

VOL. 68 - 73rd YEAR

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1990

NO. 2

**WEIZMAN RETAINS HIS CABINET SEAT,  
BUT SHAMIR SEEMS TO BE BIG WINNER**  
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir appears to have scored a masterly political coup by the 11th-hour reversal Tuesday of his decision to fire Ezer Weizman from the Cabinet, for alleged contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Under a deal worked out between Shamir's Likud bloc and the Labor Party, Weizman will retain Cabinet rank as minister of science and development, a non-influential portfolio. But the dovish Laborite had to resign from the prestigious, policy-making Inner Cabinet of 12 senior ministers.

The arrangement allows Shamir to preserve the unity coalition government, while severely embarrassing his politically weakened Labor partners, political pundits say.

It also strengthens Shamir's own position against hard-line critics in Likud and sends a clear message abroad that Israel will not relent in its policy of no talks with the PLO, political observers say.

In addition, Shamir succeeded in personally humiliating Weizman, one of the most outspoken critics of the premier's policy toward the Palestinians.

The drama began at 1:30 p.m. Sunday when, at the end of the weekly Cabinet session, Shamir suddenly informed Weizman he was dismissed because of his contacts with the PLO.

Shamir did not detail his charges and Weizman, who has publicly advocated talks with the PLO, made only a vague denial.

But the stage was set for a government crisis, since the national unity coalition agreement stipulates that the prime minister cannot oust a Labor minister without the agreement of the vice premier, Labor Party leader Shimon Peres.

**Labor Did Not Want Breakup**

But while Peres waxed indignant at the Shamir move and Labor doves rallied for Weizman, it was clear that most Labor ministers would not give up their portfolios for their hapless colleague.

Neither Labor nor Likud is eager for new elections at this time, and neither party seems capable of putting together a narrow substitute coalition, in partnership with the small religious parties that always hold the balance of power.

According to law, a decision by the prime minister takes effect 48 hours after it is announced. The eventual Likud-Labor compromise was achieved at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, just an hour before the deadline.

Weizman told reporters the arrangement was worked out in advance of his meeting with Shamir on Tuesday, which he described as "pleasant."

He said he accepted the demotion, because he felt obliged to the Labor Party and those who support him. He credited his decision for enabling the unity government to stay in office.

Labor doves seemed disappointed that Weizman did not put up more of a fight. And the party's hawks would have preferred Labor to be rid of him.

Some political observers are convinced Labor would sooner have ditched Weizman than let the government fall.

Weizman announced he would be traveling to the Soviet Union this week, as planned before the crisis broke. He was to leave for Vienna on Wednesday.

His impending visit to Moscow reportedly aroused Shamir to take action against him. The prime minister is said to have feared that Weizman would meet or communicate with a PLO figure there and that the Soviet media would break the story, to Israel's embarrassment.

Weizman has flatly denied such a meeting was contemplated.

**Clear Signal From Jerusalem**

Some Likud members are demanding criminal action against the Labor minister, inasmuch as contact with the PLO is a violation of the law as well as of government policy.

But Shamir's aides appear to be satisfied with the political gains that the premier has reaped from the weekend crisis. Within Likud, Shamir succeeded in reasserting his authority and leadership, a setback for his rivals in the party, notably Ariel Sharon, David Levy and Yitzhak Moda'i.

It is more clear than ever that next time Likud goes to the polls, its list will be headed by Shamir, political observers said Tuesday.

But sources close to Shamir are stressing the international diplomatic impact of the crisis and its resolution. They say the message emanating from Jerusalem is now crystal clear: Israel will not deal with the PLO.

Such a signal comes at a crucial time, as Israel, Egypt and the United States try to bring about some kind of Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo. The main stumbling block has been the PLO's insistence on a role in the talks, and Israel's opposition to it.

Anyone who had begun to feel that resolve was eroding will now have to review that assessment, in light of Shamir's success in punishing Weizman and the fact that large elements of the Labor Party acquiesced to it.

Likud officials feel the Americans cannot help but take notice.

**MAIL BOMBS INTERCEPTED IN ISRAEL**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- A new wave of letter bombs hit Israel last weekend, apparently without causing casualties.

Postal security officers intercepted 10 pieces of potentially lethal mail Sunday night during routine sorting. Each contained a Christmas card and several grams of explosives, which experts said were sufficient to kill.

All the bombs were safely defused, but the authorities have alerted the public to watch out for suspicious-looking mail, in case one or two pieces slipped by.

The envelopes were mailed in Cyprus. Each bore three or four Cypriot stamps and was addressed by hand to individual Jews and to Christian clergy in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa.

There were no return addresses.

Israeli police, trying to trace the source, are in contact with the Cypriot police and with Interpol, the international police agency that exchanges information on criminal activities.

Postal authorities here recalled letter bomb episodes in 1987 and 1974. In both years, they occurred in December, when mail is heavier than usual with seasonal greeting cards.

### **FORCE USED AGAINST PEACE MARCHERS DRAWS PROTEST IN ISRAEL AND ABROAD** By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- Police intervention in an ecumenical peace demonstration around the Old City walls Saturday has had a bitter aftermath in Israel and brought at least one formal protest from a foreign government whose nationals were injured.

The Peace Now movement, which organized the event, accused the police of "excessive" use of force.

The rally brought together thousands of Jews, Arabs and peace advocates from abroad, who joined hands to encircle the wall.

Although the demonstration was undisturbed for the most part, tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannon used at one site put a number of people in hospitals, and more than a few arrests were made.

A police investigation, completed in just one day, concluded Sunday that the use of force was justified. The police insisted it was a legitimate response to the provocation of some Palestinians, who waved outlawed Palestinian flags and shouted nationalist slogans.

Peace Now has charged that the show of police force it terms excessive was deliberately planned by senior government officials, to show that Jews and Arabs cannot hold a rally together peacefully in Jerusalem.

Tzali Reshef, one of the movement's leaders, told a news conference that Peace Now would not accept the police findings and would ask the attorney general to investigate.

Peace Now spokesman Amiram Goldblum said a senior police officer told him even before the rally began that it would not end peacefully.

### **Italians Lodge Formal Protest**

The Israeli news agency Itim quoted security sources as saying the peace demonstration was planned by the Palestine Liberation Organization in Vienna last September, along with the Non-Governmental Organizations Central Committee.

In Rome, meanwhile, the Foreign Ministry instructed the Italian ambassador to Tel Aviv, Leoncini Bartoli, to lodge a formal protest over the indignities suffered by Italians who took part in the peace demonstration.

About 900 Italians participated. Ten of them were injured when Israeli police opened fire with water cannon to break up a "human chain."

The most serious injury was sustained by Mariza Manno, a 40-year-old tourist from Naples who lost her right eye. She was hurt by glass splinters when police fired water cannon at the Pilgrim Hotel, near the Old City wall, where she was staying.

Manno is still under treatment at the St. John Ophthalmic Hospital in East Jerusalem.

The Italian Foreign Ministry was particularly upset by the arrest and hospitalization of Dacia Valent, an Italian member of the European Parliament

In Rome, Communist members Italy's Parliament urged Foreign Minister Gianni de Michelis to call for the immediate intervention of the European Community to stop Israeli violence against non-violent demonstrations for peace.

At least three pro-Palestinian groups from the Netherlands participated in the Jerusalem demonstration.

(JTA correspondent Ruth E. Gruber in Rome contributed to this report.)

### **PALESTINIAN KILLED IN VIOLENCE MARKING ANNIVERSARY OF AL FATAH** By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- Scattered violence and at least one death were reported Monday, as Palestinians marched and demonstrated to mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of Al Fatah, the fighting arm of the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by Yasir Arafat.

Fatah has been competing this past year with the Islamic fundamentalist movement Hamas for the loyalty of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Leaflet No. 50 of the Palestinian uprising's Unified Command instructed the population to parade and wave flags on the occasion. But the Israel Defense Force sent in reinforcements to prevent unrest. The entire Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank were put under curfew.

The single reported fatality occurred when IDF troops opened fire to disperse a nationalist parade.

The victim was identified as Ala a-Din Bader el-Khatib, 16, a resident of A-Ram, an Arab neighborhood in northern Jerusalem.

At least 21 Palestinians were killed last month, according to B'Tselem, a human rights organization that monitors events in the territories.

Nineteen of them were shot by the IDF, one died when an explosive charge detonated and another was apparently beaten to death by agents of the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service.

Another 12 Palestinians were killed by fellow Arabs for allegedly collaborating with the Israeli authorities.

B'Tselem reported that about 607 Arabs have been killed by Israeli security forces since the Palestinian uprising, or intifada, began in December 1987, and another 28 were apparently killed by Israeli civilians.

In addition, 166 suspected alleged collaborators have been murdered.

### **IDF UNIT RETURNS FIRE FROM JORDAN** By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV Jan. 2 (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force patrol came under fire Sunday night from across the Jordanian border, south of the Beit She'an Valley.

There were no casualties. The fire was returned, but a subsequent search yielded no trace of the assailants, whose identity is unknown.

Jordanian troops were seen searching their side of the border Monday morning.

Jordanian authorities have taken pains to prevent the use of their territory for incursions against Israel.

Nevertheless, there have been several infiltration attempts in recent months, near Sdom, on the southern shore of the Dead Sea, in September, and more recently in the Beit She'an area.

**SOVIET EMIGRATION TOPS 71,000  
FOR 1989, AS MORE GO TO ISRAEL**

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- A total of 8,690 Jews left the Soviet Union in December, bringing the number of Soviet Jews who emigrated in 1989 to 71,196.

The figures were reported Tuesday by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, which said the 1989 total was the highest since the group began tabulating emigration statistics in 1968.

It was nearly four times as large as the 1988 total of 18,965 and almost nine times as large as the 1987 total of 8,155.

The numbers tell the story of the dramatic changes that have taken place over the course of the past year, as the doors out of the Soviet Union opened wider than ever before, but entry to the United States became more difficult.

The December figures also reflect a new trend: an upsurge in the number of Soviet Jews deciding to settle in Israel, largely as a result of tighter U.S. immigration policies. Of the 8,690 Jews who left the Soviet Union as refugees last month, a whopping 3,590, or 41 percent, went to Israel.

The percentage was a huge increase from the figures of the previous 11 months, when the percentage of Soviet Jewish emigres going to Israel did not climb above 20 percent.

Officials at Jewish agencies involved with Soviet Jews expect the percentage of emigres settling in Israel to remain high in the coming months, since those intent on coming to the United States must now apply in Moscow for U.S. visas, which are scarce.

Most of the Soviet Jews coming to the United States now are those who had exit visas issued before Oct. 1, when the U.S. government changed its refugee policy. They are still eligible to come to the United States under the former system.

**14,000 In U.S. Since October**

Under that system, Soviet Jews arriving in Vienna on Israeli visas often opted to "drop out" and settle in the United States instead. They were sent to transit centers near Rome, where officials of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society assisted them in applying for U.S. refugee status.

During the last year, as the number of Jews leaving the Soviet Union swelled, the backlog of refugees waiting outside Rome for U.S. visas also grew.

U.S. government and Jewish agency officials hope to clear out the "pipeline" of Soviets waiting in Rome and Vienna in the next few months.

Philip Saperia, assistant executive vice president of HIAS, said that the number of Jews going to Vienna under the old system had "peaked sharply" during the last few weeks of December. He predicted that the Western European way stations would be free of Soviets waiting to go to the United States by June.

Soviet Jews and other emigres already in the "Vienna-Rome pipeline" will account for the majority of the 50,000 spots for Soviet refugees permitted by the United States for fiscal year 1990, which began in October. HIAS estimates that 30,000 of these emigres will be Jewish.

According to the State Department, 14,000 Soviets, both Jews and non-Jews, have immigrated to the United States so far this fiscal year.

Both Saperia and the State Department believe, however, that even after the last Soviets have cleared out from Vienna and Rome, some room will remain within the State Department quota to allow a number of those who applied for refugee status after Oct. 1 to immigrate directly from the Soviet Union to the United States.

The State Department will begin interviewing those seeking U.S. refugee visas under the new system sometime this month in Moscow. But those who are granted refugee status are not expected to be able to leave for at least three or four more months.

Others are expected to immigrate as paroltees, which would allow them to enter the United States, but without the amount of assistance granted to refugees.

In a statement welcoming the announcement of the 1989 emigration figures for Soviet Jews, NCSJ Chairwoman Shoshana Cardin proclaimed the past year "the record year to date for Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union."

"We trust that 1990 will also prove to be a milestone year," she said.

**EL AL FLIES NON-STOP TO MOSCOW**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- An El Al Boeing 757 made history Monday on the first-ever direct flight carrying immigrants from Moscow to Tel Aviv.

Officially, the plane was carrying more than 100 members of Habimah, Israel's national theater, to Moscow for a two-week tour of the Soviet Union, where it was founded some 70 years ago.

But on the return flight, the plane, which El Al had said would fly back to Israel empty, carried 15 Jewish immigrants, the first ever to be flown directly from Moscow to Tel Aviv.

There was a certain risk in the venture, inasmuch as the Soviet authorities have not yet ratified an agreement for direct flights, which El Al reached over a month ago with the Soviet national airline, Aeroflot. But no one interfered with the last-minute boarding.

Meanwhile, Habimah will be performing in Hebrew in Moscow and other Soviet cities. The troupe consists more than 100 actors, stagehands and managers. There is also an interpreter, who will provide the audiences with simultaneous translation to Russian.

**OIL TANKER CAPTAIN SENTENCED**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- An Israeli tanker captain got a one-year suspended sentence and was fined the equivalent of \$2,800 by an Egyptian court Tuesday for allegedly causing an oil spill in the Gulf of Suez in October.

Capt. Yosef Zvi, master of the government-owned tanker Nyuta, was not present when the admiralty court in A-Tur pronounced sentence and ordered him to pay an additional, unspecified sum to cover the cost of cleaning up the oil.

The captain, who was represented by legal counsel, insists his ship was not responsible for polluting Egyptian territorial waters.

After the alleged spill, the ship was detained and held for more than three weeks at the East Zaid Bay oil port.

The ship and its company were released through the personal intervention of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

**JERUSALEM POST PUBLISHER FIRES  
SENIOR EDITORIAL STAFF MEMBERS**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- The Jerusalem Post, Israel's only English-language daily, is in the throes of a fierce dispute over policy between its senior editorial staff and its recently appointed president and publisher, retired Israel Defense Force Col. Yehuda Levy.

The Post reported on its front page Tuesday that nine senior editorial staff members, led by Managing Editor David Landau, and 11 other journalists sent letters of resignation to Levy and to David Radler, chairman of the Canada-based Hollinger newspaper chain, which bought the Post last April.

They said they would leave the paper in 30 days if Levy were not replaced.

Levy responded by firing them as of 5 p.m. local time.

More than 20 staff members threatened last week to strike unless Radler removed Levy in 30 days as the Post's president and publisher.

Their action followed the Dec. 25 resignation of Editor Erwin Frenkel, who charged that Levy had compromised his editorial integrity.

Levy told army radio Tuesday night that he had appointed a new editor and that the newspaper could publish easily with the remaining news staff.

The joint letter of resignation stated that despite the owners' promise to "preserve the editorial independence and not to alter the character of the paper," there had been "an ever-increasing erosion of editorial independence" in recent months, "accompanied by an assault on the editorial line which the paper has embodied since its establishment."

**Paper Critical Of Shamir**

The letter charged that Frenkel and the paper's other editor, Ari Rath, who took early retirement in November, had been forced to leave the Post, after more than a decade, because of "actions which undermined their status and that of the entire editorial staff."

Charles Hoffman, the paper's widely read Jewish affairs correspondent, was informed of the developments in a telephone call to Romania, where he is currently on assignment. He immediately asked his colleagues to add his name to the list of signatures on the resignation letter.

The Post, regarded as left of center editorially, has been severely critical of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's handling of the two-year-old Palestinian uprising in the territories. It supports the land-for-peace formula, which is anathema to Shamir and his Likud party.

Levy, a Likud supporter, says he wants a "more balanced" editorial policy at the Post.

Although he reportedly gave his word not to interfere in editorial matters, Levy has involved himself increasingly.

He raised eyebrows when, without journalistic experience, he applied for membership in the Israel Editors Committee, composed of professional journalists.

Recently, Levy ordered the withdrawal of an editorial critical of Shamir's policies from the Post's international edition.

Levy said in the army radio interview that the Post had been "run by its editorial staff" since its inception. But a newspaper, he stressed, should be run as a business.

**PROTESTERS PICKET AGAINST TUTU  
AS DINKINS IS SWORN IN AS MAYOR**  
By J.J. Goldberg  
The New York Jewish Week

NEW YORK, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- David Dinkins was sworn in as this city's first black mayor on New Year's Day, in a festive ceremony that was largely unmarred by threatened protests.

It was a joyous day for New York's black community, but a day of misgivings for many of the city's 1.1 million Jews, as they bid farewell to outgoing Mayor Edward Koch, a staunch defender of Israel and Jewish rights.

Dinkins has his own lengthy record of activity on behalf of Israel and Soviet Jewry. His relationship with the Rev. Jesse Jackson, however, has stirred fears among many Jewish activists.

The new mayor made a clear attempt to lay such fears to rest in his inaugural speech, carefully listing Israeli security as one of three symbolic moral issues he would uphold as mayor.

He said his administration would defend "a woman's right to choose, we will stand for justice around the world, including Israel's right to live in peace and security, and we will fight for a free South Africa."

The remark "was a gesture," said Michael Miller, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.

**'Trying To Reach Out'**

By linking Israel with such liberal touchstones, Miller said, "it's very clear he's trying to reach out to the Jewish community."

It was Dinkins' inaugural guest list, however, that raised the most controversy.

Many Jews were angered at the scheduled appearance of Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, whose recent remarks in Israel were widely interpreted as anti-Semitic.

Tutu had compared Israeli troop actions to South African repression, and had called on Jews to "forgive" the Nazis.

The scheduled protest took place as planned, but was low-key and respectful, in response to personal appeals from Dinkins.

A small group of 50 to 75 Jewish activists held up signs across the street from the ceremonies that declared: "Tutu is raining anti-Semitic hate on your parade."

The organizer, Rabbi Avraham Weiss of the Bronx, said he was "for harmony between the black and Jewish communities, but I've always thought that dialogue is based on truth."

In any case, the protest had little impact on the day's festivities. "I don't think it in any substantial way marred our celebration," Dinkins said. Asked if he had any regrets about his controversial guest list, Dinkins said, "Heck, no."

Many Jews in the audience expressed misgivings over the presence of Tutu and of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, a longtime friend of Dinkins.

Jackson, in fact, added a sour note during a private midnight swearing-in ceremony, where he was quoted as complaining that "the birthplace of Jesus the Christ is under occupation."

Most Jewish observers said their faith in Dinkins overrode their suspicion of his friends.

"Desmond Tutu is here today. Jesse Jackson is here today. David Dinkins will be here tomorrow, and we will work together tomorrow," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.