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MRS. MEIR ACCEPTS TASK OF FORMING NEW GOV'T.; EFFORTS SO FAR DEADLOCKED

JERUSALEM, Jan. 30 (JTA)--President Ephraim Katzir officially asked Premier Golda Meir today to form a new government and Mrs. Meir accepted the task and promised to "do the utmost" to form one within the 21-day period prescribed by law. The formalities took place at the President's residence after an hour-long private meeting between Katzir and Mrs. Meir. In her response, the Premier noted that in the coming months Israel may find itself for the first time on the road to peace, but warned that the people should also be prepared for the opposite.

Katzir charged Mrs. Meir with the task of forming a new government after two weeks of consultations with the representatives of the various parties represented in the new Knesset. Mrs. Meir, as leader of the majority Labor Alignment, was the assured designee for the job. But if she is unable to accomplish it in the allotted time, the President is free to approach someone else. According to law, the 21-day period may be extended to 42 days if necessary.

That period began officially today with Mrs. Meir's acceptance. But unofficial coalition negotiations have been underway since the Dec. 31 elections. So far they have been fruitless. The Labor Party has been unable to reconcile the deep gap on religious issues between its two principal potential coalition partners--the Independent Liberals and the National Religious Party.

The impasse has given rise to serious talk of new elections in which Labor would seek a more decisive mandate than the 51 seats it won last month--a loss of six from the previous Knesset. One faction in the Labor Party, including Mrs. Meir, is said to favor new elections if the coalition talks break down. But another faction, headed by Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir, reportedly would prefer Labor to go it alone and try to govern on the basis of its own slim majority, admittedly a risky course.

Recoup Losses In New Elections

These views surfaced after a top level Labor Party meeting at Mrs. Meir's home over the weekend. The Premier and some of her supporters were reported to believe that Labor would recoup its losses in new elections because of such positive developments as the disengagement accord with Egypt. But the Sapir faction maintained that the international situation demanded a new government to be formed without further delay. They also were inclined to believe that new elections would not improve Labor's position and might in fact worsen it in view of soaring prices and the general belt-tightening called for by the government.

If that view prevails and a Labor-led coalition with the ILP and NRP proves impossible to form, the Labor Party could decide to establish a narrow government based on its 51 Knesset seats plus three seats held by Labor-affiliated Arabs and the seven represented by the Independent Liberals and Mrs. Shulamit Aloni's Civil Rights List. Such a combination would give the government a bare majority of one in the Knesset. But Laborites believe they could count on the five Aguda bloc votes and the single vote of

Moked, and possibly the Rakah Communists on vital foreign policy issues.

Such a combination is not only shaky but anathema to many Labor Party leaders including Mrs. Meir who personally dislikes Mrs. Aloni, and who wants to avoid association with the pro-Moscow Rakah. The Labor Party has so far refused to consider a broad-based national coalition government including Likud for which the NRP has been pressing. The NRP, for its part, is said to favor the idea of new elections to recoup its losses of last month.

JOBERT ASKS SYRIAN GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE ISRAELI POWS; SAUDI EXPECTED TO BUY AMX-30 TANKS WITH LASER GUNS

PARIS, Jan. 30 (JTA)--French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert has asked the Syrian government to release the earliest the Israeli POWs it still holds. Jobert, who last night concluded a two-day official visit to Syria, told a press conference at Damascus Airport that he had asked the Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs to reconsider his country's stand on this issue. "It is regrettable that human beings, the prisoners, should become the stake of the game now being played," Jobert said. The French envoy said that he drew Syria's attention to "the humanitarian aspect" of the question "as we have done in past circumstances also in both Syria and Israel."

Jobert reported here today to the French government on his trip to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Syria. Government spokesman Jean-Philippe Lecat later said that the Minister had "reasserted France's known political positions" and had tried to develop its economic ties with the visited countries. Lecat confirmed that Jobert will visit more Arab states, including Iraq, next month. He said that the Minister may return to Saudi Arabia in the near future.

Observers in Paris believe that Jobert plans to finalize the Franco-Saudi economic agreement after the details will have been worked out by experts. This agreement would provide France with some 800 million tons of oil over the next 20 years for which France would pay in industrial products, technical know-how and arms.

French sources say that Saudi Arabia is expected to buy in France a large quantity of AMX-30 tanks equipped with a special laser gun. This tank would probably be the world's most sophisticated and expensive. Saudi Arabia has already bought in France 275 AMX-30 tanks equipped with conventional guns, however. France also expects to sell Saudia more Mirage planes as well as the supersonic Franco-British produced "Concorde."

JEWISH AGENCY BOARD APPROVES BUDGET INCREASE FROM \$410 TO \$720 MILLION

JERUSALEM, Jan. 30 (JTA)--The Jewish Agency's Board of Governors is convening in Jerusalem this week for the first time since the war, to reappraise Israel's growing needs and world Jewry's ability to meet some of them. As a result of world Jewry's impressive response to the war crisis, the Governors were able to approve an increase in the Agency's current budget from \$410 to \$720 million--all of it spent on housing, health, welfare, education and absorption. In some areas--such as higher education--the Agency has

been able to shoulder the State's entire costs leaving the government freer to meet its crushing defense expenditures.

The Board also approved a \$40 million program to aid the absorption of academically trained immigrants, presented to it by Gen. Uzi Narkiss, head of the Jewish Agency's immigration department. The Board of Governors--meeting in full plenary yesterday and today after committee meetings had prepared the ground-work--approved a target of \$1.4 billion for the fund-raising bodies--United Jewish Appeal and Keren Hayesod--over the 18 months from April 1974-Sept. 1975.

The main items in this target are: \$235 million for absorption; \$308 million for immigrant housing; \$92 million for welfare; \$41 million for health; \$190 million for higher education, and another \$75 million for other education projects, grants and stipends; \$125 million for agricultural settlement.

Opening the Board meeting, chairman Max Fisher of Detroit said the war had deepened Jewish identity with Israel--not only through financial support but in all ways of aiding Israel. But at the same time the war had vastly increased the Agency's duties and responsibilities. Fund-raising scope and methods would be closely examined, he said, to see where and how more could be raised.

54,866 Olim In 1973, Dulzin Reports

The Agency's acting chairman, Leon Dulzin, reviewed the Agency's work during the war. One-third of its staff was called up, he said, but all the departments continued to function over and above their regular levels. In addition, he reported, olim kept streaming in and were taken care of; the settlement department worked under artillery fire to evacuate Ramat Hagolan and returned there two weeks later to restore and rehabilitate the damaged settlements; and the Agency's Jerusalem headquarters was the center of Israel-diaspora links and activities with information transmitted from there the world over and messages and pledges and offers of support pouring in from all over.

Dulzin said that 15,344 olim had come in the past three months, and 54,866 throughout 1973. Of these, 33,600 were from the Soviet Union. Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir told the Board that Israelis had been forced to pay through direct and indirect levies and taxes some IL 9 billion more since the war. There would be no escape from a considerable drop in living standards, and the problem was to ensure that the poor and the weak were protected, he said.

The heads of the UJA and Keren Hayesod, Paul Zuckerman and Ezra Shapiro, respectively, reported to the Board on their activities and future plans. Edward Ginsberg, chairman of the Board's fund-raising committee, said there was scope for enlarging fund-raising activities and drawing in people who had not yet been reached. He noted the participation of younger people in the wartime fund drives.

CHAYEFSEY DEMANDS WITHDRAWAL OF HIS PLAYS FROM FRENCH TV IN PROTEST AGAINST FRANCE'S ROLE DURING WAR

NEW YORK, Jan. 30 (JTA)--Paddy Chayefsky has demanded the withdrawal of all of his plays scheduled for television production in France--because of "the behavior of the French government during the recent Middle East war." The famed playwright declared: "The picture of France on its knees groveling before the Arab

oil-producing countries has aroused in me so profound a contempt for France that I no longer wish to have any of my works done in that country."

Chayefsky's demand was addressed to Emilio Bruzzo, producer-director of the scheduled Chayefsky productions in Paris. It was conveyed to French news media by the European department of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League at the author's request. Bruzzo reportedly said he hoped the playwright would "cool down" and change his mind.

Chayefsky said in his statement that while he understood and sympathized with the oil crisis being endured by European countries and Japan, "France alone has flaunted its humiliation and has gone out of its way to fawn for favor from the oil-producing countries." He contended that the French people must bear responsibility for their government's action that "reeks of Laval and appeasement" just as he, as an American, held himself responsible for Vietnam and Watergate.

JACKSON SAYS HIS AMENDMENT IS 25 YEARS OVERDUE

WASHINGTON, Jan. 30 (JTA)--Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D.Wash.) declared that when the Soviet Union comes to the U.S. to supply its technological and agricultural needs, "we have a right to ask of them, not for ourselves but for mankind, to live up to the declaration that provides for the right of a citizen to leave and return to his own country." Jackson was referring to the amendment to the East-West Trade Bill that bears his name. He said that the Jackson Amendment was in fact "25 years overdue" because its principles are contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations a quarter century ago.

Jackson spoke at a luncheon of the Washington, D.C. chapter of the American Jewish Committee which presented him with its annual Isaiah Award for the pursuit of justice. The luncheon, at the Mayflower Hotel, was attended by more than 600 persons, nearly triple the number that normally attend. The guests included Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle, D.C. Mayor Walter Washington and Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz who read a cable from Premier Golda Meir hailing Jackson as "a staunch friend of Israel." Jackson drew prolonged applause when author Herman Wouk, luncheon chairman, referred to the Senator as "Perhaps the person to lead this nation in supreme office."

The Senator elicited laughter when he noted that the luncheon had drawn the attention of Tass, the Soviet news agency, which, he said, identified the AJ Committee as "one of the leading reactionary Zionist organizations in the United States." The Jackson Amendment will come before the Senate Finance Committee next month. Identical legislation embodied in the Mills-Vanik bill, was overwhelmingly adopted by the House last month. Meanwhile, Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum (D. Ohio) became yesterday the 78th sponsor of the Jackson Amendment.

NEW YORK (JTA)--The University of Haifa in Israel is offering a special one-year Study Program in English for American and Canadian students in the fields of Jewish, Israeli and Middle East Studies, starting July 25, 1974 through June 30, 1975, it was announced by the American Friends of Haifa University.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--The three largest parties in the Knesset finally agreed on the apportionment of committee chairmanships: Labor Alignment, 5; Likud, 4; and National Religious Party, 1.

PROGRESS WITH SYRIA SEEN NEXT MONTH

JERUSALEM, Jan. 30 (JTA)--Well-placed sources in Jerusalem expect progress during Feb. towards breaking the present impasse between Israel and Syria. These sources anticipate that Syria will comply, in one way or another, with Israel's precondition regarding the POWs, and in this way open the way to disengagement talks. (See related story from Washington.)

The sources base themselves on the assessment of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger who, after his Damascus visit, reported that Syria was interested in disengagement. The Secretary also apparently believes that during next month President Assad will overcome opposition and suspicion within and without and will indeed move towards disengagement talks. At present, Syrian demands on disengagement envisage an Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines--something Israel would never contemplate. But the Israeli sources--and apparently Kissinger, too--feel that by next month Assad will be prepared to talk about the kind of disengagement that Israel has in mind.

This would be implemented solely within the area newly occupied in Oct. and would involve a pullback and interposition of UNEF, with force reductions on both sides. Once Syria is ready to contemplate that sort of disengagement, the POW obstacle will be solved, the sources believe. Meanwhile, Israel is remaining totally adamant that there can be no dialogue with Syria direct or indirect, until the POW lists are produced and Red Cross visits allowed.

As far as the Egyptian disengagement is concerned, the sources say this is being carried out with meticulous regard for the letter of the agreement. Cairo is apparently determined to give Israel no opportunity to claim that its word is unreliable. Once disengagement is completed, in a month's time, the focus of attention will gradually shift back to Geneva (assuming that by then some progress has been achieved with Syria).

Israel will only agree to resume the dialogue with Egypt, the well placed sources say, if it is clear that the disengagement agreement is being carried out according to the scenario whereby normal civilian peaceable life is to be restored to the Suez Canal zone and the threat of war thus reduced. By April, say the sources, it will be clearly apparent whether or not President Sadat intends to honor his commitments in this vital area.

When and if the Israel-Egypt dialogue is resumed, Israel will press for early discussion of "the nature of the peace" rather than negotiation on further "disengagements"--meaning withdrawal. Israel must be on her guard that the Geneva conference becomes a peace conference--not a mere withdrawal conference as the Arabs wish, the sources stress. It must also be ready to counter the danger that Egypt will claim after a successful disengagement that problems can be solved by military arrangements without the need for political settlement. (David Landau)

STATE DEP'T. MUM ON SYRIA PROGRESS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 30 (JTA)--The State Department refused comment today on whether or not any progress has been made in furthering disengagement talks between Israel and Syria. Although the Department said last week that Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger had transmitted Syrian ideas on the issue to Israel and

that the next step would be determined by the Israeli Cabinet meeting held in Jerusalem last Sunday, it sidestepped questions today.

Department spokesman George Vest, when pressed by reporters, declared that the "process" on Israeli-Syrian disengagement talks will take time and that "many factors are at play." He observed that Kissinger "is in regular touch with the various parties concerned" and that he "has had further communication from the Israelis since Sunday." Another Department spokesman John King, said, "No comment," when asked about the Israeli Cabinet decision. King also refused to comment on whether the U.S. is satisfied with the disengagement process on the Suez Canal front.

EGYPTIAN ARMY NOT OBSERVING TIME-TABLE FOR THINNING OUT FORCES

TEL AVIV, Jan. 30 (JTA)--The Egyptian Third Army is not observing the time-table for thinning out its forces on the east bank of the Suez Canal and this has caused some consternation among Israeli officials who say Israel has carried out its part of the disengagement agreement to the letter and precisely on time. The thinning out--the withdrawal westwards across the canal of Egyptian troops and heavy equipment--was supposed to have begun yesterday when the Israeli army completed the first phase of its withdrawal from the west side of the waterway.

But the Egyptians have made no move yet to comply with that condition of the Jan. 21 disengagement accord. According to reports from Cairo today, the thinning out will commence Friday--about three days behind schedule. This could delay the start of the second phase of the Israeli pull-back which is supposed to begin Feb. 4. Under the disengagement agreement, Israeli withdrawal and the partial demilitarization of Egyptian forces on the east bank are to be carried out in tandem, stage by stage.

Israeli officers said today that the Egyptian Third Army would have to build more bridges across the Suez Canal to move out their heavy equipment. So far they haven't done it, though the Suez-Cairo road, abandoned by Israeli forces yesterday, was jammed today with Egyptian supply columns headed for the Third Army and the town of Suez. Yesterday Israel permitted an Egyptian supply boat to navigate the Suez Canal to bring supplies to an Egyptian battalion encircled on the shores of Great Bitter Lake.

MORAL DEFEAT FOR LABOR ALIGNMENT

JERUSALEM, Jan. 30 (JTA)--Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir's IL 11.3 billion supplementary budget squeaked through the Knesset by a narrow margin of 7 votes last night in what observers termed a moral defeat for the Labor Alignment that boded ill for its efforts to put together a viable coalition government. Two Labor MKs--Yitzhak Ben Aharon and Arye Eliav--ignored party discipline and voted against the measure, lining up with Likud, Rukah and Moked factions. Seven other MKs of the Civil Rights List and Aguda bloc--factions Labor hopes will join a coalition--abstained.

It was the first time that Labor MKs voted against the government on a matter of such importance as a state budget and the Labor Alignment Knesset faction plans an inquiry later this week. Labor Party Secretary General Aharon Yadin said on a radio interview today that the defection was an extraordinarily unfriendly act aimed at Sapir. The negative votes plus the abstentions made it clear that there was no majority in the Knesset for the budget Sapir said was needed to defray the costs of the Yom Kippur War.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES: NEWSPRINT SHORTAGE CAUSES CONCERN FOR JEWISH PRESS

By Philip Slomovitz--Editor, Detroit Jewish News, Vice-President, Jewish Telegraphic Agency

DETROIT, Jan. 30 (JTA)--A crisis in newsprint is not limited to the daily newspapers of this country. The Jewish press is similarly affected. Thus far there have been no serious casualties. The Yiddish newspapers are appearing; the magazines have not been affected; the weekly English-Jewish periodicals are publishing. But that's part of the story. The reason the monthly magazines and those printed on heavier or coated stock are not suffering is because the costlier--much costlier!--paper they use is available. But they, too, may suffer and could well be pressed to the wall for survival because of mounting costs. For the weekly press it has been a near-calamity. On several occasions some weeklies printed on colored stock--blue, green, yellow, pink--whatever was available as scrap in printing shops; scrap the printers were anxious to get rid of.

In the meantime, the papers suffered. For the first time in its experience, The Detroit Jewish News abandoned a Chanuka issue. It published a statement with the names of some 300 advertisers, apologizing to them that the usual Chanuka greetings would not be published because there wasn't going to be a Chanuka issue. There are three traditional holiday issues--Rosh Hashana, Passover and Chanuka. Now there is the puzzle: will there be Passover and Rosh Hashana issues? Will there be enough newsprint for such special editions which are always eagerly awaited by the communities served by the newspaper? Weeklies in small communities are not affected; their needs are minimal. In the larger communities it is near-calamitous. The Cleveland Jewish News, for example, was forced to use the scrap in color already referred to and its size was cut from 16 inches deep to 14 inches. But even that was a blessing--that there was no restriction otherwise.

The publisher of the largest of the Jewish papers had this to say: "We use 40 tons a week. We have enough for two months. We just bought 400 tons at a prohibitive price. There is danger of a black market that may demand anywhere from \$225 to \$400 a ton. That would ruin all of us." But one of the most authoritative printers in America is more optimistic. Hyman Safran, one of the country's largest printing plant operators--the president of Detroit's Safran Printing Co.--responded with his views. Safran, who just retired from the chairmanship of the Institute for Jewish Life of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds--he is a member of the board of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency--views the situation as follows:

"I do not believe that the newsprint used by the Jewish press compares to the Little Pontiac Press Daily Newspaper--thus the tonnage requirements are relatively insignificant. The least difficult time you had was caused not by insufficient production, but rather by strikes--these strikes are now over and as soon as warehouses reach reasonable levels of inventory, there should be no problem--especially for the Jewish press. Long term--I believe that paper will not be as plentiful as in the past--the reason is that the total needs, especially in Europe, are much greater. Finland used to export newsprint to the United States--now Europe imports newsprint from Canada and uses all the paper they can produce in Europe. Newsprint prices will probably stabilize at about \$150 per ton--at that figure they tell me that it will make economic sense to begin building new paper mills. Up to now they could not afford it at the combined low rates paid for newsprint plus the escalating costs of capital equipment."

One publisher of an English-Jewish weekly said that he was forced to buy newsprint on the black market for \$400 a ton; and Editor and Publisher, the leading journalistic organ in the country, commented upon it editorially, stating: "Everyone knows there is a newsprint crunch which has resulted in a black market. But this exorbitant price goes far beyond what the traffic will bear and amounts to a gouge of the small, weak or defenseless. Probably other small newspapers have suffered similar experiences. It shouldn't happen but it does and it has. Leaders in the newspaper business are concerned about it and to their credit help is available when needed in such cases. Not one newspaper has had to close for lack of paper."

Strikes in paper mills are over; now they maintain they do not have enough energy power to produce all that is needed. The Washington Post gave up its Sunday Book Magazine Section. Some papers abandoned Sunday editions, and some are curtailing to such an extent that instead of printing 60 percent news matter and 40 percent advertising, they have turned their papers into reverse, with as little as 30 percent reading matter. The problem has reached the Jewish press. It is surviving. There are nevertheless obstacles to be hurdled.

MONTREAL (JTA)--Michal Chartrand, president of the Montreal National Trade Unions Association, pledged the support of the organization to the cause of the Palestine nationalists at a meeting here sponsored by the Quebec Palestine Association in Montreal. About 150 persons, most of them Canadians of Arab origin, attended the meeting. Reel Guilbert, president of the Laval Teachers Syndicate Trade Union, said "we should fight to get the history of Arab Palestine into Quebec schools." Fayeze Sayegh, Kuwait Ambassador to the UN, charged that since 1972, Israel had set up internment camps in the Gaza Strip. ***

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Israel Radio began nightly broadcasts to South America between 8 and 10 p.m. South American time. The first program featured statements by Abba Eban, Leon Dulzin and Yaa'acov Tsur. The latter, who

is the head of the Jewish National Fund and former Israeli Ambassador to Argentina, is a personal friend of President Juan D. Peron. Future programs will include news reports, current affairs commentaries, and twice-weekly Hebrew lessons. Each program is scheduled for 30 minutes. ***

NEW YORK (JTA)--High school and college youth from Metropolitan New York and New Jersey will present "The Power of Jewish Music" concert at Carnegie Hall Sunday evening. Entertainers will include Jo Amar, Moti Gladi, El Avram and the 5 Ruskijs. Sponsored by the National Council of Young Israel, the entire proceeds will benefit post-war service programs in Israel. ***

JERUSALEM (JTA)--The Religious Ministry's first prize in an essay contest for yeshiva students was awarded posthumously to Yaa'acov Yiloz, 21, who was killed in the Oct. war.