

**NEWS AT A GLANCE**

- **U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry viewed the Golan Heights from a helicopter and an observation post in northern Israel. As he concluded his two-day trip to Israel, Perry said it was too early to discuss the stationing of American troops on the Golan. But he added that the United States is "committed to participate in the implementation of any peace plan in the Golan."**
- **South African President Nelson Mandela declared next Sunday a day of national mourning for Housing Minister Joe Slovo, who died last week at the age of 68. A longtime Communist who devoted his life to the fight for racial equality in South Africa, he was also proud of being a Jew. [Page 1]**
- **A Canadian court ruled against an Israeli couple from the former Soviet Union who had claimed religious persecution in Israel in an effort to gain refugee status in Canada. Immigration attorneys said the ruling could signal an end to future bogus refugee claims. [Page 3]**
- **Argentina is unlikely to extradite accused Nazi war criminal Erich Priebke to Italy to be tried in Rome on charges of mass murder, according to an Italian newspaper. Priebke, 82, is wanted as one of the alleged perpetrators of the mass murder of 335 Romans in 1944. The massacre was considered the worst wartime act on Italian soil. [Page 3]**
- **Peace Now claims that the Israeli government has approved plans to expand 11 Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The organization said the plans are technically legal, but they constitute a violation of the Palestinian self-rule accord. Settlement leaders accused Peace Now of aiding Israel's enemies. [Page 3]**
- **El Al, Israel's national carrier, was selected the best airline operating in the Middle East by the magazine Business Travel International. British Airways and TWA followed El Al in the survey. Meanwhile, El Al decided to resume flights to Russia after Russian officials agreed to allow El Al security officials to carry weapons aboard flights to Moscow and St. Petersburg.**

**South Africa's Joe Slovo mourned; ANC leader had 'warm Jewish heart'***By Suzanne Belling*

JOHANNESBURG, Jan. 9 (JTA) — South African President Nelson Mandela declared next Sunday a day of national mourning for Housing Minister Joe Slovo, who died Jan. 5 at the age of 68.

He had been suffering from bone marrow cancer for some time.

Born Yossel Mashal Slovo in Obelei, Lithuania, he was a longtime Communist who devoted his life to the fight for full racial equality in South Africa.

He was the first white to be elected to the executive of the African National Congress and was one of two Jews to become part of the Cabinet after Mandela won the country's first all-race elections last April.

"His death is a tremendous loss to our whole country. He was a man who, until recently, was vilified by a section of the people who saw him virtually as the devil incarnate," said Ronnie Kasrils, deputy minister of defense and now the only remaining Jew in the South African Cabinet.

"Now he has emerged as virtually a hero for all in his record and contribution in transforming our country. This is what Slovo was about.

"His struggle was to overthrow racism in this country and to create a truly democratic society. The transformation that has occurred in South Africa has won the support of overwhelming numbers of our people — whites as well as blacks. Slovo was one of the chief architects of that change," said Kasrils.

ANC Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa announced that a state funeral for Slovo would be held Jan. 15 at the Avalon Cemetery in the black township of Soweto.

Although Slovo was a proclaimed atheist and Communist, he never denied his Judaism.

In an interview about a year ago in the South African cultural journal Jewish Affairs, Slovo said, "I'm not defensive at all about being a Jew. I'm quite proud of it. And I regard anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish cultural activities on the same basis as racism in this country.

"I regard myself as from Jewish extraction and coming from a group with a very rich history and culture. And part of that history and culture has impacted on my own choice of a way of life," he said.

South African Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, who has been invited to participate at a multifaith memorial meeting for Slovo at the Orlando Stadium in Soweto, said the late civil rights leader had a "very warm Jewish heart."

**'A great human being'**

While Slovo had no connection with the official Jewish community, Harris said, he had close Jewish ties and used to read the poet Shalom Aleichem in the original Yiddish.

"Joe Slovo was a contradiction — a Marxist-Leninist-Communist who nevertheless always put the well-being of the people first. He was therefore able, on the demise of Communism in Eastern Europe, to foster what he called democratic socialism," said Harris.

"Although in the formal sense Joe Slovo was not a good Jew, he will go down in history as a great human being."

Slovo emigrated from Lithuania to South Africa with his family when he was 8 years old.

Attracted to the credo of universal human equality, he joined the Communist Party of South Africa at the age of 16. The Communists were the first official party in South Africa to welcome black members. Slovo was chairman of the party at the time of his death.

During World War II, he served as a radio operator in Egypt and Italy. After the war, he studied for a degree in law at the University of the Witwatersrand, where he met fellow law student Nelson Mandela.

He graduated with distinction and went into practice in Johannesburg.

In 1949 he married Ruth First, daughter of Julius First, a founding member of the Communist Party. Because of their political beliefs, they were later banned by the government from attending meetings or having their statements quoted in the press.

In 1950, after the government passed the Suppression of Communism

Act, the party dissolved, but went underground in 1953 as the South African Communist Party.

In 1961, Slovo took part in the formation of Umkhonto we Sisze, the armed wing of the African National Congress. He was a member of its national high command.

Slovo, Mandela and more than 150 others were charged with treason in December 1956 for supporting the Freedom Charter, which called for full democracy in the country, regardless of race.

Slovo was both a defendant and a member of the defense team during the trial, which ended with the acquittal of all the defendants.

After the apartheid government banned the ANC in 1960, Slovo, along with Mandela and others, launched a campaign of sabotage against strategic government installations.

After Mandela was arrested in 1963, Slovo fled into exile and served as chief of staff of the ANC's armed wing. During the next 14 years, he lived in Tanzania, Angola, Zambia and England.

His first wife, Ruth, was killed by a letter bomb in 1982 in Maputo, Mozambique. He later remarried.

Three years later, Slovo became the first white elected to the national executive of the ANC.

Under an amnesty for political exiles in 1990, Slovo returned to South Africa. That same year, Mandela was released from prison, and he and Slovo became involved in negotiations to end apartheid.

After the ANC made the pledge to hold peaceful negotiations with the ruling National Party, Slovo proposed a crucial plan — known as the "Sunset Clause" — allowing for power-sharing in South Africa.

The agreement broke a deadlock in the negotiations with the government and led to the country's first all-race elections in April 1994. Mandela's victory in that election officially ended apartheid and brought the ANC to power.

Slovo was fourth on the ANC's list of parliamentary candidates in the elections. As minister of housing, he pursued the goal of providing affordable housing for everyone.

His last public appearance was at the ANC's national conference in December 1994, where he received from Mandela his party's highest honor, the Isithwalandwe/Seaparankoe ("He Who Wears the Leopard's Skin") award.

"What I did, I did without any regrets," he said upon receiving the award. "I decided long ago that there is only one target, and that target is to remove the racist regime and obtain power for the people." □

## **Peres and Arafat negotiate unresolved autonomy issues**

*By David Landau*

JERUSALEM, Jan. 9 (JTA) — Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat met this week to negotiate unresolved issues in the Palestinian self-rule accord.

Meeting Monday near the Erez checkpoint separating the Gaza Strip from Israel, the two leaders said that they had made progress on such issues as safe passage routes for Palestinians traveling between Gaza and the West Bank Jericho enclave, Israeli recognition of Palestinian passports and the establishment of additional Palestinian industrial zones.

They also said that Arafat and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin would meet Jan. 19 for a discussion on the next phase of the peace process, which includes the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank and the concurrent holding of Palestinian elections.

They said that details of the Rabin-Arafat meeting would not be made public in the hope that this would help expedite progress on those issues.

After meeting privately for a half hour, Peres and Arafat joined delegations from both sides for additional talks.

Israeli sources said after the meeting with Arafat that the Israeli side had demonstrated new flexibility regarding the release of Palestinian female prisoners held in Israeli jails.

Arafat, speaking to reporters after the meeting, said the prisoner issue would be taken up by a joint committee comprising ministers from both sides.

Peres, Arafat and their aides appeared relaxed after their meeting, despite tensions between the two sides in the wake of ongoing violence both on the Gaza border and in the West Bank.

The latest incident — which caused no casualties — occurred just hours before the Monday meeting.

A donkey cart laden with explosives was detonated on the main Gaza highway near the Gaza settlement of Kfar Darom just as an Egged bus carrying schoolchildren from the Katif settlements in the Gaza Strip drove past with its Israeli army escort.

But most of the charge failed to explode, and no one was hurt in the partial blast that did take place. Army sappers later blew up the remaining explosives.

Asked about this incident and about the rash of terror attacks on Israeli targets inside Gaza and across the border, Arafat claimed his police were doing their best. He said that Israel was also unable to claim total success in the fight against terrorism. □

## **Peace Now: Israeli government approves settlement expansion**

*By David Landau*

JERUSALEM, Jan. 9 (JTA) — The Israeli government has approved plans to expand 11 Jewish settlements in the West Bank, according to officials of the dovish movement Peace Now.

Leaders of the organization, which opposes settlement expansion, say the plans embrace about 1,000 acres of land in the West Bank.

The organization said that while the plans are technically legal, they nonetheless constitute a violation of the Palestinian self-rule accord by the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Aharon Domb, spokesman of the Council of Judea and Samaria, the umbrella settlers' organization, accused Peace Now of making common cause with Israel's enemies.

The latest developments come in the wake of last week's controversy over plans for the settlement of Efrat to expand.

After protests by Palestinians, the government halted construction plans and worked out a compromise with the settlement to build on land closer to Efrat.

At a news conference in Jerusalem on Monday, Peace Now officials also accused the government of setting aside thousands of acres of West Bank land on which new roads will be built to enable Israeli settlers to bypass Arab towns.

Peace Now leader Tzalli Reshef accused the government of at one moment pursuing a policy of peace, and at the next, approving building plans that would add thousands of residential units to the settlements.

"Either the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing," Reshef said, "or else, if the intention is to evacuate some of this territory in the future, these projects are a colossal waste of money." □

**Argentina reportedly unlikely to extradite alleged war criminal**

By Ruth Gruber

ROME, Jan. 9 (JTA) — Argentina is unlikely to extradite accused Nazi war criminal Erich Priebke to Italy to be tried in Rome on charges of mass murder, according to a local media report.

On Sunday, the newspaper La Stampa quoted Priebke's lawyer, Pedro Bianchi, as saying in a telephone interview from Buenos Aires that procedural errors by Italian officials would ensure that Priebke would never be extradited.

"Argentine justice is slow and complex," Bianchi was quoted as saying. "We are still carrying out a procedural battle, but there are no doubts about the final result: The request for extradition will not be agreed. It was extremely poorly presented and full of errors of form."

Priebke, 82, is wanted as one of the alleged perpetrators of the mass murder of 335 Romans in 1944. At the time, he was an SS captain and deputy to Herbert Kappler, the Gestapo chief during the Nazi occupation of Rome.

The massacre at the Ardeatine Caves south of Rome, which included 75 Jewish victims, was in reprisal for a March 1944 partisan attack that resulted in the deaths of 33 German stormtroopers in Rome.

Kappler ordered that ten Italians be executed for every dead German.

The massacre is considered the worst war crime to have taken place on Italian soil. It has become Italy's symbol both of the Holocaust and of Nazi repression in general.

Priebke escaped from a British prisoner of war camp in 1948, just before he was to appear before a war crimes tribunal. He then fled to Argentina.

He was tracked down last May in the Argentine town of San Carlo Bariloche by ABC News.

Italy formally requested his extradition in May. But despite assurances from Argentine President Carlos Menem that Priebke would be extradited, there has been little progress in the case since then.

Priebke's lawyer told La Stampa that one problem in the request to hand over Priebke was that Italy had requested his extradition for the specific crime of having murdered five people during the massacre. But Argentina has a statute of limitations of 15 years on murder charges.

He said the extradition treaty between Italy and Argentina forbids extradition if the crime is no longer subject to prosecution in one or the other country.

Last week, La Stampa said, the court tribunal overseeing the extradition request agreed to Bianchi's demand that all documentation on Priebke from the Italian side be translated into Spanish.

This request would cover some 100,000 pages of documents and would take years to accomplish. □

**Canadian court rejects claim of couple's persecution in Israel**

By Gil Kezwer

TORONTO, Jan. 9 (JTA) — In a move that could signal a change in the ability of Israelis from the former Soviet Union to claim refugee status in Canada, a Canadian federal court has rejected an Israeli couple's claim of religious persecution in Israel.

The Federal Court of Canada in Ottawa last week upheld a ruling by the Immigration and Refugee Board, which found no basis to the claim of Mikhael and Tatyana Frid that they had suffered discrimination in Israel because the husband was not Jewish.

During the past two years, Canada has granted refugee status to more than 500 Israelis, most of whom originated from the former Soviet Union.

The high number of Israeli claimants ranked Israel fifth on the list of countries from which self-described refugees were seeking to emigrate, according to the refugee board's quarterly statistics.

The issue garnered widespread publicity in Israel, where officials expressed outrage at the notion that emigres who had fled the former Soviet Union with Israeli assistance were claiming religious persecution.

The acceptance of the Russians' claims of persecution caused a diplomatic confrontation between Canada and Israel last summer, when Jerusalem called on Ottawa to stop accepting the alleged refugees.

The Frids, along with their daughter, Alice, emigrated from Kazakhstan to Israel in February 1992.

Mikhael Frid told Canada's refugee board, and repeated in federal court, that his family had been harassed and persecuted in Israel because of their mixed status.

He claimed that he could not find employment, that Tatyana had been beaten by Israeli police, and that as a conscientious objector he had faced a prison term for refusing compulsory service in the Israeli military.

**Maybe discrimination, but not persecution**

But Justice Marshall Rothstein concurred with the refugee board that if discrimination had occurred, it did not amount to persecution.

There is no evidence that the Israeli government "is persecuting those persons who they have invited to come to their country," Rothstein wrote in his ruling.

That Federal Court decision could serve as a precedent for the 1,000 outstanding cases before the refugee board filed by Israelis, almost all of whom are originally from the former Soviet Union.

The court's decision was welcomed by some immigration attorneys.

"Finally the Federal Court has made a pronouncement concerning the nonsense of all these allegations of persecution made by non-Jews from Russia who went to Israel," immigration lawyer Sergio Karas said in an interview.

"These people sought to take advantage of the generosity of Israel," he said.

After acquiring Israeli citizenship, they "turned around later and, strictly for personal gain, argued that the authorities of Israel were somehow involved in persecuting them or condoned the discrimination or harassment of them, all of which were arguments that were never supported by any objective evidence," Karas said.

In an effort to stem the flood of perceived bogus refugee claims, Canada imposed a visa requirement in May 1993 on visitors with temporary Israeli travel documents.

By pre-screening visa applicants, officials had hoped to make it harder for would-be claimants to reach Canada, officials said.

The visa measure stemmed from "the need to protect the integrity of the refugee system," said immigration spokeswoman Wendy Bontinen. "We have to demonstrate we have control of our borders."

The visa requirement does not affect citizens of Israel traveling on a regular Israeli passport to Canada. That passport continues to be visa-exempt.

Ironically, many of the emigres from the former Soviet Union are highly educated and would qualify as immigrants to Canada, according to Toronto immigration lawyer Mendel Green.

"They have the impression that the only way to get to Canada is as a refugee," he said. "They are to be pitied." □

**Jewish groups praise Dole on Bosnian arms initiative***By Matthew Dorf*

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9 (JTA) — As a shaky cease-fire takes hold in Bosnia, Jewish groups are praising an effort in Congress to lift the arms embargo on the Muslim nation by this spring.

Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) introduced legislation on the first day of the new Congress last week, calling for an end to the arms embargo if the Bosnian government asks for weapons or by May 1, whichever comes first.

Dole then put the bill on the back burner saying he will not seek an immediate vote.

Despite many Jewish activists' general concerns over the new Republican Congress, most praised Dole's bill, one of the first pieces of legislation unveiled by the new leadership.

Jewish groups have been pressing for stronger U.S. action in Bosnia ever since the war broke out in the former Yugoslav republic. In particular, Jewish organizations repeatedly called on the United States and the United Nations to lift the arms embargo.

Most Jewish groups continue to support lifting the arms embargo, but for some, the cease-fire has changed the playing field.

Former President Jimmy Carter last month negotiated the latest of a series of attempts to bring an end to the bloody carnage in Bosnia. The three-week old cease-fire has held with few exceptions, activists said.

The American Jewish Congress took the strongest stand among Jewish groups. It went a step further even than Dole in support of the lifting of the arms embargo regardless of the cease-fire.

Arguing that the Bosnian Muslims presently cannot defend themselves against the Serbs, Mark Pelavin, AJCongress's Washington representative said, "It's time to get serious about lifting the embargo.

"At every stage of the game, others have argued not to lift the arms embargo and at every stage of the game, the war goes on," he said.

B'nai B'rith, which holds little hope that the cease-fire will hold, is also among those supporting Dole's measure.

"The Serbs are factoring the cease-fire into their military designs," said George Spectre, associate director for international, governmental and Israel affairs for B'nai B'rith. "The cease-fire is a moot point because during the winter they generally don't fight anyway."

Others are taking a more cautious approach.

"We are yielding to the cease-fire," said Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism.

Lifting the embargo now "could jeopardize the cease-fire. We need to balance out the risks," he said. □

**Czech victims of Nazi atrocities demand reparations from Germany***By Gil Sedan*

BONN, Jan. 9 (JTA) — Representatives of victims of Nazi atrocities in the Czech Republic are demanding that Germany grant them reparations for their suffering during World War II.

But at the same time, representatives of the three million Germans who fled from the Sudetenland during the war demanded that the Czech government compensate them for their suffering. Many are also demanding their right to repatriate.

Jacob Cermin, chairman of the organization of the

16,800 survivors of Nazi persecution still living in the Czech Republic, complained in an interview in the German newspaper Die Welt that it was a "disgrace" that Germany has not spent one penny for the victims of the Nazis in Czechoslovakia.

Cermin warned that Germany's failure to compensate the Czechs could lead to "renewed hatred between the two peoples."

Germany has turned into a major economic power in the Czech Republic.

More and more economic enterprises, as well as newspapers, have been acquired by German entrepreneurs. The famous Skoda car manufacturer has become a subsidiary of the German Volkswagen company. □

**Israel appoints new panel to study disappearance of Yemenite children***By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM, Jan. 9 (JTA) — The Israeli Cabinet has agreed to appoint a state commission of inquiry to investigate the disappearance of Yemenite children in the 1950s.

The children had been part of a massive airlift that brought tens of thousands of Yemenite Jews to Israel from 1948 to 1950.

Some leaders in the Yemenite community have alleged that Israeli authorities at the time abducted the children and sold them for adoption in Israel and abroad.

The Cabinet's decision comes three weeks after another committee — headed by retired Judge Moshe Shalgi and appointed six years ago to investigate the matter — issued its findings.

That committee examined 505 cases, and determined that in all but 65, the children died of various illnesses.

The committee also concluded that the children for whom no documentation was found had also probably died of disease.

It found no evidence supporting allegations by some leaders in the Yemenite community that the children were sold for adoption in Israel and abroad.

In March of last year, about 10 heavily armed members of a Yemenite sect led by Rabbi Uzi Meshulam holed themselves up in a fortified house near Tel Aviv, protesting what they described as the "disappearance and sale of thousands of Yemenite children."

In a scene reminiscent of the Branch Davidians who holed up in Waco, Texas, last year, scores of armed followers of Meshulam barricaded themselves in the home of their leader in the development town of Yehud. They vowed to kill or be killed if the government did not meet a demand they issued.

They demanded that the Knesset conduct an "honest" inquiry into the fate of an undetermined number of Yemenite babies who disappeared during 1949 and the early 1950s.

Meshulam's followers were dispersed following a massive police operation, and several sect members were arrested in May.

Labor Knesset member Avigdor Kahalani, who joined other parliamentarians in drafting a bill to set up a state commission, welcomed the government's decision.

He said it was an important gesture toward the Yemenite community, for whom the fate of the children is a painful episode in their history.

"This commission will give the feeling to the families that somebody cares about them," he said. "I think maybe we will find new documents, meet new people that didn't speak to investigators before and I think we will find more facts." □