

**SHAMIR'S COALITION FACING CRISIS
WITH TSOMET GONE, OTHERS WAVERING**

By David Landau and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 29 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's government is walking a political tightrope, with his Likud-led coalition already fractured and showing signs of crumbling.

The government faces a crucial vote on the state budget Tuesday, which the law says must be in place by Jan. 1, the start of the new fiscal year. If the budget fails to win passage, Shamir will take it as a no-confidence vote and resign, according to sources in the Prime Minister's Office.

Shamir's coalition was reduced from 66 to 64 Knesset mandates when Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan, leader of the two-member Tsomet faction, formally presented his resignation Sunday to the Cabinet.

According to law, it does not take effect until 48 hours later, which allows time for reconsideration. But Eitan showed no signs of that.

The former Israel Defense Force chief of staff announced his departure from the government last week after Likud's 3,400-member Central Committee followed Shamir's lead by refusing to support an electoral reform bill the Knesset was supposed to vote on this week.

The measure provides for the popular election of the prime minister by separate ballot.

Eitan, who supports the measure, charged that Shamir violated his coalition agreement with Tsomet by explicitly refusing to give Likud Knesset members a free vote on the bill.

Religious Parties Could Bolt

Transport Minister Moshe Katsav pointed out, to no avail, that whatever party discipline the Central Committee's decision might impose on Likud would not apply to Tsomet.

But Tsomet's defection still leaves Shamir with a comfortable parliamentary majority. However, he could lose the budget vote if either the National Religious Party or the three haredi, or ultra-Orthodox, parties decide to vote against it.

The NRP, which is Orthodox but Zionist-affiliated, objects to the "special funding" of the haredi parties' school systems incorporated in the state budget.

The haredi parties hinted that they would vote against the budget if funds allocated to their institutions are channeled through the Education and Religious Affairs ministries, both controlled by the NRP.

The ultra-Orthodox parties insist that the monies be allocated by the Prime Minister's Office or by the Labor and Welfare Ministry, which is in the hands of the Agudat Yisrael party.

Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i spent Sunday in hectic consultations with the various parties, in an effort to secure their support for the budget.

To make matters worse, a member of Tehiya's Knesset faction announced his party would vote against the budget in the absence of a commitment from Moda'i.

Tehiya's threats reflected skepticism over Moda'i's promise last week to earmark nearly \$600 million for settlements in the territories.

**JEWISH VIGILANTISM AGAINST ARABS
ESCALATES IN JERUSALEM, WEST BANK**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 29 (JTA) -- Jewish vigilante acts against Arabs escalated in East Jerusalem and spilled into the West Bank over the weekend, as Defense Minister Moshe Arens sought help from the Orthodox rabbinate to calm the tempers of Jewish ultra-nationalists.

Arens met Sunday with the Ashkenazic chief rabbi, Avraham Shapira, at his Jerusalem residence. The meeting was described as an opportunity for the rabbi to submit settlers' complaints about the deteriorating security situation.

But the authorities have ample contact with the settlers on a daily basis, although relations between them are steadily worsening.

Senior army officers were reported to be enraged over the vigilantism. One was quoted as saying that settlers caught committing acts of violence should be put in jail "for a long time."

Arens promised the chief rabbi that "the Israel Defense Force would meet all security needs" in the administered territories. The meeting took place after fresh violence by Jews.

On Saturday night, about 150 settlers blocked the entrance to the Dahiyat el-Barid neighborhood on Jerusalem's northern outskirts.

Settlers drove cars through the neighborhood, brandishing flags and slogans calling for better security for Jews. The settlers said they chose Dahiyat el-Barid because members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine demonstrated there recently.

But Amir Cheshin, Arab affairs adviser to Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, said the neighborhood was relatively quiet and presented no security problem.

Some of the settlers demonstrated later outside the home of Justice Minister Dan Meridor, whom they blamed for the failure to deport Palestinian activists from the territories.

Vigilante acts were perpetrated at several locations in the territories by settlers demanding tougher punitive measures against the Arab population.

Twelve Arab residents of Hebron filed complaints at the local police station over the weekend, charging Jewish residents of Hebron damaged their property. They charged that Jews smashed the windshields of five cars and solar heaters on the rooftops of seven houses. Two Jews were held for questioning.

**STEPPED-UP ACTIVITY BY HEZBOLLAH
HARMING SECURITY ON NORTHERN FRONT**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 29 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Moshe Arens has expressed serious concern over the security situation on Israel's northern border, where it maintains a 50-mile-long buffer zone against incursions from southern Lebanon.

Conditions have worsened in recent months and there is no guarantee they will improve, even as Arab-Israeli peace talks continue, he told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee last week.

Arens attributed the deteriorating situation

to the growing strength of Hezbollah, the Shi'ite fundamentalist guerrilla group in southern Lebanon which, he said, has reached a high level of technological proficiency.

According to Arens, Hezbollah, which means "Army of God," gets its advice and instructions from Iran. It aims to derail the current peace talks, he said.

His counsel tallies with information reported this fall in Time magazine, which said Hezbollah vowed to fight Israel till the end, and an op-ed piece by David Halevy, co-author of "Inside the PLO," published last Friday in The New York Times.

According to Halevy, a secret deal was struck in September in Lebanon by high-ranking Iranian officials and leaders of Hezbollah.

In October, Teheran gave \$86 million to Hezbollah to renew attacks on Israeli and U.S. targets in the Middle East, he said. Among the ensuing attacks was a hit in southern Lebanon that resulted in the death of six Israeli soldiers.

Serious attacks are slated to begin in early 1992, according to Halevy.

More Attacks In Territories

Arens, in his Knesset report, also said attacks could be expected from extremist secular groups active in the administered territories, including those headed by George Habash and Nayef Hawatmeh.

Yasir Arafat's Al Fatah, the largest group within the Palestine Liberation Organization, is playing a double role, the Israeli defense minister said. It claims to support the peace process but at the same time it mounts attack, he said.

Arens said intifada-related security incidents are declining because of a general weariness among the Palestinians and the tougher, more sophisticated methods introduced by the Israel Defense Force under Gen. Matan Vilnai, commander of the central sector, which includes the West Bank.

The committee members were briefed by a senior IDF officer who provided a statistical overview of the intifada.

The Palestinian uprising peaked in 1988, when there were 2,380 security incidents in the territories and six Jews were killed.

In 1989, the number of incidents dropped to 1,463, with four Jewish fatalities. In 1990, incidents declined to 1,299 and one Jew was killed.

But in 1991, the number of incidents rose again to 1,709. There was also an increase in the use of firearms and explosives. There were 121 shooting incidents this year, 124 terrorist explosions and 88 hand grenade attacks, the IDF officer reported.

With respect to Palestinian casualties, the officer said the number of Arabs killed by fellow Arabs now substantially exceeds fatalities inflicted by the security forces.

This year, 74 Arabs were killed by security forces, compared to 238 killed by other Arabs.

According to the statistics provided by the IDF, that has been the trend over the last three years.

Security forces accounted for 271 Arab fatalities in 1988, while 58 Arabs died at the hands of other Arabs.

In 1989, security forces killed 270 Arabs, while the number killed by fellow Arabs increased to 110.

In 1990, security forces killed 93 Arabs, while other Arabs murdered 212 of their brethren.

LABOR PARTY REVERSES STANDS ON GOLAN, RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 29 (JTA) -- Israel's Labor Party, responding to severe pressure from within and outside its ranks, has backed off from an earlier endorsement of religious pluralism in Israel.

It has also pulled back from supporting a settlement freeze in the Golan Heights.

The retreats occurred at the second session of the party's convention, which reversed positions taken at the first session in November. The most controversial had to do with the relations between the state and religion.

A resolution adopted in November called for the "separation of religion from politics." While that was retained, the resolution was revised to include a statement that the party "favors the mutual relationship of dependence between the State of Israel and the Jewish religion."

It specifically abrogated part of the earlier resolution that called for recognition of pluralism, meaning the Reform and Conservative branches of Judaism, on matters of religious adjudication and personal status.

Labor is now on record in favor of continuing the Orthodox rabbinate's monopoly over those matters in Israel.

It was apparently forced into that position by its own Orthodox and traditional members, who threatened to quit the party if it voted otherwise.

But it also took into consideration the possibility of future coalition-building with the religious parties to replace the Likud regime with a Labor-led government.

The ultra-Orthodox or haredi bloc had already declared it would have nothing to do with Labor if it adhered to its earlier position on separation of state and faith.

The party's two leaders, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, urged revision of the earlier resolution because it would prevent future Labor coalitions with the religious parties.

Peres offered another argument. He said he would not "surrender" the Jewish heritage to the haredim. "I am not prepared that the prophets and Maimonides should be the sole property of the Orthodox," he declared.

The Golan revision came in response to determined lobbying by Laborite settlers in the territory, which was conquered from Syria in 1967. The new resolution declares that Labor favors strengthening settlement throughout the Golan Heights, instead of only "existing settlements," which implied a freeze.

Convention delegates who were determined to reverse the resolutions on the Golan and religion argued that they were passed by a minority of the Central Committee when most members had left the hall at the end of the session last month.

DUTCH AID ETHIOPIAN ABSORPTION

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 29 (JTA) -- The Dutch government has given Israel emergency assistance in the amount of \$500,000 to help resettle immigrants from Ethiopia, subject to one condition.

The grant, by the Ministry of Development, will be strictly supervised by the Netherlands Embassy in Israel to make sure that the immigrants are not housed or settled in the administered territories.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**BREAKUP OF THE SOVIET UNION CREATES
UNCERTAINTY ABOUT JEWISH EMIGRATION**
JTA Staff Report

NEW YORK, Dec. 29 (JTA) -- The breakup of the Soviet Union into 12 independent republics has raised big questions here and in Israel about whether and how the massive exodus of Jews from the former USSR will continue.

Largely at the prodding of the United States, the new Commonwealth of Independent States has pledged to abide by human rights commitments made by the Kremlin during Mikhail Gorbachev's nearly seven years in power.

But in reality, the individual republics are not bound by the emigration reform law adopted by the Supreme Soviet last spring, nor by such international agreements as the Helsinki human rights accords.

And Washington's traditional carrot and stick, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, is useless, since trade relations do not yet exist between the United States and the various republics.

The republics are nevertheless expected to continue Gorbachev's policy of allowing virtually free emigration for Jews, because they do not want to alienate the West, whose investment capital they badly need.

But emigration policy is not likely to be an immediate focus of attention for the leaders of the new commonwealth, who must first settle such basic issues as control of the defense forces, whether to adopt a unified monetary policy and coordination of foreign policy.

Adopting either individual or collective policies on emigration "isn't the highest priority for these republics" at the moment, said Martin Wenick, executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry.

No Central Emigration Mechanism

On the practical level, there is "no longer a central mechanism" for processing those who wish to emigrate, observed Wenick.

In the past, Soviet Jews applied for exit visas from OVIR, the central Soviet emigration agency. Now OVIR's functions will be taken over by the interior ministries of the individual republics. Whether they will continue to function the same way remains to be seen.

For the moment, the OVIR bureaucracy still exists and is functioning, but at the direction of local officials, rather than a central authority in Moscow. Other than the usual bureaucratic delays, no problems have been reported to date.

One guide to how the republics will proceed is the emigration flow from the Baltic states, which has not changed much since Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia achieved independence in October.

They have basically continued processing emigres the same way as Moscow did, said Wenick. "We have received no complaints."

But Jewish groups and Israeli officials are concerned that growing Moslem fundamentalism may inspire the Central Asian republics eventually to curtail Jewish emigration, particularly if they fall under the influence of neighboring Iran.

Perhaps in the hope of heading off such a development, a delegation from Israel's Foreign Ministry will visit the Asian republics shortly.

In the Slavic republics, there is some doubt as to whether Jews will enjoy the same rights as other ethnic groups. In Ukraine, for instance, Jews could be discriminated against if the legisla-

ture decides to deny citizenship to the Russian-speaking minority, said Baruch Gur, head of Soviet and Eastern European operations for the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Also in doubt is what happens to Jews who are already in the "emigration pipeline."

Over 90,000 Soviet Exit Visas

According to the Jewish Agency, at least 90,000 Jews hold exit visas issued by the former Soviet government, and 35,000 of them hold entry visas issued by the Israeli Embassy in Moscow. It is generally believed that those documents will be recognized by the newly independent republics.

Israeli officials expect, for the moment, to continue issuing entry visas from the embassy in Moscow. But technically, that embassy now only represents Israel's interests in Russia.

Israel last week recognized the independence of all of the former Soviet republics. But neither it nor the United States has immediate plans to open embassies in all of their capitals.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy told the Cabinet on Sunday that he will soon travel to Kiev to set up diplomatic representation in the Ukrainian capital. Also planned in the near future is an embassy in Riga, the capital of Latvia.

In the absence of Israeli diplomatic missions in the other republics, the Jewish Agency is likely to handle emigration matters.

The Jewish Agency currently has 12 offices throughout the former Soviet Union. It is opening one in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, and is planning to open three more: in the Russian Urals city of Ekaterinaburg, formerly Sverdlovsk; Riga; and Kharkov, in eastern Ukraine.

The United States is faced with the same problem, but it currently only has consular representation in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kiev.

"Given budgetary circumstances and logistical problems, I would not expect much of a change in the near future," said Wenick.

For the foreseeable future, Jews wishing to enter the United States under its refugee program will have to continue to apply at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, which for those outside Russia will now mean a trip to a foreign country.

New Passports Expected

So far, there have been no restrictions for citizens of the former Soviet Union on travel from one republic to another. But officials expect the internal Soviet passport to be replaced eventually with ones issued by the individual republics.

Emigration for Jews could actually become simplified if the republics create a Western-style passport system. Mark Talisman, Washington representative of the Council of Jewish Federations, said he has heard that such a system is being contemplated in Russia.

Jewish agencies that assist emigres from the former Soviet Union in rejoining families already in the United States say they hope the current Moscow-based system of processing potential refugees will continue.

There is also hope that the U.S. refugee ceiling of 50,000 Jews from the Soviet Union set for the 1992 fiscal year will now be applied to the republics that formerly constituted the union.

But like many other details, that remains to be seen. As Wenick of the National Conference put it, "We're in a transition period."

(Contributing to this report were JTA correspondents Howard Rosenberg in Washington and Yehonathan Tommer in Jerusalem.)

**IPO GOES AHEAD AND PLAYS WAGNER,
IN GUISE OF A REHEARSAL CONCERT**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 29 (JTA) -- After weeks of controversy aired around the world, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra went ahead Friday and played music by Richard Wagner. But the program took place in the guise of a working rehearsal, before a carefully screened audience.

The musicians were dressed informally as they took their positions onstage at the Mann Auditorium here. So was maestro Daniel Barenboim, the Israeli concert pianist and conductor who is one of the foremost exponents of Wagner's music.

The audience of about 600 invited guests included family and friends of musicians, as well as music students from conservatories around the country. They entered the concert hall through a side door under the scrutiny of security guards.

The precautions were taken because of the fierce debate aroused when the IPO voted by a substantial majority on Dec. 15 to include works by the 19th-century German composer in a special non-subscription concert scheduled for Dec. 27.

Emotions ran high because Wagner, an anti-Semite who became a Nazi icon 50 years after his death, has been banned from the repertoire of Israel's state orchestra.

Music lovers argue that great art cannot be ignored because the artist may have been an evil person. Nevertheless, the IPO was forced to cancel Friday's originally scheduled public concert, pending a poll of its 36,000 season subscribers.

That left open the possibility the concert would be re-scheduled. But Barenboim, who is also director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, could not wait because of commitments abroad.

Meanwhile, he made sure the rehearsal format was observed by calling frequent breaks to instruct the orchestra on fine points of the music.

He also excused 12 musicians who felt uncomfortable playing Wagner.

The performance included extracts from the operas "The Flying Dutchman," "Tristan and Isolde" and "Lohengrin." There was nothing, however, from the famous "Ring" cycle, which was a favorite of the Nazis.

The front doors of the auditorium were locked and the box office was closed. Outside the concert hall, a lone protester, who gave his name as Michael Gilead, carried a banner inscribed with the numerals 116135, which he said were tattooed on his arm at Auschwitz.

GERMAN CHURCH TO PURGE TEXTS
By David Kantor

BONN, Dec. 29 (JTA) -- The Protestant church in Germany has acknowledged that anti-Jewish passages still exist in its texts and is determined to purge them, the church's central organization, EKD, announced in Hanover last week.

A 60-page study published by the EKD concluded that all texts must be screened anew for anti-Jewish bias.

An effort undertaken in 1975 apparently fell short of its goal, the study found. The population of united Germany is more than 50 percent Protestant. In the former West Germany, it was evenly divided between Protestants and Roman Catholics.

**JEWS WHO FLED GERMANY FOR PALESTINE
MAY RECLAIM CITIZENSHIP, COURT RULES**
By David Kantor

BONN, Dec. 29 (JTA) -- The offspring of German Jews who left for Palestine in the 1930s are entitled to German citizenship, a Berlin court has ruled.

The court issued the ruling after several Jews sued the government for refusing their request to be issued German passports.

Berlin authorities had argued that the plaintiffs did not qualify for automatic German citizenship, saying their parents had left Germany of their own volition and had voluntarily applied for citizenship of the British Mandate in Palestine.

The authorities had argued that the Nazi order to strip the German citizenship of Jews had not occurred until 1941.

But the Berlin appeals court ruled that the citizenship of the British Mandate of Palestine could not be equated with citizenship of a "normal" state. Therefore Jews who became citizens of the British Mandate are still to be considered as German nationals, the court said.

The German Constitution says that any German national who has been deprived of citizenship can reclaim it and that this applies, too, to offspring of individuals who were expatriated.

Many Jews throughout the world have used this constitutional guarantee to become German citizens again without having to renounce other citizenships they have acquired since they or their parents left Germany.

The Berlin court decision means that the authorities will have to issue German passports to the plaintiffs, most of whom live in Berlin.

The ruling could come into play in the cases of former Soviet Jews who have applied to live in Germany as "Volksdeutsch," or ethnic Germans.

3 MORE ISRAELIS DROWN IN FLOODS
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 29 (JTA) -- Three Israelis drowned early Saturday morning in flash floods resulting from Israel's third torrential rainstorm of the season.

The three drowned were among five traveling in a car that skidded off the road when raging flood waters inundated Nahal Sorek, a dry river bed near Kfar Gavirol.

The five were returning to their homes in the Ashdod area after having spent the night out in Rehovot. Two passengers in the back seat managed to break a window, crawl out and summon help. But the three in the front seat were trapped and drowned.

The bodies of Nicole Barda, 26, and Haim Kazarov, 34, of Ashdod, and Aviva Etedji, 19, of Kiryat Malachi, were found by searchers the following morning, some miles downstream.

Earlier in December, two soldiers drowned when the vehicle in which they were traveling was overturned by the sudden onrush of torrential waters.

And four other people were killed in storm-connected accidents this past weekend when their vehicles skidded into utility polls or other vehicles on waterlogged roads.