

**IDF'S WEST BANK COMMANDER  
KILLED IN HELICOPTER CRASH**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 12 (JTA) -- Israel was reeling this week after the death of the military officer in charge of the West Bank.

Maj. Gen. Nechemia Tamari, the head of the Israel Defense Force's Central Command, died along with three other officers in a helicopter crash early Wednesday.

Tamari was the highest-ranking officer to die in the line of duty in nearly a dozen years.

As commander of the central sector of Israel, which includes the West Bank, Tamari would have been in charge of the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Jericho, as stipulated in the Palestinian self-rule accord signed last September in Washington.

The Dec. 13 deadline for the start of the withdrawal was missed because of a deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Tamari, however, indicated that the withdrawal could be implemented in a brief period of time.

"Jericho is not complicated in terms of taking out forces," he was reported to have said. "We can do it in a number of days."

Tamari, 45, had flown north Wednesday to be with troops searching the area near the city of Beit She'an, near the Jordanian border, for an infiltrator who had crossed into Israel during the night.

Tamari and the three officers were killed as their helicopter was returning to command headquarters north of Jerusalem.

Also killed were Tamari's aide, Maj. Ofer Kaufman, and two air force captains serving as helicopter pilots, Ofri Yaelli and Assaf Asher.

The army ruled out sabotage, saying the crash was an accident caused by bad weather.

The IDF was in a state of mourning Wednesday upon hearing of the loss of four of their comrades.

Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur, a longtime friend of Tamari's, shaken and tearful, called the general "one of the boldest and smartest fighters" he had ever known.

Tamari, who reportedly was a candidate for the position of army chief of staff, had served in the IDF for 28 years. He fought in the Israeli-Arab wars of 1967 and 1973 as well as in the war in Lebanon.

**NEW PLAN REPORTEDLY WOULD EXPAND  
SETTLEMENT EAST, SOUTH OF JERUSALEM**

JERUSALEM, Jan. 12 (JTA) -- A plan to expand settlements in the vicinity of Jerusalem is being discussed by government ministries, according to a report by Yediot Achronot.

The plan would join the capital to two nearby regions of settlements: Gush Etzion to the south, and Ma'aleh Adumim to the East.

While Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin ended the policy of the predecessor Likud government of promoting massive settlement throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, he has consistently supported what he termed "security settlements."

In his 1992 inaugural address, he pledged

that his government would "continue to enhance and strengthen Jewish settlement along the lines of confrontation, due to their importance for security, and in Greater Jerusalem."

According to Yediot, the plan been approved for consideration by Israel's Civil Administration, which oversees the territories.

It was reportedly drafted by representatives of several ministries, including that of defense, which Rabin heads. Rabin's assistant for settlement affairs has already signed off on the plan, Yediot reported.

According to Yediot, the plan has the support of the right wing of Rabin's Labor Party, as well as members of the opposition.

More than 15,000 people live in Ma'aleh Adumim, a bedroom community whose residents mostly consider themselves residents of suburban Jerusalem, not settlers of the West Bank.

The plan would reportedly extend the town along the road to Jerusalem, up to a quarter-mile from the capital's municipal boundaries.

East of Ma'aleh Adumim, the proposed settlement bloc would increase Jewish settlement in the direction of Jericho.

The plan would also create a continuous string of settlements between Jerusalem's southern suburbs and the settlements of Gush Etzion, 15 miles south, now home to more than 10,000 people.

Zionist settlement in the Gush Etzion region began in 1928. In 1948, residents of the villages in the Etzion area were the last line of defense for Jerusalem in the War of Independence. Those who survived the battles were massacred after surrendering to the Arab Legion.

The Etzion bloc was the location of the first Jewish settlements in the wake of the Six-Day War, established in part by orphans of the original settlers.

**HISTADRUT BOSS WINS PRIMARY  
IN NASTY RACE FOR RE-ELECTION**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 12 (JTA) -- The secretary-general of the Histadrut Trades Union Federation has been elected in a Labor Party primary to run as the party's candidate for a second term.

In Tuesday's nationwide elections, in which the 130,587 Labor Party members who were also members of the confederation were eligible to vote, incumbent Chaim Haberfeld defeated Labor Knesset member Amir Peretz by an almost two-to-one margin.

Former Knesset member Jacques Amir placed third.

Haberfeld will now face the Likud's candidate for secretary-general, Knesset member Yaakov Shamai, in elections in May.

Histadrut, the umbrella organization of all labor unions in Israel, is also an important voluntary body that oversees issues of public health, pensions and professional training.

Ever since its establishment in the late 1920s, the Histadrut has been dominated and led by the Labor Party, with right-wing parties in opposition and for many years even boycotting the Histadrut and its political, economic and social agenda.

**RELIGIOUS SHOPPERS SKIRT THE ISSUE,  
BOLSTER SALES IN ONCE-FALTERING MALL**  
By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, Jan. 12 (JTA) -- There is a boutique near the central bus station here, the Jeans Club, that is doing a flourishing business these days after floundering for the past couple of years.

But anyone searching for a pair of jeans had better look elsewhere, because for the past year the Jeans Club has not sold a single pair of pants.

In fact, there is not a pair of jeans for sale in the entire shopping center where the store is located.

Long-sleeved blouses have replaced tank tops. Long, modest skirts have displaced minis.

Since last January, the entire Center 1 Mall, a hub of 40 shops, has devoted itself solely to a fervently religious clientele. And business has never been better.

"The vast majority of women who shop here now are religious, so we cater to them," said store manager Irit Harnoy matter-of-factly.

"We no longer sell pants or bodysuits, but that's O.K. The religious people are very nice and I'm happy to stock what they want to buy," she said.

Built by the Yona hotel chain in 1987, Center 1 was originally designed to attract a wide range of customers, religious and secular, Jewish and Arab, in this busy section of the city, said Avi Ben-Arush, the shopping mall's manager.

"It did for a while," said Ben-Arush. "But then business slowed down."

"Part of the problem was the intifada," said the mall's sole Arab storekeeper, who runs a large souvenir shop. "The center has always relied heavily on tourists, and the intifada has hurt the tourist industry."

"We also used to have a lot of wealthy Arabs from, say, Bethlehem, who would come to the mall and spend a lot of money," he said.

"Those days have been over for a long time," the shopowner said.

In 1992, with most shopping centers hurting for business and heightened concerns that a new mall across town, then nearing completion, would lure away customers, management decided to take a gamble.

**'We Needed To Find A Niche'**

"We knew we needed to find a niche in the market, something special," recalled Ben-Arush. "The center sits between a number of very religious neighborhoods, so it seemed like a natural choice."

Once the decision to change was made, management had to figure out exactly how to go about it, he said.

"We wanted the mall to have a certain atmosphere so that religious shoppers would feel comfortable here," he said, adding, "On the other hand, we did not want to drive away secular customers."

"Finding the balance hasn't always been easy," he conceded.

Three women's sportswear stores that would have had no future vacated the premises, as did a cosmetics salon.

Then all the center's eateries underwent the strictest possible kashrut conversion.

Now, a quadruplex movie theater, one of the newest in Jerusalem, is about to be transformed

into a wedding hall that caters to the Orthodox community.

While the manager maintains that "no one was forced out, we did have to make a deal" with some storeowners before they would leave, he said.

"I couldn't tell someone, 'Don't sell jeans.' But those who remained took it upon themselves to sell things religious people want to buy," Ben-Arush said. "Nobody is selling things that are offensive to the religious."

Jerusalem City Councilman Ornan Yekutieli, a former deputy mayor and a proponent of the rights of the capital's secular residents, had less sanguine recollections.

"When the process started, many of the shopowners were forced to leave. In one case, the owner of a women's clothing and lingerie shop arrived at the mall and found her store's window covered with newspapers," he recounted.

"There was also pressure on people who didn't play the right kind of music," he said.

The music "used to be David Bowie. Now there's a lot of classical music and show tunes," said Efrat Cohen, a young, jeans-clad waitress at the Ne'eman Cafe.

But the change does not bother her, she said. "I really like the religious community. They're good customers. If the food is good, they say so."

"This is especially true of the Americans who come," she said. "And there has been a big increase in the number of American yeshiva students in the past year" at the cafe, which offers a 10 percent discount to the students.

Not everyone shopping at the mall is observant.

"It's convenient for me to come here" for a bite to eat, said a soldier at the Ne'eman Cafe. But, she said, she does her shopping at the other mall or in the center of town.

**CALL FOR CUTS IN MILITARY SERVICE**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 12 (JTA) -- A commission established by the army chief of staff has recommended that Israel reduce both the period of compulsory military service for men and the period of men's annual reserve duties.

The recommendation was based on the premise that the army is now drafting more men than it needs and that the threat of conventional warfare facing Israel will remain unchanged, despite the government's current peace initiatives.

The commission, headed by Reserve Maj. Gen. Herzl Shafir, said that compulsory military service for men should be shortened by as much as six months, and that reserve service should be cut in half.

If accepted by the Defense Ministry, the recommendations would apply to men drafted by the end of 1996, who would serve 30 to 32 months, instead of three years. Their exact term of service would depend on their unit and training.

Army service for women has already been reduced.

A decision on the Shafir report is expected within a few months.

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**Reminder: The JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published Monday, Jan. 17.**

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## DUTCH WON'T BAN NEO-NAZI FILM, DESPITE REQUEST BY JEWS, OTHERS

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Jan. 12 (JTA) -- Rejecting arguments by Dutch Jewish groups, the public prosecutor here will not ban the public showing in Holland of the controversial German film "Profession: Neo-Nazi."

The film -- in which a young neo-Nazi spouts anti-Semitic rhetoric and denies that any Jews were killed at the Auschwitz concentration camp without a word of rebuttal from any other person in the documentary -- created an uproar among Jewish groups in Germany upon its release late last year.

The banning of the film in Holland had been requested by Jewish congregations here and by the Foundation for Combatting Anti-Semitism.

But after seeing the film, the public prosecutor concluded that although certain statements made by the film's title character, unabashed neo-Nazi Bela Althans, were certainly anti-Semitic, the film itself was not.

The prosecutor instead said he thought the documentary provided a warning against neo-Nazism.

As a result of the public prosecutor's decision, the documentary will now be shown in several Dutch cities.

In Germany, meanwhile, the Jewish community's attempts to get the film banned have only been partly successful.

The film has been banned in several German states, including Hesse, where Frankfurt is located.

Ignatz Bubis, the leader of the German Jewish community, said his organization will continue to seek a countrywide ban on the film.

"We're waiting for a court ruling in Frankfurt that would be applied to the whole country," Bubis told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

In December, the Central Council of Jews in Germany, of which Bubis is president, filed charges against the main character in the film over at least 10 passages the group said were in violation of German law.

Under Germany's criminal codes, hate speech is against the law.

These include statements calling for hate or violence against a group. Saying that Auschwitz or the Holocaust never existed is also against German law.

But late last year the district attorney for the state court in Berlin ruled that the Central Council's charges were unfounded and allowed the movie to continue its run there.

*(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Miriam Widman in Berlin.)*

## BRITAIN SAID TO BE PREPARING TO TRY SUSPECTED WAR CRIMINALS

By Bernard Josephs  
London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, Jan. 12 (JTA) -- Britain's first Nazi war crimes trials are expected to take place this year, parliamentary sources have told the London Jewish Chronicle.

The hearings would be the first under the controversial 1991 War Crimes Act, which was passed despite fierce opposition, especially from some members of the House of Lords.

A spokesman for the all-party Parliamentary War Crimes Group -- which spearheaded the

campaign to pass the act -- said there were strong indications that investigations by Scotland Yard's Nazi-hunting unit were nearing completion.

A number of prosecutions are being planned, the spokesman believes.

But he described as "speculative and premature" reports last week that a decision already had been made to charge at least three suspects.

The director of public prosecution, Barbara Mills, is known to be examining interim reports on the cases of at least 10 suspected Nazi criminals. They are among the hundreds said to have found refuge in Britain after the war.

Bringing to trial the suspects, some of whom are both elderly and in poor health, is bound to reignite the furor about war crimes trials.

Any decision to prosecute will rest on discussions between Mills and the attorney general, Sir Nicholas Lyell. Lyell has stressed to Britain's Jewish community that, despite strong criticism by some members of Parliament, the government has no intention of abandoning the search for suspected war criminals.

However, he also has called it essential that there be sufficient evidence for a reasonable prospect of conviction before cases are brought to court.

## ITALIAN JEWS MAY CONFRONT CHOICE OF PASSOVER OR POLLS

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Jan. 12 (JTA) -- Scandal-plagued Italy is planning elections that are expected to redraw the country's political landscape and usher in a new political era.

Passover may coincide with these watershed elections. The first two days of the holiday, March 27 and 28, are being considered as possible polling dates.

Rome's chief rabbi, Elio Toaff, has written to President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and Interior Minister Nicola Mancino, urging that the vote not be scheduled for March 27.

The Rome daily *Il Messaggero* also reported on Wednesday that Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, contacted authorities to point out that legal agreements between the state and the Jewish community stipulate respect for religious holidays.

"I hope that the rights of a religious minority are not trampled upon," Toaff said in an interview with the newspaper.

"I also believe that the highest levels of the state are sensitive to our request, which only reiterates respect for our community, which is an integral part of Italian society and thus wants to participate fully in such an important election."

About 40,000 Jews live in Italy, out of a population of 58 million. About 30,000 Italian Jews have the right to vote.

Though nominally Orthodox, most Italian Jews are not strictly observant.

Toaff rejected the argument that most Jews would not be so observant on Passover that it would prevent them from casting their ballots.

"That is a ridiculous argument," he told *Il Messaggero*. "It would be like asking Catholics to not celebrate Christmas. Jewish law calls for a day of rest (on festival days).

"The days of Passover should be dedicated to meditation and spiritual recovery. Every Jew should be free to pray, without being afflicted by daily encumbrances, even such important ones as voting, which none of us wants to renounce."

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**
**JORDANIANS, PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS FIGHT FOR BANKING RIGHTS IN TERRITORIES**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Jan. 12 (JTA) -- As nations and agencies commit themselves to aiding Palestinian development, the most prosaic of questions has become political: Where will the money actually go? Will Jordanian or Israeli banks reap the benefits of billions of dollars in deposits?

These questions underlie a recent flurry of diplomatic activity.

Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the Palestine Liberation Organization's political department, flew to Amman early this month to sign an agreement on economic cooperation with Jordan.

The agreement had been drafted last fall but was approved by the PLO only after repeated public pressure from King Hussein.

The deal grants Jordanian banks permission to operate in the West Bank once Palestinian autonomy begins, and it reportedly sets the Jordanian dinar as the official currency in these areas.

But notwithstanding the agreement with Jordan, some senior Palestinian officials appear to prefer Israel as an economic partner.

At issue is who will operate the banks in the territories with the onset of autonomy and the influx of foreign aid.

Forty-six nations pledged \$2 billion in aid over five years at a conference in Washington last October.

Much of that international aid, targeted to develop the Palestinian economy, will presumably be administered by the banks, which will profit from the customary fees and charges.

The quest for banking rights is seen as the reason why Hussein pressured the PLO to sign the financial accord and meanwhile concluded his own banking accord with Israel.

But the Jordanians are not the only ones who want a piece of the action. Similar motivations are said to be behind a recent agreement between Israeli and Palestinian business leaders.

According to some observers, it is the Israeli-Palestinian option that is favored within some quarters of the PLO.

**PLO Prefers Cooperation With Israel**

"The PLO has made clear that it will not surrender its financial and economic independence in the territories, and will not deposit its aid money in Jordanian banks," Sevar Plotzker, economics correspondent for Israel's Yediot Achronot newspaper, wrote recently.

And there are indications from PLO officials that the Palestinians would prefer financial cooperation with the Israelis, he added.

In December, Israel's Bank Leumi announced the formation of a new commercial bank in conjunction with Spanish, Moroccan and Palestinian partners. It will take over the two existing Bank Leumi branches in the West Bank cities of Bethlehem and Hebron.

The new bank will be launched with \$40 million in initial capital. The partners include the Casablanca-based Banque Commerciale du Maroc and the Madrid-based Banco Central Hispano.

The Palestinian partners are said to be close to the PLO and to include residents inside and outside the territories who are keeping a low profile.

"We hope to deal with the lion's share of

the international aid to the Palestinians," Moshe Sanbar, chairman of the board of directors of Bank Leumi, was quoted as telling Yediot.

Sanbar added that as far as he knew, PLO leadership in Tunis, including PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, is "in the picture."

The bank is in the process of incorporation, but even registration will not make it a reality. The bank's future depends on Arafat, and it is not yet clear how solid his commitment is.

"I believe that Chairman Arafat has not decided to go ahead with this project or any project," said Mohamed Rabie, a Palestinian economist who heads the Center for Educational Development in Washington.

"Anything you hear has to have his green light, and he has not given any green light."

Rabie said that the joint Israeli-Palestinian bank had long been rumored but a key figure mentioned in the rumor has denied involvement. Still, such a venture is considered impossible until Israel and the PLO reach a political settlement.

He said he had friends in Jordan who conceived joint projects during the initial euphoria over the signing of the Israeli-PLO accord last September, but who have since backed up in light of the slow progress of the talks designed to implement the autonomy plan.

According to Yediot, the Bank Leumi-Palestinian partnership was suggested by Palestinians, shortly after Jordan reached an agreement on banking with Israel.

The Jordanian agreement was signed Dec. 5 in Washington by representatives of the Bank of Israel and the Jordanian central bank, and it paved the way for the speedy reopening of Jordanian banks in the West Bank.

Palestinians reportedly were furious over the accord, but Israelis explained that they were bound to adhere to international agreements concerning supervision of banks.

If the multinational consortium does succeed in turning the present Bank Leumi offices in the territories into a Palestinian banking force during the autonomy period, there will be symbolic significance as well. Bank Leumi, after all, was founded by the Zionist movement in 1902.

**EX-FINANCE MINISTER HURWITZ DIES**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Jan. 12 (JTA) -- Israel's former finance minister, Yigal Hurwitz, died Monday. He was 75.

Born near Rishon LeZion, Hurwitz was a farmer before entering industry and, later, politics.

After serving as director of the Tene-Noga Dairy Products Co., Hurwitz entered the Knesset with David Ben-Gurion's small State List Party in 1969. The faction aligned itself with the Likud in 1973.

In 1977, Prime Minister Menachem Begin named Hurwitz minister of commerce, industry and tourism. He resigned the post to protest the Camp David accords Israel signed with Egypt.

He was assigned to the finance post in November 1979, but resigned at the end of 1980. During the year he held that position, he developed a reputation as a prophet of doom regarding Israel's looming economic crisis.

In 1983 Hurwitz unsuccessfully advocated a national unity government to deal with the economic situation -- a year before such a government was actually formed.