

# RABBINICAL POLL EMBROILS ISRAEL

## Ben-Gurion's Candidate Is Favored in Move to Weaken Religious Parties

Special to The New York Times.

TEL AVIV, Israel, July 15—Col. Shlomo Goren, chief chaplain of the Israeli defense forces and Premier David Ben-Gurion's candidate for the Chief Rabbinate, is favored to be elected to the highest ecclesiastic post in Israel.

Polling has been set for Aug. 26. The selection is to be made by an electoral college comprising forty-two rabbis and twenty-eight laymen.

Two Chief Rabbis and the Supreme Rabbinical Council of six members are to be elected. Rabbi Goren, an Ashkenazic (occidental) rabbi, is seeking the post that has been vacant since the death of Chief Rabbi Isaac Halevy Herzog in July, 1959. Rabbi Itzhak Nissim, the incumbent Sephardic (oriental) Chief Rabbi, is standing for re-election.

Powerful figures in the "old guard" of religious leadership have been fighting to stop Rabbi Goren. The Minister for Religious Affairs, Rabbi Yaakov M. Toledano, has been leading a fight against Rabbi Nissim's candidacy.

The politics that has marked the elections has caused some antagonism here. "The politicians," observed Maariv, a Tel Aviv newspaper, "appear more concerned with who shall influence the Chief Rabbis than with the influence the rabbis shall have over the flock."

The feud between Chief Rabbi Nissim and the Minister for Religious Affairs stems from the last rabbinical elections five

years ago. Rabbi Toledano, who had been Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, had sought promotion to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. The National Religious Front, which comprises the Hapoel Hamizrachi and Mizrahi parties, supported Rabbi Nissim, who was elected.

Mr. Ben-Gurion says that he is against mixing religion with politics and that he does not recognize the justification for the existence of religious political parties.

By wresting the Ministry of

Religious Affairs from them, he has deprived the parties of one of their major sources of power in the religious community. He now hopes to break their control of the rabbinate.

Hitherto, the religious parties monopolized the elections. The organizing committee that establishes the electoral college is appointed jointly by the Ministry and the outgoing Supreme Rabbinical Council.

The rabbinic "old guard" and the National Religious Front do not question the scholarship or

fitness of Rabbi Goren but they oppose him because he is regarded as an instrument used by Mr. Ben Gurion to weaken their position. They prefer the election of Rabbi Joseph H. Soloveichik of Boston or Chief Rabbi Iser J. Unterman of Tel Aviv.

The elections had been scheduled originally for last February, when the five-year tenure of the outgoing rabbinate expired, but they could not be held because of an impasse between the Ministry and the rabbinate.

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Rabbi Toledano had drafted regulations providing that candidates must be Israeli citizens under the age of 70. These clauses would have barred Rabbi Soloveichik, a United States citizen, and Rabbi Unterman, who was 73.

The Minister later withdrew the controversial clauses and each side eventually named four representatives to the organizing committee.