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CABINET AGREES TO HOLD ELECTIONS JULY 7; A BILL TO THAT EFFECT WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE KNESSET Labor Wants Elections By End Of June By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 18 (JTA) -- The Cabinet decided today to dissolve the Knesset and hold elections on July 7. A bill to that effect will be presented to the Knesset this week but a major battle is looming with the opposition Labor Party which wants to go to the polls at an earlier date.

A Labor spokesman said today that the Alignment could not support the government's proposed date, noting that July is the vacation season when many Israelis will be out of the country. "This proves that Likud fears the decision of the voters," the spokesman said.

According to Moshe Shahal, chairman of the Labor Alignment Knesset faction, the opposition will insist on holding elections no later than June 30. "We warned that if no agreement can be reached with Likud, Labor would introduce an election bill of its own this week. The Shinui Knesset faction announced that if several election dates are proposed, it would support the earliest one."

The July 7 date was arrived at after prolonged deliberations by the ministers. The National Religious Party is known to have wanted to postpone elections even further but was apparently convinced that a later date would not win approval of the Knesset.

Begin Confident Of Likud Victory

Begin, who personally announced the decision to waiting reporters after the Cabinet session, said he would lead Likud in the election campaign "if my friends express confidence in me." He insisted that despite public opinion polls that show a Labor victory in the next elections, Likud had a fair chance of winning based on its record. "All the issues will be debated -- foreign policy, economic policies, social improvements and all other problems," Begin said. "In an election campaign there is never one issue."

He also believes that the election campaign would not impair continuation of the autonomy talks with Egypt and the U.S. "But that depends on other parties to the negotiations."

The Cabinet did not decide today on a successor to Finance Minister Yigal Hurwitz whose resignation last Sunday precipitated the government crisis and the need for early elections. Begin's favored candidate, Communications Minister Yoram Aridor, a member of Herut, did not win the confidence of the Cabinet. Energy Minister Yitzhak Modai insisted that the new Finance Minister come from the ranks of the Liberal Party and Begin agreed. The Liberals were angered in 1979 when Begin shunted aside then Finance Minister Simcha Ehrlich in order to install Hurwitz in his job.

Modai proposed no candidate. One Liberal possibility, Yisrael Saharav, dropped out of the race. Others still in the running are Minister of Commerce and Industry Gideon Patt, former Deputy Finance Minister Yehezkel Flamin, or Modai himself. Whoever is named will serve a caretaker

regime which is not likely to introduce major policy innovations. Begin said the choice would be the subject of consultations and that he hoped the "problem could be solved this week."

LITTLE PROGRESS MADE IN NEW ROUND OF AUTONOMY TALKS Another Meeting Due To Be Held In Egypt By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 18 (JTA) -- Israeli, Egyptian and U.S. delegates wound up three days of autonomy talks here Friday with little progress made other than a decision to meet again in Egypt, at a date still to be fixed.

The talks were held on the technical level and the delegations, headed by Wat Cluervius for the U.S., Chaim Kubersky for Israel and Ezzat Abdul-Latif for Egypt, sought to draw up a list of points of agreement reached during the past 18 months and those points on which no common ground could be found.

The results will be presented to President Reagan as soon as he takes office to enable him to formulate his policy. Conference sources said future meetings of the autonomy committee would depend on Reagan's decision on how to proceed.

Although the talks were supposed to have been technical, a political note was introduced by the Egyptians and promptly protested by the Israelis. Latif told reporters after the meeting, "We have not been negotiating matters of substance. We have been consulting on ways and means of removing the obstacles which are facing these negotiations."

Cites Main Obstacles

Asked what these were, he said "The main obstacles come actually from the political atmosphere that has been created either by taking decisions like the Knesset decision on Jerusalem or the measures taken by the military government in the occupied territories and by the attitude taken towards the Palestinians."

Latif said the Egyptians had asked the Israelis to take the necessary measures to regain mutual trust and hoped Israel would help reduce tensions on the West Bank, free political prisoners and allow expelled Arab leaders to return home.

Responding, an Israeli delegation source said it was strange that the Egyptians had protested the law declaring Jerusalem Israel's capital and other actions, calling them obstacles to negotiations without consideration of the fact that Egypt itself had previously suspended the talks to put pressure on Israel, and the attitude shown at times by Egypt in international gatherings.

Kubersky observed that "Israel is, of course, handling the negotiations in the correct manner, with full regard to Israel's conception of the Camp David agreements, with the aim of reaching full agreement. Israel will reject any attempt to go beyond the Camp David agreement or give it incorrect interpretations," he said.

NEW EVIDENCE ON WALLENBERG'S FATE By Maurice Samuelson

STOCKHOLM, Jan. 18 (JTA) -- New evidence is emerging here about the fate of Raoul Wallenberg,

the Swedish diplomat missing in the Soviet Union after helping to save thousands of Jews in wartime Hungary.

A hitherto unknown witness claims he met Wallenberg in the Lubyanka Prison months after July 17, 1947, the date the Russians say he died. Another witness says that he heard about Wallenberg in the early 1960s in Vladimir Prison. Both appeared here at an international hearing of the case organized by Wallenberg's sister and brother supported by sympathizers from Israel, Britain, the United States, France and Austria.

The first witness was Andre Lipchitz, stepson of the late Jacques Lipchitz, the famous Lithuanian-born Jewish sculptor. Lipchitz, a bachelor in his late 60s, gave his evidence at the hearing where he spoke under the assumed name of Andre Shimkevitch.

He said that he was Wallenberg's cellmate for two days in Moscow's Lubyanka Prison shortly before Christmas, 1947. If true, his statement further discredits Moscow's contention that Wallenberg had a fatal heart attack at Lubyanka on July 17, 1947. It also boosts the plausibility of witnesses who say they saw Wallenberg long after that date.

Another man, who says he heard about Wallenberg in the early 1960s, is Dr. Marvin Makinen, a Finnish-American who spent two years in Vladimir Prison at the same time as Gary Powers, the famous U-2 pilot. Makinen had been accused of espionage while on a visit to Kiev. He is now a biophysicist in the U.S.

Another report about Wallenberg was given by Simon Wiesenthal, the Nazi-hunter who helped trace Adolf Eichmann in South America. He quoted an unnamed witness as saying that Gen. Gennady Kuprianov had encountered Wallenberg in 1953 and 1954. Some details of these meetings were reported in the West two years ago. Kuprianov was then said to have been interrogated by the KGB in the course of which he died.

Breaking Worldwide Silence

The conference which heard all this evidence, as well as a lot more tenuous information, was intended to break the world-wide silence which has hung over the Wallenberg case for the past 36 years. It was the culmination of nearly two years of efforts by concerned individuals in several Western countries.

In addition to Wiesenthal, participants included Elizabeth Moynihan; MP Greville Janner, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews; Elie Wiesel, who heads President Carter's Holocaust Memorial Commission; Gideon Hausner, prosecutor at the Eichmann trial, and French Nobel Prize winner Prof. Andre Lwoff.

After hearing first-hand accounts of Wallenberg's wartime work both from his Swedish collaborators and Jewish proteges, as well as copious evidence about Wallenberg's detention in the Soviet Union, the conference unanimously resolved that it believed the Swedish diplomat is still alive.

It said it would ask the Soviet Union to receive a delegation to discuss the matter in Moscow and that meanwhile the Wallenberg Association would seek the help of Western Communist parties and international human rights agencies.

But 24 hours after the conference ended the Soviet Embassy here refused to accept the resolution and would not let its chairman, Supreme Court Justice Ingrid Goerde Wideman of Sweden, pass the Embassy gates in her bid to see the Soviet Ambassador.

The Swedish government on the other hand is making no secret of its strong sympathy for the conference. Ola Ullsten, the Foreign Minister, said Sweden welcomed all efforts to clarify Wallenberg's fate. Although the Soviet government claims Wallenberg died in 1947, he said, "the Swedish government has never accepted this as the final answer."

One of the chief participants in the conference was Annette Lantos, wife of Rep. Thomas Lantos (D.CA), who has said that his first piece of legislative business will be to propose that honorary American citizenship be conferred on Wallenberg. The Swedish diplomat's Budapest mission was undertaken at the behest of the Roosevelt administration during World War II. Both Mrs. Lantos and her husband come from Hungary and were saved by the protection of the Swedish and Portuguese representatives there.

ISRAELI OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

NEW YORK, Jan. 18 (JTA) — Harry Hurwitz, Israel's Minister of Information in Washington, today voiced Israel's optimism and confidence in the upcoming Reagan Administration.

Speaking at the midwinter conference of Bnai Zion at the America-Israel Friendship House here, Hurwitz said that President-elect Ronald Reagan's statements during the election campaign and since his election, particularly his belief that Israel's West Bank settlements are legal, gives Israel "much confidence." He said Reagan's "rejection of a PLO state are encouraging."

Hurwitz also had praise for the departing Carter Administration. "Israel will be forever grateful to President Carter" for the "success of the Camp David accords," he said.

Later during the one-day conference, Rabbi I. Usher Kirshblum, spiritual leader of the Jewish Center of Kew Gardens-Hills in Queens, and chairman of the conference, declared that the Begin government "has served the Israeli nation well through the peace accords." He said it also "rightfully declared the legal status of Jerusalem" despite the nations which moved their embassies out of the city "under duress of the Arab lands blackmail" that they would cut off oil "if they remained in Jerusalem."

JTA, Jewish Week Honored

At a testimonial luncheon, Bnai Zion presented plaques to Murray Zuckoff, editor of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, and to the Jewish Week for their contributions to the Jewish community. The presentations were made by Paul Safo, Bnai Zion president.

The plaque to Zuckoff cited him for "extraordinary public service" under whose direction the JTA "serves as a first hand source of information on all major events affecting the welfare of the Jewish people and the State of Israel." It also stated that Zuckoff's "own courageous stand in his articles on crucial problems confronting the American Jewish community constitutes an invaluable contribution to the climate of public understanding and alertness which is so vital for Jewish survival."

The plaque to the Jewish Week, which was accepted on its behalf by Deborah Hart, a staff member, cited the newspaper for "exceptional public service" and its role "as a valuable weekly publication" for the "dissemination of vital and newsworthy information setting the highest standards in journalism affecting the welfare of the American Jewish community, world Jewry and the State of Israel."

EMANUEL CELLER DEAD AT 92

NEW YORK, Jan. 18 (JTA) — Funeral services were held here today for Emanuel Celler who died last Thursday at the age of 92 from pneumonia. He

served in the House of Representatives for 50 years, from 1922 to 1972, when he was defeated in the Democratic primaries in a stunning upset by Elizabeth Holtzman. The defeat ended one of the longest political careers in Congressional history. He was also chairman for 30 years of the American Mogen David for Israel (ARMDI).

Celler was a proponent of Zionism since he read Theodor Herzl's "Jewish State" when he was 26 years old. Lewis Rosenberg, ARMDI president, said Celler "was the valiant heart and inspiration of ARMDI, guiding the organization in its efforts on behalf of Israel's Red Cross service." He said Celler's staunch fight for the "noble cause of human rights and as a leader of the Jewish people is incomparable."

As chairman of the House Judiciary Committee for a record 22 years, from 1949 to 1972, with a two year interruption when the Republicans controlled the House in 1953 and 1954, Celler sponsored in 1957 the first Civil Rights Act since Reconstruction and led in the fight for the civil rights amendments of 1960, 1964, 1965, 1968 and 1970.

He said the most memorable event in his life was the time he stood beside President Truman when the President telephoned the Israeli Ambassador to the United States to say "I have the honor of recognizing Israel as an independent sovereign state."

Celler had been a director of the Brookdale Hospital Center in Brooklyn and a trustee of the Oscar Straus Memorial Fund. He had been a member of the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee and B'nai B'rith.

The grandson of German Jewish immigrants, he was born in Brooklyn May 6, 1888. His parents died soon after he entered Columbia College and he worked his way through school by going to classes in the morning and selling wine, his father's old business, in the afternoon and evening. He graduated from Columbia in 1910 and Columbia Law School in 1912 and then entered the practice of law which he continued throughout his life.

2 RABBIS, CANTOR AMONG 16 CLERICS IN THE INAUGURAL CONVOCATION

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18 (JTA) -- Two rabbis and a cantor joined today in the only public worship sponsored by the Presidential Inaugural Committee as part of the official inauguration ceremonies that will culminate with the swearing in of Ronald Reagan as America's 40th President on Tuesday.

Rabbi David Ben-Ami, of Harrisburg, Pa., Rabbi Andre Ungar, of Temple Emanuel of Westwood, N.J. and Cantor Roy Garber of the Washington Hebrew Congregation, Washington, D.C. were among the 16 clergymen who participated in the Inaugural Convocation held at the National City Christian Church of the Disciples of Christ. The others represented the Catholic, Orthodox and Islamic faiths.

Ben-Ami, in his remarks, said "This interfaith service gives expression to the common ground of all the great religious traditions that have influenced American life, stressing the sacredness of human personality, respect for human rights and the duty of fraternal cooperation for common welfare." Ben-Ami is chairman of the American Forum for Jewish-Christian Cooperation and was vice chairman of the Religious Participation Committee headed by Dr. Robert Billings.

Ungar read the 72nd Psalm which begins with the words, "Oh God, endow the ruler with your own justice and give of your compassion to the leader so that he may govern our people with righteousness and deal out justice to the poor and suffering." Garber chanted verses from Psalm 34 in the Hasidic melody, "Mi Ha'ish," part of which, translated reads, "See Peace and Pursue It."

Reagan will be the third President who is a member of the Disciples of Christ. The others were James Garfield and Lyndon Johnson. At the inauguration itself, the sole religious representatives will be the Rev. Donn Moomah, of the Bel Aire Presbyterian Church of Beverly Hills, CA which the Reagans attend. Reagan is a member of the Hollywood-Beverly Christian Church.

SAUNDERS RETIRES UNEXPECTEDLY

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18 (JTA) -- Harold Saunders, Assistant Secretary of State for the Middle East, retired unexpectedly Friday. However, he will continue as a special consultant to the U.S. official group negotiating the release of the American hostages in Iran.

Saunders had not been expected to leave his post for several months, according to State Department sources, primarily, because the incoming Reagan Administration had not selected his successor. The sources said the retirement four days before the new Administration takes over permits Saunders to qualify for higher federal retirement benefits.

Saunders, 50, has 23 years of government service. He was with the Air Force, Central Intelligence Agency, and the White House before coming to the State Department when Henry Kissinger became Secretary of State in 1973.

MAGAZINE TO PROPAGATE WORKS OF AN ANTI-SEMITIC

AMSTERDAM, Jan. 18 (JTA) -- The first issue of the "Celine Journal," established by the Celine Society to propagate the works of the late French author, Louis Ferdinand Celine, an anti-Semite and Nazi collaborator, was published in Holland this week. The society was founded last year with the stated purpose of making Celine's writings available in the Dutch language. The journal will appear twice a year.

Although the society acknowledges Celine's Nazi sympathies, it regards him as a great writer whose books deserve to be read. Three of them have already been translated into Dutch and more are expected to follow. His "Voyage Au Bout de La Nuit" has been adapted for the stage by Belgian playwright Guido Lauwaert and will be performed in various Dutch cities in the next few weeks.

TERRORIST SQUAD APPREHENDED

TEL AVIV, Jan. 18 (JTA) -- A four-man Fatah terrorist squad responsible for a number of murders and other acts of violence was captured by security forces on the West Bank recently, according to an Israeli army spokesman. The gang had been active in the Ramallah area north of Jerusalem. When captured, the group, termed the "liquidation squad" by investigators, was found in possession of quantities of arms and explosives.

They had reportedly carried out a number of murders of local Arabs they said had collaborated with the Israelis, as well as grenade attacks on Israeli vehicles. Another terrorist group captured recently included two brothers from Hebron who led security forces to large arms caches in the region.

PARIS (JTA) -- Israel's Labor Party leader Shimon Peres is due to meet this week with President Valery Giscard D'Estaing and Socialist Francois Mitterrand.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

HOW IS THIS CRISIS DIFFERENT?

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 18 (JTA) — "Wherefore is this crisis different from all other crises?" This was one of the questions that political observers were pondering here as the week began with the decision of Premier Menachem Begin's Cabinet to dissolve the Knesset and hold elections July 7.

Granted, Finance Minister Yigal Hurwitz resigned last Sunday and took his three-man Rafi faction out of the coalition and out of the Likud. But senior ministers have resigned before from Begin's cabinet, including Hurwitz himself, who quit as commerce minister in 1978 in protest at the Camp David agreements. The storms their resignations caused soon subsided.

The answer — the key to the unique finality of this particular crisis — lies only partly in Parliamentary arithmetic. The government without Rafi would be hard put to maintain its majority in the Knesset.

The more fundamental answer lies in the realm of political psychology. The accumulation of problems, the succession of crises and deflections, the deterioration of the economy, the withering criticism of the entire press — all these together brought the majority of the coalition leaders, and Begin at their head, to the conclusion that enough is enough.

In any case, this government will have served by July slightly more than a full four-year term, which is longer than any previous government in Israel's history. Begin would have liked to go the whole stretch until November, the statutory end of the Knesset's term. But he is said to be conspired by the four-year record.

Early Elections Not A Disaster

The fact that the government did reach this conclusion, however reluctantly — some would say belatedly — is in itself a good omen for the essential health and inner stability of Israel's democracy.

"Early elections are not a disaster," Foreign Minister (and Begin's heir-presumptive) Yitzhak Shamir said in a radio interview last week. "They are a common enough occurrence in the best and longest established or parliamentary democracies."

Arithmetically, say Likud floor-managers in the Knesset, the government could have carried on. Indeed, the diehards Ariel Sharon and David Levy of Herut, proved to Begin with pencil and paper during the past week that there are enough floating votes to be had from Knesset lone back-bench mavericks to ensure the government a 61 vote majority in any confidence motion.

But, Begin, Shamir, Yosef Burg and Simcha Ehrlich, the leading figures in the main coalition parties, remained unconvinced. They explained privately that although normally a majority of one in a democratic parliament is sufficient, in this case it would be politically and morally wrong for the government to rest on the votes of one-and-two-man spinoffs from the long-defunct and practically forgotten Democratic Movement for Change. "After all," one coalition leader remarked, "Whom do they represent now apart from themselves?"

Begin himself, with his finely honed sense of honor and political propriety, recoiled from the prospect of making 11th hour "deals" with the lone Knesset members to purchase their loyalty to his coalition.

Collective Survival Instinct

While the issue in dispute between Hurwitz and Education Minister Zevulun Hammer — major pay rises for the country's 60,000 teachers — was truly weighty and even crucial, given the state of the economy, everyone at the Cabinet table felt that economic considerations were not Hurwitz's sole motivation.

Ironically, Hurwitz, little known outside Israel, succeeded where the two men of international renown in Begin's cabinet, Moshe Dayan and Ezer Weizman, abysmally failed. Neither their resignations, nor Weizman's subsequent ouster from Herut, shook the government for longer than a week or two. The collective survival instinct of the various components of the coalition quickly overcame any regrets that some of them felt over Dayan's and Weizman's departures.

The government's prestige abroad suffered heavy blows, however, from the departures of these two stars, but at home, matters soon returned to business as usual.

That was also the case when, 14 months ago, Begin lost his first Finance Minister, Simcha Ehrlich, who fled before an unprecedented barrage of press and public criticism. Ironically, it was Hurwitz then who saved the day by rejoining the government to take over the Treasury. Ehrlich, in an interview last week said with ill-concealed gratification, "I never expected great achievements from him ... but I didn't think he'd fail so fast."

Hurwitz certainly would seem to have failed to improve the economic situation, at least if inflation statistics are a yardstick. He insists they are not. The year end figures in that area show his performance to have been worse than Ehrlich's.

But he did succeed in creating the circumstances in which a tired government could do what it appears to have itself wanted to do: End its term with honor and go to the nation for a renewed mandate.

EI AL TAKES WING AGAIN

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 18 (JTA) — The general strike that paralyzed EI Al last Thursday ended 48 hours later following the reinstatement of six maintenance workers' committee members fired earlier for staging an unauthorized work stoppage. EI Al board chairman Avraham Shavit rescinded the dismissal notices under the threat of sympathy strikes by 13 major trade unions that would have brought Israel's entire economy to a halt.

While Israel's national air carrier was operating again, the brief strike cost the financially beleaguered company hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost revenue and its future remained uncertain. Shavit himself came under fire from fellow board members for giving in to the workers.

During the crisis, the EI Al board was seriously considering shutting down the airline and reorganizing it on a tighter basis that would eliminate the multiplicity of workers committees. Shavit obtained labor's agreement to a retrenchment plan to stem the company's losses. But it was rejected by Transport Minister Haim Landau who sent word from his hospital bed — where he is recovering from a leg amputation — that he was not prepared to grant EI Al additional government funds under those conditions.

As a result, the EI Al employes have petitioned a labor court to nullify the compromise agreement on grounds that the government's attitude made it a "dead letter."

JERUSALEM, Jan. 18 (JTA) — An Egyptian Parliamentary delegation is due here Monday on an official visit.