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**SHOOTING OF THREE WEST BANK ARABS  
BY CIVILIAN IS UNDER INVESTIGATION**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- Police are investigating the unprovoked shooting of three West Bank Arabs, apparently by an Israeli civilian, last Thursday night near the Etzion Bloc of Jewish settlements south of Jerusalem.

The wounded, members of an Arab family from Hebron, included an infant. They were taken to Hadassah-Hebrew University Hospital in Ein Kerem and were said Sunday to be out of danger.

The victims, who were driving from Bethlehem to Hebron, were identified as Dr. Faisal Amru, 40; his sister, Ibtissam, 34; and her 9-month-old son, Aya Jamal Amru.

The baby apparently was the most severely hurt. He suffered serious stomach and leg wounds for which he underwent surgery. The hospital said Saturday his condition was "improving."

The attack occurred at about 10 p.m. local time. The assailant was described as a lone man wearing an IDF uniform and the kippah of an Orthodox Jew. He opened fire on the car with an automatic rifle and fled on foot in the direction of the Etzion settlements.

An anonymous telephone call to the news media shortly after the attack said it was carried out by a previously unknown group calling itself the Zionist Vengeful.

Police spent the weekend questioning West Bank settlers, but they came up with few clues about the assailant, and no arrests were reported.

The telephone call spurred media speculation that a new anti-Arab Jewish terrorist underground may have sprung up in the territory, similar to one active in the 1980s.

That idea was promptly rejected by the settlers and by Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai, the senior Israel Defense Force commander in the central sector, which includes the West Bank.

**No New Organized Underground**

The incident occurred little more than 24 hours after the release from prison of the last three of 25 members of the 1980s Jewish underground group to serve time for murdering and maiming Arabs.

They served less than seven years of what originally were life sentences and got heroes' welcomes from West Bank settlers when they emerged from prison.

Another past member of the underground, Dan Be'eri, told the Israeli daily Ha'aretz in an interview that the attack on the Amru family was probably the work of someone acting alone or perhaps a few unorganized individuals.

Be'eri said he did not believe an organized Jewish underground like the one in the 1980s was possible in the administered territories.

In any event, he said, he doubted it would be organized like the earlier one by people associated with the Gush Emunim settlers movement.

Knesset member Dedi Zucker of the dovish Citizens Rights Movement released a list meanwhile of 34 fatal assaults on Arabs, apparently by Israeli civilians. In only a few cases were charges ever brought, Zucker charged.

Police officials claimed all of the cases cited

by the Knesset member are still under investigation, but none of them produced evidence of organized Jewish terrorism.

The police said charges would be filed in at least half the cases.

**UPSURGE OF VIOLENCE IN GAZA STRIP  
LEAVES 4 ARABS DEAD, SCORES INJURED**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- Four Arabs were killed and as many as 250 reported wounded over the weekend in clashes with the Israel Defense Force in the Gaza Strip.

The violence was associated with preparations for the annual observance of Fatah Day this Tuesday.

The occasion will be the 26th anniversary of the emergence of Al Fatah as the principal fighting force of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The day usually sparks widespread disturbances in the administered territories. About 150 known Fatah activists were put under preventive arrest over the weekend, but that failed to keep the peace.

As a result, most of the 750,000 Palestinian inhabitants of the Gaza Strip were under curfew by Sunday night. Curfews also were clamped on towns and refugee camps in the West Bank.

Thirteen Arabs were wounded Sunday in Gaza and El-Mughazi refugee camp, two of the few locations not under curfew.

But the worst casualties occurred Saturday in Rafah and Khan Yunis, at the southern end of the territory.

According to the IDF, the trouble broke out in Rafah on Saturday afternoon, when soldiers challenged two masked youths who refused to halt. They were shot first in the legs and then fatally shot.

**Haifa Man Stabbed To Death**

News of the deaths brought hundreds of Palestinians swarming into the marketplace of the nearby Shabura refugee camp, where they confronted soldiers with hails of rocks. Two soldiers were injured.

The soldiers opened fire, killing two more Palestinians and wounding many others. A fifth fatality occurred when an Arab man died of a heart attack after inhaling tear gas.

After relative quiet due to widespread curfews Saturday night, violence erupted anew Sunday, when at least 14 more Arabs were wounded.

Gen. Shmuel Zucker, the IDF commander in the Gaza Strip, said the deaths were unavoidable. He confirmed that four Arabs were shot to death by soldiers over the weekend but disputed the number of wounded, which he put at no more than 90.

An IDF officer commented later, "It was a real face-to-face battle. We did not want to shoot, but we had no choice. We had to, so that soldiers wouldn't be hurt."

Meanwhile, the body of an Israeli man was found stabbed to death in Haifa. Police identified him as Yosef Malchin, 60, and said he may have been a victim of Palestinian nationalists. A police spokeswoman said a note signed by Fatah was found near the body.

# NEWS ANALYSIS:

## LABOR COMMITTED TO ELECTION REFORM, BUT ROAD AHEAD FILLED WITH OBSTACLES By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- A modest but significant step toward electoral reform was taken last week when the Labor Party's Central Committee voted to support legislation providing for the direct election of the prime minister.

The decision, binding on all Labor Knesset members, would reduce if not eliminate the disproportionate leverage of the small parties, which represent only a minority of the electorate.

Its significance lies in the fact that the country's second largest political party has committed itself toward a radical change in the way Israel elects its leaders.

But Labor's decision is no more than a minor step on the long road to electoral reform, which is strewn with countless pitfalls and obstacles.

Despite widespread public sentiment favoring reform, no political pundit in Israel today is prepared to predict that the next election, due in or before 1992, will be conducted according to rules different from all previous elections.

Given the divided, splintered nature of Israeli politics, they cannot comfortably predict that the next elections will not be followed by the same horsetrading, political bribery and blackmail that has marked the coalition-building process after past elections.

Among the major hurdles to be overcome before Labor's proposal or any radical reform becomes law is Likud's vow to some of its junior coalition partners neither to promote nor approve any change in the present system without their advance agreement.

Within the Likud itself there is little enthusiasm for the proposal adopted by Labor, and without unanimity between the two biggest parties it seems impossible even to hope for a change.

### Concern About Fascism

Some observers wonder whether it is entirely coincidental that the electoral reform proposal adopted by a majority of the Labor Central Committee is precisely the one a majority in Likud is said to oppose.

Conversely, the alternative proposal Labor rejected is the one that would probably win a majority in the Likud Central Committee.

The Labor proposal calls for separate but simultaneous elections -- one for the Knesset and one for the prime minister.

It was supported by the party chairman, Shimon Peres, and by his rival, Yitzhak Rabin. Each presumably sees himself a potential victor.

The proposal provides that the government set up by the nationally elected prime minister could be brought down by a simple majority of 61 in the 120-member Knesset.

Similarly, the prime minister would need a reliable Knesset majority to govern because the legislature could always deny him funds under the budget law if he tried to go it alone.

Advocates of this plan argued that the arrangement had built-in checks and balances to ensure that the man or woman elected prime minister could not become a dictator.

Opponents argue that the proposal could breed fascism if some unscrupulous candidate of vague ideology pandered to the popular mood and romped to victory in a direct election.

In such event, they say, it is unlikely that

the Knesset members would vote to bring the government down and themselves out of office.

The alternate proposal, which lost by 280-150 in the Central Committee, called for automatic installation of the leader of the largest party as prime minister before coalition talks.

Proponents of the plan argued it would retain the essence of the parliamentary system while stripping the small parties of their disproportionate power to determine who will rule.

The voters at the ballot box would in effect determine the identity of the prime minister, leaving the parties less room for maneuver in subsequently forming the government.

### Constituency Idea Abandoned

It was clear if unspoken that the Laborites who backed the winning proposal have strong doubts about their party's ability to win an electoral majority in the foreseeable future.

But they are more sanguine that a Labor Party leader could win the office of prime minister, someone like Rabin for example.

Likud members, on the other hand, consider their party stronger with the electorate than any one of its candidates. There are also Likud members, similar to their Labor counterparts, who fear an incipient dictatorship.

Longtime advocates of electoral reform were distressed by the virtual abandonment by both big parties of a key element of past reform moves: a constituency system of elections to the Knesset. That would ensure a direct link between Knesset members and the people who vote for them.

Under the present system, Knesset seats are assigned by the parties according to a predetermined list. Those nearest the top are assured a seat; those near the bottom are usually out.

The system does not encourage closeness between voter and representative. But election by constituency is no longer central to current thinking on reform.

That has been attributed to the implacable opposition of the small parties, which are pivotal in the present government.

Both big parties also are apparently pledged to their respective small allies not to propose raising the threshold for entry into the Knesset to any more than 2 percent. At present, a party need poll no more than 1 percent of the popular vote to gain a Knesset seat.

### KATYUSHAS HIT WESTERN GALILEE By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- Katyusha rockets fired from Lebanon hit Western Galilee and the southern Lebanon security zone Friday night, but they caused no casualties or damage.

They were the first rocket attacks on Israel in eight months, but residents of Galilee took them in stride.

"We are used to it, even though we haven't had any for some time," said one resident.

The rockets were fired from the area around Tyre, a Lebanese port on the Mediterranean. Further east, another round of katyusha rockets and mortars were fired Saturday at positions of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army in the security zone without causing casualties or damage.

Israel Defense Force and SLA artillery responded with a heavy barrage aimed at the Maidoun area of southern Lebanon, just north of the security zone. Reports from Lebanon said four children were killed and three adults wounded.

**FINAL WEEK OF THE YEAR BRINGS  
12,000 IMMIGRANTS FROM THE USSR**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- The final week of 1990 saw a record-breaking 12,000 immigrants arrive from the Soviet Union, 4,000 of them since Friday.

The week's total was about equal to the entire aliyah of 1988, an Absorption Ministry spokesperson said.

Absorption Minister Yitzhak Peretz presented the Cabinet on Sunday with his plans to absorb 400,000 newcomers in 1991. The total is up from 300,000 new arrivals projected earlier but may already be obsolete.

Observers said that rapidly deteriorating economic and political conditions in the Soviet Union could bring an aliyah of 600,000 in 1991.

While the press reported that immigration from the Soviet Union in December could total 50,000, Gad Ben-Ari, a spokesman for the Jewish Agency, which transports the immigrants to Israel, said the figure would be closer to 35,000.

According to Ben-Ari, one source will add olim arriving after midnight to the previous day's total and another to the following day's total so they are counted twice.

Friday's arrivals included 61 children, not immigrants but victims of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident. They were flown here to be treated for radiation sickness and associated disorders.

They are the third group of Chernobyl children brought to Israel for medical treatment under the auspices of Chabad, the Brooklyn-based movement of Lubavitcher Hasidim.

The chartered Aeroflot plane that flew them here directly from Moscow returned with nine tons of fresh fruit, powdered milk and other food donated by various Jewish organizations in Israel.

**SOVIETS TO BUY MEDICAL SYSTEM  
DEVELOPED BY MAGEN DAVID ADOM**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- The Soviet Union will import a sophisticated emergency medical system developed by Magen David Adom, Israel's equivalent of the Red Cross, to serve the estimated 125,000 foreign residents and senior government officials in Moscow.

The system, known as "Keshev," was recently introduced by the Red Magen David's paramedical service in Ramat Gan, a Tel Aviv suburb.

The decision to establish such a service for the Moscow elite was reached last week by Valeri Bikov, the minister of medical and microbiological industries, who heads a Soviet medical mission currently visiting Israel.

The system includes a Keshev emergency beeper to summon police, firefighters and ambulance services, and an electrocardiogram that transmits at any distance over telephone lines. The EKG is reserved for paying members of the paramedical service, not the average citizen.

The Soviet delegation visited Keshev headquarters and was shown how the sensors attached to the patient's chest send data over the phone lines. The print-out can be read instantaneously by a cardiologist at the other end of the line.

The delegates, guests of the Israel Chamber of Commerce, were preparing a \$20 million list of medical equipment and pharmaceuticals they intend to purchase in Israel.

**PARIS PLAYING INTO HANDS OF IRAQ,  
LEADER OF FRENCH JEWRY CHARGES**

PARIS, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- The Jewish leadership has accused the French government of attitudes that undercut the anti-Iraq alliance in the Persian Gulf.

Jean Kahn, president of CRIF, the representative body of French Jewish organizations, aired his complaints in a broadcast on the Jewish radio station here.

He said that by calling for an international conference now to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the French authorities are playing into the hands of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, who has been trying to link the two.

Kahn said he could not understand why the French government still considers the Palestine Liberation Organization to be the valid representative of the Palestinian people.

"By joining Saddam Hussein, Yasir Arafat's organization is likely to fight against French soldiers should conflict erupt," the Jewish leader maintained.

Finally, Kahn demanded to know why France does not "express its indignation when Saddam Hussein openly threatens Tel Aviv."

The Iraqi leader told Spanish television on Dec. 23 that Tel Aviv would be the first target of his missiles should war break out in the Gulf, whether or not Israel was involved.

"On this particular issue, like on many others, one can but note the silence of France, of Europe and of some moral authorities like the Vatican," the French Jewish leader said.

"The current policy of France is apparently hurting her own interests. It is disappointing us and we must express our disagreement on this point," he said.

**Jordanian Military Exercises Discussed**

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Michel Rocard was reported last week to have questioned the reliability of Syria as a member of the anti-Iraq coalition in the Persian Gulf.

According to the Socialist weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Rocard doubts Syria is ready to join Western and Arab troops in possible military action against Iraq.

Rocard revealed to leaders of French political parties that the Syrians avoided the first joint meeting of the allied chiefs of staffs, the weekly reported.

The Defense Ministry has confirmed a Jewish Telegraphic Agency report that the French Mirage F-1CR reconnaissance jets have been pulled out of Saudi Arabia because they could be mistaken for Iraq's French-built fighter-bombers in case of combat in the area.

In Jerusalem, meanwhile, the Israeli Cabinet held a short discussion of the Gulf crisis Sunday. Defense experts briefed the ministers on Iraq's ongoing preparations for war and on large-scale exercises that the Jordanian army has recently been holding. Some speculated the discussion had deliberately been kept brief to prevent the possibility of leaks to the press.

(JTA correspondent David Landau in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

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**Because of the New Year's Day holiday, the JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published on Wednesday, Jan. 2.**

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# LUBAVITCHER REBBE REJECTS ASSERTION THAT HOLOCAUST WAS DIVINE PUNISHMENT

NEW YORK, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- An Israeli Orthodox sage who infuriated Holocaust survivors and other Jews by claiming the Shoah was God's punishment for their abandonment of the Torah, has received an indirect rebuke from the Lubavitcher rebbe.

"All who perished in the Holocaust -- man, woman and child -- were holy and pure. They died solely because they were Jews. Each and every one was a righteous martyr," declared the rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson.

He spoke to about 3,000 disciples at Lubavitch world headquarters in Brooklyn on the Tenth of Tevet, a day of fasting and mourning when Jewish suffering, during both the Temple period and modern times, is remembered.

His message, broadcast around the world, seemed intended as a response to the sermon delivered last week to yeshiva students in the Israeli township of Bnei Brak by Rabbi Eliezer Schach, dean of the Ponovezh Yeshiva and spiritual mentor of the Orthodox Degel HaTorah party.

Schach, 94, advanced the idea that the Holocaust was a result of cumulative divine wrath over the Jewish people's wholesale abandonment of Orthodoxy under the influence of the enlightenment, socialism and Zionism. He denounced secular Jews for eating pork and failing to observe the Sabbath and religious festivals.

Schach is a theological foe and longtime critic of the Lubavitcher rebbe, the Hasidic leader whose Chabad movement tries to draw secular Jews back to religion.

Schneerson was especially vociferous in his attack on the notion, expounded by Schach, that further retributive suffering might befall the Jewish people if they fail to abide by Jewish law.

"This suggestion is unconscionable," the rebbe declared, without mentioning who had made it. "The future bodes only well for the Jewish people. There will never be another Holocaust. There will be redemption and joy."

Schach maintained that "God is long-suffering but eventually, when a point of saturation is reached, he wreaks his punishment."

According to the rebbe, however, "the tragedy of the Holocaust is an unanswerable question. There is no human rationale whatsoever that can explain such indescribable suffering.

"Indeed, God's words to his prophet that, 'My thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways' (Isaiah 55:8), is all that can be said."

The rebbe added, "Any attempt to cast blame, for whatever reason, upon those who perished is shocking."

## KNESSET SPEAKER CUTS OFF FUNDS

### TO SHAS PARTY IN WAKE OF CHARGES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- Knesset Speaker Dov Shilansky has cut off the Shas party's monthly allocation of state funds for January.

The Orthodox party stands accused of misusing state funds in the report of Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat, released last week.

Shilansky acted after the High Court of Justice ruled that the Knesset speaker does not have the authority to weigh the comptroller's charges against Shas' statements in its defense.

The justices issued the ruling after civil

rights groups argued that by hearing Shas after Ben-Porat published her report, Shilansky would be setting himself up as a court of appeals.

The comptroller, the government's fiscal watchdog, charged that Shas failed to account for the way it used the monthly allocations all Knesset factions get from the Treasury in proportion to their representation in the legislature.

The funds are supposed to be used for legitimate political purposes and accounted for.

According to the comptroller, Shas used them to make personal loans and to employ yeshiva students who are forbidden by law to work as a condition of their exemption from military service.

She accused the religious party of withholding information and demanded it be fined the maximum allowable for that offense, \$750,000.

Meanwhile, army radio reported Sunday that the police will recommend criminal proceedings against Zvi Jacobson, a key aide to Interior Minister Arye Deri of Shas, though not against Deri himself.

According to the report, Jacobson will be charged with accepting payoffs to help certain people avoid military service. The allegations against him surfaced during the broader police investigation into charges that Deri misused government funds, army radio reported.

But that inquiry is moving slowly. Begun in May, the police still do not seem to have sufficient evidence to make a case against the interior minister, who at 31 is youngest in the Cabinet.

## ISRAELI AIR FORCE GENERAL ACCUSED OF FRAUD SCHEME WITH IDF CONTRACTOR

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 30 (JTA) -- The investigation of Israeli air force Brig. Gen. Rami Dotan moved closer to home over the weekend as allegations surfaced that he had fraudulent dealings with the government-owned Beit Shemesh aircraft engine repair works.

Dotan is accused of bilking the Israel Defense Force of tens of millions of dollars through bribery, embezzlement and other illegal acts when he was senior procurement officer for the air force in New York in 1984 and 1985.

He is now reported also to have been involved in a scheme that billed the air force for fictitious repairs at the Beit Shemesh plant.

The new charges center on Dotan's friendship with Menachem Karmon, the air force liaison officer with the engine repair factory until his unexplained suicide several years ago. Dotan married Karmon's widow, Alla.

IDF Judge Advocate General Amnon Strashnov, the chief military prosecutor, announced Dec. 20 that Dotan agreed to a plea bargain whereby he would confess all and return his loot in exchange for his wife's immunity from prosecution.

He already reportedly has implicated another friend, the senior air force officer who replaced Karmon at Beit Shemesh. The officer was questioned by police last week.

But many senior IDF officers believe Dotan should be tried for treason. Last week, a reserve officer appealed to the High Court of Justice to void the plea bargain.

Dotan, who was under military police guard at Tel Hashomer Hospital, where he was receiving treatment for high blood pressure, reportedly was moved over the weekend to a military base hospital, where he cannot be reached by the media.