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See Eshkol's Successor As A Political Figure Who Will Not Want To Stay After Election

JERUSALEM, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- The person who succeeds the late Levi Eshkol as Premier will probably be a personality devoid of the ambition to seek the post in the forthcoming November national election, informed observers suggested today, as the name of Mrs. Golda Meir, 70, emerged most frequently in speculation about a successor. The observers argued that whatever the successor Premier does between taking power and the November elections will be open to disabling criticism, from both opposition parties and from coalition members. The observers agreed that a period of less than nine months is too short a time for any leader to really prove himself as a Prime Minister and that a pre-election period was probably the worst possible time to try it.

Mrs. Meir was considered the candidate most likely to be able to rally the differing sections and opinions of the power blocs in the Cabinet. However, it was reported reliably she had not yet been approached on the matter. She has served as foreign minister and as Mapai Party secretary-general.

None of the other apparent candidates are considered strong enough to take over the Premier's post. Deputy Premier Yigal Allon, who is heading a caretaker government, was considered able to gain support of the United Labor Party machinery but was believed to lack general popularity. The opposite was considered the situation for Gen. Moshe Dayan, the Defense Minister. Foreign Minister Abba Eban might have a hard time convincing the Labor Party secretariat to back him for the Premiership, for popular opinion about him is divided, observers said. A great majority of Israelis considered him an excellent Foreign Minister but it is believed that most would not want to see him in serious consideration for the Premier's post. He trails both Gen. Allon and Gen. Dayan in public opinion polls.

The Labor Party's powerful secretary-general, Pinhas Sapir, is unlikely to be acceptable by the Gahal (Liberal-Herut) alignment or by the National Religious Party coalition factions because of his recent statement that the Israeli-occupied areas should be considered a burden to be thrown off as quickly as possible. His candidacy was seen as posing the threat of a breakup of the Government of national unity the late Premier Eshkol put together, and few Israelis want that to happen.

Dignitaries Arrive For Funeral; U.S. Delegation Includes Finch, Sisco, Barbour, Fisher

JERUSALEM, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- High ranking dignitaries from many countries arrived here today to represent their governments at the funeral tomorrow of the late Prime Minister Levi Eshkol. Representing President Richard M. Nixon will be his Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, former Lt. Gov. Robert H. Finch, of California. Mr. Finch left Washington today on a special flight to Tel Aviv accompanied by Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco. They will be joined by U.S. Ambassador Walworth Barbour.

Max M. Fisher of Detroit is also serving as a member of the U.S. delegation. Mr. Fisher co-ordinated Mr. Nixon's campaign efforts for the Presidency in the Jewish community last year. He also served as a special Nixon adviser on urban and community affairs during the campaign. He is president of the United Jewish Appeal, chairman of the United Israel Appeal and a ranking board member of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

The highest ranking foreign representative will be Herbert Weichmann, President of the Bundesrat (West Germany's Upper House) and acting President of the Federal Republic. Mr. Weichmann, who is Jewish, is also Mayor of Hamburg. The Canadian Government will be represented by its former Foreign Minister Paul Martin and Australia by Speaker of Parliament W. J. Aston. Delegations were expected from Britain, Italy, Belgium, Holland and the Scandinavian countries among others.

Apart from diplomats, Lydda Airport was jammed with arriving groups representing various Jewish organizations and Socialist parties who will pay their final tribute to Mr. Eshkol. Thousands have already filed past the bier in the center of the Knesset (Parliament) plaza here. Among them are foreign diplomats, Israeli Government officials, men and women from all walks of life and many Israeli Arab and Druze notables.

Mr. Eshkol, Israel's third Prime Minister, was the first to pass away while in office. Entire editions of Israeli newspapers today were devoted to eulogies of him. The independent daily Haaretz, frequently an outspoken critic of Mr. Eshkol named him as "one of the most important men of the generation." The Labor Zionist Organization declared a week of mourning for Mr. Eshkol among its branches throughout the world. Itzhak Koren, general secretary of the movement, hailed the late Prime Minister as one of the pillars of the labor movement.

Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger of West Germany sent a note of condolence describing Mr. Eshkol's death as a grave loss to Israel. "We pay special tribute to his dedication to the freedom of his country," Dr. Kiesinger said. The German Social Democratic Party said in a message to the Israel Labor Party, "We shall always remember Mr. Eshkol as a man who, in the dark hours of history our two peoples, always resolutely found the path of cooperation in human fellowship." British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart sent telegrams of condolences to Gen. Allon and Mr. Eshkol's widow. British Opposition leader Edward Heath also sent a telegram to Mrs. Eshkol.

American Jewish Leaders Eulogize Eshkol, Cite His Contributions

NEW YORK, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- President Arthur J. Goldberg of the American Jewish Committee and the organization's honorary president, pledged to Acting Prime Minister Allon "our renewed efforts to help create the just and lasting peace in the Middle East that would be the finest memorial to Levi Eshkol." The American Jewish Congress lauded a "friend and beloved colleague" for his efforts to "establish Israel as an exemplar of justice and democracy in the Middle East." The National Community Relations Advisory Council said that "all mankind has lost a man of profound humanity." William Haber, president of the American ORT Federation, described Mr. Eshkol as "a figure on whom world Jewry looked with love." A statement by B'nai B'rith described Mr. Eshkol as a "pragmatist and visionary" and cited his self-effacing humor, Yiddishkeit and and constant concern for the faith in the cultural unity and advancement of the Jewish people." Condolences were also expressed by the Synagogue Council of America, Rabbinical Council of America, Central Conference of American Rabbis, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, Mizrahi Women, B'nai Israel, American Technion Society, New York and Chicago Boards of Rabbis, National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, United HIAS Service, and Jewish Labor Committee.

In Montreal, cables expressing sympathy were sent to the Israel Government by Samuel Bronfman, Canadian Jewish Congress honorary president, who spoke for the Canadian Jewish community, and by officials of the CJCongress and the Zionist Organization of Canada. Other condolences were sent by the Buenos Aires Jewish community and the DAIA, central representative body of Argentine Jewry.

American Jewish leaders will attend a national memorial service in honor of Mr. Eshkol tomorrow at 1 P.M. in the auditorium of the Jewish Agency, 515 Park Avenue, New York. The service, a few hours after the interment of Eshkol on Mt. Herzl, Jerusalem, will be sponsored by the American Section of the Jewish Agency for Israel in cooperation with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the American Zionist Council.

Speakers will include Dr. Emanuel Neumann, chairman of the American Section, Sen. Jacob Javits; Rehavam Amir, Consul General of Israel, who will represent the Israel Government; Dr. Joachim Prinz, former chairman of the Conference of Presidents; Pinchas Cruso, honorary president of the United Labor Zionist Organization, a long-time personal friend of Mr. Eshkol, who will speak in behalf of the American Zionist Council; and Edward Ginsberg, of Cleveland, chairman of the United Jewish Appeal. Cantor David Kusevitsky will chant "El Moleh Rachamim," the traditional prayer for the dead.

Two leading dailies, the New York Times and the Washington Post, said editorially that the selection of a successor to the late Premier Eshkol had to be considered by Israel in terms of the possible effects on Israel's foreign policy, particularly toward the Arab states. The Times declared that if all-party unity was continued, "compromises are conceivable as peace negotiations go forward" but that without it, "there could be a shift toward a more hawkish policy and even an appeal to intransigence for domestic political gain." The Times concluded, however, that the likelihood was that "shifts in nuance and style will be greater in the next Israeli Government than substantial shifts in policy."

The Washington Post noted that whoever assumes the Premiership between now and the November national elections "will have an awesome responsibility of preserving the security of Israel and peace in the Middle East." The editorial declared that "already several Arab countries have tightened their security as an indication, no doubt, of their apprehension about the policies of Mr. Eshkol's successor." The Post added that Israel's political leaders "would be wise to measure their loss" in the death of Mr. Eshkol "in terms of that talent he had for reconciliation and restraint.

London Press Says Death Has Harmed Chances For Peace

LONDON, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- British newspapers took the position today that the sudden death of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol of Israel has harmed chances for a peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis. The papers based their consensus on Mr. Eshkol's talents as a conciliator and as a "stabilizing factor" in Israel's Government.

The Daily Telegraph said his death "brings an additional element of instability into the Middle East at a time when...prospects of progress toward a settlement are already depressing enough." The London Times said Mr. Eshkol's "Political talents will be missed" and added, "only a chairman of genius could have reconciled the intense personal and political rivalries of the parties and their leaders." The Times and the Guardian expressed the belief that Mr. Eshkol's successor will be less concerned with putting coalition unity before anything else. The Guardian said Mr. Eshkol "was the man who might have induced his compatriots to accept less than they might have considered just or expedient." The papers felt that, in any event, the Israel Government now must thrash out what its minimum demands are for a settlement with the Arabs and state them publicly.

Reports from Cairo and Beirut today indicated that Mr. Eshkol's death has created considerable uneasiness in the Arab world. The semi-official Cairo newspaper Al Ahram saw in the appointment of Gen. Yigal Allon as acting Prime Minister "a new step toward reaffirmation of the military's authority" and no change in Israel's "aggressive" policies. The paper thought matters would be even worse from the Arab point of view if Defense Minister Moshe Dayan were to take power. Daily Telegraph correspondent Clare Hollingworth reported from Cairo that Arab diplomats agree "there will be turmoil resulting in trouble for Egypt arising from Mr. Eshkol's death." The Times reported from Beirut that Arab leaders are concerned because they regarded Mr. Eshkol as "a voice of restraint in an increasingly militant Cabinet and feel that now the delicate balance will be tipped in favor of the hawks."

State Department Says It Knows Of No Plans For Early Four Power Talks On Mideast

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- A State Department spokesman said today that he knew of no plans for early Four Power talks on the Middle East which diplomatic reports from London said would begin early next week. The official, Carl Bartsch, said he had no information to support the London reports. He noted that the U.S. is still engaged in bi-lateral conversations at the United Nations with the representatives of Soviet Russia, Britain and France. The purpose of those talks is to ascertain whether sufficient common ground exists for multi-lateral or Four Power discussions to seek a solution of the Middle East crisis. So far nothing has emerged from the bi-lateral talks.

The Washington Post reported yesterday that President Nixon has agreed to bi-lateral talks between the U.S. and the Soviet Union outside the frame work of the UN discussions to see if there are any areas of agreement on the Middle East. Washington Post correspondent Richard Harwood attributed his information to sources close to the President who are accompanying him on his current European tour. According to Mr. Harwood, the talks will be conducted in Washington between Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin.

Mr. Harwood said the U.S. was optimistic since it believes the Soviets want talks with the U.S. on broader subjects, such as arms control, which could be brought about if there is progress toward a Middle East accord. President Nixon has reportedly said he would be agreeable to a summit meeting with Soviet leaders if progress could be achieved first on a "lower level." The Washington talks on the Middle East would fit the description of "lower level" talks.

(The UN peace envoy Dr. Gunnar V. Jarring, who had been expected in Israel today, postponed his trip owing to Mr. Eshkol's death and sent Foreign Minister Abba Eban a letter of condolence.)

(The Soviet Government, in a statement carried by the Tass news agency today, charged Israel with "abominable provocations" against the neighboring Arab states and said that commando action against Israel would intensify. Such action, it was said, was justified by international law.)

Eban, Occupied By Eshkol's Death, Has No Comment On Reply From Thant Letter

JERUSALEM, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- There was no comment here today on the note sent by United Nations Secretary General U Thant yesterday to Israel's Foreign Minister Abba Eban, in which Mr. Thant assured the Israel Government that he was doing all he could toward "finding means to prevent such acts of violence" as the Arab guerrilla attack on an El Al airliner in Zurich last week. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said Mr. Eban had not gotten around to studying Mr. Thant's letter owing to the sudden death yesterday of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol.

Mr. Thant's letter was in reply to one from Mr. Eban last week in which the Israeli official virtually challenged Mr. Thant to spell out exactly what he planned to do regarding Arab terrorist activities and threats to civilian air travel. Mr. Thant said in his response that even before he had heard from Mr. Eban he had contacted the International Civil Aviation Organization, a specialized UN agency, as well as the International Air Transport Association, which is a private group with headquarters in Montreal. He used his letter on the protection of civilian air traffic to exert diplomatic pressure on Israel, some observers thought. Mr. Thant advised Israel that "the only sure way" to end terrorist attacks was to make "some substantial movement" toward a Middle East peace.

Israel Accuses Iraq Of Holding 'Many Jews' In Jail, Says Action Endangers Peace

UNITED NATIONS, N. Y., Feb. 27 (JTA) -- Israel accused Iraq, in a document officially circulated at the UN today, of still holding under arrest "many Jews" accused of spying and of responsibility for the recent torture deaths of five imprisoned Jews. The charges were contained in a letter from Israel's chief representative to the UN, Ambassador Yosef Tekoah, to Ambassador Armand Berard, of France, February president of the Security Council. Mr. Tekoah protested the recent "atrocious crime repeated in Baghdad"--the trial, execution and public display of eight alleged spies for Israel--as well as the January execution of 14 Iraqis, nine of them Jews, on the same charges. "The continuation of these arrests, trials and executions constitutes a danger to peace in the region," Mr. Tekoah's letter said. "The international community must not, by its toleration, suffer this situation to continue. There is no recourse for the Jews of Iraq except to be allowed to leave the country," Mr. Tekoah said.

Israel Replies To Sniping By Egyptians At Canal, Engaged In 2-Hour Fire Exchange

TEL AVIV, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- Persistent sniping by Egyptians on the west bank of the Suez Canal escalated today into a two hour exchange of fire with Israeli forces across the waterway as Israelis abandoned a policy of restraint and hit back at the Egyptians. At the same time, Israeli forces laid down a heavy barrage against Jordanian units who provided covering fire for a gang of Arab saboteurs pursued by an Israeli patrol in the southern Golan Heights. Two saboteurs were killed.

Three Israeli soldiers were wounded today in a bazooka attack from Jordanian territory on a patrol near the junction of the Israeli, Jordanian and Syrian borders. An Israeli soldier was killed yesterday and two others were injured in pre-dawn clash with Arab saboteurs in the Jordan Valley. Israeli forces replied with heavy fire to a Katyusha rocket attack launched from Jordanian territory on a Beisan Valley village last night. Several Katyusha rockets were fired near Kuneitra, the main township in the southern Golan Heights. There were no casualties or damage.

The Nabulus office of the Bank Leumi was damaged by a bomb that went off in its doorway yesterday. Eleven local Arabs were arrested on suspicion. A bomb went off in front of an Arab grocery stall in Tel Aviv yesterday blasting a three-foot crater and damaging a car parked nearby.

Economic Minister Urges Israel Bond Convention To Increase Bond Sales In 1969

MIAMI, Fla., Feb. 27 (JTA) -- An Israeli official urged delegates to the inaugural conference for Israel Bonds here to raise their 1969 quota of Bond sales to more than half of Israel's \$333 million development budget for the current year. Shimon Alexandroni, Israel's Economic Minister to the United States, told the 2,500 delegates that his nation's economy would be in a bad way if it were not for Bond sales. He said Israel is now spending more than 20 percent of its gross national product for defense.

Dr. Joseph J. Schwartz, vice president of the Israel Bond Organization, disclosed that world-wide sales of Bonds last year yielded proceeds of \$130,500,000. He said the largest single sum, \$30 million went for housing; \$16.5 million, was allocated to the development of agriculture and irrigation; and \$15 million each was allotted for industrial development and postal and tele-communications development. The remaining Bond proceeds went for electric power, transportation, mining and mineral resources development, roads and public buildings.

Conference On Soviet Jewry Voices Regret Over Refusal Of Visas To Rabbis

NEW YORK, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- An organization which has frequently accused the Soviet Union of practicing religious and cultural repression against its Jewish citizens expressed surprise and regret today over refusal of Russian visas to a number of Western rabbis who had been invited to participate in the 75th birthday celebration for Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow's Central Synagogue which were held last Sunday. Lewis H. Weinstein, chairman of the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry, said it was "tragic that more Jewish leaders were not present at this celebration which could have been an opportunity to open new vistas of communication between Soviet Jewry and Jews from around the world." He said that while the Conference was "dubious" about the political motivations of the Soviet authorities in sanctioning the birthday observance, it sent Rabbi Levin a congratulatory telegram. "It is not known whether or not it was revealed to the 2,000 Jews who are reported to have attended the service," he said.

A number of prominent rabbis from the U.S. and other Western countries, close friends of Rabbi Levin, were invited to the birthday fete by the head of the Moscow Jewish community, apparently with Soviet Government approval. But most of them were denied visas by Soviet Consulates or visas were not issued in time for them to make the trip.

An eye-witness at the birthday celebration reported that the only Communist bloc country represented was Hungary. Geza Seifert, head of the Hungarian Jewish community, addressed the throng in the Central Synagogue and reportedly drew exclamations of disbelief when he told them there were 30 synagogues in Budapest, a rabbinical seminary, a Jewish high school, hospital and other institutions. There are only three synagogues in Moscow and no other Jewish institutions.

CJFWF, WJCongress Sending Representatives To Latin America To Discuss Problems

NEW YORK, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- The Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds will send a small delegation of its top leaders to four Latin American communities next month for discussions on matters of concern to Jewish community organizations. The delegation, to be headed by CJFWF president Louis J. Fox and executive vice president Philip Bernstein, will visit Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Brazil, Montevideo, Uruguay and Buenos Aires, Argentina between March 17-31. The meetings in the communities will cover community organization, fund-raising, welfare, health, education, youth services, leadership development and professional training. Mr. Fox and Mr. Bernstein will be accompanied by several members of the CJFWF board of directors. The members of the group will travel at their own expense.

The World Jewish Congress announced yesterday that a Canadian Jewish leader will visit Mexico next month on its behalf to confer with Jewish community leaders there on a number of problems. The WJCongress said that Lavy Becker, former chairman of the Canadian Jewish Congress, planned to join a delegation of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

AFL-CIO Warns U.S. To Be Wary Of Soviet Union 'Peace Offensive' On Mideast

BAL HARBOUR, Fla. Feb. 27 (JTA) -- The AFL-CIO executive council has warned the U.S. Government to be wary of the Soviet Union's "peace offensive" in the Middle East and to press for a genuine settlement agreed to by the Arabs and Israelis and not one imposed from outside the region with the eventual aim of destroying Israel. The trade union body's view of the Middle East crisis was contained in a lengthy statement issued at a meeting of the executive council here. It accused the Soviet Union of attempting to dominate that region and of supplying the Arab countries, particularly Egypt, with arms and diplomatic support as instruments of Soviet policy.

Dr. Haber Declines Michigan Governor's Bid To Serve As Labor Department Director

DETROIT, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- A University of Michigan professor who heads the ORT, Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training, has declined an invitation by Gov. William G. Milliken of Michigan to serve as director of the State Labor Department. Dr. William Haber expressed regrets to the Governor that he could not accept the appointment because of other commitments. He offered to make himself available in a consultative or advisory capacity to whomever the Governor may name to the post. Dr. Haber is chairman of the central board of the World ORT Union and president of the American ORT Federation.

Dr. Goldstein Urges Solidarity With Israel At Opening Of Belgian Campaign

BRUSSELS, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- Dr. Israel Goldstein, world chairman of Keren Hayesod, called for Jewish solidarity with Israel here yesterday at the opening of the organization's campaign in Belgium. Keren Hayesod is the fund-raising arm of the world Zionist movement.