

75th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1992

VOL. 70, NO. 243

**ISRAEL STANDING FIRM ON DENYING  
RELIEF GROUPS ACCESS TO DEPORTEES**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Israel is standing firmly by its decision to deny international relief agencies access through Israeli-held territory to the 415 Moslem fundamentalists it expelled to southern Lebanon on Dec. 17.

Relief agencies such as the Red Cross have been seeking to send food and medical assistance to the deportees, who are stranded on a snowy strip of land between Israeli and Lebanese army checkpoints in southern Lebanon.

The Lebanese government, which refuses to accept responsibility for the deportees, has denied the Red Cross and other groups access to the no-man's land since early last week. At a special Cabinet meeting last Friday, Israeli ministers decided not to permit these agencies access through the buffer security zone it controls along the border in Lebanon.

The Israeli government's position was made clear to visiting U.N. Undersecretary-General James Jonah by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who held separate meetings with him Sunday.

Jonah, who was dispatched to the region at the request of the U.N. Security Council, was expected to travel on to Lebanon, where he hoped to visit the deportees, so as to assess their situation firsthand.

Meanwhile, Israel's High Court of Justice on Sunday gave the government 72 hours to reply to an appeal of the Cabinet's decision barring humanitarian aid to the deportees, lodged by Knesset member Abdel Wahab Darawshe of the Arab Democratic Party.

Darawshe claims Israel is bound by international conventions to permit Red Cross to convey food and medical aid to the deportees.

**Six Ministers Favored Allowing Aid**

The Cabinet adopted its position against allowing such aid at a special session last Friday afternoon that developed into something of a standoff between Rabin and Peres. It was the first outright clash between these two longtime Labor Party rivals since the present government was established last summer.

Peres headed a group of six ministers who supported allowing the Red Cross through. The group also included Moshe Shahal and Uzi Baram of Labor, and the three ministers of Labor's left-wing coalition partner, the Meretz bloc: Shulamit Aloni, Amnon Rubinstein and Yair Tsaban.

But a majority of eight voted, at the premier's suggestion, to reject the Red Cross application. Two Labor ministers, Ora Namir and Haim Ramon, abstained, and a third, Justice Minister David Libai, was abroad.

Official sources said the Friday split was in no way articulated at Peres' meeting Sunday with the U.N. undersecretary.

The foreign minister had been visiting Japan when the Cabinet agreed to the deportations. He has since let it be known privately that he is unhappy over the move, but publicly he has accepted collective responsibility for it.

In his meeting with Jonah, the foreign

minister reportedly explained at length the rationale for both the original deportation decision and for the decision to block relief aid through Israel.

He also complained about the "one-sidedness" of the Dec. 18 U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the deportation. He said it made no mention of the circumstances leading up to the expulsion: the rising wave of terrorism culminating in the brutal murder of kidnapped border policeman Nissim Toledano.

"Our intention was to create a real barrier to persons bent on killing the peace process," Peres was quoted as telling the U.N. envoy.

He stressed the deportees' right to petition appeal boards, which are empowered to readmit them to the territories or reduce the duration of their expulsion.

**Dozens Expected To Win Appeals**

Informed sources in Jerusalem have said they expect dozens of the deportees to be readmitted by these appeal boards. In certain cases, they say, the authorities know already that the deportations were not justified and occurred as a result of the extreme pressure under which the mass deportation was organized.

Darawshe's petition to the High Court has exacerbated an already fragile relationship between the government and the five Knesset members of the two Arab parties, whose tacit support is important for the stability of the governing coalition.

Prime Minister Rabin met with three of the five in his office Sunday evening, together with Finance Minister Avraham Shohat.

Rabin sought to persuade the Arab lawmakers that he is pressing ahead with the peace process. In a speech over the weekend, the premier said he was confident of reaching an agreement with one of the parties, probably Syria, during the year ahead.

But the Arab Knesset members emerged from the meeting with Rabin despondent, saying there was no movement regarding the deportees. They threatened not only to withdraw their support from the coalition, but to submit a no-confidence motion in the Knesset this week.

**THOUSANDS PROTEST DEPORTATIONS,  
BUT RALLY IS SMALLER THAN IN PAST**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Thousands of opponents of Israel's expulsion of 415 Moslem fundamentalists from the administered territories braved an unusually cold and rainy evening here Saturday to join in a demonstration called by the Peace Now movement.

Hundreds of activists marched through the streets of Tel Aviv, bearing torches and posters decrying the deportations, which have been welcomed by the vast majority of Israelis.

At the square outside the Tel Aviv Cinematheque, the marchers were joined by thousands of fellow protesters. But the rally was still significantly smaller than previous Peace Now demonstrations, which have drawn tens and even hundreds of thousands.

Conspicuous in their absence were leaders of the dovish Meretz bloc, who had in the past

almost invariably taken part in previous Peace Now rallies. But this time, members of the left-wing bloc, angered by the recent killings of five Israeli security officers by fundamentalists, voted in the Cabinet in favor of the expulsions.

However, many of those present at the rally were rank-and-file members of Meretz and its component political parties: the Citizens Rights Movement, Shinui and Mapam. The Cabinet ministers' votes were denounced by many speakers, who accused them of "bankrupting the party."

Peace Now activist Tsali Reshef sarcastically denounced the "pure doves who have all stood on this stage with us in the past and now support this terrible decision."

Although most Israelis have backed the deportation of the Islamic fundamentalists, who are said to be members of the militant Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements, there is some sentiment here for the deportees' situation in the no-man's land between Israeli and Lebanese army checkpoints in southern Lebanon.

The consensus of both speakers and demonstrators was summed up by an 18-year-old youth about to be inducted into the army, who told the crowd that "the deportees must be returned, brought to trial and, if necessary, imprisoned."

The organizers, anticipating a rather small turnout, chose to gather in the smaller square for the venue, rather than the giant Malchei Yisrael Square in front of the municipality building generally used for mass rallies.

#### VATICAN MEETS WITH PLO OFFICIAL AND SAYS IT WILL STEP UP CONTACTS

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- The Vatican, which has refused so far to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, says it is planning to step up its contacts with Palestinians.

In an announcement last week, the Holy See said it would establish a "joint bilateral commission" with Palestinians and intensify contacts with Palestinians living in the Israeli-administered territories as well as those "in the diaspora."

The announcement was made after Farouk Kaddoumi, the Palestine Liberation Organization's "foreign minister," met here Dec. 23 with the Vatican secretary of state, Monsignor Louis Touran.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro Valls said that during talks between Kaddoumi and Touran, "concern was expressed for the lack of movement in the peace process and for the increase in violence."

The day before the meeting, the Vatican used a front-page article in its official newspaper, *Osservatore Romano*, to call upon Israel to reconsider its decision to expel 415 Palestinian fundamentalists to Lebanon.

Speaking to reporters before the meeting, Kaddoumi said he appreciated the Vatican stance.

"We think that the moral role of the Vatican and the role of Italy in Europe are particularly important," he said.

While in Italy, Kaddoumi also met with Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo and other Italian officials. He spoke to Colombo of the need to "pull the peace process out of its stagnation."

Colombo said Italy considers the expulsion of the 415 Palestinians an "exaggerated" reaction, but he also sharply condemned the brutal killing by Palestinians of an Israeli border policeman, which he termed a danger to the peace process.

#### OUTSPOKEN MERETZ BLOC POLITICIAN BECOMES MINISTER IN RABIN CABINET

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Yossi Sarid, long the enfant terrible of Israeli politics, was appointed minister of the environment by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Sunday, becoming the fourth member of the dovish Meretz bloc to serve in the Cabinet.

The environment post until now has been held by Ora Namir of the Labor Party, who was moved to the much larger and more senior Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, which until now had been held by the prime minister himself.

In other Cabinet shifts, Economic Planning Minister Shimon Shetreet of Labor was given an additional portfolio as minister of science. The Science Ministry had been held until now by Meretz's Amnon Rubinstein, along with the Communications Ministry, which he will continue to hold.

The appointments signify Rabin's realization that the chances of drawing additional parties into the coalition are slim for the time being. The premier had been holding the Labor and Social Welfare portfolio vacant in the hope that the United Torah Judaism party would join the government.

Sarid indignantly denied hinted suggestions in the media and in the political community that his support for the Cabinet's decision earlier this month to deport 415 Moslem fundamentalists to Lebanon was in some way connected to his ministerial appointment.

As chairman of Meretz's Knesset faction, Sarid has shared with the party's three ministers responsibility for supporting the move, which has been sharply criticized by two of the party's three main factions: the Citizens Rights Movement and Mapam.

#### Fight Over Religious Affairs Post

Sarid has long been considered a thorn in the side of Rabin. He repeatedly attacked Rabin personally for his performance as defense minister in the national unity government of 1984-1990, especially with regard to his efforts to stamp out the intifada.

But in recent weeks, the customarily outspoken Knesset member has adopted a more "establishment" and "statesmanlike" public posture, discharging his duty as Meretz faction chairman in a manner that has earned him unusual praise from Rabin.

Discussions were also under way concerning the Ministry of Religious Affairs, with Rabin now expected to appoint a Shas deputy minister to run this sensitive and always-controversial ministry.

A number of Labor figures, including the present caretaker minister of religious affairs, Uzi Baram, are conducting a rear-guard fight against handing the ministry to Shas, on the grounds that the fervently Orthodox Sephardic party is too narrowly focused and has too many interests at stake to do justice to the need to provide religious services to the entire populace.

Aiding the anti-Shas campaign is the National Religious Party, which is traditionally the steward of the Religious Affairs Ministry but now finds itself outside the government for the first time in Israel's history.

NRP's secretary-general, Shaul Yahalom, appealed to Labor on Sunday to keep direct control over the ministry rather than award it to the non-Zionist Shas party.

## PARDON OF WEINBERGER SPURS CAMPAIGN TO WIN CLEMENCY FOR JONATHAN POLLARD

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Advocates for Jonathan Pollard are seizing upon President Bush's pardon last week of former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger to urge a commutation of the life sentence the former U.S. Navy analyst is serving for passing secrets to Israel.

The initiative comes at a time when those who have long argued that Pollard was unjustly sentenced are gaining support from both the Jewish grass roots and mainstream Jewish communal organizations.

In recent weeks, the American Jewish Committee decided to ask Bush and President-elect Bill Clinton to review the case. And the board of the New York Jewish Community Relations Council voted to approve a letter asking for clemency.

In another show of support for Pollard, a congressman has reportedly become the first U.S. official to visit him at his prison in Marion, Ill.

The waning days of a presidential term are generally seen as the most opportune to time to appeal for clemency. In addition to Weinberger and five others involved in the Iran-Contra affair, Bush last week pardoned 18 others who had been convicted of federal crimes, ranging from the theft of 12 six-packs of beer to stealing a car.

"In the same spirit, I urge the president to commute the sentence of Jonathan Pollard, who has served seven years of a life sentence in solitary confinement," Seymour Reich said in a statement issued over the weekend.

Reich, a past chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, will soon assume the presidency of the American Zionist Federation.

A formal request for clemency was filed with the Justice Department earlier this month by Pollard's lawyer. In October, the Supreme Court decided not to hear an appeal by Pollard of a March decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals turning down a request for a new sentencing procedure.

### Weinberger Memos Cited

But the connection between Weinberger's pardon and possible clemency for Pollard runs deeper than timing.

Pollard and his supporters have long blamed the former defense secretary for Pollard's sentence, which they charge is grossly disproportionate to those meted out to others convicted of espionage against the United States.

They cite a still-confidential presentation by Weinberger before the judge that sentenced Pollard in 1987. It was this presentation, say Pollard's supporters, which led to the life sentence, in apparent contravention of government promises prior to Pollard's plea bargain.

"He pleaded guilty in exchange for a plea bargaining deal that was supposed to have given him less than a life sentence," Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.) told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency last week after visiting Pollard. "Then Caspar Weinberger and company undid the deal."

Ackerman also said there exists the possibility that a letter from Weinberger arguing against parole is on file among the court papers that would be considered by a parole board.

While Pollard's supporters have sometimes said that Pollard was sentenced to life without parole, he in fact comes up for parole in 1995, 10

years after his arrest outside the gates of the Israeli Embassy in Washington.

Weinberger is also accused by some of Pollard's advocates as being anti-Israel and of tilting American policy toward the Arab states. It was such a tilt, Pollard has said, that led him to feel that information that America had promised to transfer to Israel was being held back.

In the wake of the presidential pardons, Democrats in Congress have indicated their renewed intention to hold further hearings on aspects of the Iran-Contra affair and other alleged improprieties carried out by the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Among those may be charges that the Bush administration covered up its efforts to arm Iraq.

Will these hearings touch on the Pollard sentencing?

"Yup," said Rep. Ackerman. "I think there's going to be a closer look at this soon. I think there's an awful lot of tie-ins that look more than coincidental."

As to Weinberger's motivation in pressing for the maximum penalty against Pollard, the congressman said, "I think there's a much deeper involvement there than I'm prepared to discuss right now."

## IN ITS CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE RIGHT, GERMANY BANS THIRD NEO-NAZI GROUP

By David Kantor

BONN, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- In a widening crackdown on violence against foreigners, German authorities have banned another neo-Nazi group, the third in four weeks.

The outlawing last week of the National Offensive, a group that operated mainly in Saxony and Bavaria, followed police raids on offices and apartments in which large quantities of light weapons, propaganda and illegal Nazi symbols were found.

The Dec. 22 ban followed one Dec. 10 on a group called the German Alternative and an earlier one, Nov. 27, on the National Front.

In announcing the latest ban, Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters said that members of all three groups had greatly contributed to the recent wave of neo-Nazi violence in the country.

The National Offensive was established in July 1990 in Augsburg, Bavaria, near Munich. After Germany's reunification that October, the group expanded its arena of activity to eastern Germany and recruited some 140 members.

Seiters said the group disseminated anti-Semitic propaganda and agitated against foreigners. He said the new ban is proof the government is serious in its fight against neo-Nazi violence.

Meanwhile, a multitude of German people are making known their opposition to the neo-Nazi violence that has taken the country by storm.

Last Friday evening, nearly a quarter-million people turned out in the center of Berlin, in an impressive show of protest against racism and anti-Semitism.

Then on Saturday, large numbers turned out on the border with Poland for the first joint German-Polish vigil against neo-Nazi extremists.

The demonstration was held on the Neisse Bridge, between the German town of Guben and its Polish twin city of the same name. More than 100,000 people from both sides of the border carried candles and flashlights and lined the streets of both towns, forming a human chain of light against racism and anti-Semitism.

# **BEHIND THE HEADLINES: CONTROVERSY OVER BURIAL CAVES PITS COMMUTERS AGAINST HAREDIM**

By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- "Driving to work in the morning is certainly no picnic," said Sara Cohen, her motor idling in early morning traffic.

Cohen was caught in the traffic bottleneck that routinely traps commuters from Jerusalem's northern neighborhoods of Pisgat Ze'ev and Neveh Ya'acov.

"I can't wait until the new interchange that's being built is finally completed," she said.

Cohen and her fellow commuters may have a very long wait.

In the course of constructing an overpass and expanding the main road connecting the neighborhoods to the city center two months ago, bulldozers unearthed nine ancient burial caves in the French Hill neighborhood.

When the Israel Antiquities Authority excavated two of the caves, clearing the way for further construction, thousands of haredim, or fervently Orthodox Jews, staged violent protests against what they view as the desecration of a 2,000-year-old cemetery.

A few weeks ago, archaeologists at the site were forced to stop their work when the police officers who had been guarding the excavations were assigned to intifada-related duty elsewhere in the city.

At the same time, Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, who wanted to resolve the issue quickly without locking horns with the religious community, asked Jerusalem Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Kolitz to rule on whether it is halachically permissible to destroy the burial caves and proceed with the road, provided that the human remains were buried elsewhere.

To Kollek's dismay, Kolitz ruled that the caves cannot be destroyed and that the remains within cannot be removed.

The result has been virtual gridlock between the municipality, which spearheaded the road expansion in the first place, and the haredim, who will not budge on the issue.

## **More Demonstrations Expected**

In his ruling, Kolitz stated that a Jewish gravesite must not be tampered with, whether a person was buried yesterday or centuries ago.

He drew parallels to existing cemeteries, and asked, "What if a plan mistakenly called for a road through the cemeteries of Sanhedria, Har Hamenuhot or the Mount of Olives? Nobody would consider unearthing graves to clear the way for a road."

The rabbi said that although widening the road was halachically unacceptable, because doing so would require the graves' removal, constructing an overpass to accommodate traffic was all right.

Kollek immediately rejected Kolitz's decision on the grounds that constructing the overpass without widening the road "might not be feasible and, at any rate, would be too time-consuming."

As a city spokeswoman explained it, "We are interested in the road being completed as soon as possible, because it's necessary for the city's development.

"There are already very difficult traffic problems in the new northern neighborhoods of Jerusalem into the center of the town," she said. "These problems will only get worse when thou-

sands of families move into the homes nearing completion."

Upon hearing the mayor's decision, Tzvi Meshi-Zehav, a vocal opponent of burial cave excavations and a member of the Eda Haredit, one of the city's most extreme haredi groups, said, "The mayor doesn't realize what an outcry this will produce. Haredim from around the country will come together and demonstrate."

Indeed, a massive demonstration by haredim was planned for Monday.

"Respecting the dead is of utmost importance," explained a yeshiva student who gave his first name as Moshe. "The Israeli army will try at any cost to bring back a soldier's body for burial. There is a halachic reason for that."

The Antiquities Authority, which is slated to resume its work on the remaining seven burial caves in French Hill in the near future, is currently performing at least a dozen similar excavations around the country, according to spokeswoman Efrat Orbach.

"We average 250 rescue excavations every year, whenever something archaeologically significant is found in the course of building an apartment house or constructing a sewage system," she said, citing "thousands of such caves in Israel."

"What bothers me is the inconsistency," said an archeologist not associated with the dig. "There are burial caves all over the neighborhood of Shuafat, which is slated to become a large haredi community. Why didn't the religious leaders raise a fuss about them?"

With the issue still unresolved, and perhaps more confrontations on the way, commuters like Sara Cohen may have little choice but to consider getting jobs closer to home.

## **WORLD LEADERS PROMOTING ARAB-JEWISH KINDERGARTEN**

By Igal Avidan

BERLIN (JTA) -- What do German President Richard von Weizsacker, the exiled Dalai Lama of Tibet, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and Israeli President Chaim Herzog have in common?

They are all promoting a campaign to build an Arab-Jewish kindergarten in Tel Aviv.

Titled "Stop Violence, Make Peace!" the new project is a joint venture by the Tel Aviv Foundation in Germany and Germany's largest-circulation daily, Bild.

The paper's editor in chief, Claus Laras, used a front-page open letter recently to announce the project, whose goal is that "children will learn friendship instead of hate after 40 years of conflict in the Middle East."

Von Weizsacker expressed his support for the initiative by saying, "I cannot think of a more peace-inducing action than to bring children together so they will learn through playing to respect and love one another."

And Herzog wrote: "There is no alternative to peace in order to secure the future of the children in this area."

Gorbachev said that during his visit to Israel this past spring, he learned how important mutual tolerance between Jews and Arabs is. "Their future depends on the way in which the young citizens of this Earth grow up," he said.

The Dalai Lama, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, wrote of his conviction that the need "for people to live together in peace and harmony should be instilled at an early age."