

VOL. 71 - 76th YEAR

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1993

NO. 23

**NO PEACE TALKS UNTIL ALL DEPORTEES ARE RETURNED, PALESTINIAN LEADER SAYS**  
By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 3 (JTA) -- The Palestinian delegation will not return to the Middle East peace talks as long as even one of the men deported by Israel to Lebanon is not repatriated, the head of the delegation warned this week.

Dr. Haidar Abdel-Shafi made the categorical statement during an interview here Tuesday. He dismissed as meaningless a decision Monday by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to allow 100 Palestinians deported Dec. 17 to return immediately and to permit the return of the remaining 300 before the end of the year.

In Washington, there were strong indications that the issue has already delayed the resumption of the multilateral phase of the peace talks.

Two of the five multilateral working groups on regional issues were to have convened early next week, one on arms control, which was to meet in Washington, and the other on economic development, which was to meet in Rome.

The State Department acknowledged Wednesday that invitations for those meetings had not yet been issued.

"We're consulting with our Russian co-sponsors, and we would expect to have a decision fairly soon on the timing for the next round for those talks," said spokesman Richard Boucher.

"We have to talk to the Russians first about suggesting the dates, the oral invitations for people to come to the talks," he added.

As for the bilateral talks, in which Israel is negotiating separately with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians, there is no indication yet when they will resume.

**Warns About U.S. Veto**

But Abdel-Shafi made clear, during a luncheon talk at the Town Hall of California here, that Israel's decision to take back 100 of the Moslem fundamentalists it deported is "not enough" to bring the Palestinians back to the peace table.

"The deportations are a basic violation of human rights," he said. "To accept them would be a disservice to the principles of human rights."

The Gaza Strip physician took a somewhat more ambiguous position on Hamas, the Islamic fundamentalist movement whose leadership, Israel says, makes up the bulk of the deportees.

Abdel-Shafi said the U.S. State Department's plan to classify Hamas officially as a terrorist organization is unjustified.

"We are aware of Hamas, and we're dealing with them ourselves, without any Israeli help," he said. "We are sure there are many in Hamas who are not prone to carry out terrorist acts. To generalize in this way serves no useful purpose."

But later, he said that the moderate Palestinians he represents disagree with Hamas on "the killing of innocent people in cold blood."

The Palestinian leader warned that if the United States ends up vetoing a possible U.N. Security Council resolution imposing punitive sanctions against Israel over the deportation issue, it will have a "catastrophic" effect on Washington's standing in the Arab world.

Responding to questions from a group of

high school students at the luncheon, Abdel-Shafi said he was in touch with the Peace Now movement in Israel, but considered its effectiveness "very marginal."

He voiced disappointment at the fact that Cabinet ministers of the dovish Meretz bloc backed the original deportation move, saying their support was "very surprising and painful."

He also said he had met with some American Jewish leaders during his current trip, whose main purpose he described as meeting with relatives in San Jose, Calif. and Chicago.

*(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Deborah Kalb of States News Service in Washington.)*

**CABINET MEMBERS DID NOT FORESEE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DEPORTATIONS**  
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 3 (JTA) -- Now that Israel has offered a compromise on the Palestinians it deported to Lebanon, Cabinet ministers have come out openly with complaints they were never fully briefed in December about the original order's likely consequences.

In mostly anonymous interviews in the Hebrew press, ministers talked about how the Cabinet did not foresee many of the problems that arose after Israel temporarily expelled 415 Moslem fundamentalists from the administered territories on Dec. 17.

Responding to pressure from the United Nations and aiming to save the peace process, Israel this week backed down and proposed to take back 100 deportees and shorten the term of exile for the others.

Explaining what went wrong, Health Minister Haim Ramon said Wednesday that the Cabinet did not expect Lebanon to bar entry to the activists, who were bused across the border from the Israeli-controlled security zone in Lebanon.

In the past, Israel has periodically deported Palestinians to Lebanon without problems, sometimes by dropping them north of the security zone by helicopter.

Lebanon was commonly regarded as too weak or too preoccupied with its own problems of internal instability to be able to block the practice.

"We did not know Lebanon is a state again. We thought of it as the Wild West," Ramon said.

Lebanon's refusal to take in the deportees resulted in their being stranded on a barren stretch of land between Israeli and Lebanese army lines. That unusual situation contributed to the international crisis which developed.

The newspaper Yediot Achronot quoted another minister as saying the Cabinet had not expected the U.N. Security Council to consider such strong action as sanctions in order to compel Israel to reverse the deportations.

The Cabinet had fully predicted international criticism, but reasoned that it would die out eventually, the minister said. The Cabinet did not even consider the possibility that the United States might refrain from using its Security Council veto in protection of Israel.

Cabinet officials also complained that a defiant Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin steamrolled the Dec. 17 decision through a shocked but

obedient Cabinet, without bothering to genuinely solicit their advice or concerns.

Political insiders have criticized Rabin for his tendency to make decisions on his own without much consultation outside a handful of close advisers.

#### **Future Mass Deportations Possible**

At a Cabinet meeting last week, Rabin displayed typical impatience with regard to hearing opposing views when he sought to silence Justice Minister David Libai.

"We've heard enough of you now on the radio," Rabin said, telling other ministers to talk with Libai privately if they wished to hear his opinions.

Libai was the only minister not to support the deportations in December, abstaining at the Cabinet vote.

The decision to partially reverse the deportations was accepted unanimously by the Cabinet, although Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer warned that the deportees would reject the offer and that Palestinians in the territories would see the move as a sign of Israeli weakness.

Rabin this week defended the compromise proposal against the right-wing opposition parties, who accused him of surrendering completely to Arab and international pressure.

The prime minister also said Wednesday that Israel would maintain the right to resort to mass expulsions in the future should the need arise.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres predicted that the Arabs would eventually accept the deal and return to the peace negotiations, since many Arab parties had informally approved the idea in behind-the-scenes diplomacy.

#### **LATEST SENATE PANEL APPOINTMENTS ARE WELCOMED BY PRO-ISRAEL FORCES**

By Deborah Kalb  
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3 (JTA) -- The Senate Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations, which appropriates foreign aid, has announced its new lineup of members for the 103rd Congress, and the pro-Israel community is, for the most part, pleased.

Additions to the subcommittee include first-time Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), a strong supporter of Israel, and Sen. Connie Mack (R-Fla.), who has been active on pro-Israel issues.

The latest appointments round out a series of new assignments made over the past few weeks to the four key congressional subcommittees charged with authorizing and appropriating aid to Israel.

Supporters of Israel, who have been concerned that the public's growing focus on domestic issues might result in less sympathy on Capitol Hill for foreign aid, were pleased to see sympathetic newcomers and old friends sitting on the relevant subcommittees.

The new ranking minority member on foreign operations is Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), viewed as a supporter of Israel. He will be joined on the Republican side by Sens. Alfonse D'Amato of New York, Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, Don Nickles of Oklahoma, Mack of Florida and Phil Gramm of Texas.

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) will retain his chairmanship and will be working with fellow Democratic Sens. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, Dennis DeConcini of Arizona, Frank Lautenberg of New

Jersey, Tom Harkin of Iowa, Barbara Mikulski of Maryland and Feinstein.

"The subcommittee is composed of men and women who are knowledgeable about and committed to strengthening the U.S.-Israel relationship," an AIPAC spokesperson said. "They want to play a role in maintaining a strong relationship with Israel."

"Adding Feinstein to the Democratic lineup certainly strengthens the position of pro-Israel advocates" on the panel, said Lewis Roth, spokesman for the National Jewish Democratic Council.

Roth pointed to a firmly pro-Israel speech Feinstein delivered at a Democratic Council fundraiser during the week of inaugural festivities last month. "Judging from the speech at our event," he said, "she'll be very outspoken" in calling for a "strong U.S.-Israel relationship."

Inouye and Harkin have also been "terrific over the years," Roth said.

#### **Concern About Leahy's Plans**

Matt Brooks, executive director of the National Jewish Coalition, a Republican group, said he was "particularly encouraged by the members from the Republican side" on the subcommittee.

He said he was "still saddened" by the November defeat of former Sen. Robert Kasten (R-Wis.), who had served as ranking minority member on the subcommittee. Kasten was supported by many pro-Israel groups in his losing effort against Russell Feingold (D-Wis.).

Brooks sounded a note of caution about the Democratic chairman of the subcommittee. He pointed to "extremely troubling" reports that Leahy planned to overhaul foreign aid programs.

One story, however, in the AIPAC publication Near East Report, also noted that Leahy, in a Washington Times interview, had said Israel would "fare well" in future aid legislation.

The other Senate subcommittee dealing with aid to Israel, the Foreign Relations subcommittee on Near East and South Asian affairs, will be headed by a longtime friend of Israel, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.).

In addition, Feingold of Wisconsin has joined the Foreign Relations Committee, though he does not serve on the Near East subcommittee. Feingold, who is Jewish, is considered a strong supporter of Israel.

On the House side, Israel's advocates are relieved that Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) is serving on the Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East.

Schumer has been taking the lead recently on Israel-related issues, appropriating the role once held by defeated Democratic pro-Israel stalwarts like New York's Stephen Solarz, Florida's Larry Smith and California's Mel Levine.

The subcommittee also includes veteran Reps. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) and Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), who have been active on the pro-Israel front, and two Jewish newcomers, Reps. Peter Deutsch (D-Fla.) and David Levy (R-N.Y.).

And the House Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations includes among its new additions two staunchly pro-Israel members, Reps. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) and Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.).

The chairmen of the two House subcommittees, Reps. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.) of the Near East subcommittee and David Obey (D-Wis.) of foreign operations, are not seen by most in the pro-Israel community as among Israel's strongest supporters, but they are generally well-respected.

## SHOVAL MEETS WITH VICE PRESIDENT, THANKING HIM FOR AMERICAN SUPPORT

By Deborah Kalb  
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3 (JTA) -- Israel's outgoing ambassador to Washington, Zalman Shoval, met Wednesday with Vice President Albert Gore.

Israeli sources said the ambassador thanked the vice president for the position the United States had taken on the issue of the Palestinian deportees.

The U.S. government worked with Israel to craft a compromise allowing 100 of the 415 Palestinians deported to Lebanon in December to come back almost immediately, with the rest to return to the administered territories before year's end.

While the deal has been rejected by the Palestinians, the United States maintains the compromise fulfills a U.N. Security Council resolution calling for the return of the deportees.

In response to a reporter's question about the deportation issue, Gore reportedly said that even if the United States had differences of opinion with Israel, they would be resolved in a friendly manner.

The vice president added that the two countries would continue their dialogue as is suitable in a relationship between two allies, Israeli sources said.

During the meeting with Gore, Shoval expressed hope that the U.S.-Israeli dialogue would continue. The ambassador also thanked the vice president for his personal friendship.

## AUSTRIANS REJECT AN INITIATIVE TO CLOSE COUNTRY TO FOREIGNERS

By Marta S. Halpert

VIENNA, Feb. 3 (JTA) -- Liberal politicians in Austria say they are relieved at the poor showing of a popular initiative that aimed to declare the country closed to foreigners and institute racist regulations.

The initiative, organized by Jorg Haider, leader of the far-right Freedom Party, was signed by 417,278 of 5.6 million eligible voters, or slightly less than 7.5 percent of the electorate.

"The sun shines today, but not for Jorg Haider and his xenophobic poll," said Franz Vranitzky, the Austrian chancellor.

Haider, who heads up the country's third-largest party and received about 780,000 votes in the last election, had said he was expecting to collect between 780,000 and 1 million votes.

By law, any initiative that garners more than 100,000 votes must be debated in the federal Parliament. However, the poor result was seen as a major political defeat for Haider.

The 12-point initiative called upon Austria to stop all immigration until the issue of illegal immigration is resolved and unemployment, now at 6.8 percent, is reduced to 5 percent.

The initiative also demanded that schools allow only a maximum of 30 percent non-German speakers.

The final results of the initiative were published just a week after hundreds of thousands of Austrians demonstrated in Vienna against racism and anti-foreigner prejudice in a special evening rally.

Haider charged after the results of the initiative were made public that "a broad united front of the church, the trade unions and the big party machineries" had defeated him.

## ALIYAH FROM EX-SOVIET REPUBLICS FELL SLIGHTLY BUT EXPECTED TO RISE

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Feb. 3 (JTA) -- Jewish immigration to Israel from the republics of the former Soviet Union dipped slightly in January, despite uncertainties and unrest in the region.

Jewish Agency officials say the numbers could rise if the situation there worsens and if the Israeli job market continues to improve, and they are planning accordingly.

But they do not expect the deluge seen in recent years.

Out of the 6,900 Jews who made aliyah last month, 6,016 were from the former Soviet republics, according to figures provided by the Jewish Agency.

Another 3,880 Jews from the republics arrived in the United States last month under the government's refugee program, according to the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society in New York.

The January figure to Israel was down from 6,745 in December, but reflects a 10 percent rise over the same month the previous year, according to the Soviet Jewry Research Bureau of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry in New York.

While more than a thousand immigrants are still streaming into Israel every week, aliyah is sharply down from three years ago. Immigration from the republics peaked around 182,000 in 1990, then declined to 145,000 in 1991 and 64,000 last year.

The Jewish Agency's offices in Eastern Europe are predicting an increase this year in immigration from the republics, said spokesman Yehuda Weinraub. He said the number could go as high as 100,000.

## Jobless Rate Dropping

Weinraub said the renewed interest from the republics reflects, in part, heightened ethnic tensions and unrest in such places as Tajikistan and Moldova.

But he said it may also be a result of hopes that the new Israeli government will develop better absorption policies and foster an improved economic climate in Israel.

Weinraub pointed out that the unemployment rate among immigrants is dropping, and their presence in the work force is rising.

In the third quarter of last year, 72 percent of the immigrant work force was employed, which was a "big improvement" over the 60 percent employment figure in the same period the year before, he said.

Weinraub said there are more than 1 million Jews in the former Soviet republics who have taken an initial step toward emigration by securing permission from Israel to join their families here.

But he said the vast majority view it only as "an insurance policy" while they assess the situation, both at home and in Israel.

Officials from the Jewish Agency and the National Conference on Soviet Jewry said they are waiting to see what effect a new Russian law on emigration will have.

Before dissolving, the former Soviet Union passed a law making it unnecessary for citizens to obtain an exit visa before leaving the country.

The now-independent Russian Federation has adopted the law, which was to go into effect Jan. 1, but will now not be implemented until April.

## MESSIANIC JEWISH FAMILIES FIGHT ISRAEL'S EFFORT TO DEPORT THEM

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 3 (JTA) -- Two families belonging to a messianic Jewish sect are fighting efforts by the Israeli government to deport them.

Just 17 days before their visas are due to expire, the Beresford and Candle families held a news conference Wednesday and publicly appealed to the government to allow them to stay in Israel.

Accusing the government of discrimination, Ricky Candle said: "They particularly have a vendetta against a Jew who believes this way. It's too much for them or something."

Candle's sect believes that Jesus was the Messiah.

The families maintain they should be allowed to immigrate to Israel under the state's Law of Return, which grants automatic citizenship to Jews.

But Israel's High Court of Justice last September rejected the petitions of three families from the messianic Jewish sect who wanted to stay in Israel under the Law of Return.

Richard and Ricky Candle, who came to Israel five years ago from Southern California, have four children living with them in Israel.

Ricky Candle warned that if her family and the Beresfords are forced to leave the country, the government would feel justified in choosing other targets to deport. "It's almost like ethnic cleansing," she said.

"I don't blame them for their feelings, but you cannot take your personal feelings, with power in high places, and say you represent all of Israel, when all of Israel thinks something else," she added.

Gary and Shirley Beresford arrived in Israel six years ago from Zimbabwe. Their two sons are Israeli citizens and have both served as paratroopers in the Israeli army.

Beresford appeared at the news conference in Jerusalem wearing a skullcap and noted that although messianic Jews believe Jesus was the Messiah, they are still Orthodox Jews.

In response to the public appeal by the two families, the Interior Ministry noted the High Court decision last September.

David Efrati, head of the ministry's population registrar, said those families simply did not qualify to stay. Although born to Jewish mothers, they were now members of a different religion and therefore were not eligible to remain in Israel under the law, he explained.

## ELECTION FOR ISRAELI CHIEF RABBI SCANDALIZED BY WOMANIZING STORIES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 3 (JTA) -- Elections for Israel's Ashkenazic chief rabbi, held once every 10 years, have been thrown into disarray by articles in the press linking the leading candidate to women other than his wife.

A petition demanding that the elections be postponed pending full examination of the accusations has been forwarded to the state attorney general by a Jerusalem resident who some claim is acting in collusion with rival candidates for the post.

At the center of the storm is Tel Aviv's chief rabbi, Yisrael Lau, who was expected to be elected the top Ashkenazic rabbi in the country.

But damaging charges about the rabbi's personal life, first printed in the Tel Aviv weekly Ha'ir, have started to erode his support.

Two important rabbinical figures have expressed their reservations about Lau's qualifications for the position. The current occupant of the post, Rabbi Avraham Shapira, said the election should be postponed until the issue is fully investigated.

Rabbi Shlomo Goren, a former chief rabbi of Israel, said Lau in effect disqualifies himself if he does not sue the newspaper for libel.

The whole scandal is also mixed up in the politics for electing the new chief rabbi. Reports said that Leon Katsch, the Jerusalem man who petitioned the attorney general, was acting in consort with one of two rival candidates for the post: Haifa's chief rabbi, Haifa Shear Yashuv Cohen, and Rabbi Simcha Kook of Rehovot.

Katsch, who claimed to be acting independently out of concern for the dignity of the office, said through his lawyer that he would also appeal to Israel's High Court of Justice if his petition to the attorney general fails.

Goren also remarked to the media that the other candidates, Cohen and Kook, are unsuitable for the post because they are insufficiently learned in Talmud and Jewish law, or halacha.

The scandal has renewed calls within Israel's Masorti movement -- Israel's Conservative movement -- to dissolve entirely the institution of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel "in view of the present wave of ugly accusations."

Rabbi Philip Spectre, executive director of the Masorti movement, called on the Knesset to debate the issue of whether to dissolve the rabbinate.

"There is no foundation whatsoever in the Jewish tradition for a chief rabbinate," he said in a statement.

## DERI IS TO BE QUESTIONED NEXT WEEK ABOUT FRAUD, FINANCIAL IMPROPRIETY

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 3 (JTA) -- Interior Minister Arye Deri will face questioning by police investigators starting next week on his alleged role in fraudulent activities going back several years.

The interrogation, expected to last for two months, follows Deri's surprise announcement earlier in the week that he was no longer maintaining his right to remain silent.

Deri, head of the Orthodox Sephardic Shas party, has been under investigation for the past three years both for alleged fraud committed under his supervision at the Interior Ministry and for suspected improprieties in his own personal finances.

Until now, Deri refused to cooperate with the investigation, although he was summoned three times for questioning by police.

Police will reportedly question Deri about the allegedly improper diversion of public funds to religious organizations.

Newspaper reports have accused Deri's Interior Ministry, under the previous government, of allocating funds to certain municipalities with the understanding that part of the funds would later be given over to religious foundations affiliated with Shas.

The police apparently will also question Deri about the source of funds used to purchase apartments and pay for overseas travel.