

**ETHIOPIAN ALIYAH IS SHARPLY UP,
BUT SOVIET IMMIGRATION IS DOWN**

By Charles Hoffman

JERUSALEM, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- More than a thousand Ethiopian Jews made aliyah last month -- the highest number since the end of Operation Moses six years ago.

But immigration from the Soviet Union dropped by more than 60 percent, apparently because of the Iraqi missile attacks on Israel.

According to the Jewish Agency for Israel, a total of 14,456 immigrants arrived in Israel in January, including 13,360 Jews from the Soviet Union, down from an all-time high of 35,000 in December. The National Conference on Soviet Jewry in New York reported an identical figure.

In addition, 1,300 Soviet Jews immigrated to the United States last month, according to the New York-based Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.

While Jewish Agency officials were pleased with the high Ethiopian aliyah total, up from 530 in December, they said the situation of some 20,000 Jews waiting in Addis Ababa is still desperate.

One official said it would be technically possible for more Ethiopian Jews to leave, but the Ethiopian government has set an unofficial quota and issues exit visas on that basis.

In New York, Rabbi Daniel Allen, assistant executive vice chairman of the United Israel Appeal, said the Jewish Agency is now drawing up a budget that anticipates the arrival of 15,000 Ethiopian Jews between April 1 and Dec. 31, and 225,000 Soviet Jews during the same period.

The war in the Middle East and the Iraqi missile threat appear to be the main causes of the dip in Soviet aliyah, which nevertheless was still almost three times as high as the total for January 1990.

At Least 500 Arrivals A Day

Recent Soviet immigrants have said that while Soviet television is not taking an anti-Israeli slant in its coverage of the war, the reports of damage in Israel have been exaggerated, thereby causing some prospective olim to delay their departure.

The Jewish Agency decided last Friday to send special emissaries to the Soviet Union to provide a more balanced explanation of the war's impact in Israel and to allay fears among prospective immigrants.

The Israeli Consulate in Moscow last month issued about 650 visas each day, down from about 1,000 a day in the last three months of 1990. The Jewish Agency expects an average of 500 to 600 Soviet immigrants to arrive each day for the near future, until the emergency footing in Israel has ended.

Between 80,000 and 100,000 Soviet Jews now hold Israeli visas and are expected to depart over the next few months.

The government's immigrant housing program has been hard hit by the emergency, which has shut down major businesses throughout the country, but particularly in the Tel Aviv area.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon said last week that the construction industry is operating at about 25 percent of its normal capacity.

**ISRAEL 'ITCHING' TO TAKE OUT SCUDS,
BUT WILL COORDINATE MOVES WITH U.S.**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- Israel has devised plans to eliminate the Iraqi Scud missile threat and is "itching" to carry them out, the second-highest-ranking Israel Defense Force general disclosed in a television interview Sunday.

But barring exceptional circumstances, the plans will be executed only after consultation with U.S. forces, Maj. Gen. Ehud Barak, the IDF's deputy chief of staff, stressed.

He gave no particulars, nor did he elaborate on the circumstances which would have to prevail for Israel to act on them.

Barak, designated to be the IDF's next chief of staff, did not reply directly when asked if he thought the Israeli air force could do a better job than the Americans in destroying Iraq's missile-launching capability.

"I suggest that we do not criticize the American operation," he said. "Nonetheless, I can state that the IDF has very good operational plans to deal with removing the threat of ground-to-ground missiles from western Iraq. These plans will be carried out when and if the Israeli government instructs on their implementation."

In that case, Barak said, the Israeli plans would be implemented as much as possible in consultation with U.S. forces. Only in certain undefined circumstances would they be implemented unilaterally, and then only after a suitable notification had been made.

10 To 12 Mobile Launchers Left

Barak said that according to IDF estimates, there are still 10 or 12 mobile Scud launchers in western Iraq, though "it is possible that some of them have been damaged."

While the missile threat has been significantly diminished, "all in all, the capability still exists," he said.

"It is worth noting that during the first nine days of missile launching, 25 missiles fell in Israel. In the past eight days, only five missiles have fallen and they have hardly caused any damage," he said.

"This means that in practice, either as a result of increased efficiency in American operations or as a result of other reasons which we don't fully understand, there is a decrease in Iraq's launching capability," Barak said.

He repeated however that missile strikes "are still possible, and the threat has not been eliminated."

Barak admitted that Israel is hurt and angry over the physical damage the missiles have caused, the fact that they have been aimed at Israel's civilian population and the threat of chemical warfare.

"On the political level, fingers are itching to carry out operations which in our opinion can remove the threat," he said.

"But in the complex situation created by this war, neither anger, hurt nor itchy fingers can replace rational thinking, which takes into consideration only the security of the state and asks by what timing and by using which methods it is possible to best serve this interest."

KNESSET ENDS DEBATE ON GULF CRISIS WITH SHAMIR SPEECH AND A RESOLUTION

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- A resolution urging the dismemberment of the "Iraqi war machine" was adopted by the Knesset on Monday after Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir branded Saddam Hussein a war criminal and predicted he would eventually be punished as such.

The prime minister's lengthy speech marked the end of a prolonged debate over the Persian Gulf war and Israel's role in it.

Shamir outlined Israel's position and policies, saying the situation created by the Persian Gulf war is one that Israel has not faced before.

He vowed that "the time for us to take direct action against the Iraqi enemy will come." But Israel will decide when and will consult with the United States, he said.

Shamir described Israel's policy as neither restraint nor response but rather a policy under constant review to decide how best to serve the national interest and defend the country.

He praised the spirit of the nation under Iraqi missile fire and declared that the U.S. government and President Bush deserve the world's gratitude for recognizing that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was more than another inter-Arab dispute.

"The attacks on Israel have created a new political situation which has so far contributed to a positive change in Israel's international relations," Shamir observed.

"The wicked attacks on our population have brought in their wake a wave of sympathy from many countries in the world, and not just traditionally friendly countries, but others as well."

Israel Ready To Pursue Peace

He noted that the United States, Britain and other countries have rejected linkage between the Gulf war and Arab-Israeli relations.

"They correctly understood that Saddam Hussein is using the interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict to cover up his aggression. And, indeed, any such linkage would damage the international front against Iraq."

He added that Israel will not need to be prodded to resume the peace process with added vigor once the war is over and the Iraqi dictator is eliminated.

But he called on "all sincere peace-lovers" to drop the idea of an international conference, which he said would be counterproductive.

He promoted instead Israel's own 1989 peace plan, which envisaged peace agreements with the Arab states and elections and autonomy for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He said the national duty now is "to do everything possible to defend Israel and its population."

But "this time it is a war where the Iraqi enemy faces an international coalition which is fighting with courage and vigor out of its own considerations, and it would have been unreasonable of us not to take this fact, as well as its operative ramifications, into account when planning our defense," Shamir said.

The prime minister spoke of the "many economic problems caused by the situation."

"Tremendous resources will be needed for all these things," he said, "and we must prepare and examine the possibilities for raising this money," with help from "friends abroad."

ROCKETS FROM LEBANON BACKFIRING ON THE PLO

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- The Palestine Liberation Organization's recent Katyusha rocket assaults aimed at Israel's northern border seem to have backfired badly.

Not only have the rockets fallen short of their targets and exploded harmlessly in the southern Lebanon security zone, but the fierce artillery retaliation by the Israel Defense Force and its allied South Lebanon Army has turned the local populace against the PLO.

According to sources quoted by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, hundreds of shells aimed at PLO concentrations in the Rashidiya refugee camp east of Tyre and elsewhere have caused the flight of about 60 percent of the camp's population.

The refugees blame the PLO for bringing destruction down on their heads, the UNIFIL sources said.

The PLO, which cast its lot with Saddam Hussein of Iraq, has been sharply criticized by Syria, which has allied itself with the American-led forces.

The semi-official Damascus newspaper Tishrin, which reflects Syrian government policy, has denounced the Katyusha attacks. Beirut newspapers quote senior Syrian officers as saying that now is not the time for such activity.

The officers said the PLO was mistaken if it thought it could draw Israel into a cat-and-mouse game. PLO sources have spoken of opening up a "second front" of the Middle East war in southern Lebanon.

Continued Katyusha attacks would only give Israel reason to enlarge the southern Lebanon security zone, the Syrians warned.

The Islamic fundamentalist organization Hezbollah has blasted PLO attempts to help Iraq's Hussein force Israel to intervene actively in the Gulf War in the hope of breaking up the allied coalition.

Meanwhile, Palestinian positions in southern Lebanon were only lightly shelled by IDF and SLA gunners Sunday night.

UNIFIL said Monday that the Israeli air force dropped flares over the Rashidiya camp during the night.

MORE ISRAELI SCHOOLS REOPENING

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- Israeli schools, disrupted by the Iraqi missile attacks that began Jan. 18, will gradually return to normal in most of the country this week.

The Education Ministry announced that classes in elementary schools will resume Tuesday except in the Greater Tel Aviv and Greater Haifa areas. Those urban centers were hit by the most destructive missile attacks to date.

High schools reopened Jan. 27, and junior highs began reopening four days later.

In Jerusalem, grades five and six will return to classes Tuesday, followed on Wednesday by grades three and four. First-graders will be back in school by Thursday.

The ministry, meanwhile, has arranged a \$2 million telephone linkup for 6,000 kindergartners, allowing them to participate in classroom work from their homes. The Bezek telephone company promised to complete the linkup in a few days.

GOVERNORS OF 50 STATES SIGN LETTER BACKING ISRAEL, PRAISING RESTRAINT

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- The nation's governors have expressed continuing support and concern for the people of Israel in the face of the ongoing threat of Iraqi missile attacks against the Jewish state.

At a ceremony Monday at the Israeli Embassy here, eight of the governors, four Democrats and four Republicans, presented Israeli Ambassador Zelman Shoval with a letter of support signed by all 50 governors.

The letter was drafted by Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad, a Republican, who circulated it for signatures during the winter session of the National Governors Association here.

Branstad initiated the letter at the suggestion of the Jewish Community Relations Commission of Iowa in Des Moines, according to Mark Solomon, the commission's executive director.

The letter condemned the Iraqi missile attacks on Israel's civilian population and added: "We commend the way in which your government has handled the situation, as well as the exceptional restraint with which it has reacted to those horrendous attacks."

Both the Senate and House have passed resolutions condemning Iraq for its Scud attacks and praising Israel for its restraint.

Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) now wants the United Nations to join in the praise of Israel. He has sent a letter to Thomas Pickering, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, urging that the United States take the lead in pressing for a resolution commending Israel's restraint.

While the United Nations has frequently condemned Israel, it has never passed a resolution praising Israel, Schumer told Pickering.

"The time has come for the United Nations to follow Congress' lead by rallying the world's support for Israel's remarkable courage," Schumer wrote. "Never before has a nation suffered a direct attack on its people and refrained from responding in the interest of world peace."

MAYOR, ENDING ISRAEL VISIT, SAYS PEOPLE 'CAN BE UNITED'

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- New York Mayor David Dinkins ended his 24-hour goodwill visit to Israel on Monday saying, "We learned that people can be united, despite differences of color and language."

His remark came after he met with a group of immigrants from Ethiopia and the Soviet Union at the Mevasseret Zion absorption center near Jerusalem. During his visit, he was a guest of an immigrant family that arrived three weeks ago.

Shortly before leaving the country with his traveling partner, Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), a prominent member of the Congressional Black Caucus, the mayor said the world is now clearly aware of the danger Israel faces.

"The moment we stepped off our airplane, we were handed gas masks and were told how to use them. We learned a lesson in patience and endurance," he declared.

Dinkins, the first black mayor of New York, was criticized by elements of the black community for going to Israel. They contended he was pandering to the Jewish community while neglecting his black constituency.

But Dinkins brushed that aside. He said the vast majority of Americans, including African-Americans, understand that Israel has exercised tremendous restraint. The dissenting voices come from a small but vocal minority, he said.

Dinkins met with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and visited a Patriot anti-missile battery to speak to the soldiers operating it.

"We are proud to see you. You conduct an important mission, especially in light of Israel's restraint. You must feel great getting up in the morning with the important mission you are conducting," he said.

The mayor of New York was not the only visiting head of a foreign city. Two German mayors whose cities have sister relationships with Tel Aviv arrived on goodwill visits Sunday.

Hans Daniels of Bonn and Norbert Burger of Cologne brought to Tel Aviv the very practical gift of five tons of adhesive tape used to seal rooms against poison gas attack.

The mayors pledged nearly \$700,000 in emergency aid to help meet the costs of repairing Iraqi missile damage in Tel Aviv.

And back in Germany, about 100 pro-Israel students demonstrated outside the Israeli Embassy in Bonn carrying banners supporting the U.S. coalition forces fighting Iraq.

But thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in several major cities to protest the war in the Gulf.

(JTA correspondent David Kantor in Bonn contributed to this report.)

POLISH JEWS, NON-JEWS RALLY FOR SOLIDARITY WITH ISRAEL

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- Several hundred Polish Jews and non-Jews, urging "peace for Israel," held a rally for solidarity with Israel on Sunday outside Warsaw's Royal Castle.

"I think this was the first public Jewish demonstration ever held in front of the Royal Castle," Polish-Jewish activist Stanislaw Krajewski told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in a telephone interview from the Polish capital.

He explained that it was organized around the peace theme because Israel has become a target of Iraqi missiles.

Krajewski, a leader of the Poland-Israel Friendship Society which organized the event, stressed that supporters of Israel were encouraged by the recent statement of President Lech Walesa that Israel is a friend of Poland and similar assertions made in the Polish Senate.

A spokesman for the President's Office, Jacek Mazarski, told the crowd in the Plac Zamkowy, or Castle Square, that there are "moral considerations" behind the support for Israel, Krajewski reported.

He said the demonstrators sang "Shalom Aleichem," waved banners reading "Peace for Israel" and "Polish Jews with Israel" and gathered about 400 signatures on a "peace for Israel" petition that was to be presented to the Israeli ambassador in Warsaw, Meron Gordon.

According to Krajewski, the rally was held for three reasons: because missiles are aimed at Israeli civilians; because Iraq might use biological and chemical weapons against Israel; and because the Persian Gulf war could expand into a religious war.

"This would threaten everybody. The battlefield would be everywhere," he said.

\$127 MILLION IN ISRAEL BONDS SOLD DURING TWO-WEEK EMERGENCY DRIVE

By Aliza Marcus

NEW YORK, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- Israel's friends in the United States and elsewhere are showing their support with their pocketbooks, helping the emergency State of Israel Bonds campaign surpass its two-week goal of \$100 million.

Meir Rosenne, former Israeli ambassador to the United States and president of the Bonds organization, announced Monday that the campaign, which began shortly after Iraq's first missile attack on the Jewish state, netted \$127 million.

"As has happened during previous periods of danger, the Jewish people mobilized their time, energy and resources to ensure Israel's continued economic stability," he said at a news conference here.

About 7,000 people bought bonds, which range in price from \$500 to \$1 million, joining an estimated 70,000 Israel bonds holders around the world.

Rosenne said the campaign was part of a larger, \$500 million Israel Bonds campaign that would continue through the end of March, another effort to help support Israel during its times of financial hardship.

Israel's economy has been battered by the Iraqi missile attacks, which, in addition to injuring people, have damaged thousands of buildings and disrupted business.

This takes place along with the continuing Soviet Jewish immigration, which could bring as many as 400,000 new immigrants to the country this year. They join 200,000 who arrived in 1990, many of whom are already suffering from Israel's lack of affordable housing and lack of new jobs.

All money raised through bonds sales will go toward the absorption costs of the new immigrants, specifically in the areas of housing and employment opportunities, Rosenne said.

UJA Has Collected \$90 Million

Elie Wiesel, who attended the news conference, said the bonds sales give the people of Israel hope, showing them they have not been abandoned in their time of trouble.

"The mood in Israel is very sober," said Wiesel, who just returned from a trip to Israel, "and every mark of solidarity is important."

The Nobel Peace Prize-winner, writer and Holocaust survivor added, "I have rarely felt so gratified as I feel now, knowing what the entire (Bonds) organization has done for our people."

Meanwhile, the United Jewish Appeal's emergency cash drive to aid Israel, which has set out to gather \$400 million in cash by the end of March, has so far collected about \$90 million.

A spokesman said local federations around the country are responding admirably to the call for people to pay up the balance of their pledges to UJA's regular campaign and its special Operation Exodus drive for Soviet Jewry.

The Baltimore Associated Jewish Charities and Welfare Fund presented UJA officials with a check for \$2.9 million, while the Jewish Federation of New Haven, Conn., was able to give \$1.96 million, said a spokesman for UJA.

He said the relatively small Jewish Federation of Central New Jersey sent in a check for \$300,000, and the Jewish Federation of Allentown, Pa., came up with \$669,000 in cash and promised to forward another \$1 million within six weeks.

SWISS FIRMS MAY HAVE SOLD LETHAL CHEMICALS TO IRAQ

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- At least 11 Swiss firms have violated the arms embargo on Iraq, selling that country substances with which it could build chemical weapons, according to charges last week leveled in the Swiss Senate.

The charges reflect growing dissatisfaction with what is perceived by much of the public and the news media to be a pro-Iraqi tilt by the government, which has invoked Switzerland's traditional neutrality in the Persian Gulf war.

The Foreign Ministry in particular has come under criticism.

Two Swiss newspapers, Tribune de Geneve and Le Journal de l'Emploi, observed that Foreign Minister Rene Felber exercised Swiss neutrality by closing its air space to allied aircraft.

At the same time, Felber, a Socialist not known to be friendly toward Israel, has called for an international peace conference to settle all Middle East issues, which was one of Saddam Hussein's conditions to pull out of Kuwait.

Switzerland also is rumored to have given permission to Hussein's wife and three children to take refuge from the war somewhere near Geneva, though there has been no official confirmation.

Meanwhile, Switzerland announced it is sending \$10 million in humanitarian aid to Egypt, Turkey and Jordan. It is not sending aid to Israel.

JEWS AND MOSLEMS IN HOLLAND VOW WAR WILL NOT DIVIDE THEM

By Henrietta Boas

AMSTERDAM, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- Representatives of Holland's 25,000 Jews and its nearly half-million Moslems vowed in front of television cameras here that events abroad such as the Persian Gulf war will not affect their harmonious relations in this country.

The occasion was a Jan. 29 meeting here of representatives of Jewish and Moslem organizations to demonstrate that the two communities can live peacefully together and bear no grudges.

Neither politics nor the Gulf war were discussed at the gathering, which was dedicated to removing mutual prejudices that might exist.

A statement issued later said, "There are no problems between Jews and Moslems in the Netherlands. The war abroad in which groups are involved that are also represented in Dutch society need not be continued here."

Dutch Jewry was represented by the Foundation for Jewish Social Welfare; CIDI, the Center for Information and Documentation on Israel; and Ashkenazic, Sephardic and Liberal congregations.

The Moslems, who number about 450,000 in Holland, were represented by organizations of Turks, Moroccans and Surinamese. Suriname, on the northeast coast of South America, is a former a Dutch colony also known as Dutch Guiana.

LE PEN MAKES STRONG SHOWING IN LYON

PARIS, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme right-wing National Front drew more than 25 percent of the vote Sunday in a parliamentary by-election in Lyon.

Although it lost the election, the party's strong showing in a major city in southeastern France aroused concern among many who consider the National Front racist and anti-Semitic.