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## 2 CABINET MEMBERS STEP UP THREATS TO PULL OUT OF SHAMIR'S GOVERNMENT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 14 (JTA) -- Two far-right Cabinet ministers have stepped up their threats to quit Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's narrowly based coalition government, in the wake of reports that Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in Washington have begun discussing issues of substance.

"The chances that I will submit my resignation to the Cabinet Sunday are very high," Science and Energy Minister Yuval Ne'eman, who heads the Tehiya party, said Tuesday.

A similar warning was sounded by Rehavam Ze'evi, leader of the Moledet party, who is a minister without portfolio. It is up to Shamir to "prove" that the Israeli negotiating team has not offered the Palestinians a plan for autonomy, Ze'evi said.

Palestinian autonomy in the administered territories is one of the goals of the 1978 Camp David accords, on which Israel says the peace process is based.

While there may be vast differences between the conceptions of autonomy held by Shamir's Likud regime and the Palestinians, the parties of Israel's far right are convinced that autonomy in any form will result in a Palestinian state. Consequently, they refuse even to allow the subject on the agenda.

"I cannot stay in a government that is setting about giving away parts of Eretz Yisrael to somebody else," said Ne'eman, whose Tehiya faction holds three Knesset seats.

## Labor Would Back Government

Moledet has only two seats. But if both parties defect, Shamir's coalition would lose its parliamentary majority, and the government would have to resign and call for early elections.

Shamir has already lost the hard-right Tsomet party, whose leader, former Israel Defense Force Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan, quit as agriculture minister last month.

Eitan's departure was precipitated by Likud's opposition to an electoral reform bill he backed.

Shamir's chief of staff, Yossi Ahimeir, tried to convince the Tehiya and Moledet leaders that Israel's negotiating team in Washington has made no substantive proposals to the Palestinians.

He said they merely have offered suggestions for the future agenda of the talks and received counterproposals from the other side. Ahimeir insisted the present round of talks in Washington would not go beyond procedural issues.

But Justice Minister Dan Meridor said Tuesday "the main point" is that this government is indeed committed to peace based on the Camp David autonomy plan, as everyone knows.

Shimon Peres, leader of the opposition Labor Party, reiterated Labor's commitment to support the Likud government in the Knesset, as long as it "goes ahead with a genuine peace policy" and does in fact offer autonomy based on Camp David.

But political observers believe Shamir would sooner dissolve his government and face the electorate at an early date than keep it in office dependent on Labor's support.

## TERRORIST AMBUSH WON'T STOP ISRAEL FROM PURSUING PEACE WITH THE ARABS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 14 (JTA) -- A terrorist ambush Tuesday evening on an Israeli passenger bus in the West Bank has prompted demands from settlers that the government immediately recall its negotiating team from peace talks with the Arabs in Washington.

But in Washington, the head of the Israeli delegation negotiating with the Palestinians said the incident would not prompt an Israeli walkout from the bilateral peace talks.

"We will not be deterred in our quest for peace," said Elyakim Rubinstein. But he stressed that Israel would "also not tolerate either the terrorism itself nor the double-talk of some people supporting peace on one hand and encouraging terrorism on the other."

Six Israeli settlers were wounded in the incident, which occurred shortly after 6 p.m. local time near Ein Sinya village in the Ramallah district, about 13 miles north of Jerusalem.

The bus was en route from Jerusalem to Shiloh, a settlement in the Samaria district of the West Bank.

The victims were hospitalized with wounds ranging from moderate to serious. One of the more seriously injured was a boy said to be about 7 years old.

The Israel Defense Force immediately sealed off the area in order to search for the gunmen, Israel Radio reported.

## Speaking From Both Sides Of Mouth

The attack was the latest in a series of shootings that has taken the lives of four Jews in the administered territories since October.

The first occurred on the eve of the peace conference that opened in Madrid on Oct. 30. Israeli authorities blame Palestinian radicals opposed to the peace process, which has been endorsed by the mainstream factions of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The last occurred Jan. 1, when a Jewish settler was fatally shot in the Gaza Strip. A day later, Defense Minister Moshe Arens ordered the deportation of 12 Palestinian activists. Their appeals of the order are presently being heard by a military tribunal.

The deportation order was seen as an attempt to mollify Jewish settlers in the territories, who have long demanded tougher measures against Palestinians who perpetrate violence.

Uri Ariel, chairman of the Council of Settlements in Judea and Samaria, said Tuesday that a truly nationalist government would have broken off the peace talks by now.

According to Ariel, a Jew is attacked every time the "so-called peace talks" reach a new phase. Each time, innocent Israeli civilians were hurt, he said.

In Washington, Israeli negotiators accused their Palestinian counterparts of condemning the attacks while in Washington and then supporting violence while in the territories.

Yosef Ben-Aharon, head of the Israeli delegation for talks with Syria, said that Hanan Ashrawi, the Palestinian delegation's spokeswoman,

was speaking out of "both sides of the mouth" when she condemned Tuesday's attack.

Ashrawi said she condemned all violence against innocent civilians.

But Ben-Aharon said the Palestinians were saying one thing aimed at the U.S. audience while supporting violence when speaking to their people in Arabic at home.

He also pointed out that Israel would continue its negotiations, unlike the Arabs, who had postponed coming to Washington for a week to protest the planned deportation of 12 Palestinians.

*(JTA correspondent David Friedman in Washington contributed to this report.)*

## ISRAEL STILL PRESSING FOR TALKS TO BE HELD CLOSER TO THE MIDEAST

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14 (JTA) -- Israel is making it clear that it wants the next round of talks with the Arabs to held in the Middle East.

But Israeli negotiators stopped short of saying flatly they would not return to Washington.

The demand for moving the talks to the region was raised by Israel in its separate talks with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians.

Yosef Ben-Aharon, head of the Israeli delegation for talks with Syria, said that Israel had come to Washington in December and this month, despite its belief that the talks should be held in the region.

He said that Israel asked again Tuesday that the talks be moved to the countries involved. If that is unacceptable, then Israel could offer a list of 10 other possible places in the region, he said.

The Syrians replied that they could come up with a list of 10 places and all of them would be Washington, Ben-Aharon reported.

Hanan Ashrawi, the spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation, also said the talks should remain in Washington until some accomplishments have been achieved.

But Ben-Aharon said that unlike the Palestinians, most of the Israeli negotiators are high-level government officials who have work in Jerusalem waiting for them.

"We love Washington," said Yosef Hadass, co-chairman of the Israeli delegation for talks with Lebanon. "But we find it not very convenient to be far away from where we live."

Hadass is also director general of Israel's Foreign Ministry. Ben-Aharon is director general of the Prime Minister's Office and Elyakim Rubinstein, who is heading the talks with the Palestinians, is the Cabinet secretary.

The Israelis continued to insist that their plan was to leave Washington after another round of talks Wednesday. But they left open the possibility that they would stay longer.

Meanwhile, Israel began its first official talks with separate Jordanian and Palestinian delegations Tuesday. But they have not yet gotten down to substance. The two sides were unable to reach agreement on an agenda, Ben-Aharon said.

During Israel's talks with Lebanon on Tuesday, Lebanese negotiators raised the subject of Israel's attack last Friday on a Palestinian terrorist target south of Beirut.

Uri Lubrani, co-chairman of the Israeli delegation for talks with Lebanon, said he expressed "sorrow" for any casualties caused by the Israeli raid. But he stressed that Israel would continue to take action to preserve its security along the border with Lebanon.

## U.S. MUST SEVER ITS 'IMMORAL LINK' ON LOAN GUARANTEES, SAYS SHARANSKY

By Yehonathan Tommer

JERUSALEM, Jan. 14 (JTA) -- The White House and Congress should sever their "immoral link" between Israel's request for U.S. loan guarantees and developments in the Middle East peace process, former Soviet prisoner of conscience Natan Sharansky told a group of American Christian leaders here this week.

"Israel is not asking for an American hand-out, but for the opportunity to borrow money from international banks to house and create suitable jobs" for Jews continuing to immigrate here from what was formerly the Soviet Union, said Sharansky, who heads what is now called the Zionist Forum of Former Soviet Jews.

A refusal to provide guarantees for \$10 billion in loans sought by Israel "would be tragic and harmful to both the peace and the immigrant absorption processes," he said.

Sharansky said that as many as 2 million Jews could settle in Israel following the Soviet Union's disintegration and deepening economic hardships in the 15 newly independent republics.

Increasing food shortages there will likely aggravate social tensions, and food riots leading to pogroms against Jews are conceivable, he said.

The one-time prisoner of the Soviet Gulag spoke Monday night to 21 American leaders of the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel, which was holding its weeklong quarterly board meeting in Israel for the first time.

The group issued a statement Tuesday morning strongly endorsing the Israel government's request for the loan guarantees, noting that the money would be used for humanitarian purposes.

## 'Saddened' By American Delay

"We are saddened that our U.S. government still delays affording this needed endorsement for our only democratic ally in the Middle East due to political reasons," the statement said. It called on the government to honor the commitment made "to these oppressed peoples when we encouraged and supported their release" from the USSR.

The statement was signed by Sister Rose Thering of Philadelphia, the group's executive director, and Dr. David Lewis of Springfield, Mo., chairman of its board.

The Christian leaders were in Israel to express their solidarity with the Jewish people. They met with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Knesset Member Ze'ev (Benny) Begin and numerous Israeli officials.

"We came to strengthen our Israeli friends and let them know we represent millions of Christians concerned about Israel's security," Lewis told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

The group, representing leaders of 35 Protestant, Catholic and Evangelical denominations in the United States, was the guest of the Inter-religious Coordinating Council in Israel, a network of 30 Israeli organizations.

Lewis said the group's membership would telephone and write to the White House expressing support for the loan guarantees.

"We shall do everything we can to influence our politicians to support legislation approving American loan guarantees to Israel," said Lewis.

"The American public doesn't fully understand that this is not foreign aid, but a business deal with a very fine partner who has shown an impeccable past history in repaying loans."

**JEWS OF ALGERIA ARE RELIEVED  
AT CANCELLATION OF ELECTIONS**

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, Jan. 14 (JTA) -- Algeria's tiny remnant Jewish community appears not to have been affected yet by the turmoil that followed the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front's victory in the country's first democratic elections since its independence from France in 1962.

But a leader of the Jewish community in Algiers, where most of the country's 200 Jews reside, expressed relief that President Chadli Bendjedid canceled the second round of voting by dismissing Parliament and resigning Saturday.

The leader, who asked not to be identified, said there has been no harassment of Jews by supporters of the fundamentalist party, known as the FIS, since the crisis began.

But on Monday night, the FIS urged the Algerian people to rise against the military and civilian leaders who canceled the elections. Should street violence erupt, the situation of Algerian Jews could be precarious.

The Islamic party made a strong showing in the first round of elections on Dec. 26, winning 188 seats in Parliament, 28 short of a majority.

With strong popular support, the FIS was expected to close the gap in the second round, originally scheduled for Sunday.

But the government, led by Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghazali, established a High Security Council, which voided the December election results and canceled the rest of the process.

Its rationale was that Bendjedid's resignation created a situation not covered by the Algerian constitution and so extreme steps were needed.

Many observers have noted the irony that Algeria's first democratic elections resulted in victory for a party that would supersede democracy with the religious injunctions of the Koran.

They attributed the broad support for the FIS to the degeneration of the National Liberation Front, which has governed Algeria for 30 years, and the failure of viable alternatives to emerge.

About 35,000 Jews were living in Algeria when it won independence from France in 1962. About 95 percent of them emigrated, mostly to France and North America.

**JEWISH ORPHAN IN YEMEN KILLS HERSELF**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 14 (JTA) -- The forcible conversion of orphaned Jewish children in Yemen has led to tragedy, according to reports brought here this week by members of a pro-Israel Japanese sect, Makopya, who had just visited Yemen.

They said a young Jewish girl jumped off a cliff after she and her 14 brothers were forced to convert to Islam, following their parents' murder by highway robbers.

The incident occurred in Bilad-Anis, a town 50 miles south of Sana, the capital.

The Uri Teyman (Awaken Yemen) Association here, which tries to rescue Jews remaining in Yemen, confirmed that 47 Jewish boys and girls between ages 10 and 14 have been converted to Islam in the past three months.

According to Yemeni law, an unmarried orphan automatically belongs to Islam. The 15 Jewish children whose parents were murdered came to the attention of a religious Moslem, Ahmed Midani el-Maz'aki, the Japanese travelers reported. He had them converted under duress.

**BERGEN-BELSEN MEMORIAL VANDALIZED  
OVER NEW YEAR'S WITH NAZI SYMBOLS**

By David Kantor

BONN, Jan. 14 (JTA) -- Officials at the Bergen-Belsen memorial in Lower Saxony have confirmed that buildings on the site were daubed with Nazi symbols on New Year's Eve.

The vandalism occurred during the night of Dec. 31 and the wee hours of Jan. 1. No arrests have been made, according to the Interior Ministry in Hanover, capital of Lower Saxony.

The incident was first reported in the United States two weeks ago on the ABC television program "PrimeTime Live." The report was promptly verified by the New York-based World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Survivors.

Bergen-Belsen officials said the offenders painted swastikas and other Nazi graffiti on the walls and doors of the documentation center at the memorial, which also houses a small Holocaust museum and exhibits of crimes of the Third Reich.

The center is located in front of the main entrance to the former concentration camp, where about 30,000 Jews died during World War II.

The vandals did not enter the camp itself and did not disturb the mass graves, where an inscribed obelisk was erected in 1946.

According to Sam Bloch, president of the Bergen-Belsen Survivors, the graffiti included numerous swastikas, SS insignias and "Sieg Heil."

Bloch said "police authorities are investigating" the vandalism, but "they assume this was a job done by juvenile delinquents."

The vandalism appears to be part of an ongoing surge of racist activities in Germany.

"Race hatred is still alive and well in Germany," Kent Schiner, president of B'nai B'rith International, said in response to the defacement. "Those responsible for this hideous act are telling us that the Nazi mentality has not disappeared."

(JTA staff writer Susan Birnbaum in New York contributed to this report.)

**LEGAL REFORM BILL INTRODUCED,  
BUT IT MAY BE DEAD ON ARRIVAL**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 14 (JTA) -- The Justice Ministry has proposed far-reaching changes to Israel's legal system, which would establish the framework of a written constitution for the Jewish state.

But the measure, introduced in the Knesset this week with strong backing from Justice Minister Dan Meridor, was immediately opposed by the religious parties.

As long as they remain essential to government coalition-building, the new legislation can be considered dead on arrival, political experts said.

Israel has never had a written constitution, largely because the Orthodox religious establishment insists that the Scriptures are the only legitimate constitution.

Instead, the Knesset has enacted a number of "basic laws" over the years, which require a two-thirds majority to repeal.

The proposed legislation would strengthen the status of the basic laws already enacted. It would, for example, grant the High Court of Justice power to convene a nine-justice constitutional court that would have the authority to nullify laws passed by the Knesset if it decides that they contradict the "basic principles of the State of Israel."

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:****DEMISE OF SOVIET UNION DOESN'T MEAN  
WORK OF SOVIET JEWRY MOVEMENT IS DONE**  
By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Jan. 14 (JTA) -- Twenty years after the National Conference on Soviet Jewry began, the organization has no plans to follow the Soviet Union into oblivion.

On the contrary: The collapse of the central government means that what was called the Soviet Jewry movement must open channels with each of the 15 former Soviet republics.

"It is more time-consuming and requires more personnel, at a time when the established Jewish community has thought the problem basically resolved," said Shoshana Cardin, who chairs the National Conference, the central coordinating body for American Jewish organizations and communications on the issue.

The National Conference had already started that route, even before Russian President Boris Yeltsin organized the Commonwealth of Independent States and placed the tombstone on Soviet history and Mikhail Gorbachev's political career.

In October, Cardin met with Ukraine President Leonid Kravchuk, in addition to Gorbachev.

As the National Conference embarks on a new phase in the movement, the American activists have allies: the increasingly organized local Jewish communities in the independent republics.

"Now we ask people in the communities and republics what they need," said Cardin. "It's a major difference."

The transformation has affected the institution of "twinning," until recently a way to form connections between American Jews and Soviet refuseniks. Typically, an American Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebration would invoke a refusenik teen of similar age as part of the ceremony.

Today, the National Conference speaks of twinings closer to the sister-cities idea -- a relationship "that help Jews feel that they're part of klal Yisrael," the totality of the Jewish people.

Topping the National Conference's agenda is the effort to establish relations with the political leaders of the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and of the four other former Soviet republics.

**Just Over 50 Long-Term Refuseniks**

National Conference leaders met with the new foreign minister of Belarus, formerly Byelorussia, when he was still the not-yet-independent republic's representative in New York. They have also met with several officials of Russia.

Martin Wenick, executive director of the conference, is making further contacts during a visit there later this week.

The original goal of the National Conference -- free emigration for the Jews of the Soviet Union -- remains a priority. In meetings with State Department officials, Cardin and Wenick make sure that the importance of human rights and emigration is conveyed to the new leadership of the Soviet Union's successor states.

Cardin, who expects emigration to continue at the rate of about 10,000 a month, says the problem of refuseniks continues.

But in contrast to 1986, when the National Conference circulated a list of over 11,000 long-term refuseniks, the current count is not too far above 50, with an additional 200 or so cases whose refusals are less than five years old.

Most stem from charges that the refuseniks

know state secrets -- a catch-all restriction during the Brezhnev era and increasingly ridiculous as ex-Soviet nuclear scientists offer their expertise to the highest bidder.

Cardin said that a commission established following October's international human rights summit in Moscow is continuing its efforts to review individual cases and the secrecy restriction in general, even though its head, Dr. Yuri Reshetov, is no longer head of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's humanitarian affairs department.

**Over 700,000 Jews Emigrated**

The struggle to open the gates of the Iron Curtain was "one of the most successful and ambitious undertakings of any peoples in the world," Cardin said, reflecting on the movement's achievements.

"The process not only enabled nearly 500,000 to leave over a 10-year period, but encouraged millions to acknowledge their Jewish roots," she said.

Since emigration from the Soviet Union began in 1968, 702,961 Jews have left (through the end of last year), of whom 506,054 went to Israel, according to the National Conference.

The conference was founded in 1971, to succeed the American Council on Soviet Jewry, the organized Jewish community's tepid response to the grassroots Soviet Jewry movement.

By 1971, the issue had leaped to the front pages of the American press, due to both the dedicated activism of groups like the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry and the smaller-scale, but more deadly, terrorist campaign waged by Meir Kahane's Jewish Defence League.

Cardin is careful to point out the dangers inherent as what was the Soviet Union tries to reshape itself. Her obvious pride in the Jewish community's victory is not matched by unbridled joy at the defeat of what Ronald Reagan called the "Evil Empire."

Instead, she cautions that much still has to be done before world Jewry can sleep soundly. And she hints that perhaps the United States is not doing enough to help.

"There must be a sense of understanding," she said, noting a newspaper article cautioning that a sudden, unassisted changeover to capitalism in the once-Communist countries would not work.

"We have to appreciate in this country the very difficult period that faces all the republics," she said. "There will be some who want a very firm, steady hand to tell them what to do.

"We must recognize what a serious condition this is for millions of people," she said.

**ISRAELI UNEMPLOYMENT UP 4.7 PERCENT**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 14 (JTA) -- Unemployment in Israel increased by 4.7 percent last month to reach a record 10.9 percent of the civilian labor force in the final quarter of 1991, according to figures issued by the Labor and Welfare Ministry.

The number of jobless was put at 135,700 in December, up from 129,600 in November. By comparison, the number of unemployed ranged from 90,000 to 105,000 in the last two months of 1990.

Unemployment stands at its highest rate since the slump of 1966-67.

Moreover, the 135,746 Israelis out of work last month do not include new immigrants. During last year's third quarter, 68,000 immigrants were employed and 44,000 were jobless.