

**U.N. ORDERS INVESTIGATION INTO
400 MISSING WAR CRIMES FILES**

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar ordered a full investigation Tuesday into reports that more than 400 files are missing from the U.N. war crimes archives.

Perez de Cuellar acted after the New York Post published a report Tuesday by Uri Dan, its Mideast correspondent, that the previously sealed war crimes files have "mysteriously vanished." Dan was the first journalist allowed access to the files since the secretary general ordered them opened to the public Nov. 23.

The director of the archives, Alf Erlandsson, confirmed Tuesday that 432 files have "somehow disappeared." The secretary general said he has appointed Richard Foran, U.N. assistant secretary general for general services, to conduct the investigation.

According to a statement released Tuesday by a U.N. spokesman, the secretary general "was surprised and disturbed to learn, through press reports and for the first time, that a number of files of the United Nations War Crimes Commission archives are missing." The archives are stored in a building in midtown Manhattan.

Immediate Investigation

The spokesman said the investigation would start immediately and, he believes, will be concluded quickly. The results will be made public.

He said that, among other things, it will "seek to determine whether the files in question were separated from the archives while they were in U.N. custody, or whether they were ever received by the United Nations when it was first given custody of the archives" in 1947 by the now defunct Allied War Crimes Commission.

The U.N. spokesman said the investigation will try to determine "whether the files in question concern 'adjoined or withdrawn cases' which were filed separately." These may be files that at one point or another were legally withdrawn from the archives for reasons not specified.

The files contain documents on more than 40,000 people suspected of committing war crimes during World War II. Until last month, the files were accessible only to the governments of U.N. member states. The secretary general, who has sole custody of the files, ordered them opened to scholars, researchers, historians and other members of the public.

This was a major victory for Israel, which had been campaigning vigorously for more than a year to make the files accessible to the public. The Israelis finally prevailed on the 17 former members of the War Crimes Commission to grant their assent.

'A Shocking Development'

Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, who led the effort, said Tuesday, "The revelation of missing files is a shocking development. It means that vital information concerning the greatest criminals in history may have been destroyed. It proves again the

importance of releasing these documents from the veil of secrecy that has shielded them for many years."

In his report in the Post, Dan did not say what files he was looking for. He reported that "numerous microfilmed files were marked 'Missing Registered Number'" and that they included Yugoslavian documents relating to the wartime activities of President Kurt Waldheim of Austria.

He said Erlandsson confirmed that the missing files included 123 submitted by France; 51 by Britain; 20 by Yugoslavia; two by the United States and an undetermined number by Belgium. All concerned charges of atrocities committed by Germans.

Netanyahu said the missing files might be retrievable "from other sources" since the U.N. records are summaries of documents in various national archives.

**HUMAN RIGHTS, ARMS CONTROL
TOP REAGAN-GORBACHEV AGENDA**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Human rights was at the top of the agenda as President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev began their three-day summit conference at the White House Tuesday.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said human rights and arms control were the two issues discussed during a nearly hour-long meeting between the two leaders and then at a longer session which included top Soviet and U.S. officials.

However, he stressed that the discussion was more of an "overview" of the issue, in which the two leaders expressed their opinions rather than dealing with specific concerns.

Reagan had mentioned human rights in welcoming Gorbachev at a ceremony Tuesday on the south lawn of the White House.

'Fundamental Issues'

"On the table will be not only arms reduction, but also human rights issues about which the American people and their government are deeply committed," the president said. "These are fundamental issues of political morality that touch on the most basic of human concerns."

Gorbachev did not mention human rights specifically, but noted that in addition to arms control, "we are also looking to a most serious and frank dialogue on other issues of Soviet-American relations."

Fitzwater said that two working groups were set up, one to discuss arms control and the other to consider the three other topics of the summit: human rights and regional and bilateral issues.

Fitzwater was not sure whether the working groups would make a public report. Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennady Gerasimov, who

In order to provide expanded coverage of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit and related activities on behalf of Soviet Jewry, today's Daily News Bulletin has been expanded to six pages.

shared the briefing with Fitzwater, said the usual practice is for the working groups to present brief summaries to the two leaders to use in their discussions.

While Reagan has promised to press for improvement in Soviet policy on Jewish emigration, as well as the treatment of Jews in the Soviet Union, it is not clear that even if the Soviets agreed to change, it would be publicly announced at the summit.

Talks On Mideast Uncertain

Neither was it certain that the Arab-Israeli peace process would be among the regional issues to be discussed.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has proposed that the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, including the United States and the Soviet Union, convene an international Mideast peace conference to lead to direct negotiations between the parties.

The Soviets did hint that they might hold a briefing on regional issues, although they did not say to reporters whether that would include the Mideast.

The highlight of Tuesday's meeting between the leaders was the signing of the treaty to eliminate medium- and short-range nuclear missiles.

Fitzwater said that to mark the signing, Reagan gave Gorbachev a pair of solid-gold cuff links, similar to the ones he was wearing, depicting the prophet Isaiah beating a sword into a plowshare. He noted that this was the theme of Reagan's address to the United Nations General Assembly in 1986.

In addition to the opening session, Gorbachev and Reagan met again in the afternoon and plan to hold two more meetings on Wednesday and a final session Thursday morning.

Reagan and his wife, Nancy, were set to host a state dinner for Gorbachev and his wife, Raisa, at the White House Tuesday night, and the Gorbachevs will host a dinner at the Soviet Embassy Wednesday night.

Gorbachev is also scheduled to hold meetings with Vice President George Bush, key leaders of Congress, American intellectuals and business leaders.

Before leaving Washington Thursday night, Gorbachev will hold a news conference at the embassy. Reagan is scheduled to address the nation over television Thursday night.

Tight Security

Security here is the tightest ever for a foreign visitor. The entire block in front of the Foreign Embassy is barricaded by concrete barriers, with sharpshooters stationed on rooftops. The curb lane of the street in front of the Madison Hotel, where the rest of the Soviet officials are staying, is also blocked off.

Except for a few selected pool reporters, most of the nearly 7,000 journalists from around the world covering the summit can not see the two leaders except on television at the press headquarters in the J.W. Marriott Hotel, about six blocks from the White House.

Washington residents are talking about not only the traffic inconveniences caused by the security arrangements, but also the strange sight of seeing the Soviet red flag with its yellow hammer and sickle flying on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House and draped on the Old Executive Office Building next door.

SOVIETS WON'T CONFIRM PLANS TO DISBAND ANTI-ZIONIST COMMITTEE By David Friedman and Susan Birnbaum

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- The deputy chairman of the Anti-Zionist Committee of the Soviet Public refused Tuesday to confirm reports here that the Kremlin is planning to disband the anti-Israel propaganda organ.

When asked by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency if the reports were true, Samuil Zivs, in Washington for Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's summit meeting with President Reagan, chuckled and refused to comment.

But on Monday, Zivs told The New York Times, "No public organization can last forever." Reports of the Kremlin's plans to disband the committee, attributed to an unidentified American official, first appeared in the newspaper Tuesday.

Formed In 1983

The committee was formed in April 1983 at a time when anti-Semitic propaganda was proliferating in Soviet books, media broadcasts and newspaper articles. It has been used by Soviet authorities to counter activism by Soviet Jewish refuseniks and their supporters in the West.

"The Anti-Zionist Committee was a blunder when it was created, and never accomplished what the pre-Gorbachev rulers wanted to accomplish," Jerry Goodman, executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Tuesday.

'Became An Embarrassment'

He said the committee became "an embarrassment" to the Kremlin, because of its "crude propaganda and heavy-handed approach. It did not deter Jews who wanted to leave for Israel and its propaganda was never bought in the West except by pro-Moscow apologists."

Shortly after the committee was formed, Zivs announced that nearly all Jews who wished to leave the Soviet Union had done so, that there was no Jewish problem in the USSR and no anti-Semitism. He later retracted the statement on emigration.

Prior to the 1985 summit meeting in Geneva between Reagan and Gorbachev, Zivs told the news media they were victims of "false propaganda," yet admitted that several thousands Jews still wanted to emigrate but could not be granted exit visas because of "state secrets."

Persona Non Grata

Zivs later became persona non grata in the United States, Goodman recalled, and was refused entry even though he had applied as a member of the Soviet Lawyers' Association at the urging of the American Bar Association.

Because the committee members "caused an obvious embarrassment in the West," they were excluded whenever possible from participating in meetings, even if they came under other sponsors," said Goodman. "It was obvious they were a liability in trying to project the new image of a new Gorbachev and a changing society."

Goodman said he would welcome the dissolution of the committee, "because maybe there will be less anti-Semitic pollution in the Soviet Union."

But he said its elimination would "not suggest, in and of itself, a real shift in terms of Jews living in the Soviet Union."

SOVIET JEWS DEMONSTRATE, POLICE TURN UP THE HEAT

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Groups of Jewish refuseniks have been demonstrating for exit visas this week in the Soviet Union, hoping to draw heightened attention to their plight while Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is in Washington for meetings with President Reagan.

Meanwhile, despite the avowed Soviet policy of glasnost, Soviet police and security forces apparently are increasingly cracking down on these demonstrations.

An estimated 100 refuseniks in several Soviet cities have declared a hunger strike for the duration of the summit meeting, according to Israeli Ambassador to the United States Moshe Arad, who was speaking to the Freedom Sunday rally for Soviet Jews in Washington, D.C.

On Tuesday, about a dozen Moscow refuseniks attempted to demonstrate outside the Foreign Ministry, hoping to meet with officials inside. However, the refuseniks were quickly arrested and charged with illegally demonstrating. Two long-time, active refuseniks, Natasha Khassina and Yuli Kosharovskiy, were also charged with physically resisting arrest.

Lynn Singer, executive director of the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry, said the police provided "witnesses" to "prove" the charge of resisting arrest. She added that the charges, or "protocols," can be used against these people any time for further arrests.

An additional participant, Alexander Feldman, a religious Jew, was arrested and released later Tuesday.

Singer said the demonstrators intend to go to the Communist Party headquarters Wednesday to "ask that all protocols be destroyed."

On Monday, about 30 refuseniks demonstrated at the Central Committee of the Communist Party. It was reported that nine were briefly detained.

On Sunday, refuseniks demonstrated in both Moscow and Leningrad. The Moscow demonstration was broken up by KGB toughs, who arrested at least two Jewish activists and beat several others.

All those arrested were released after several hours' detention, including an American newsman, Peter Arnett, Moscow bureau chief of Cable News Network.

In Leningrad Sunday, long-time refuseniks Lev and Marina Furman were forcibly arrested with their nine-month-old girl, Aliya. Lev received a jail sentence of 10 days in an unknown prison and Marina was fined 50 rubles. Aliya, who remained with her mother for several hours in jail, was not permitted to eat, according to Singer.

One of the demonstrators, a former prisoner of Zion, told Singer that the Furmans were part of a group of about 12 demonstrators, four of whom were beaten. Three bystanders, brothers Boris and Slava Flsburg and Mark Olchovich, also reportedly were arrested and received 10 days in jail.

Taken from their Moscow apartment and detained for several hours Tuesday were Anatoly and Gali Gennis, in-laws to Kosharovskiy, and their three children. They were later released.

It was also reported that the apartments of Khassina and Kosharovskiy have been under constant surveillance since Dec. 4, and that refusenik Judit Ratner-Bialy is under house arrest. Bialy was told Dec. 4 she would receive permission to

emigrate.

Said one observer to Singer, "Things are so tight, it's like the old days in Moscow."

15 ARRESTED FOR PROTEST NEAR SOVIET EMBASSY

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- While Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev was meeting with President Reagan Tuesday, 15 Jewish demonstrators were arrested for protesting within 500 feet of the Soviet Embassy here.

The protesters, led by Rabbi Avraham Weiss and Glenn Richter of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ), had crossed police barricades set up two blocks away from the embassy.

Wearing tallisim, they sat near the embassy for five minutes, singing "Hatikva," "Am Yisrael Chai" and other Hebrew songs before police escorted them to a police bus. One of the protesters blew the shofar.

On Monday, just hours before Gorbachev arrived in Washington, the SSSJ and the North American Jewish Students' Network demonstrated outside the office of the Soviet Union's Aeroflot Airlines to protest the \$2 billion in loans from American banks to the Soviet Union each year.

Representatives of the groups placed dozens of fake checks of \$2 billion each payable to Gorbachev inside the security fence guarding the office.

Both the Tuesday and Monday demonstrations featured former Soviet Jewish refuseniks including Yosef Mendelevich, Leon and Anna Charny and Irina Dashevsky.

The former Jewish refuseniks who live in Israel did not cross the barricades Tuesday for fear that their arrests could jeopardize their right to visit the United States.

Also present were members of the Colorado Committee of Concern for Soviet Jewry. Some of the Denver protesters wore sweatshirts saying "Glasnost-Shmasnost, Summit-Shmummit. Just Let Our People Go."

Both demonstrations focused on further restricting U.S.-Soviet economic ties until the Soviets live up to their obligations under the Helsinki human rights accords. The SSSJ and the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews support a legislative proposal by Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.) that would allow President Reagan to suspend U.S. loans to the Soviet Union for reasons including national security or human rights violations.

At Monday's protest, Mendelevich was named the ambassador of the newly created Union of Struggling Soviet Refuseniks Embassy in front of Aeroflot. Mendelevich displayed a styrofoam key to symbolically open the Soviets' door to emigration.

Mendelevich said the Soviet government does not have "enough brains to consider any Jewish appeal" for increased emigration. He was referring to Gorbachev's comments Nov. 30 that the emigration movement is part of a U.S. conspiracy to create a "brain drain" from the Soviet Union.

Rabbi Weiss, national chairman of the SSSJ, called for the Soviets to release 60,000 Soviet Jews annually. Until then, he said, the United States should continue to adhere to the Jackson-Vanik amendment linking trade advantages to human rights policy.

To protest Gorbachev's scheduled meeting Thursday with U.S. business leaders, Weiss said he plans to stage a funeral procession Thursday in

front of Aeroflot to mark the "death of morality in American business."

Weiss also criticized U.S. politicians for not demanding at Sunday's rally that the \$2 billion in U.S. loans be linked to Soviet human rights policy, a position stated publicly Sunday by Mendeleovich.

On Tuesday, the Jewish demonstrators protested at the police barricades near the embassy alongside Ethiopian-Americans critical of Soviet ties with the Ethiopian government.

10,000 IN ISRAEL RALLY FOR SOVIET JEWRY RIGHTS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- About 10,000 school children and Soviet Jewry activists packed the Yad Eliahu sports stadium here Monday night in a rally for the right of Jews to leave the Soviet Union.

They were addressed by the country's top leaders -- President Chaim Herzog, Premier Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres--who aimed their remarks at Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, now in Washington for a summit conference with President Reagan.

The rally here came a day after Freedom Sunday, which drew more than 200,000 people to Washington for a pre-summit demonstration on behalf of Soviet Jews. The event in Washington was attended by some of the most prominent former refuseniks, including Natan Sharansky, Ida Nudel and Vladimir Slepak, who flew from Israel for the occasion.

The highlight of the rally here was a broadcast telephone conversation from Moscow with Yuli Kosharovskiy, a refusenik since he first applied for an exit visa 16 years ago.

Kosharovskiy, an engineer and Hebrew teacher, thanked all those in Israel and the United States who are working for the cause of Soviet Jews. "We will succeed if we continue to work. We will immigrate to Israel," he said.

Responding in a voice that cracked with emotion, Shamir vowed to pursue his case. He declared that after the Washington rally, "The world must know that the Jewish people are a power, and we are no longer a people without an address. We no longer say let my people go, but let my people go home, to Israel, to the homeland."

Peres called on Gorbachev to dismantle not only missiles, but the "land mine of hatred" for the Jewish people.

Herzog said the issue of human rights "is the litmus test which will show whether the rulers in the Kremlin are indeed bent on a genuine reversal of policy and a new path."

"There is no doubt that new winds are blowing and that many hopes have been raised and await fulfillment," he said. Herzog demanded "no more gestures, no more tokens, no more declarations of intent, but deeds -- an actual change in the Soviet authorities towards the Jewish nationality in the USSR."

SHARANSKY SAYS BILINGUAL MAGAZINE COULD BRIDGE U.S.-ISRAEL GAP

By Susan Birnbaum

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Since his release from Soviet prison 20 months ago, Natan Sharansky has emerged as somewhat of a consultant, sometimes self-appointed, on major Jewish

issues resulting from his experience as refusenik, prisoner and new Israeli.

Speaking to the plenary of the United Jewish Appeal's National Campaign Cabinet Sunday night, following the massive rally here for Soviet Jews, Sharansky offered solutions to what he said was a continuing problem of disunity among American and Israeli Jews.

"I often have a feeling that we are two different nations," he said in front of his closest colleagues from his Moscow refusenik days, as well as an ample assortment of members of Congress, United Jewish Appeal leaders and Soviet Jewry activists.

"For many Israelis, America is a good place to raise money, and for many American Jews, Israel is a place they go to see what their money is being raised for."

As a result, he said, "American Jews don't understand Israeli Jews" and vice versa.

Sharansky suggested the creation of an English-Hebrew magazine "with an editorial" that both communities would read, and identical Jewish education programs for children in both countries with student exchanges also offered.

He said the estimated cost of the magazine -- \$2 million to \$10 million -- was worth it. "We cannot have two separate people," Sharansky said. "And all this giving and taking is all we have between us."

Turning to the issue of Soviet Jews, Sharansky suggested that it would be "absolutely normal" to create a special UJA fund to bring former refuseniks to the West to speak to Jewish groups and government figures.

In addition, he said, such a reservoir would also avoid the pitfalls of rival Soviet Jewry activist groups. "Why do we need all this competition?" he asked. "Why shouldn't we make it centralized?"

"One says we must solve the question in Washington," he continued. "The other says we can solve the problem in Moscow. The most normal way is to solve this problem in Israel."

Sharansky said that he, as well as Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, are involved with the rudiments of a UJA program that would provide money for housing via direct contributions "without any bureaucracy."

"It's only an idea and there are still very serious barriers," he said. But, he told the U.S. Jewish leaders, "It is you who can push us."

Also on Sunday, the American Jewish Committee presented Sharansky its American Liberties Medallion for being a "courageous defender of Jewish dignity."

PERES SAYS HE REGRETS SUMMIT NOT USED FOR MIDEAST PEACE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told the World Zionist Congress Tuesday that he regretted the Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting in Washington was not used to launch Israeli-Arab peace negotiations under the aegis of the two superpowers.

Peres drew catcalls from rightwing hecklers and warm applause from supporters when he referred to the controversial idea of a mini-summit of Israelis and Arabs to be held in congruence with the meetings now taking place between President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev -- an idea he proposed to the Reagan administration last month.

U.N. ATTEMPTS TO THWART MOVE BY CONGRESS TO CLOSE PLO OFFICE By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar sent a letter Monday to the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, saying that the world body opposes a congressional move to close the Palestine Liberation Organization's observer mission in New York.

The letter, sent to Vernon Walters, conveyed the U.N.'s "legal position" that the PLO's observer mission cannot be closed under existing international agreements, a U.N. spokesman said Tuesday.

A resolution to close the PLO's offices in Washington and New York was adopted 11-8 last Thursday by a House-Senate conference committee. The measure, which previously had passed the full Senate, is part of an amendment to the State Department authorization bill for the next fiscal year.

Both houses have to vote again on the amendment before it becomes law. Sources in Washington said they expect this to happen later this week or next week.

D.C. Office Still Open

The State Department has already ordered the PLO to close its information office in Washington, but it opposes closing the observer mission to the United Nations in New York. A federal district court has upheld the order closing the Washington office, but it has remained open, pending appeal to a higher court.

The PLO was invited to set up an observer mission to the United Nations in 1974 with the adoption of U.N. General Assembly Resolution 3273. "As such they are covered by sections 11, 12, and 13 of the headquarters agreement of June 26, 1947," according to the U.N. spokesman.

These sections say that the United Nations may not impose "any impediments to transit to or from the headquarters" of "persons invited" by the United Nations and requires the United States to grant visas to all such people.

The Arab nations are considering asking the World Court in The Hague to rule on the legality of closing the PLO observer mission in New York, the New York Times reported Tuesday.

Commenting on the report, the U.N. spokesman said: "It is too early to speculate about the submission of this case to the International Court of Justice, since the decision of the Congress is not yet law, and the U.S. has not made clear how it intends to implement this decision."

Israeli diplomats on Tuesday praised the congressional move to shut down the PLO office here. Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency: "We welcome the congressional decision, which should be taken as an example by all countries that terrorists cannot dwell in the midst of civilized society. It is high time that the U.N. expel the PLO from its ranks altogether."

VIOLENCE IN GAZA LEADS TO STORMY DEBATE OVER TERRITORY'S STATUS By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Israel may soon have to come to grips with the problem of the Gaza Strip -- whether the continued occupation of that territory of less than 200 square

miles with an Arab population of 600,000 is essential to Israel's security and worth the cost of maintaining law and order there.

The issue moved to the fore this week following another fatal stabbing of an Israeli citizen, Shlomo Takal, 45, who was knifed in the back of his neck in the main square of Gaza on Sunday.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee Monday that the Gaza Strip should be demilitarized under Israeli supervision and the Jewish settlements in the territory dismantled. About 2,000 Jewish settlers live in the Gaza Strip and are as militant as their 50,000 compatriots who live in the West Bank.

Premier Yitzhak Shamir blasted Peres' proposal Tuesday, assuring his Likud Knesset faction "it will never be." He said it was "hard to understand people who want to put Israel on the operating table" during this week's summit between President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

While the future status of the West Bank is at the core of the split between right and left in Israel, many Israelis of both camps feel that Israel's interests in the Gaza Strip, though vital, are of short-term value.

Elihu Ben-Elissar, a prominent member of Likud's Herut wing, who was Israel's first ambassador to Egypt, admitted recently that the densely populated Gaza Strip, where over half the Arab population lives in refugee camps, is more of a nuisance than an asset.

The territory was seized from Egypt during the Six-Day War in 1967 and has been a trouble spot ever since.

Demographic Argument

Peres used demographic arguments to support his views. "Very soon there will be one million Arabs in the Strip. Where will you settle them? In the Negev?" he asked the Knesset committee members.

Peres' remarks triggered a new confrontation with right-wingers. Tehiya leader Yuval Neeman, at a news conference Tuesday, denounced Peres' suggestion that Jewish settlements be dismantled. He maintained that the suggestion itself would lead to more violence in the territories, which he said are filled with terrorists who feel they can get away with anything.

Tehiya announced it would introduce a motion of no confidence in the government to protest the "deterioration of the security situation in the territories."

The Likud faction on the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee said it would summon Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin to reply to complaints that the IDF was no longer effectively combatting terrorism and subversion in the administered territories.

Meanwhile, security forces continued to search for Takal's assailant. Most of the suspects detained for questioning have been released and the curfew imposed on downtown Gaza Sunday was lifted Tuesday morning.

Takal's murder was the latest in a series of assaults on Israelis in Gaza in the past year. Yisrael Kitano, a 43-year-old taxi driver from Ashkelon, was fatally stabbed there on Oct. 7, 1986. Ten days earlier, on Sept. 27, Haim Azran, 35, also from Ashkelon, died of knife wounds inflicted while he was shopping in the Gaza marketplace.

ARMY EXEMPTIONS FOR YESHIVA STUDENTS COME UNDER SCRUTINY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Public attention was focused this week on the sizable number of yeshiva students exempted from military service. Premier Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres agree it is unfair and does not serve the national interest.

Shamir said over the weekend that "the wholesale exemption of yeshiva students from service is splitting the nation in two." Peres proposed that exemptions should be reduced to the number necessary to maintain the religious schools, not make them a haven for draft dodgers.

He told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee Monday that "the criteria for exemptions have apparently changed since 1977, and we ought to examine the reasons why."

Israeli law requires that all able-bodied citizens serve in the armed forces when they reach the age of 18. Men are required to serve for 3 years and women for 2 years. But yeshiva students are excused as long as they pursue their religious studies.

A Knesset subcommittee study of Israel Defense Force documents showed that exemptions for yeshiva students increased after Likud came to power in the 1977 Knesset election. Ezer Weizman, then a Likud defense minister, raised the number of exemptions because the first Likud government depended upon the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Israel party for its Knesset majority.

From 150 to 17,000

Peres recalled that in 1948, when he was director general of the Defense Ministry, David Ben-Gurion, who was premier and defense minister, put him in charge of military exemptions. The number of requests then was for 150 to 200 yeshiva students out of a total Jewish population of 650,000.

"If today, the number of students exempted is 17,000, it's a very serious matter," Peres said.

Rabbi Menachem HaCohen of Labor, who chairs the Knesset subcommittee investigating the issue, said the IDF's figures "prove that 20,000 yeshiva students of military age are today exempt from regular and reserve service."

Another subcommittee member, Yossi Sarid of the left-wing Citizens' Rights Movement, said that the exemptions law has enabled "60,000 healthy yeshiva students to become battlefield deserters" since the state was founded.

Recently the rabbinical court in Jerusalem refused to appoint Ezra Basri, a candidate for dayan -- religious court judge -- because he had feigned mental illness to evade military duty in 1957. It was also disclosed that many of the recently appointed military chaplains never did their compulsory military service.

CATHOLIC-JEWISH TIES ENDURE, DESPITE THE JOLTS OF 1987

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- The ongoing dialogue between Catholics and Jews has proven strong enough to withstand several severe shocks that jolted relations between the two faiths during the past year, a leader of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States said here Monday.

"While 1987 was a turbulent year in Catholic-Jewish relations, nevertheless, the delicate

fabric of the new relationship that Catholics and Jews have been weaving in patient dialogue for the past 20 years, in this country and throughout the world, remained intact," according to Dr. Eugene Fisher, executive secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Waldheim Audience Mentioned

Fisher, speaking before the American Jewish Committee's Interreligious Affairs Commission, mentioned among other events, the audience Pope John Paul II granted Austrian President Kurt Waldheim last June.

The meeting aroused Jewish ire because of Waldheim's alleged involvement in the deportation of Greek Jews and link to other atrocities during his service as a German army officer in the Balkans during World War II.

The Catholic leader also referred to "the recent controversy" touched off by remarks attributed to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith, in an interview published Oct. 24 in the Italian weekly magazine *Il Sabato*.

The cardinal was quoted as saying that while the basis of Catholic dialogue with Judaism is respect between the two religions, Catholics must also pursue the "theological direction" that "the faith of Abraham... finds its fulfillment" in the reality of Jesus Christ.

Interview Outrages Jews

The interview outraged Jewish leaders and prompted the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith to demand a clarification from the Vatican last month.

In a telegram to Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, head of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, the ADL's national president, Abraham Foxman, and Rabbi Leon Klenicki, director of its interreligious affairs department, protested that Ratzinger's "expressions take the dialogue (between Catholics and Jews) back to the Middle Ages and appear contrary to the spirit of Vatican II and Pope John Paul II's statements on Judaism."

A statement released shortly afterward by Willebrands' office said the intention of Ratzinger's remark was to expound the view that Christians should acknowledge their Old Testament heritage and that the Catholic Church respects Jews and their "own faith and expectations."

Fisher told the AJCommittee commission Monday that "the real story of the events surrounding Cardinal Ratzinger's interview" is that "a clarification was needed. A clarification was asked for, and within days, a clarification was given."

Deepened The Relationship

Fisher maintained that "The recent months of controversy have deepened the entire Catholic-Jewish encounter, and, indeed, ironically, have strengthened the entire endeavor."

Rabbi A. James Rudin, national interreligious affairs director of AJCommittee, said that a number of "shocks, jolts and surprises have severely tested Catholic-Jewish relations."

"But I have been enormously heartened by the positive strength of Catholic-Jewish relations in the United States, and I have been gratified by the important leadership role that the American Catholic bishops have played throughout this year of crisis," he said.