

# BLACK PANTHERS MARCH AGAINST JEWS

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- More than a thousand members of Israel's Black Panther movement and residents of poor neighborhoods staged violent demonstrations against the government's new austerity program and its allocation of funds for settlements on the West Bank. The demonstrators burned tires, hurled rocks at police and set one police car on fire. Some demonstrators were injured in clashes with police and an unknown number were arrested.

Large numbers of slum residents staged 10 demonstrations shouting "ten pounds is too much for milk" -- a reference to sharp price increases -- and "the government must fall." They shouted obscenities at various Cabinet Ministers. Police, responding in force, blocked one band of protestors seeking to reach Premier Begin's residence. However, the police urged the Panthers not to take out their anger on the police since there was no conflict between the police and the public over economic measures.

Charley Biton, a Black Panther leader who is a member of the Knesset, used a bullhorn in the Knesset to shout protests against new Finance Minister Yigal Hurwitz, who developed the new economic program aimed at curbing Israel's spiraling inflation. The protests were touched off by the announcement on Nov. 19 of the measures which are expected to produce a deliberate slowdown in the economy and austerity affecting every Israeli home. The Hurwitz plan calls for a tight credit squeeze and a halt in government development projects, including new schools and hospitals. Milk and milk products were targeted for 100 percent

increases; public transport 50 percent; electricity nearly 40 percent; and mail service 30 percent. An imminent oil price increase is expected to trigger a new chain of price increases. Hurwitz defended the program in a TV interview in which he said "another nation could live on the amount of money we waste." He warned the current 100 percent inflation rate would not decline in the first two to three months of the new economic program.

Declaring that Israel's annual balance of trade deficit stands at \$4.3 billion, Hurwitz said the program will "freeze" "greatly swollen" services. Credit "which is fueling inflation," will be allowed to rise by only nine percent in the next three months. He said government subsidies "have been completely abolished for milk and milk products and for cooking oil and will soon be abolished for meat." He said there will be "no new wage agreements until 1981," interpreted to mean that wage agreements coming up for renewal in 1980 will be extended unchanged for a year. His economic "war cabinet" met for seven hours before issuing

its stiff orders. Treasury experts said the new measures would add five percent to the cost-of-living index. The economic plan provides for immediate payment of compensation to the poorer residents, such as welfare recipients and widows. Child allowances also will rise immediately by five percent. All wage earners will get cost-of-living increases, as of December instead of the scheduled April date. Officials said the program has a specific objective of directing and encouraging manpower to

move from civil service sectors to export-oriented industries.

Biton took up the issue again in the Knesset, urging the House to intervene for the release of some 20 suspects detained after the riotous demonstrations in Jerusalem the previous night. Biton said all appeals for "the weaker strata" were like "talking to the wall" and at that point he turned to face the wall behind the speakers podium and continued his speech. Likud deputies quit the chamber in protest and the session was suspended. Black Panther leaders, meeting in one of the poor neighborhoods, said the police were after them, so they had gone underground.

## PLIGHT OF FALASHA JEWS STUDIED

MONTREAL (WNS) -- The plight of the Falasha Jews in Ethiopia and the problems of Sephardic Jews inside and outside of Israel stirred the most vigorous debate among the 2600 Jewish communal leaders attending the five-day General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations. Yona Begale, the leader of the Falasha community for the last 50 years, allowed to leave Ethiopia less than three weeks ago, appealed urgently for an increase in efforts being made in Israel and elsewhere to rescue the 25,000 Jews he said remained trapped in Ethiopia.

The 72-year-old leader told the delegates that Ethiopian Jews had been killed, forced into slavery and to convert to other religions with the result that the one-time 250,000 Falasha Jews had dwindled to less than 25,000.

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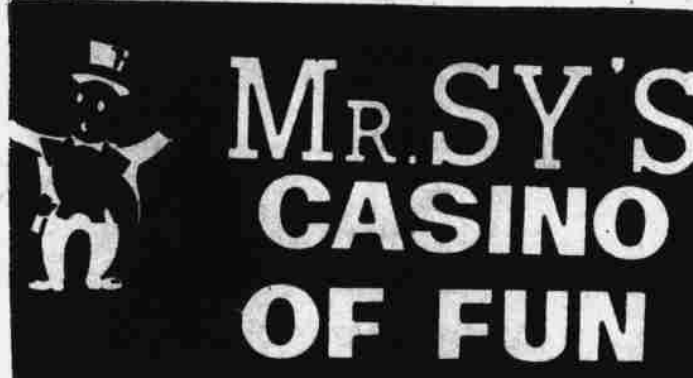
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