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Mrs. Meir Becomes 4th Premier As Knesset Gives Her A 84-12 Vote Of Confidence

JERUSALEM, March 17 (JTA) -- The Knesset (Parliament) gave an overwhelming vote of confidence today to the coalition government of Mrs. Golda Meir, who becomes Israel's fourth Premier. The vote was taken following an hour-long speech by the 70-year-old former Milwaukee school teacher in which she served notice that Israel would never accept a solution to the Middle East conflict imposed by the Big Powers.

The tally, 84-12 with one abstention, was read by Speaker of the Knesset Kaddish Luz and Mrs. Meir took her place at the head of the horse-shoe shaped government table where she and her cabinet pledged allegiance to the State, its laws and the Knesset, according to a formula laid down by Israeli law. The Cabinet later paid a ceremonial visit to the home of President Zalman Shazar.

Mrs. Meir's coalition cabinet is the same as the one put together 22 months ago by her predecessor, the late Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, on the eve of the Six-Day War. It consists of her own Israel Labor Party, now in political alignment with Mapam, the left-wing labor party; the Gahal (Herut-Liberal Party alignment); the Independent Liberals; National Religious Party; Poali Agudat Israel, and four small factions made up of Druze and Israeli Arabs affiliated with the Labor Party.

The position of Mrs. Meir's Government was spelled out in a platform presented to the Knesset today which declared that "the government will make constant efforts to achieve a durable peace with Israel's neighbors founded on treaties of peace to be reached in direct negotiations between the parties concerned." The document asserted further, "Without peace treaties, Israel will continue to maintain in full the situation as determined by the cease-fire and will consolidate her position in accordance with the vital needs of her security and development." That platform, reflecting the demands of the right-wing, nationalistic Gahal faction, appeared to contradict the contention of some observers here and abroad that in the past few months Israel had "quietly dropped" its insistence on direct peace talks with the Arabs and formal peace treaties with them.

Mrs. Meir's maiden speech as head of the government left little doubt about what Israel's stand will be in the months ahead. She reflected the deep concern felt here that the Big Four powers, whose representatives were expected to confer on the Middle East at the United Nations this week, may come up with recommendations inimical to Israel's interests and exert pressure on Israel to accept them. "The small State of Israel ventures to ask its friends...to understand that in matters affecting our existence, the conditions for our very physical survival, no decision can be adopted without us, nor can any recommendations be formulated without our consent," Mrs. Meir said.

She said the Arabs must understand that the cease-fire lines can be tranquil only if quiet is maintained on both sides of the line. "We want tranquility," she added. "It was never our aspiration to win victory in war, but to prevent wars. But it has been demonstrated that when wars have been forced upon us, we have been able to play our part and there is no doubt in my heart that if a new war is forced upon us again, we shall again be victorious."

The Knesset assembled this morning. After being called by the Speaker, Mrs. Meir rose from her seat in the Labor Party section and mounted the rostrum. Members of her family were in the audience as was Mrs. Miriam Eshkol, widow of the late Prime Minister. Most members of the Knesset were dressed formally but some did not break their habit of appearing in public with open collars. Yigal Allon was sworn in as Deputy Prime Minister, the rank he held in the Eshkol government. He had served as Acting Prime Minister of the caretaker government from the time of Mr. Eshkol's death Feb. 26 until Mrs. Meir was named Premier-designate by President Shazar. The only absent members of Mrs. Meir's cabinet were Foreign Minister Abba Eban and Housing Minister Mordecai Ben Tov who are abroad.

Former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, absent from the chamber during Mrs. Meir's address, arrived later but abstained from casting a ballot in the confidence vote. Mr. Ben-Gurion later expressed his "personal" opposition to Mrs. Meir. He had been a bitter political foe of the late Mr. Eshkol. The former Premier, who plans to stand for re-election to the Knesset as a one-man faction, said he would join the United Labor movement if it were headed by "men of high ethical standards true to the people of Israel. Another erstwhile political opponent of Mrs. Meir, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, warmly congratulated her as she walked from the rostrum after her speech. He will continue to serve as Defense Minister.

Say Nasser Pursuing Tough Line On Resumption Of Relations With United States

WASHINGTON, March 17 (JTA) -- The Nixon Administration is exploring quietly the chances of improved relations with Egypt, but the Nasser regime has imposed conditions involving Israel's withdrawal from occupied territories that Washington is reluctant to accept, it was learned here today. A Cairo newspaper meanwhile has accused the United States of aiding Israeli reprisal actions against Arab guerrillas.

A reliable diplomatic source said that Cairo wants the U.S. to apply pressure on Israel, either within or outside an imposed settlement, to roll back its troops from the Suez Canal. One official said that "Nasser has been raising the ante with the U.S. every week" in setting forth his position on renewed relations. Egypt broke diplomatic ties with Washington during the Six-Day War.

Former U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Anderson, in Cairo on a trouble-shooting mission for President Nixon, is trying to assess the attitude of the Nasser Government on the possibility of sending a top official to Washington to meet with the President. King Hussein of Jordan, who arrived in Cairo yesterday for two days of consultations with President Nasser, will visit Washington next month for talks with President Nixon. Mr. Anderson has had a lengthy meeting with Egyptian Economic Minister Hassan Abbas Zaki on the possibility of increasing trade. He saw Hussein today.

The Cairo newspaper Al Gumhourea charged the U.S. Defense Department with "interfering openly" against the Arabs by allegedly helping Israel plan and execute reprisal actions. The newspaper said yesterday's Israeli air strikes against guerrilla camps in Jordan opened a "new era in the escalating Israeli terrorist measures against the Arab countries." It called "suspicious" the recent visit of Gen. Theodore Conway, commander of the U.S. Army strike command, to Israel.

The semi-official Cairo newspaper Al Ahram denied reports that Egypt was hoping for an "imposed" solution of the Middle East crisis by the Big Four powers. But the artillery duels initiated by Egypt across the Suez Canal last week and the mounting war fever, abetted by statements by government officials and the Egyptian press, were seen by observers here as intended to persuade the Big Four that urgent measures must be taken to avoid a new Middle East explosion.

Israeli Jet Fighters Blast Guerrilla Camps In Jordan Again, 3rd Attack Since Friday

TEL AVIV, March 17 (JTA) -- Israel's Air Force jets blasted guerrilla encampments inside Jordan this morning following a night of fierce artillery and rocket duels with Jordanian forces in which Iraqi units stationed in Jordan also took part. The air strike was the second in two days and the third since last Friday. A military spokesman said that eight terrorist bases were hit and many casualties were inflicted today.

There were no casualties reported in Deganya, Ashdod Yaacov or any of the other settlements in the Jordan and Beisan Valleys which were bombarded by Jordanian artillery and Katyusha rockets last night. Iraqis joined the attack with 122-mm. field guns. Israeli forces returned the fire and reportedly scored direct hits on enemy positions, aided by flares dropped by Israeli planes. A military spokesman said the Jordanian shells caused extensive damage to crops and banana groves in the Beisan Valley.

Yesterday Israeli jets attacked three guerrilla bases deep in Jordanian territory, surprising the commandos in early morning while most were still asleep. The targets, according to an Israeli military spokesman were Yadida, less than 10 miles north of Amman; Dibin, about eight miles south of Jarash township; and Dabrat, in the remote Araba region well south of Amman. All three villages were long ago evacuated by their civilian populations and were under complete control of El Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the spokesman said. Last Friday morning, Israeli jets attacked saboteur camps about 10 miles inside Jordan, north of the capital. The camps were bases for incursions against Israeli positions in the Golan Heights and the Beisan Valley.

Today's air strike came as reports reached here that Iraq has sent units of its Air Force into Syria to protect Iraqi troops newly stationed there. A military spokesman said yesterday's operation caused heavy damage to El Fatah installations. He said hits were scored on vehicles and possible on Katyusha rocket launchers, a mobile weapon that is favored by guerrilla groups. The spokesman said the air strikes were intended to show the terrorists that they were not safe anywhere in Jordan and to force them to move from camp to camp. The original terrorist bases near the banks of the Jordan River were rendered unusable some time ago by Israeli attacks.

Weizmann Says Israel Will Reinforce Armored Units in Sinai To Meet Aggression

TEL AVIV, March 17 (JTA) -- The chief of the General Staff Branch of the Army disclosed today that Israel will reinforce its armored units in the Sinai this year to meet any aggressive moves by Egypt. Gen. Ezer Weizmann, who met with military correspondents here, also confirmed earlier reports that Israel has established a special command for the Sinai in addition to the existing south, central and northern commands. He said the reorganization was designed to meet all contingencies based on estimates of the enemy's strength and intentions.

Gen. Weizmann singled out for praise the Israel Army corps of engineers which constructed a defense line along the east bank of the Suez Canal that proved itself in last week's artillery duels. He said although the Egyptians fired thousands of shells, Israeli casualties were held to a minimum. He also praised Israeli gunners for the pin-point accuracy of their return fire which caused heavy damage to Egyptian oil refineries, shipping and troop emplacements.

Gen. Weizmann said the Israel Air Force would have no trouble absorbing the supersonic American Phantom jet fighter bombers due to be delivered as well as the U.S.-built Skyhawks, a subsonic fighter that has already arrived. He said the training of new pilots would be accelerated but not at the sacrifice of quality. The general felt that the Israeli Air Force as presently composed would not feel the affects of the French embargo on aircraft spare parts. He said the military program this year will include more preventive measures against terrorist gangs but did not specify what they would be. He announced that the Army would hold large scale maneuvers during the year which will involve Air Force, infantry, armored units and paratroopers in units of greater than division strength.

Pincus Urges French Jews To Emigrate To Israel, Stresses Learning Of Hebrew

PARIS, March 17 (JTA) -- The chairman of the Jewish Agency urged French Jews yesterday to emigrate to Israel and told them that absorption facilities have been greatly improved in recent months. Aryeh L. Pincus, who also heads the Jewish Agency's immigration department, spoke at a meeting of the France Aliyah Commission attended by 350 delegates from Zionist organizations whose members have pledged to settle in Israel within three years.

Mr. Pincus stressed that the first step toward successful integration into Israeli life was a knowledge of Hebrew. He urged parents and Jewish organizations to encourage Hebrew studies either at Jewish Agency classes or in French schools where Hebrew is an optional foreign language. He said Israel welcomed aliyah from France with its cultural and scientific heritage. Reports disclosed that 4,200 persons had immigrated to Israel from France last year and 6,500 more have opened aliyah files at the Jewish Agency offices.

Zionist Federation Of Great Britain, Northern Ireland Will Mark 70th Anniversary

LONDON, March 17 (JTA) -- The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will mark its 70th anniversary at its annual conference next weekend. According to Lavy Bakstansky, general secretary of the movement, its current activities are focused on Jewish education, assistance to Jews planning to immigrate to Israel and public relations for Israel.

The B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation here announced that its new building is nearing completion. According to Hayim Pinner, executive director, the \$720,000 structure will provide facilities for students and all activities of the Hillel Foundation.

Israeli Arab Official Tells British That Direct Negotiations Are Only Solution

LONDON, March 17 (JTA) -- An Israeli Arab labor leader and former member of the Knesset (Parliament) told a British audience yesterday that direct negotiations between Israel and the Arab states were the only possible solution for the Middle East problem. Yusuf Khamis, a member of the Mapam Party and of the Executive of Histadrut, Israel's labor federation, spoke at a meeting arranged by Mapam in Britain. He is in charge of social welfare for West Bank Arabs.

He said there were deep-seated conflicts among the Arab states themselves and a social and economic abyss between the rich oil-producing countries and the poverty-stricken states of Egypt and Jordan. He said the problems of the Arabs would be solved as soon as general peace was established in the region. Arab guerrilla groups such as El Fatah could make no constructive contribution to peace, he said, so long as they adhered to terrorist tactics and the indiscriminate killing of civilians. He said an imposed solution by the Big Powers could not bring peace to the Middle East.

Rabin Tells Brazilians That Israel Will Not Withdraw Until There Is 'Real Peace'

RIO DE JANEIRO, March 17 (JTA) -- Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's Ambassador to the United States and the former Chief of Staff of its armed forces, told a mass rally yesterday that Israel's Army would not withdraw from the occupied Arab territories for "10, 20, 50 or even 100 years without a real peace." Ambassador Rabin expressed optimism about the talks between President Richard M. Nixon and Israel's Foreign Minister Abba Eban in Washington last Friday at which he was present. While in Brazil, Gen. Rabin will meet with Jewish community and student leaders here and in Sao Paulo. He will visit Uruguay and Argentina.

West Germans Welcome First Delegation Of Knesset Members To Visit Their Country

STUTTGART, West Germany, March 17 (JTA) -- The first Israeli Knesset delegation to visit West Germany was present today at the opening ceremony of "Israel Week" here. Germans and Jews spoke of the warm relations that exist between the two countries. The delegation, headed by David Hachohen, chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, also includes Shimon Peres, former deputy Defense Minister. The delegation was welcomed by Israel Ambassador Asher Ben-Nathan and Bonn Interior Minister Ernst Benda. The Israelis will meet West German government leaders tomorrow.

The parliamentary mission was invited by the Bundestag, West Germany's lower house, and was boycotted by members of the Achdut Haavoda wing of the Israel Labor Party and members of the leftist Mapam Party and Herut wing of Gahal (Herut-Liberal alignment) who were opposed to visiting Germany as a matter of principle. Also boycotting the mission were the four-member Free Center, the two Agudat and Communist factions of the Knesset.

Israeli Envoy Present At International Agricultural Fair Held In Verona

ROME, March 17 (JTA) -- Israel's Ambassador to Italy, Amiel Najar, represented his country at the inauguration of the 71st International Agricultural Fair at Verona, an event attended by Italian Prime Minister Mariano Rumor and several members of his cabinet. The Ambassadors of Japan, India and Soviet Russia also attended. The Israeli stand proved to be one of the major attractions with displays of grapefruit, avocados, strawberries, flowers, wine and fruit juices.

Nathan Stolnitz Dead At 75; Was Canadian Cantor Who Contributed To Newspapers

TORONTO, March 17 (JTA) -- Nathan Stolnitz, the dean of Canadian cantors and author and contributor to Yiddish, American-Jewish and Argentine-Jewish newspapers, died in Miami Beach where he was vacationing. He was 75. Cantor Stolnitz was born in Vilna, Russia and settled in Toronto in 1926. He founded the Ontario Cantors Association and was associated with Yivo, the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Toronto Jewish Public Library. He was the author of "Music in Jewish Life," published in 1957 and "On Wings of Song," published in 1968. He was Toronto correspondent for the Day-Journal, the New York Yiddish daily, under the pseudonym of A. Vilensky.

Rabbinical Assembly Told Of Efforts To Strengthen Conservative Movement In Israel

KIAMESHA LAKE, N.Y., March 17 (JTA) -- The president of the Rabbinical Assembly, the rabbinical arm of Conservative Judaism, called today for new efforts to establish a strong Conservative movement in Israel. Rabbi Ralph Simon of Chicago, addressing 500 rabbis assembled here for the international rabbinical association's 69th annual convention, enumerated steps already taken to achieve that objective. He said the Israel Foundation for Conservative Judaism will coordinate existing programs and develop new projects from its offices in Jerusalem. Various fund-raising activities will be merged into one campaign to finance the activities of the Conservative movement in Israel. And, he said, architectural plans were being prepared for the Jerusalem campus of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the rabbinical and teacher training college of Conservative Judaism.

Rabbi Simon described the most critical challenge to the Conservative movement today as "the ability or willingness to make Jewish law responsive to 20th Century problems--to bridge the gap between commitment to tradition and need for change." Calling for increased dialogue between Jews and the Negro community and Jews and Christian leadership, Rabbi Simon decried those who succumb to "the tendency to break off communication when conflict looms, or even in the face of outspoken disagreement." He said that black anti-Semitism had "injected bewilderment, frustration and anger into our ranks" but urged Jews to a "continued effort on behalf of racial justice." He noted widespread Jewish disappointment at the failure of Christian religious leaders to react vigorously to the threat Israel faced in June, 1967 and added, "If our ecumenical activities have not produced the results we hope, we must mount a new program of spiritual outreach to the non-Jewish world. We must not despair of the possibility of creative dialogue and withdraw into a 20th Century version of medieval isolationism."

Rabbi Simon also called upon the Assembly and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform) to accept the religious holiday calendar as it is observed in Jerusalem. Such a decision, he said, "would represent a striking demonstration of the spiritual centrality which Israel holds for the Jewish world." This would mean that observance of second day of the three Biblical festivals would be non-compulsory. Rabbi Levi Olan of Dallas, CCAR president, was present and termed Rabbi Simon's suggestion "extremely creative." He said that he would present the suggestion to the CCAR executive board which meets this week. If accepted, this would mean that Reform would have to reinstate the second day of Rosh Hashanah in conformity with the Israel calendar.

Eban Will Be Main Speaker At 2-Day Leadership Conference On Peace In Mideast

NEW YORK, March 17 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Abba Eban of Israel will head the speakers' list at a two-day national leadership conference on peace in the Middle East here next Sunday and Monday, organized by the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations. About 400 Jewish leaders from all over the country will attend. Other speakers include Ambassador Yosef Tekoah, Israel's chief representative to the United Nations, Sen. Stuart Symington, Missouri Democrat, and Sen. Jacob K. Javits, New York Republican and Dr. A. Roy Eckart, chairman of the Lehigh University department of religion and a prominent Protestant layman.

Rabbi Herschel Schachter, conference chairman, told a press conference today that the parley was "not called out of any fear or concern that the Mideast is about to explode, nor as a protest against government policy. It is not an emergency assembly, but it is a vitally important one because of the need to exchange ideas within the Jewish community on peace in the Mideast, to arrive at a statement of position representing the Jewish community, and to communicate that position to the Nixon Administration at a time when the President and his advisers are formulating Mideast policy."

Mr. Eban will receive an honorary degree of Doctor of Hebrew letters from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America on Sunday. It will be conferred by Dr. Louis Finkelstein, Chancellor, at a special academic convocation at which Mr. Eban will be cited for his contributions to Israel, Judaism and world peace.

Hadassah Collecting Measles Vaccine For Arab Children In Occupied Territories

NEW YORK, March 17 (JTA) -- Some 40,000 units of measles vaccine will be shipped to Israel within the next two weeks to inoculate Arab children in the occupied territories. The vaccine is being collected and shipped by Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America. Some 20,000 units already provided by pharmaceutical manufacturers have been shipped. Hadassah undertook to sponsor the vaccine effort following a recent visit to Israel by its national president, Mrs. Max Schenk, and national chairman of its medical organization, Mrs. Charlotte Jacobson, when they learned it was needed.

University Invites Israeli Soil Conservationist-Forestry Expert To Work In U.S. Southwest

NEW YORK, March (JTA) -- A leading Israeli soil conservationist and forestry expert has come here on the invitation of Colorado State University to apply his knowledge and experience in Israel to the development of new forms of plant life and afforestation in the arid regions of southwestern United States, the Jewish National Fund reported today. Dr. Israel Gindel, who heads the division of forest ecology at the Volcani Institute of Agricultural Research in Israel and visits the University of Florence, Italy, regularly where he is professor of forest research, will conduct a research program at the Colorado school's Forestry College. He will specialize in the development of new ecological and arid zone forestry techniques. (Ecology is the study of life forms in relation to their environment.) He established the first forest research laboratory in Israel at the invitation of the Jewish Agency and the JNF.

Selective Service Says Jews May Ask Deferment On Exams, Induction At Passover

NEW YORK, March 17 (JTA) -- The Selective Service System has announced that Jewish registrants may request deferment from their local draft boards for physical examinations or induction into the armed forces which are scheduled immediately before or during the Passover holidays. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, director of the Selective Service, has asked draft boards to give "favorable consideration" to such requests wherever possible, the National Jewish Welfare Board announced.