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HISTADRUT CANCELS GENERAL STRIKE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Nov. 26 (JTA) — A general strike called for tomorrow was cancelled by Histadrut today at the urging of the national Labor Court here. The court did not act on an appeal by the Manufacturers Association to declare the strike illegal but arranged a compromise in the interests of "good labor relations." Histadrut stressed that the strike was not aimed against management, but was intended as a protest against the government's new austerity economic program.

The court agreed that Histadrut could reactivate the strike plans. It promised to review the issue later this week or next week. Yesterday, the Histadrut leadership had appeared determined to go ahead with the strike after a Tel Aviv district Labor Court rejected an appeal to ban it.

The strike decision was taken by Histadrut's Executive Committee at a stormy session during which fist-fights broke out between members of the Labor Party and other opposition factions and representatives of Likud who support the government's economic policies. Police were called at one point. A Likud-sponsored no-confidence motion in Histadrut Secretary General Yehoram Meshel was defeated.

Had the general strike materialized, it might not have been fully effective. Several public service workers unions said they would not participate. Many civil servants were not willing to lose a day's pay.

Effects Of Economic Measures

Meanwhile, the initial effects of the government's economic measures remained unclear. According to one report, the labor market is responding to Finance Minister Yigal Hurwitz's efforts to shift employment from services to productive industry. But soaring prices resulting from the elimination of government subsidies for basic commodities is making it harder to sell goods.

Winter sales will begin tomorrow instead of in several weeks in an effort to move merchandise. The shoe industry says it is left with a large stock of unsold goods. The head of the Contractors Association warned of a paralysis of residential building because of the government's freeze on credit.

Worries Of Large-Scale Unemployment

These developments seem to bear out the warning by Avraham Shavit, president of the Manufacturers Association, that large-scale unemployment is imminent. Addressing a press conference, Shavit charged that Hurwitz's new measures will create unemployment for industrial workers at a time when the government is encouraging workers to switch to industrial jobs.

"Last week I supplied Hurwitz with a detailed list of plants which could absorb immediately some 1600 workers," Shavit said. "Now I have to tell him that the list is no longer valid." He said many plants face bankruptcy because of the tightening of credit. The only financial assistance they can receive is either loans in Israel Pounds at an interest rate of 120 percent or dollar loans at 12 percent, he said.

According to a just published study by a firm of financial consultants affiliated with the Bank Leumi, inflation may increase by 40 percent over the next three months as a result of the government's austerity measures. The study found that consumer prices will rise 20 percent higher than originally expected. Although subsidy cuts will save the Treasury IL 8.5 billion, the government's debts exceed that figure by IL 2 billion. Manufacturers say, meanwhile, that the credit freeze alone will force them to raise prices by at least 10 percent.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

KLUTZNICK IS FACING STORMY WEATHER

By Joseph Palakoff

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26 (JTA) — At age 72, Philip Klutznick is embarking on what appears will be the most critical period of his extraordinary career as a lawyer, real estate developer, financier, government specialist and a leader in Jewish communal organizations.

Having earned millions in his Chicago-based business enterprises after leaving his law practice in Omaha, the Kansas City native had time for manifold services for six Presidents -- two Republicans and four Democrats -- and led both the B'nai B'rith and the World Jewish Congress.

In becoming Secretary of Commerce -- Senate confirmation is certain -- for President Carter, he faces officially such problems as weighing the Jackson-Vanik Amendment's relationship to Soviet Jewish emigration and administering the provisions of the U.S. law against the Arab boycott of American companies that do business with Israel or have Jewish managers.

In addition, having been named to the Cabinet in an admittedly political tactic in a tense Presidential campaign, he will be encountering what Vice President Walter Mondale at an Israel Bond rally here called "emotion-laden" situations in Israeli-Arab-American relations.

Klutznick is not resigning from the WJC Congress' presidency but is taking "a leave of absence," indicating that when his governmental functions are over he will have the option of again returning to its helm. He became its head in November, 1977, succeeding Nahum Goldmann. Klutznick's temporary successor in the WJC Congress is being selected under a method already set up, with WJC Congress Secretary General Gerhart Reigner in Geneva conducting it.

A Man For All Seasons

Klutznick, whose resourcefulness either in business, finance or government has never been seriously questioned, has served every President over the past 40 years with the exception of Richard Nixon. A recognized expert on wide-scale housing at home and abroad, he served in these capacities, as in other ways, both for American Presidents and in the United Nations.

After advising Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman, he was named by Dwight D. Eisenhower to the U.S. delegation to the 12th UN General Assembly. John F. Kennedy chose him to be the U.S. representative with the rank of Ambassador to the UN Economic and Social Council. Lyndon Johnson gave him special assignments, including missions to Brazil and Panama.

Now under Carter, Klutznick is plunging into heavy political weather that was not on the horizon during his previous Presidential duties. In an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and later in a news conference in Washington, Klutznick said he took the Cabinet job because he was asked -- Mondale is credited with persuading him -- and because he wants to help advance America economically, especially in trade. But what of the political element?

"A President of the United States considers any appointment to his Cabinet to be political," he told JTA. "I wouldn't have accepted the appointment if I didn't favor Carter's re-election. I respect Ted Kennedy. I'm not against him. I am for Carter."

Soviet-American Trade

Regarding Soviet-American trade and the emigration factor, he told the press: "I have tried in my lifetime to keep issues separated as much as I can. I wasn't either an opponent or the proponent of the Jackson-Vanik bill. It has served certain constructive objectives. I would be very doubtful whether it should be a normal practice under normal circumstances. But the case that was involved appeared to be extreme enough in the judgement of members of the Congress to have taken action, which I again say, has been somewhat effective."

Asked whether he had "any thoughts" on a pending trade agreement with the Soviet, he replied: "none that I would express here."

On the Arab boycott law, he said "from everything I've heard, it's been fair and just. I don't plan to do anything more than seeing that it's fair and just, as the laws dictate." Klutznick was a member of the Business Round Table that helped negotiate the legislation.

The most stern issue he may face involves the Palestine Liberation Organization. Goldmann, following Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky's red-carpet reception in Vienna for PLO chief Yasser Arafat, said he would also meet with the terrorist leader if he were invited. Klutznick disassociated himself from Goldmann's position.

Mideast Peace Process

In his JTA interview, Klutznick pointed to the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations and said he did not see "any purpose being served by introducing a strange partner at this time." Asked about the meaning "at this time," Klutznick replied that the settlement process was established under the Egyptian-Israeli treaty of March 26 and "they should get a fair chance" to work out a settlement "before anything is done to interfere with it."

Noting that Egypt and Israel have "made progress," he stressed a Middle East peace is "not a simple problem" and observed Egypt and Israel have until May 1 to agree on a West Bank-Gaza autonomy plan. That leaves open the question of what course he may have to take when April ends, but that is left to the future even as May 1980 looms as a crucial date in U.S.-Israeli-Egyptian relations.

Klutznick has had his controversies with other Jewish communal leaders, notably in February 1978 when he met with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat during a tense and delicate period in Israeli-American-Egyptian relations when it appeared a movement was underway to split the Jewish community.

"I don't happen to believe American Jews

should engage in avoiding a guest of the President even though you don't agree with him," Klutznick said in the JTA interview. He minimized that particular dispute, noting "we have controversies for 48 hours" within the Jewish community.

Emphasizing his resourcefulness, Klutznick, after that controversy subsided, successfully suggested later that year to Northwestern University that it grant an honorary Doctorate of Law to Israeli Premier Menachem Begin.

PLO OFFICIAL WARNS THAT ANY PALESTINIAN ACCEPTING THE AUTONOMY PLAN WOULD BE CONSIDERED A TRAITOR

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 26 (JTA) -- The General Assembly opened its debate on the Palestine question today under the shadow of the crisis in Iran. UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim has called for an immediate meeting of the Security Council to deal with the hostage situation in the U.S. Embassy in Teheran. The Security Council today agreed to debate the U.S.-Iran crisis but set no date for the meeting.

The principal speaker at the opening of the General Assembly session was Farouk Kaddoumi, the "foreign minister" of the Palestine Liberation Organization, who reiterated the PLO's positions and declared that the Palestinian people reject the autonomy plan now under discussion between Egypt, Israel and the U.S. He warned that any Palestinian supporting this plan would be considered "a traitor."

The PLO official also called on the U.S. to stop supporting Israel and appealed to the American public to persuade the Administration to change its Middle East policy. Kaddoumi claimed that the Palestinian question is the core of the Middle East conflict and said that as long as it is not solved there will be no peace in the region. He said the PLO would continue its "struggle," holding a rifle in one hand and an olive branch in the other.

Kaddoumi maintained that the PLO covenant does not call for the destruction of Israel, as Israel claims, but rather "for the liberation of Palestine."

The Palestine debate will continue for the next three days. The General Assembly will hear the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The committee is recommending the return of Palestinians to their homes and the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity. Israel Ambassador Yehuda Blum will address the General Assembly tomorrow.

U.S. NOTES "WITH SATISFACTION" ISRAEL'S RETURN OF OILFIELDS

By Joseph Palakoff

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26 (JTA) -- Israel's return of the Alma oilfields in southwest Sinai to Egypt -- its most important sacrifice so far in carrying out the terms of its peace treaty with Egypt -- elicited a brief oral "note" from the State Department today. "I would only say we note with satisfaction the return of this area on schedule under terms of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty," the Department's chief spokesman, Hodding Carter, said.

He made his brief comment when asked for the U.S. view of the Israeli action that marked its return to a condition of total reliance on foreign sources for oil. In effect, the return of the area means that the U.S. is now committed for 15 years to sell Israel oil at market prices. This guarantee was a condition under which Israeli Premier Menachem Begin agreed to return the Sinai area and its oil to Egypt. However, it is understood that Israel has no need to invoke that commitment at present.

According to information available here,

Israel buys more than 160,000 barrels of oil a day. Somewhat less than half comes from Mexico. Middlemen supply the rest at extraordinarily high prices. The origin of the sales and of the oil are usually concealed to avoid an Arab boycott and a cut-off of supply to those sources because they deal with Israel.

TORAH SAGES URGE ORTHODOX JEWS TO BUILD BRIDGES TO THE JEWISH MASSES

PORTCHESTER, N.Y., Nov. 26 (JTA) --

Two of America's leading Torah sages urged an overflow crowd of more than 4000 Orthodox Jews "to maximize Orthodoxy's new level of sophistication to reach the American Jewish masses," at the keynote session of the 57th national convention of Agudath Israel of America last Saturday night.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, dean of Mesivta Tifereth Jerusalem and chairman of the Council of Torah Sages, speaking by telephone hookup from his home, and Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky, dean of Mesivta Tor Vadaath, said that Orthodox Jews "cannot sit back and bask in the glory of their achievements, but must seek to inculcate uninitiated Jews with Torah education and Torah values."

In his keynote address, Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, dean of the Telshe Yeshiva of Cleveland, stressed that "Jews cannot be satisfied with living their lives by better standards than the rest of society." He urged that "Materialism not overshadow those inherent values which makes the Jewish nation unique."

Rabbi Moshe Sherer, who was reelected president of Agudath Israel of America, charged the Knesset deputies who recently voted against an amendment to halt wholesale abortions in Israel with being guilty of importing obnoxious diaspora concepts into the Holy Land, an effort which will be vehemently resisted by Orthodox Jews worldwide. He also told of Agudath Israel's new projects for the spiritual rehabilitation of Soviet Jews and Iranian Jewish students as part of the movement's "new thrust to tackle the mind boggling opportunities which Orthodoxy has to elevate Jewish life."

New Focus Stressed

The new influx of Soviet and Iranian Jews provoked an introspective look at Orthodoxy's response to their arrival. Rabbi Haim Benaliel, a prominent Sephardic rabbi from New York, said that the presence of Iranian Jewish students in the United States vividly showed the extent "of how Ashkenazic Jews and Sephardic Jews can cooperate with one another. While we may feel estranged from each other by virtue of differences in customs, we have too much to gain from working together to continue in isolation." He called for the establishment of bridges between the two groups in the U.S.

Prof. Aaron Twersky, dean of Hofstra Law School, chided well-meaning activists "who would rush in to help their Russian Jewish brethren without taking the pains to get to know them. He said, "The first step is to learn rather than teach. Let the Russian Jews teach us their unquenchable pride in being Jewish that survived a half century of spiritual captivity before we attempt to teach them their Jewish heritage. Then we must step in with brotherly concern. After all, that which Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev could not accomplish with oppression, we should not do to them by indifference."

In other actions at the convention, three international Orthodox Jewish leaders urged that the "spiritual revival of Russian Jews become the central theme of the forthcoming Sixth World Congress of Agudath Israel Jan. 7-13 in Jerusalem." Rabbi Yehuda Abramovitz, Deputy Speaker of the Knesset, said the world conclave of Orthodox Jews "will for the first time in 15 years embark on a complete review of problems facing Jews." Rabbi Shraga Grossbard of Jerusalem, head of the Torah Schools in Israel, said that "Jewish education of young Jews will ultimately save Israel's spiritual decline."

KENNEDY RAPS ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION REGARDING THE PLO

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26 (JTA) -- Sen.

Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) believes that the Carter Administration's position with respect to the Palestine Liberation Organization is a cause of "concern among Israelis." He also said, on a television interview yesterday, that no conditions can be "superimposed" on Egypt and Israel in their negotiations. He characterized former Texas Gov. John Connally's proposal to establish a U.S. military presence in the Middle East as "one of those vague generalities."

Kennedy, a declared candidate for the Democratic Party's Presidential nomination in 1980, appeared on the ABC-TV "Issues and Answers" program. He said that "the negotiations have to continue between Egypt and Israel" and expressed "hope that the process will continue" and that "other countries of the Middle East will join."

He said "I do think there is concern among Israelis about the Administration's posture and position with regard to the PLO" and referred to "the ambivalence of the Administration's position as indicated by the informal contacts in Vienna, by Mr. (Andrew) Young's conversations and by Mr. (Zbigniew) Brzezinski's meeting with (Yasir) Arafat in Algeria. This is a matter I am sure, of concern to the Israelis, about what the U.S. position is," Kennedy said.

In the context of his remarks on the Middle East, Kennedy charged that the Carter Administration is speaking with more than one voice on foreign policy matters. "There has to be a very clear understanding by our adversaries about what our interests are and where we consider those interests to be absolutely vital," he said.

GENERAL STRIKE IN EAST JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM, Nov. 26 (JTA) -- A general

strike was called in East Jerusalem today to protest the impending expulsion of Nablus Mayor Bassam Shakd and his continued detention in jail. Although most shopkeepers ignored the strike this morning, they shut down later, apparently under pressure from bands of youths who roamed the streets to make sure the strike was enforced.

Arab youngsters at the Ibrahimya School in East Jerusalem hurled rocks at passing vehicles until they were dispersed by police. School children stoned military vehicles in the West Bank town of Ramallah. A group of women led by Shako's wife, Annaya, held a hunger strike outside the Red Cross office in East Jerusalem. They were joined by delegations of women from Arab villages in Israel.

OTTAWA (JTA) -- The Canadian Parliament Monday passed a member's resolution which urged the Soviet Union to release all prisoners of conscience, and especially jailed dissidents Anatoly Shcharansky and Ida Nudel. It also demanded that the USSR respect the principle of reunification of families.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

ISLAM AND THE JEWS IN OUR TIMES

By Solly Press

JOHANNESBURG, Nov. 26 (JTA) — Who speaks for Islam today? The learned Arabian Muslim or the secular Baathist Party functionary of Syria? Or perhaps the proselyte Muslim from Bangladesh or the believer from northern Nigeria?

Hawbeit, to Israel and Jewry nowadays, Islam appears as a monolithic hostile bloc set to debase and destroy them. And to those who pay lip service to Islam, even if they hardly possess a fleeting knowledge of their holy writings, Jewry is an enemy against whom some "holy" jihad must be waged.

Yet Islam remains silent about millions of Muslims under Marxist rule. Such destructive notions reflect the words of the ignorant and the ranting of fools, and ill become Islam's great teachers of peace and brotherhood. They are seemingly spun "according to the designs and purposes of the troublemakers who feign Islam," as an Islamic declaration stated in Baghdad a generation ago.

The Koran Mentions The Torah

Those who feign Islam may be reminded that the Koran mentions the Torah by name, speaks of Abraham 70 times, and mentions Moses in 34 verses. The Hebrew Kings and Prophets occur frequently in the Koran, and Gabriel plays a significant role in the birth of Islam in Arabia, the land of Ishmael.

The feigners of Islam overlook the fact that the Torah records the names of Omar, Abdel, Salah and Hassan, among several other "Islamic" personalities. As readily overlooked by Islam's fanatics are the great and abiding similarities between Judaism and Islam, closer than either is to the third sister, Christianity.

Not only do both pray to the same all-merciful God, neither recognizes any mediator between the individual and his creator. Indeed, both Islam and Judaism still share a similar set of customs, languages, and history.

The best of Jewish scholarship points out the mutual closeness by way of, say, the Biblical and Talmudic expression "Ribon ha-Olamim" (Lord of the World) and the Koran's "rab al-Alamin." The similarities range from divine election to pro-Israelite, anti-Pharaonic themes. Guess to whom Deuteronomy 18:18 refers: "I shall raise up for them a prophet among their own brothers."

Prof. Naiman Bentwich used to remind his readers that the Prophet Muhammad himself made a covenant with the Jews of Eilat, the same historic port nowadays coveted by those who loudly proclaim loyalty to his teachings. As quickly skimmed over is the fact that the Davidic exilarch Bostani (Bustani) was the brother-in-law of the Ishmaelite Caliph Omar. This was long before Spain's golden age.

"Islam," remarked Prof. S.-D. Goitein, "is from the very flesh and bone of Judaism," a theme supported by the Koran itself: "We believe in what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes." The Koran appears also to contain a special message for Israelites, Ishmaelites, Syrians, Lebanese, and Sheban Ethiopians: "Allah ordains that blood relations are closer to one another than to other believers (proselytes)."

Misinterpretations Of Islam

So, whence the animosity towards Jewry? If

the Koran itself contains the fruits of Biblical and Talmudic Judaism, the animosity can only arise from blatant misinterpretations of Islam itself, a blindness worse than endemic trachoma. Though Arab by itself is not inhospitable to fanatics in our times, possibly the most far-fetched misinterpretations of Islam arise among those whose ancestors were converted by Ishmael's scimitar. Thus a North African Islamicist, one Taha of Cairo, wrote these lines:

"Why should I simply repeat what the ancients said? The Hebrew Torah may speak to us about Abraham and Ishmael, and the Arab Koran may tell us about them too. But the mention of these names in the Torah and the Koran is not sufficient to establish their historical existence, let alone the story which tells us about the emigration of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, to Mecca and the birth of the Arabized Arabs (sic!) there! We are compelled to see in this story a kind of fiction intended to establish the relations of Jews and Arabs on the one hand, and Islam and Judaism and the Koran and the Torah on the other."

It is less surprising to learn that this Islamic questioner of the Koran, Taha, was a contemporary of Gamal Abdel Nasser, whose Egypt often upset the purist Saudis on religious grounds, to the point of ruptured diplomatic links.

From Zeal To Alienation

Proselytes are said to veer from fanatic zeal to intellectual reluctance and even alienation. If so, Muslims are no exception. The Shias of Iran seem to represent the former, the Neo-Destour of Tunisia appear to reflect the latter. Examples of both can no doubt be found from the Malayalam countries and Pakistan to the Muslim areas of tropical Africa.

Sometimes the Arabians themselves suffer ignominy at the hand of those their ancestors forcibly converted -- from the Fatimid heresy to Shia excesses. Did not those whom Paul converted to at least the Ten Commandments provide his people with an inquisition?

Whatever the dangerous analogies, it remains true that today's anti-Israel stances come most stridently from those whose holy book contains all that is necessary to understand Jewry's love for Zionism. So, the question remains: who will yet speak for the true Islam?

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Youth Aliya teachers in Kiryat Shmona have each contributed 25 hours of work to the Treasury as their part in the efforts to strengthen the economy. In a letter to Cabinet Ministers and Histadrut Secretary General Yehoram Meshel, the teachers noted that they have raised the contribution despite their relatively low salaries because "Israel's teachers should be at the spearhead of every voluntary action." The teachers believe their contribution would save the State tens of thousands of Pounds. They expressed the hope that other workers would follow.

JERUSALEM (JTA) — About 3000 former emissaries of the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization recently organized into a national body to operate under the auspices of the Zionist Council in Israel. Some 50 former emissaries met in Jerusalem over the weekend and announced the establishment of the new organization. It was decided that its main function would be to promote ties between settlements and neighborhoods in Israel and Jewish communities overseas; lectures in local schools on Jewish life overseas; guidance of emissaries scheduled to leave; and work in the absorption of new immigrants and overseas students.