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KNESSET DEBATES PROPOSAL

TO HOLD ELECTIONS JULY

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 20 (JTA) — Debate began in the Knesset today on the government's bill to hold elections next July 7. But behind the scenes discussions are also underway between coalition and opposition factions and most political observers predict a Labor-Likud compromise on a somewhat earlier date, possibly June 23.

MK David Glass of the National Religious Party, who is chairman of the Knesset's Legal Committee, seemed to agree with that prediction. His committee will get the government bill after it passes its first reading and will refer it back to the full Knesset for its second and third readings with recommended changes. The compromise date will probably be decided in committee where Glass and his two NRP colleagues hold the balance between Likud and Labor.

July 7 was the date decided on by the Cabinet last Sunday, though apparently subject to change. Likud's Liberal Party wing is unhappy with it because the Maccabiah Games with which the party is closely associated begin on July 6. The Labor Party objected because July is the vacation season when many Israeli voters will be abroad. Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres said today that July 7 was just a "whim" on the part of Premier Menachem Begin.

12 MEMBERS OF EGYPT'S PARLIAMENT

IN ISRAEL ON A LONG-PLANNED VISIT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 20 (JTA) — Twelve members of Egypt's Parliament sat in the Knesset gallery today watching their Israeli counterparts debate over a date for early elections. The group, headed by Mohammed Ahmed Abdullah, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Egyptian Peoples Assembly, arrived last night on a long-planned visit. It is the first of what is hoped to be a series of interchanges between Israeli and Egyptian parliamentarians as the process of normalization continues.

The Egyptian group includes one woman and one member of the opposition Liberal Party. The others belong to President Anwar Sadat's ruling National Democratic Party. They are accompanied by four Egyptian journalists who cover the Parliament in Cairo.

Abdullah told reporters that their very presence in the Knesset was the best proof that normalization between Egypt and Israel is making progress. He and his colleagues professed to know nothing of the ban on Israel's participation in the international book fair opening in Cairo next week, which was reported here yesterday.

The visitors met with a group of Knesset members this morning and are due to meet separately with Shimon Peres, chairman of the opposition Labor Party, and former Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, now an independent MK.

TRIAL OF NAZIS MAY END IN MISTRIAL

BONN, Jan. 20 (JTA) — The sixth and probably last trial of Nazis accused of war crimes at

Auschwitz may end in a mistrial in Frankfurt today because the chief defendant, Horst Czerwinski, 58, suffered a heart attack. Lawyers for his co-defendant, Josef Schmidt, 58, have demanded a mistrial on grounds that their client's case is closely related to that of Czerwinski who is not expected to return to the dock for a considerable time.

Czerwinski, who was a commander of the Lagischa camp in the Auschwitz complex has been charged with the murders of at least eight inmates. Schmidt, a "Blockfuhrer" at the same camp is accused of collaborating in the killings. The proceedings against them have been underway for 3 1/2 years.

Observers here believe the court will have to drop the cases against both men because the prolonged absence of Czerwinski will interrupt the continuity of the legal process required by law. The entire proceedings would have to begin from scratch, but that option is unrealistic because the case depends heavily on witnesses who are not expected to appear a second time.

NEW ECONOMIC PROGRAM TO

BE INTRODUCED BY ARIDOR

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 20 (JTA) — Israel's newly appointed Finance Minister, Yoram Aridor, is expected to introduce an economic program to slow the steady devaluation of the Shekel, improve labor relations, encourage long-term investments and savings by the public and, hopefully, reduce the annual inflation rate, now at a record 130 percent-plus to a more manageable double digit figure.

Much of Aridor's program was recommended to his predecessor, Yigal Hurwitz, in an economic plan paper submitted a month ago, close associates of the new Finance Minister told reporters today. He is expected to continue Hurwitz's policy of slashing government spending which he considers absolutely essential if inflation is to be contained. That proved to be Hurwitz's most formidable obstacle. He achieved only limited success and resigned over the issue Jan. 11.

Elements of New Economic Plan

Aridor intends to prop up the Shekel by offering the public foreign currency saving schemes. A stronger Shekel would have adverse effects on exports which rose substantially during Hurwitz's regime, his most notable achievement. Aridor is said to be ready to recommend additional incentives and compensation to exporters who find it hard to market their goods abroad without a cheap Shekel.

Aridor will make wage and salary increases independent entirely on increased productivity. He believes this formula would lead to labor peace by cushioning wage-earners against inflation and offering them a tangible inducement to improve productivity and at the same time, would peg cost-of-living increments to 100 percent of the price index and pay them monthly instead of quarterly. At present, the increments do not cover the full rise of the price index.

Aridor is said to favor a reduced tax on fuel and does not believe the tax should go up every time the price of fuel rises. Thus, he believes, the economy would be less subject to periodic jolts. He would offset the fuel tax reduction by a one-time large increase in the value-added tax (VAT). The new Finance Minister also wants to make government saving schemes more attractive to investors as a means of absorbing the excess money supply.

Aridor, who is chairman of the Herut Executive, was Premier Menachem Begin's choice to succeed Hurwitz. His appointment was approved by the Cabinet yesterday after Likud's Liberal Party wing withdrew its objections. Part of the deal with the Liberals was the naming of one of its leaders, Minister of Commerce and Industry Gideon Patt, as chairman of the Cabinet's economic committee. Another top Liberal, Energy Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, will be a member of that powerful body.

Aridor also pledged not to tamper with two key elements of the Liberal's economic program—the foreign exchange regulations established by former Finance Minister Simcha Ehrlich and a tax exemption for profits realized on stock market investments. He also promised not to raise direct taxes beyond their present levels.

DIPLOMAT SAYS WESTERN UNITY WAS ACHIEVED AT MADRID CONFERENCE

NEW YORK, Jan. 20 (JTA) — Max Kampelman, a high-ranking U.S. diplomat, told a meeting here that Western unity achieved at the recent review of the Helsinki Accords in Madrid should prompt continued use of these forums to win human rights concessions from the Soviet Union.

According to Kampelman, co-chairman of the American delegation to the 35-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the fear that the Soviet Union would gain more from the 1975 Helsinki pact than the West, was allayed during the Madrid session, now in recess to Jan. 27.

"Instead of Helsinki becoming a tool for Soviet propaganda, it is now a tool for liberty and human rights," he told an audience of some 100 Jews and Christians at the Episcopal Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in Manhattan.

Taking note of the one-time U.S. apprehension that the treaty would merely serve Soviet interests by recognizing much of the USSR's post-war takeover of Eastern Europe, Kampelman observed that the reverse has come true: "It is now a tool for the West. We have learned how to use it," he declared.

Kampelman was keynote speaker on a program titled, "The Road from Helsinki to Madrid: Exploring the paths of Justice and Human Dignity" under cosponsorship of the Cathedral Church, the Episcopal Diocese of New York and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Kampelman, who is also vice-chairman of the ADL's National Commission, said that in the forthcoming session the U.S. will support a follow-up meeting to Madrid, to further pursue Soviet compliance on human rights issues. In addition, he said, the U.S. will seek new areas of cooperation, such as an agreement to curtail international terrorism and to develop bilateral discussions between the 35 signatories to the treaty.

PLANTING TREES ON TU B'SHEVAT

JERUSALEM, Jan. 20 (JTA) — Israel was to become richer by 150,000 trees as a result of

today's Tu B'Shevat celebrations by toddlers and school children around the country. The Jewish National Fund distributed that number of saplings for the youngsters to plant during the traditional nature rambles that are the rule of the day in Israeli schools.

The JNF held several mass planting events today itself in forests around the country. Some 4000 school children took part in one such ceremony at the Kennedy Memorial Forest near Jerusalem, and 7000 were present at ceremonies in the Haifa and Galilee areas.

DEAL TO FREE AMERICAN HOSTAGES AND FAILURE TO PUNISH IRAN SEEN AS SETTING A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 20 (JTA) — An Israeli expert on international terrorism said today that the deal entered into to free the 52 American hostages and the failure to punish Iran for seizing them more than a year ago, may have set "a dangerous precedent." Dr. Ariel Merari, a researcher at Tel Aviv University's Institute for Strategic Studies, nevertheless welcomed the release of the Americans.

"I can fully understand the rejoicing of the families of the hostages," he said. "But from the national and international point of view, it may serve as a dangerous precedent for other would-be kidnappers or hijackers, either individuals, organizations or governments."

Merari said that there has been a decline in hijacking and hostage-taking in the last 5-6 years mainly because countries have refused to grant asylum to the hijackers for fear of international sanctions. But the Iranian government was itself involved in the seizure and holding of the Americans and it succeeded in its objectives, "or at least has escaped without punishment," he said.

TU B'SHEVAT MARKED IN NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE, FETE ALSO MARKS RELEASE OF HOSTAGES FROM IRAN

By Rochelle Saidel-Wolk

ALBANY, Jan. 20 (JTA) — The New York State Legislature marked Tu B'Shevat, the Jewish "New Year of the Trees," for the fifth consecutive year today at a festive gathering attended by some 40 members of the Assembly and Senate, Jewish and non-Jewish, and more than 100 guests from the local community.

Assemblyman Sheldon Silver (D, Man.), one of the co-hosts, noted that the day had special significance in that it marked a new beginning for the 52 American hostages in Iran who were released and on their way home even as the celebration was in progress.

Other co-hosts were Assemblymen Howard Lasher, and Samuel Hirsch, both Brooklyn Democrats, and Rabbi Israel Rubin, representing the Lubavitcher movement in Albany. Lasher explained that the Tu B'Shevat celebration has become an annual event of the New York State Legislature because the new legislative session coincides with the beginning of the spring cycle in Israel.

Rubin noted that Tu B'Shevat is foremost a children's holiday when children in Israel plant trees in the countryside. He likened children to trees, observing that "the earliest impression on a seed or sapling shows up later in big ways, just as the education of a child can greatly influence later life."

The party, held in Lasher's office, featured the fruits of trees indigenous to Israel, wine and other refreshment. Ten children of the Maimonides Hebrew Day School of Albany sang Hebrew songs under the direction of Cantor Joel Cutler.

U.S. PLANS TO SELL SAUDI ARABIA SOME \$2 BILLION IN MILITARY AID

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Jan. 20 (JTA) -- The Carter Administration yesterday, in one of its last acts, notified Congress that the U.S. proposes to sell Saudi Arabia almost \$2 billion in supplies and services for the Saudi air force and navy. Congress has 30 days to reject the proposed sales or they automatically go through. If either the Senate or the House rejects it the sale is stopped.

A Pentagon spokesman told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the proposals were contained in three letters to Congress, divided into allocations for the navy and air force. One letter proposes \$900 million in "technical and personnel support" for the Saudi air force concerning U.S. F-5 aircraft and also a "mission of support services at F-5 and F-15 air bases."

Another letter provides for \$846 million for design and construction services for the Saudi navy at Jubail, Jidda, Dammam and Riyadh. Another letter for \$200 million concerns spare parts and supplies for naval supply depots in Jubail and Jidda.

The new sales increase to more than \$35 billion the total of U.S. military and military-related sales to Saudi Arabia since 1955, nearly all of it in the last seven years. In fiscal year 1980 which ended last Sept. 30, U.S. sales to Saudi Arabia totaled \$4.5 billion.

Pentagon sources indicated they expected no difficulty in the sales going through. They noted the new equipment and services are not "offensive" weapons as were the 60 F-15 warplanes sold to the Saudis two years ago or the enhancement of these warplanes with refueling apparatus and bomb racks now being sought by the Saudis.

AUSTRIAN GROUP DONATING FUNDS TO ISRAELI GROUP FOR A PROGRAM OF EDUCATION OF JEWISH, ARAB CHILDREN

VIENNA, Jan. 20 (JTA) -- An Austrian welfare organization, The Solidarity Fund for Children of the Third World, announced that it will donate 1.5 million Schillings for a multifaceted program of education for Jewish and Arab children.

The money will be given to the Mapam-oriented Givat Haviva center in Israel, a center for Arab, African and Asian studies which is headed by Yitzhak Patish, a former Israeli Ambassador to Vienna, and Muhammad Watad, an Arab journalist and politician. The center offers seminars for Jews and Arabs to help both reach a better understanding between the two peoples.

The Solidarity Fund will donate the money for a program that will include a Jewish-Arab youth seminar for 500 participants from each side, a recreational program for underprivileged Jewish and Arab children, seminars for young Arab teachers and working women, and the establishment of a Jewish-Arab cultural club for young people.

The donation was initiated by the Rote Falken, the youth section of the Austrian Socialist Party, whose members visited Givat Haviva in 1979.

JEWISH GROUPS AIDING U.S. TO FIND NEW WITNESSES IN WAR CRIMES PROBE

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 20 (JTA) -- The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Greater Philadelphia and the Association of Jewish New Americans are cooperating with the

United States Department of Justice in attempting to find new witnesses for investigations of crimes committed by alleged Nazi war criminals currently residing in the U.S., a JCRC official reported.

The JCRC is distributing copies of a brief questionnaire for survivors prepared by the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations. The questionnaire, which is available in English and Russian, can be obtained by calling the JCRC office at (215) 545-8430.

According to H. Ronald Klasko, chairman of the JCRC Committee on Nazi War Criminals, "The cooperation of survivor witnesses has been essential in the investigation and ultimate bringing to justice of individuals responsible for Nazi-related crimes. We believe there are many people in our community who have information which could help in the prosecution of such cases, and we urge them to call for the questionnaire and cooperate in this important effort."

Information provided by respondents to the questionnaire will be kept confidential and turned over to the U.S. Justice Department. Questionnaires should be returned to Burton Siegel, Jewish Community Relations Council, 260 South 15th St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION ORDERED AGAINST TWO GERMAN ARMY OFFICERS

By David Kantor

BONN, Jan. 20 (JTA) -- Disciplinary action has been ordered against two army reserve officers who wore their uniforms at the funeral of Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz on Jan. 6 in defiance of a Defense Ministry ban. Doenitz, commander of the U-boat fleet in World War II, succeeded Hitler as Reichschancellor in 1945 and negotiated Germany's surrender. But he never repented his Nazi activities or his loyalty to Hitler.

The Defense Ministry explicitly ordered military personnel not to attend the funeral in uniform. The occasion was used by rightwing and neo-Nazi elements to demonstrate their sympathy for the Nazi system. It was largely shunned by German officials. What action would be taken against the reservists was unclear inasmuch as they are not bound by the same regulations as officers on active duty.

Doenitz was selected by Hitler as his successor before his suicide. The Admiral served in that capacity for the last three weeks of the Third Reich. He was tried at Nuremberg in 1946 and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for war crimes.

MENTEN TO APPEAL SENTENCE

AMSTERDAM, Jan. 20 (JTA) -- Pieter Menten, twice convicted of war crimes he committed in the service of the Nazi SS, will appeal to the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg against the 10-year sentence imposed on him by a Rotterdam court last June and upheld by the Dutch Supreme Court last week, his lawyer, Louis Van Heyningen said this week.

Menten, 81 and ailing, was found guilty in 1977 of the murder of Jews and others in the Polish village of Podhoradz in July, 1941. But the Supreme Court twice quashed the conviction on technical grounds. Its confirmation of the Rotterdam sentence, which included a 100,000 Guilders fine, foreclosed any further appeals by Menten in Holland.

WASHINGTON (JTA) -- Donald McHenry, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations since Sept. 1979, has been appointed a research professor in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

RABIN: ISRAEL FACES CHALLENGES OF PROJECT RENEWAL, PEACE PROCESS

NEW YORK, Jan. 20 (JTA) — Former Premier Yitzhak Rabin of Israel stressed two challenges his country will face in the year ahead when he addressed major American Jewish organizations during his visit to the U.S. earlier this month. They are Project Renewal, the joint Israeli-diaspora effort to improve the environment and quality of life for Israelis who dwell in poverty areas, and the ongoing peace process with Egypt which, he hoped, could be broadened to include other Arab states.

Rabin, a leader of the opposition Labor Party in Israel, also spoke of overall strategic matters affecting the Middle East and emphasized the need for an American military presence in the region to assert its credibility in defense of the continued flow of oil to the industrial democracies and to block Soviet encroachment.

Mideast Struggle Is Crucial

Speaking at the foreign policy symposium of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in Washington, Rabin said "The Middle East struggle is crucial in determining the balance between the free world and the Soviet bloc. This struggle might decide the fate of the democratic world."

The "mood today" of the two superpowers was projected in the manner in which the U.S. handled Iran and the Soviet Union handled Afghanistan, Rabin contended. According to him, "There is no doubt the Russians came up with the upper hand. The American strategic existence in Iran was eliminated."

Emphasizing that he was expressing his own opinion, Rabin suggested that the U.S. "take the initiative to bring changes in the policies" of the countries that now cooperate with the Soviet Union. He said the Soviets were not engaged in the Middle East on an ideological basis but in a "sheer power struggle."

Rabin was optimistic about the progress in relations between Israel and Egypt. He said that as long as President Anwar Sadat leads Egypt, peace will continue. But, he added, "even a change of regime in Egypt will not bring a complete switch in Egyptian policies that are now prevailing." He hinted that Israel would forewarn Sadat of any threat. "If we know of any danger to the Sadat regime, he would know it and would eliminate it," Rabin said.

Expresses Confidence in Reagan's Administration

He expressed confidence that the Reagan Administration "will be bound" by the Camp David accords and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. With respect to the Jordanian option, favored by his party, which would have Israel negotiate with King Hussein of Jordan to resolve the Palestinian problem, Rabin said that "for the sake of peace," Israeli forces would be withdrawn from "70 percent of the West Bank and Gaza" to create "one entity — a Jordanian-Palestinian state."

In an address to the United Jewish Appeal Southwest Regional Conference in Dallas, Rabin noted the sacrifices Israel already has made for peace. Under the terms of the peace treaty with Egypt, "Israel has given up the oil fields which supplied the country with 25 percent of its oil. Who else would give 25 percent of their oil supply away today? We have done this for peace," the former Prime Minister said.

He told the 500 Jewish leaders in his UJA audience that "We are determined to keep Project

Renewal going, even under the difficulties that we face," which include a defense budget that is "heavier than that of any other country" and an oil bill that is "bigger than our defense bill." Nevertheless, he said, "for the further development of Israel, we must also solve the problems, through Project Renewal, that continue to oppress the 300,000 Jews who have not yet been fully absorbed into the mainstream of Israeli society."

SOLOMON LEVY DEAD AT 87

NEW YORK, Jan. 20 (JTA) — Funeral services were held Sunday for Rabbi Solomon Levy, the former Grand Rabbi of Hust, Czechoslovakia, who died Saturday while conducting Shabat services in his synagogue in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn. He was 87 years old.

Levy, who founded Ohel Elimelech in Boro Park when he came to the United States in 1939, had been blind for the last 20 years. Nevertheless as cantor he continued to lead the cantorial services from memory every week at his synagogue, including on the High Holy Days, and to conduct a weekly lecture every Saturday.

Levy was born in Tosh, Hungary, where his father was the Grand Rabbi and married the daughter of the Grand Rabbi of Hust, where he himself later became the Grand Rabbi.

MOVE TO END SHORTWAVE TRANSMISSIONS TO AMERICA

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 20 (JTA) — The World Zionist Organization information department is recommending that Israel's shortwave radio transmissions to North and South America be phased out and the resources channeled into television broadcasts via satellite and video cassettes and taped radio shows. A final decision will be taken jointly by the Foreign Ministry, the WZO and the Israel Broadcasting Authority.

The WZO information department said surveys show that audiences listening to the shortwave programs are miniscule. Medium wave broadcasting of Israeli material through local American stations would be much more effective, the department believes, and resources saved could also be used for TV programs especially made for showing in America.

The cutback in short wave transmissions is contemplated, the department stressed, only for the Western hemisphere, not for Europe (especially Eastern Europe) where, it is felt, they still have an important role to play.

Meanwhile, a commercial TV and film studio in Herzliya is embarking on an effort to sell Israeli television programs to the U.S. market. Initially, shows specially put together here (in English), comprising news, views, culture and sports, will be screened by Channel 47 in New York City.

Subsequently, the studio hopes, the shows will be transmitted via satellite or cassettes to other stations in the U.S., particularly in areas of large Jewish population concentrations.

TEL AVIV (JTA) — The Jewish National Fund has provided a plot of land near Mount Meiron in Galilee for the planting of what is believed will be the first memorial forest for the late John Lennon, of the Beatles. The idea for the Lennon Memorial Forest originated with a group of Orthodox Jewish newcomers from the U.S. living in Safed. Funds are being raised among Galilee residents and Jews abroad. The first trees are to be planted shortly by Safed youngsters and Arab children from neighboring villages.