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Most Israeli Commentators Find No Swing To Right In Knesset Election Returns

JERUSALEM, Oct. 30 (JTA)--Most Israeli political commentators were in disagreement today with the prevailing interpretation of the national elections results in foreign newspapers. They maintained that the increase in Gahal (Herut-Liberal alignment) seats in the new, seventh Knesset did not reflect acceptance by the electorate of a hard line shift to the right on the question of the future of the occupied territories.

On the contrary, they said, the projected final results indicate that although the Labor Party-Mapam Alignment dropped from its absolute majority of 63 seats to 58, the nation had by its ballots given firm support to the foreign and security policies of the Laborites.

(A typical reaction to the outcome was expressed in the lead editorial of today's New York Times which said that Premier Golda Meir "lost ground to proponents of a harder line. The vote reflects an ominous shift in Israeli public opinion toward the minority who favor outright annexation of occupied territories.")

The premise of overseas new media, the commentators said, was that the decline in Labor-Mapam votes had been picked up by Gahal which favors permanent annexation and settlement of the occupied areas. They then discussed the supposed implications of such a shift in sentiment. Most political analysts however adopted a contrary view which by and large tallied with an editorial in the independent but normally pro-Labor Jerusalem Post.

The editorial said in part "the electorate voted for continuity of the existing division of power. While the Alignment did not retain its 63 seats, it lost at least two of them to (David) Ben Gurion's State List made up largely of Rafi dissidents from Labor's own camp. And while Gahal gained four or perhaps five seats, three were drawn from its own dissident Free Center faction for whom the election proved a devastating blow. Thus any shifts involve only two or perhaps three seats."

See Ben Gurion Gains, Land Of Israel Loss As Proof Of No Rightist Drift

Observers said that the added strength for Mr. Ben Gurion could hardly reflect a rightist drift since only last weekend he told the Paris press that Israel should, in the interests of peace, return all of the occupied territories except for East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. He also said Sharm el-Sheikh should be abandoned once a peace treaty was signed and free passage through the Strait of Tiran was assured. One factor which tended to cast doubt on the validity of Mr. Beigin's views on public favor for a hard line on the territorial question was the inability of the newly-formed Land of Israel Party to gain a single seat. The party favors an outright expansionist policy.

A second main interpretation also accepted by most informed political observers was given by the independent newspaper Haaretz. This editorial said in part: "The Labor Alignment is headed by men who are identified with Israel's accomplishments in the security and foreign policy field over the past two and one-half years. However, the public has given the Alignment carefully limited support because it fears the emergence of a colossus that might subjugate the country. On the other hand, there has not arisen a real alternative. The return of Gahal strength to what it had been before the breaking off of the Free Center is probably to be interpreted as reflecting the voters' intention for a more balanced Knesset in the face of the Alignment's formation."

The Alignment consists of the Israel Labor Party and the leftist Mapam. The Labor Party itself represents a merger of the former Mapai, Achdut Haavodah and Rafi parties. Gahal won 27 seats, one more than it won in the 1965 election for the sixth Knesset; it concluded the last Knesset with 22 members after four dissidents seceded and formed the Free Center. In the vote on Tuesday, the Free Center headed by Shmuel Tamir dropped to one seat. Mr. Ben Gurion, whose one-man faction was called the State List, will end up with either three or four seats in the new parliament.

Beigin Hails Results, Plans To Use Leverage For More Cabinet Posts

Menahem Beigin, the Herut leader who heads Gahal, was more sanguine about the meaning of the returns. He interpreted them as pointing to increased public acceptance of Gahal's no-return policy on the territories and said they showed that the Knesset would now contain a majority "opposed to the re-partition of the Land of Israel." He also indicated that he planned to exercise political leverage by announcing that his party need not enter into the broad-based national coalition to which Mrs. Meir committed Labor before the election, and if invited it would pose two main conditions. Mr. Beigin said that an agreed coalition program would have to be worked out in advance. The second condition would be that Gahal must be given Cabinet posts in accordance with its proportional strength. This was taken to mean that Gahal would not be satisfied with its present two posts of Minister Without Portfolio. At Labor-Mapam headquarters there was a feeling that the second condition might be tougher to fulfill than the first--that Gahal would demand five ministries. Moshe Kol of the Independent Liberals

Party, long a Labor ally, said that his faction would be happy to keep its two ministries--Tourism and Development--which he heads. But in view of its hold on only four seats, this development was considered unlikely by some analysts.

Observers felt that the main stumbling block on the road to formation of a renewed grand coalition--Government of National Unity, as it is called--will not be questions of foreign policy and peace, for Gahal generally agrees with the stand taken before the formation of Mrs. Meir's Government following the death this year of Premier Levi Eshkol. The principal division of opinion may occur instead over economic questions, which did not figure in any important way in the pre-election campaign, with the Marxist Mapam on one end of the coalition and the free enterprise Gahal on the other, analysts say.

The three main blocs--Labor, Gahal and religious--all claimed that the 120th seat, whose future was still in doubt in computer projections--would be theirs. The ballot counting was slow and was expected to be completed some time next week when all the soldiers' and seamen's votes are counted. The Land of Israel, Peace List and Young Israel factions have conceded that they did not reach the one percent of the total vote required to win a seat. Young Israel, a perennial also-ran, is a list of Oriental immigrants which has entered every election in the past 12 years but has never gotten one percent. Land of Israel got about .8 percent and Peace List got .45 percent.

President Zalman Shazar was expected to entrust Mrs. Meir with the formation of a Cabinet soon, even before final results are in. He may consult with the various parties on the basis of provisional returns but a new Cabinet does not assume power until given a vote of confidence by the new Knesset. The Knesset must meet within 14 days after the official announcement of the election results but not earlier than 14 days after the election.

Labor circles said today that Mrs. Meir would probably consult first with the National Religious Party. A great deal depends on the NRP stand on the formation of another National Unity Government. Without its participation, a coalition may have too small a majority to ensure reasonable stability, observers said. If the NRP refuses to enter a coalition without Gahal, the Labor-Mapam Alignment may have no chance to resist Gahal demands. In any case, the Alignment is not expected to abandon its firm insistence on direct negotiations aimed at a peace treaty ensuring secure and recognized boundaries and will not withdraw without a peace agreement with the Arabs.

International Arbitration Court Rules That Bergen-Belsen Graves Cannot Be Opened

BONN, Oct. 30 (JTA)--Nine judges of the International Court of Arbitration ruled in Coblenz yesterday that the mass graves at the site of the Nazi concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen must not be disturbed in an effort to find and remove the remains of 139 French nationals interred there. The French Government had demanded exhumation of the bodies, a move opposed by the World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Associations, an organization of concentration camp survivors headed by Joseph Rosenzweig of New York. The West German Government was also opposed. The controversy had continued for 12 years before it was submitted to international arbitration.

Hugo Wickstrom, of Sweden, who headed the arbitration court, said the judges' decision was based on two factors: the moral and religious objections of the Bergen-Belsen survivors and the testimony presented by experts that it would be impossible to identify the bodies of individuals almost 25 years after burial. Mr. Rosenzweig, sole survivor of a family of 61 killed by the Nazis, hailed the decision as "a vindication of the moral stand taken by the survivors in accordance with Jewish tradition in opposing the opening of the graves." Fifty thousand prisoners, most Jews, are believed to have died at Bergen-Belsen. One of them was Anne Frank, the Dutch girl made famous by her Amsterdam diary. The graves which the French wanted opened were the repository of bodies buried after April 15, 1945, when British liberation forces occupied the camp. The French case for re-opening the graves was based on a little-known French-West German agreement made in 1954 which permitted the return of French victims of Nazism to France. The Arbitration Court, which visited the gravesite on May 6, was established to settle disputes among World War II allies.

Rohan Tells Court God Intended To Make Him 'King Of Jerusalem And Judaea'

JERUSALEM, Oct. 30 (JTA) -- Denis Michael William Rohan, the Australian accused of burning the El Aksa mosque in East Jerusalem last Aug. 21, took the witness stand in his own defense today as his trial resumed after a two-and-a-half week recess. He corroborated his earlier confession that he set fire to the Moslem shrine. He told the court that he "did it to prove to the world that God wants me to build his Temple and that he will set me up as King of Jerusalem and Judaea."

Rohan is being tried on two counts of arson and two counts of violating a Holy Place. He faces a total of 44 years in prison. His defense counsellor, Yitzhak Tunik, has offered a plea of insanity. He said he would prove that Rohan, 28, was mentally unbalanced when he set fire to the mosque. Psychiatrists from Australia, who treated Rohan before he came to Israel, were expected to testify for the defense later.

Rohan, who testified from a bullet-proof glass booth, told presiding Judge Henry F. Baker that he became convinced that he was King-designate of Jerusalem and Judaea on the basis of three years of Bible studies and "visions" based on interpretations of the Scriptures. He said he was a member of the Church of God, a Protestant sect which, according to Rohan, believes that the Temple of Solomon must be re-built on its old site in Jerusalem before the Messiah will return. Rohan refused to take an oath on religious grounds but agreed to make an affirmation to tell the truth. Rohan related to the court details of a disturbed childhood in Australia. He said he was removed from ordinary school, sent to a special institution and later to reform school. He said that he considered himself to be the cause of a series of floods and other natural disasters which led to a suicide attempt and his confinement to a mental institution.

Soviet News Agency Distributes Data Purporting To Show Status Of Jews In Russia

WASHINGTON, Oct. 30(JTA)--The Soviet Embassy today released what may be the most comprehensive compilation of purported data on Soviet Jewry ever to come from the Soviet propaganda apparatus. The study of Soviet Jewry, titled "Soviet Jews As They Are," was prepared by the Novosti Press Agency, Russia's external propaganda organization. It is intended for publication in the United States and Western Europe. The study appeared to be an effort by Soviet authorities to answer rising charges of anti-Semitism. It detailed Czarist anti-Semitism, but it omitted any mention of Stalinist atrocities against Jews and more recent anti-Jewish actions by the Soviet Government. The study included a detailed report on the current Jewish population of the USSR and demographic data. A projection based on the forthcoming 1970 census indicated a total Jewish population of about three million.

Novosti said that had it not been for World War II, "the Jewish population would have been no less than four million. About two million Jews were annihilated on USSR territory temporarily occupied by the Nazis....The number of victims would have been greater if the Soviet authorities had not taken timely and energetic measures to evacuate the population in areas adjacent to the front....About two million citizens of Jewish nationality were evacuated deep into the Soviet rear," Novosti said.

The study traced Lenin's efforts for equality for Jews. But it quoted Lenin as stating that "this Zionist idea is absolutely false and reactionary in its essence." It was alleged that Zionism and Jewish nationhood merely perpetuated a "ghetto spirit" while Jews were truly liberated by Communism.

Claims That Jews Are Represented In All Fields, Including Government

Surveying the vocational achievements of Jews, Novosti said that Jews made contributions to all branches of the Soviet economy. "The so-called Jewish callings have long since gone out of existence," the agency stated. It listed among such callings tailoring, medicine and law and asserted that Jews have now achieved prominence across the broad spectrum of vocations. Novosti emphasized that there was a disproportionately large number of Jews, per capita, in scientific pursuits as compared with the general population. In the total number of scientific workers, Jews ranked third after Russians and Ukrainians although Jews are far fewer in numbers and comprise only 1.2 percent of the general population, Novosti said. The latest figures available (1967) showed at least 58,952 Jews in scientific professions, it said.

The Novosti study contained long lists of Jews in executive positions in industries, Government and military service. "There are about 8,000 Jews who are deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and of the Union of Republics, as well as local Soviets," it said. It sought to debunk charges that Jews were not given equal educational opportunities.

According to Novosti, there are 315 Jewish college students to every 10,000 Jews in the country. There are only 182 non-Jews in college for every 10,000 non-Jews, the report said. Novosti explained that Jews attended college in greater numbers because Jews tended to live in urban centers. Novosti also listed Jewish writers, artists, musicians and others distinguished in Soviet cultural life.

Lists Cultural Activities, Says 100 Synagogues Are Functioning

Novosti went to some length to try to refute charges that Jewish cultural and religious life was suppressed in Russia. It mentioned the Yiddish monthly, Sovietish Heimland, and claimed that a Yiddish drama ensemble in Moscow and various musical companies offered Yiddish entertainment. It said that many books were published in Yiddish in 1968 and 1969 and listed the names of their authors. At least 50,000 Jews were said to attend Yiddish cultural programs every year.

Novosti said that "about 100 synagogues" are functioning in the Soviet Union and that 300 minyans are known to pray regularly in various places. Novosti also claimed that a yeshiva was attached to the main synagogue in Moscow to train rabbis and ritual slaughterers. It added however, "it should be remembered that most people in the Soviet Union have long turned away from religion....Jews are no exception."

Novosti said there was "no official registration of believers" in the USSR. But selective sociological investigation has shown that the number of Jewish believers in the territory of the Russian Federation and the Ukraine is between three and six percent of the total; five to nine percent in the Baltic Republics (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia); between seven and 12 percent among the north Caucasus and Bukhara Jews. The overwhelming majority of these are elderly people, Novosti said. It said that Jews "have every opportunity to practice religion" and maintained that "synagogue libraries have collections of books on religion running into thousands."

Commenting on the assimilation of Jews, Novosti said "this is not a specifically Soviet phenomena." It said there was a reduction in numbers of persons who regard Yiddish as their native tongue. Novosti observed that "hardly more than 20 percent of the Jews in the United States consider Yiddish their native language." It said that "in the Soviet Union, the process of natural assimilation is taking place among many peoples."

High honors bestowed on Jews were listed as disproportionately high. The highest honor, the title of Hero of Socialist Labor, was conferred on 55 Jews, four of whom won the order twice, three winning it three times. Of the 844 winners of Lenin Prizes, 96 were Jews, Novosti said. It noted that the city of Sverdlovsk was named for a Jew and that there were many streets in Soviet cities named for Jews, and that many Soviet ships sailing the seas bear the names of distinguished Jews. Novosti expressed the hope that "the facts and figures cited in the present article show how far from reality is the gloomy picture usually drawn by Western bourgeois propagandists."

Prof. Murray Gell-Mann, a New Yorker At Caltech, Is Nobel Physics Prize Winner

STOCKHOLM, Oct. 30 (JTA)--Prof. Murray Gell-Mann, a New Yorker on the faculty of the California Institute of Technology, was the recipient of the 1969 Nobel Prize in physics awarded here today. Gell-Mann is Jewish. He was cited by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences for "his contributions and discoveries concerning the classification of elementary particles and their interaction." Among these was the "quark," purported to be the smallest known particle of matter.

Dr. Gell-Mann, 40, has been a leading theorist for many years in particle research. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree at Yale University in 1948 and his doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1951. He joined the Caltech faculty in 1955. Five years ago he evolved a theory concerning the smallest particle in the universe, the so-called "quark." The theory created a controversy in scientific circles, but it appeared to be verified this year when an Australian scientist at the University of Sydney announced that he believed he had isolated the "quark."

Reform Parley Urges Congregations To Help Minorities - End Poverty, Oppression

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. Oct. 30 (JTA)--Leaders of American Reform Judaism declared here last night that the American Jewish community must assume its share of the burden to lift minority groups out of poverty and oppression. The call for action was contained in a so-called "Jewish manifesto," one of a series of resolutions on Jewish and general subjects adopted at the closing session of the 50th biennial convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Reform movement's congregational arm.

The resolution titled, "Racial Justice--a Jewish Reaffirmation," urged that Reform congregations "redouble their efforts in support of those who have been exploited by our society. Synagogue programs supportive of oppressed peoples, the raising of funds for minority group use, pressure upon our Government for massive action, are vehicles that we must employ to heal the deep wounds inflicted."

Other resolutions adopted called for a "stand-still" cease-fire in Vietnam, approved selective conscientious objection, urged people of all faiths to support Israel's quest for security and supported efforts to establish and strengthen Reform Judaism in Israel. The UAHC went on record against a stand on voluntary chaplaincy service taken last June at the convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Reform movement's rabbinical branch. The UAHC urged the CCAR to "do whatever is required to supply the necessary number of Reform Jewish chaplains to the U.S. armed services."

A controversial plan to establish a Reform Jewish day school movement was defeated by the 2,000 delegates after five hours of heated debate. The resolution embodying the plan called for a "more intensive study of Judaism" and the establishment of Jewish all-day schools. At present Reform Judaism conducts classes in Jewish studies only several days a week. In contrast, there are more than 300 Orthodox all-day schools in the country and the Conservative branch of Judaism has been steadily developing its own network of all-day schools.

Opponents of the day-school plan, mainly lay leaders, argued that such schools would be concentrated in large cities and would pose a threat to the public school system. Proponents, mainly rabbis, maintained that a day school system was imperative to educate future Jewish leaders who would be qualified for leadership for cultural rather than monetary reasons.

United Synagogue Ends Parley With Call For Support For Vietnam Moratorium

KIAMESHA LAKE, N.Y. Oct. 30 (JTA)--The United Synagogue of America adopted today at the closing session of its biennial convention a resolution which called on its synagogues to associate with the three-day peace moratorium Nov. 14-16 by special prayers for peace in Vietnam and special study on peace in the congregational religious schools. Another resolution on Vietnam commended President Richard M. Nixon for his decision to begin the withdrawal of American troops, urged that the speed of withdrawal be accelerated and that the Government "move even more energetically to end our involvement in the Vietnam war." The 2,500 delegates at the same time expressed disappointment at the slow pace of negotiations in Paris. They asked for a cut in defense expenditures and that "funds be reallocated from the national defense budget to meet the critical problems of urban America."

The delegates also adopted a resolution which recognized "the inequities and lack of consistency in state laws governing abortion, and urged the movement's 835 affiliated Conservative congregations to study the question and to bring their concern to the attention of state and Federal legislatures to the end that measures be taken to liberalize abortion laws. Social action resolutions passed also included a protest against the policies of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and Poland. Thirty-four new congregations were inducted into the organization.

Set Trial Date For Arabs Accused Of Burning Israeli Flag Near UN Mission

NEW YORK, Oct. 30 (JTA)--Three members of the Action Committee on American-Arab Relations will be tried on Feb. 10 on disorderly conduct charges stemming from their burning of an Israeli flag in a demonstration near the Israeli Mission here. Manhattan Criminal Court judge John Brickley dismissed charges yesterday against the three defendants that the act was illegal but denied a motion to dismiss the disorderly conduct charges. In the demonstration, which took place last April 12, Mohammed T. Mehdi, secretary general of the committee, joined Ghazi Khankan and Mohammed Rabie in unfurling the flag and setting fire to it after they cut out the Star of David. Police put out the fire and issued summonses to the three.