows all domestic issues. The parties, large and small, are fighting bitterly down to the finish line. The use of television, radio and full page newspaper ads has been on an unprecedented scale for the past two weeks.

Mrs. Meir's Labor Party is clearly struggling to preserve a comfortable majority that will allow it to form a new government. Likud is sounding the theme that it is time for a change, stressing the alleged errors of the government before and during the Yom Kippur War and urging the electorate to give it a mandate to form a "national unity coalition." Labor, for its part, has stated that it will never enter a coalition with Likud and warns the populace of a political stalemate and possible chaos should Likud prevail. Labor is aware that it has many defectors in its ranks and has warned them that abstention or votes for any of the leftist or rightist splinter parties will be wasted votes and will only increase the chances of Likud.

Likud has been branded the party of war, largely on the basis of the uncompromising "don't give an inch" line of Begin on the issue of territories. Labor, in turn, has been tarred with the brush of "appeasement" because of its stated willingness to compromise in the interests of a peace settlement. But spokesmen for both parties modified their stands on election eve. Foreign Minister Abba Eban and Yaacov Hazan and Victor Shemtov of Mapam, and other Alignment leaders said last night that they did not accuse Likud of wanting war, only of adopting policies that would lead to new wars.

Premier Meir, addressing new immigrants from Russia at the Habimah Hall in Tel Aviv last night, said that her government went to Geneva neither to surrender all territories--as the Communist and leftist parties demand--nor to demand peace without concessions, as Likud advocates. Begin and other Likud leaders, contended that any withdrawal would jeopardize Israel's security. But Rimalt balanced that hawkish line with assurances to the voters that if elected, Likud would miss no opportunity to negotiate directly with the Arabs.

## REPORT EGYPT, SYRIA MAY USE CHEMICAL WARFARE IN NEXT ROUND OF FIGHTING

TEL AVIV, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- Israeli forces, placed on a high state of alert, are bracing for a possible renewal of all-out fighting, including chemical warfare, on the Syrian and Egyptian fronts, it was learned today. The alert was ordered as shooting incidents mounted in frequency and

intensity, particularly on the Egyptian front over the week-end. Israeli soldiers have been ordered to shave off their beards so that they can don gas masks in the event of a chemical attack.

While incidents on the Syrian front have been less frequent than along the Suez Canal, the Syrians are being watched most closely. They appear to be inviting local incidents that might be used as a pretext for full scale resumption of hostilities. Their intention seems to be to improve their military position before joining the Geneva peace talks. The Oct. 22 cease-fire found Israeli forces deep inside Syrian territory. The Syrian Army, which suffered severe losses during the Yom Kippur War, has since been re-enforced and re-equipped with Soviet artillery and armor. Large concentrations of Syrian troops and tanks have been observed on the cease-fire lines.

What worries the Israeli military most is evidence that both Syrians and Egyptians have been equipped for chemical warfare, outlawed by the Geneva Convention and, with one exception, never used after World War I. The exception was Egypt's use of gas in the Yemeni civil war in the 1950s.

According to Israeli intelligence, every Egyptian and Syrian soldier on the front has been issued, in addition to gas masks, anti-gas injection kits and gas detecting devices. More ominous, the Egyptian and Syrian forces are reportedly equipped with gas spreading devices, indicating their precautions are against the affects of their own gas rather than an anticipated chemical attack by Israel.

#### Incidents Mounting On Egyptian Front

Meanwhile the list of incidents on the Egyptian front has been growing daily despite the presence of a large United Nations observers corps and UNEF, the armed, multinational UN Emergency Force set up by the Security Council to keep the peace. An Israeli soldier was wounded yesterday in an exchange of fire near the UN checkpoint at Kilometer 101 on the Suez-Cairo road. Fire exchanges were reported Friday and Saturday in the regions of Kantara, Fayid and Attaka. The Syrian front was quiet.

Egyptian Sam-6 missiles downed an Israeli pilotless plane yesterday. An Israeli spokesman said the drone was over Israel-held territory. The Egyptians claimed it was in their air space. Israel denied an Egyptian claim to have shot down an Israeli jet Friday. Israeli and Egyptian tanks and artillery duelled all along the front Thursday and Friday. Israel announced on Friday the death of another Israeli soldier during an artillery battle northwest of Lake Timsah Wednesday night.

It was learned that Israeli Army engineers completed a land bridge across the Suez Canal which is in use supplying Israeli forces on the west side of the waterway. Egyptian engineers attempted to build a similar bridge in their sector but ran into difficulties and filled the gap with pontoon bridges. Israeli sources, meanwhile, continued to deny a report in the French newspaper Le Monde that a small Egyptian-Algerian force of battalion strength is encircled by Israeli forces between the large and small Bitter Lakes. The Algerian unit, under Egyptian command, was said to consist of about 500 soldiers with several tanks and halftracks.

## REPORTS OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN CHILE EXAGGERATED IN U.S., FOREIGN PRESS

MEXICO CITY, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- A Mexico City Jewish official, just back from a visit to Chile declared here that reports in the American and foreign press about anti-Semitism or a bad situation for Jews under the present government of Chile were very exaggerated. Sergio Nudelstejer said leaders of the Jewish community in Santiago stated that there was no anti-Semitism in Chile and that in general the situation was going to improve in all aspects.

Nudelstejer, representative of the American Jewish Committee in Mexico and Central America and secretary general of the Jewish Committee, also said that Chilean Jews had confidence in the policy of the new government and all Jewish institutions were functioning normally. Gil Sinay and Robert Levy, Santiago Jewish leaders, said rumors about anti-Semitism was only harming Jewish interests in Chile, Nudelstejer said.

## JEWISH LEADERS MEET WITH KISSINGER

NEW YORK, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- A group of Jewish leaders had a "warm and cordial" meeting Thursday with Secretary of State Kissinger in his Washington office, according to Jacob Stein, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish organizations, one of the participants. Stein said the "full and frank" discussions dealt with all issues related to the Middle East situation. He called the meeting one of a series between Jewish leaders and key government officials.

Also attending were Paul Zuckerman, general chairman, United Jewish Appeal; Max Fisher, former president, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds; Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman, American Zionist Federation; Raymond Epstein, CJF president; Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, president, American Jewish Congress; David Blumberg, president, B'nai B'rith; Louis Cole, president, National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council; Rabbi Louis Bernstein, president, Rabbinical Council of America.

Also attending were Melvin Dubinsky, president, United Israel Appeal; Rabbi Judah Naiditch, president, Rabbinical Assembly; and Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president, Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Leonard Garment, counsel to President Nixon, also participated in the meeting, Stein said.

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TORONTO (JTA) -- Bora Laskin, 61, has been named chief justice of Canada, the first Jew to hold such a high judicial position. A student of Felix Frankfurter at Harvard Law School, Justice Laskin is known as a liberal and an advocate of human rights. He taught at the Toronto Law University and was the first Jewish member of the Canadian Supreme Court in 1970. Born in Thunderbay, Ontario, he was chairman of the legal committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress, president of the Toronto chapter of the Friends of the Hebrew University and a board member of Holy Blossom Temple.

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TEL AVIV (JTA) -- A Libyan Jew who recently emigrated to Israel after smuggling himself out of Libya reported here this weekend that the number of Jews still residing in Libya has been reduced to about 25. Alfonso Pagni told Israel Radio that he was the first Jew to leave Libya since Muammer el Qaddafi became the Prime Minister in Jan. 1970 following the overthrow of the monarchy in Sept. 1969. Pagni disclosed that he made his escape by hiding in a box of musical instruments which was being sent to Malta for repairs.

## PEACE NEGOTIATORS ANNOUNCE CONSENSUS ON SOME DISENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Next Meeting Due Jan. 2

GENEVA, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- The Israeli and Egyptian military delegations negotiating here on disengagement announced Friday after their second meeting that they had reached "consensus on some principles of disengagement". The two delegations met for two hours and ten minutes at the United Nations European headquarters under the chairmanship of UN truce commander Lt. Gen. Ensio Silasvuo of Finland.

After the meeting, a UN-spokesman read the following communique: "Consensus was reached on some principles of disengagement. There was a further frank-exchange of views on other principles. Clarifications were also sought by both sides regarding details of these principles. The next meeting will take place on Jan. 2 at 5 p.m."

The Israeli delegation consisted of Maj. Gen. Mordehai Gur, Col. Dov Sion and foreign Ministry official David Ramin. The Egyptians were Maj. Gen. Ahmed Tahal el Maghdub, Col. Fuad el-Howeidy and Foreign Ministry official Nabil el Araby. Observers in Geneva believe that in spite of the terseness of the communique, the meeting had been constructive. It is also generally believed that the two sides raised specific instances of ceasefire violations in the Suez Canal area.

## DAYAN CALLS FOR MORE SETTLEMENTS

JERUSALEM, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Moshe Dayan proposed Thursday night increased settlement to determine the country's borders. Addressing an alignment election rally here, Dayan declared: "Borders are not set at the Geneva conference but by Israel's own work of building and development, which others will not do for us."

Dayan said that great importance is attached to the question of the borders and, accordingly, Israel should be prepared not only to fight alone if necessary, but also to develop the country wherever required. "We should not be ashamed of our efforts to build and expand Jerusalem out toward its neighboring Arab settlements to bring to the city new immigrants and industries," he said.

The Minister also noted the need for developing and building up the empty areas south of the Gaza Strip so that Israel's southern border would not lie at Erez and Yad Mordechai. He said Jerusalem was not only a local problem, but a symbol of the entire land of Israel, and the city's problems and the solutions to them were to a large extent symbolic of all the problems in Israel.

## LATE NEWS BULLETIN

### JOSEPH SIEFF SHOT BY INTRUDER

LONDON, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- Joseph Sieff, one of Britain's most prominent Jews and president of the Marks and Spencer department store chain, was shot and seriously injured tonight in his London home by a masked intruder. It was not immediately known whether the shooting was politically motivated or whether the intruder was a

house-breaker. Sieff and other members of his family have identified themselves closely with Israel's cause. He was appointed honorary vice-president of the Zionist Federation of Britain and Ireland in 1965. Sieff resided in the exclusive northwest London district of St. John's Wood. According to police reports, a man called at Sieff's home and asked to see him. After being shown in by the butler the intruder pulled out a gun, fired at Sieff and left the house. It was not immediately known how many shots were fired or what model gun was used.

### PRO-ARAB JOURNALIST SAYS HE VISITED WITH SEVEN ISRAELI POWs IN SYRIA

PARIS, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- A French journalist said he spoke with seven Israeli prisoners of war in Syria and found them in good health and well treated. Pierre Demeron described his meeting with the prisoners in an article in this week's edition of "Paris Match" to go on sale Monday. All seven prisoners are shown in photographs in the article.

"They are not allowed to communicate among themselves, but from all signs they appeared in good health," Demeron wrote. He added that he had the impression the prisoners were not assembled in camps but scattered in small groups throughout Damascus in military locals. The French journalist said he spoke with Yoram Sharar, Gagy Ouerson and Ury Chakhat and four other prisoners. He said Syrian authorities would not let him visit other Israeli prisoners.

He talked with Sharar over a cup of Turkish coffee. Sharar was shot down during a raid over Damascus. He told Demeron he passed the hours doing math and drawing sketches of his wife, Edna, describing fervently her "beautiful dark eyes and tiny nose." The magazine carried a photograph of Sharar holding a drawing of his wife with a message to her in Hebrew inscribed on it. Captain Sharar sent kisses to his little 2-year-old son, Arnoun.

Demeran visited Ouerson in the Mezze Hospital where he is receiving treatment for a leg wound. Ouerson is a captain in the Israeli Air Force and was shot down in his Skyhawk. The nurses attending Capt. Ouerson told the French journalist that last Nov. 20, the Israeli captain celebrated his birthday with his doctor, Henri Zaza, in the hospital.

Demeran had a third visit with Chakhat, a Phantom pilot. Chakhat, a jovial redhead, told him, "I've shaved my mustache and feel like a little boy again. My wife is not going to recognize me." Demeron also met with Syrian Defense Minister Gen. Mustafa Tlass who told him the Israeli POW problem must be settled "when the hostilities have ended and not before. Why should we let Israeli pilots go home? So they can turn around and drop fragmentation bombs... on Damascus and kill women and children?"

In Paris, Demeron is considered by many observers to be militant in pro-Arab pressure groups. A leader of the French Friendship with Arab Nations group, he also heads the French edition of the Damascus propaganda magazine "Flash." He has already made reports in Syria and Iraq on what he called the good treatment of Jews in these countries.

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TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Egyptian gunners fired several non-lethal shells Friday at Israeli positions southwest of Fayid. The shells contained propaganda leaflets enjoining Israeli soldiers not to vote in Monday's elections because every Israeli party has been "proven" unfit to govern.

