

RACIST PARTY IN FRANCE WINS ALMOST 10 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL VOTE

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, March 17 (JTA) — The ultra-rightwing National Front Party, whose leader, Jean Marie Le Pen, has been denounced as a racist and an anti-Semite by Jewish community leaders, elbowed its way into Parliament Sunday in national elections that left the winning center-right coalition four seats short of the majority they need to form a government.

Le Pen, whose party won 35 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly — and nearly 10 percent of the total vote compared to one percent in the last elections — promptly declared he would not support a new center-right government unless he is part of it. The possibility looms that he will may be.

Only last week a court sentenced Le Pen to a symbolic fine after finding him guilty of racist remarks when he insulted four Jewish reporters who had been critical of his party's activities. In an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency last year, Le Pen denied he was anti-Jewish. He admitted being anti-Arab and favors expelling immigrant guest workers, many of whom are of North African origin.

The National Front Party won four seats in Marseilles, a city plagued by unemployment which has a large population of guest workers from North Africa. It matched the center-right coalition which also won four seats in Marseilles. Le Pen himself was elected in Paris where he polled 11 percent of the vote.

Elements In The Anti-Socialist Coalition

The coalition which beat President Francois Mitterrand's Socialist Party consists of the neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR), headed by Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, and the liberal Union for French Democracy (UDF) whose leader is former President Valery Giscard d'Estaing.

Together with several independent rightwing deputies, they polled 22.5 percent of the national vote which translates — under the system of proportional representation introduced by Mitterrand — to 293 seats in the National Assembly, four short of a majority.

The Communist Party, which won 35 Assembly seats with slightly less than 10 percent of the national vote, suffered its worst defeat since 1924. Political analysts believe its debacle was attributable in part to the party's poor record on human rights.

The Representative Council of Major French Jewish Organizations (CRIF) issued a communique on the eve of the elections calling on the Jewish community to vote "according to each and every one's political and ideological convictions." It made only two exceptions — the National Front and the Communist Party.

Nevertheless, some Jews cast votes for the extreme left and extreme right. The Communist daily, L'Humanite, published an appeal last week signed by 200 Jews urging Jews to vote Communist. Several Jews wrote to local Jewish newspapers protesting the CRIF communique and stated they would vote for Le Pen's party.

According to the French Constitution, Mitterrand will serve out his term which expires in 1988. He will remain in charge of foreign affairs, though probably in consultation with the new center-right Prime Minister he must appoint. This is expected to be Chirac who was Premier in Giscard's government.

But Mitterrand could appoint a "dark horse." One name mentioned is Simone Veil, former President of the Parliament of Europe, who is Jewish and a survivor of Auschwitz.

The Jewish weekly Tribune Juive was pleased with the election results. An editorial in its next edition states that "strong parliaments are generally good for Jews." As an example, the paper noted that the U.S. Congress is Israel's best friend in America, even at times when the Administration is less receptive to Israel's needs than it is now.

According to Tribune Juive, nothing could be better for Israel and the French Jewish community than a pro-Israel President such as Mitterrand and a National Assembly dominated by the Socialists and center-right parties.

In The Aftermath Of A Disastrous Convention: HERUT IN A LAST-CHANCE EFFORT TO KEEP ALIVE ROTATION OF POWER WITH LABOR

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 17 (JTA) — Yitzhak Shamir and David Levy, bitter rivals whose power struggle caused Herut's 15th convention to collapse in unseemly chaos last Thursday, may be inching toward a rapprochement this week in what many observers see as a last-chance effort to keep alive the rotation of power agreement with the Labor Party.

The would-be peacemaker and the man who may have in the long run outmaneuvered both Levy and Shamir is Ariel Sharon, Herut's most outspoken hardliner who allied his forces with those of Levy a week ago to deprive Shamir of the convention's endorsement as leader of Herut.

The partly Sharon, a Yom Kippur War hero and probably the most controversial politician in Israel, is the only Herut figure who managed to emerge from the stormy convention politically strengthened.

The pandemonium had hardly died down when he astutely distanced himself from Levy, identified his camp as the "third force" in Herut and began a round of "shuttle diplomacy" between Shamir and Levy even while the two men and their aides continued to hurl verbal brickbats at each other.

Tempers cooled somewhat over the weekend. Shamir, who is Foreign Minister and a Deputy Premier in the Labor-Likud unity coalition government, called on his supporters to cease their war of words.

Levy, Minister of Housing and also a Deputy Premier, contributed to the cooling off when, Sunday night, he declined to be interviewed on the main television newscast. This act of restraint for Levy is the only one of the principles not to appear on television since the convention broke up.

Sharon, building on the atmosphere of relative civility, assumed the role of mediator with a formula to heal the lacerated Herut. His proposal is a three-way division of power. Shamir would be elected chairman of Herut.

Levy would become chairman of the party's Executive. Sharon would assume the chairmanship of its Central Committee. The arrangement, if agreed upon by all concerned, would be put before the convention which would reconvene, possibly in a week or so, for no more than a half day.

According to Sharon, the pre-arranged power-sharing deal would be endorsed by voice vote and would in fact be unanimous since all three camps will have agreed in advance. Herut would emerge once again as a united party, or at least give the appearance.

Sharon's plan got a cold shower from the Shamir camp. The Foreign Minister was not about to accept the largely honorary title of party chairman while foregoing the key position of chairman of the Executive. It was pointed out that Menachem Begin, Herut's founder, always held both chairmanships, the former giving him prestige and the latter effective control of the movement.

Levy, too, according to his aides, was unlikely to accept the three-way power-sharing scheme. Levy supporters are convinced that if the convention is resumed, their man can defeat Shamir. However, they concede they would need the backing of the Sharon camp.

Sharon's Political Stock Has Risen

Sharon is estimated to command the votes of 10-15 percent of the 2,000 convention delegates. Levy's strength is estimated at at least 35 percent. The balance are Shamir supporters. But Sharon's political stock has risen. At the convention he overwhelmingly defeated Binyamin Begin, son of the former Premier, for chairman of the important credentials committee. That success provided him with clout far out of proportion to his numerical strength.

Sharon's troika strategy, according to political observers, is to establish himself as the equal of Shamir and Levy at the party's summit and he is poised to grasp that position at the most propitious moment.

His strategy is aided by growing fears in Herut that Labor is eager to exploit the party's disarray. The Labor Party opens its convention on April 8 with the Israeli and much of the world's media focussed on it. Unless Herut has put its house in order by then, it will be open to ridicule as a party unable to govern itself, much less the nation.

At risk is the rotation of power agreement where Premier Shimon Peres must hand over his office to Shamir next October 13. The agreement which is the basis of the Labor-Likud coalition, was reached between Peres and Shamir on a personal basis. Peres is not required to relinquish his office to any other Likud leader.

The Premier has promised to carry out his part of the bargain. He renewed that pledge in fact at the festive opening of the Herut convention in Jerusalem on March 9. But Peres is already under pressure from within the Labor Party to renege on grounds that Herut has demonstrated its inability to run the country.

Herut Seen As Seriously Weakened

Some political observers believe that even if Herut manages to patch itself up in the coming weeks, it has been seriously weakened in the public eye by the gross spectacle of its aborted convention.

These observers expect Labor will seize the first opportunity to break up the unity coalition. This could come at the next Cabinet crisis, whether it is

over the economy, the Taba border dispute with Egypt or an ideological confrontation on issues where Labor and Likud are poles apart.

The internecine warfare within Herut meanwhile has paradoxically encouraged leaders of Likud's Liberal Party wing to press for a swift merger with Herut. The merger has been under negotiation for some time and was expected to come about in the weeks following the Herut convention. Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i, leader of the Liberals, presumably believes that with Herut leaders feuding bitterly, his party is in a good position to take command after a merger.

Herut, the dominant partner in Likud was ready to merge with the Liberals on its terms. But enthusiasm for such a move has waned rapidly since the convention. A party divided against itself, the Herut leadership knows, is no longer in a position of strength.

COURT RESERVES DECISION ON DEPORTING NAZI WAR CRIMINAL

NEW YORK, March 17 (JTA) — A defense attorney for accused Nazi war criminal Karl Linnaas argued before an appeals court Monday that a lower court decision ordering that his client be deported to the Soviet Union for war crimes would amount to pushing "him over the border to be shot." Linnaas has been sentenced to death in absentia by the Soviet Union for his war crimes. The Appeals Court reserved decision on the case.

The attorney, Ivars Berzins, spoke before the three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, hearing arguments in the case of Linnaas, a 66-year-old Long Island resident accused by the U.S. government of being a former commandant of the Nazi concentration camp in Tartu, Estonia, who was ordered deported in 1985.

POLICE SEARCHING FOR MAN WHO CRITICALLY SHOT WEST GERMAN TOURIST

TEL AVIV, March 17 (JTA) — Police are searching for an unidentified male suspect in the shooting of a West German tourist whose comatose body was left for dead in a field belonging to Kibbutz Revivim in the Negev Friday.

The victim was identified Monday as Miriam Stucker, 20, who was shot in the head and is in critical condition at a Beersheba hospital where she remains in a coma. The identification was made by a friend, a German man who works at the Nabatean experimental farm in the Negev. He said the young woman was on the way to visit him when she was shot.

Police believe the shooting occurred Friday afternoon. Two women kibbutz volunteers who were in an orchard at the time told police they heard shots but thought it was a hunter. They said they saw a man leave the area later and drive away in a late model white four-door car. Stucker was found Saturday by kibbutz members who thought at first that she was asleep. When she failed to move they discovered she was seriously wounded.

The police said they would subject the two women witnesses to hypnosis which might produce a more detailed description of the man they saw or his car. They said the method was used in their investigation of a very similar shooting last summer. The victim then, too, was a young woman who was shot in the head and left in a field in the Revivim area. That shooting also occurred on a Friday. Neither Stucker nor the earlier victim had been sexually assaulted.

THE TORAH THAT WOULD NOT DIE

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, March 17 (JTA) — In March 1944, as the Nazis overran Hungary, an enraged Nazi soldier, finding nobody home at the Lisker Synagogue, threw the Torah he found into the waters of the Bodrog River, which flowed through the synagogue's backyard. Hidden from view, a 17-year-old Christian boy, Istvan Fenye, watched in disgust, and as the Nazis departed, the boy stole down to the river and rescued the Torah.

On Sunday, March 16, 42 years to the day the Torah was desecrated, it was rededicated in a profoundly moving ceremony at the new Lisker Synagogue in Manhattan. Before an unanticipatedly large crowd, the 400-year-old Torah was brought out in a new white velvet cover and marched into the street under a chuppah, the canopy under which Jewish weddings are performed.

Livened by music and dance, the procession then returned into the sanctuary to inscribe the names of victims of the Holocaust who left no progeny, and of loved ones of those present at the ceremony. A special parchment addition was provided at the end of the Torah scroll upon which a scribe penned the names given.

The Full Cycle Of An Episode

Thus came full cycle an episode of death and rebirth in a Jewish community, a small yet greatly significant gesture in the ongoing tale of broken and demolished Jewish congregations that refuse to let the memory die. More than that, the act of rededication signaled yet one more effort of those who suffered the Nazi scourge to let the world know "We are here."

The Fenye boy, an orphan who was taken into the Lisker rebbe's household years before the incident and who retained his Christian beliefs, also found his way into permanent remembrance as his name, too, was inscribed in the Torah scroll.

But this wasn't the only righteous Gentile who saved the Torah and the rebbe's family. This is also a "Wallenberg story," for the family of the rebbe, Solomon Friedlander, who had been hiding in Budapest with Christian papers, were left to fate once more as Budapest was bombed. And the tall Swede named Raoul Wallenberg provided them with papers and gave them and the valise they carried with the Torah inside — just as Fenye had brought it to them under great peril himself — shelter in the Swedish Embassy, where they remained for the 10 days till liberation.

'We Are Here To Stay'

In a ceremony of remembrance and testimony preceding the taking out of the Torah, tribute was paid to those who perished and to the power of the Torah itself, whose importance to the Jewish people did not die in the Holocaust's flames.

Rabbi Samuel Ashkenazie of Kew Gardens, Queens, and brother-in-law of the Lisker rebbe, reminded those gathered that "when these monstrous people, the beasts of humanity, the Germans, came into Hungary, and they were sure that they'd be able to extinguish the Jewish nation, they were sure the Torah would not exist any more ... today we can come together and proclaim to the world 'We are here to stay.' The Torah is our life and the Torah is with us ... There is no greater joy, no greater privilege than to tell the world, 'We saved the Torah, and we are here with it!'"

Keynote speaker Jack Eisner, founder of the Holocaust Survivors Memorial Foundation and cofounder of the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization, remembered that he was only one of 30 grandchildren who survived. In a deeply felt testimony, he recalled his grandmother's near-survival, and his presence, in hiding, as she was thrown down the stairs by the Nazis.

And he remembered the question often asked, as the Jews tried in vain somehow to escape the round-ups. "Why save the Torah?" He spoke of the Torahs burned, and of "the letters (that) will float in Heaven to come back to us to teach our grandchildren what Judaism is all about."

The ceremony was sweetened by the voice of Cantor Chaskele Ritter, who sang in Yiddish as well as Hebrew, and was enhanced by a candle-lighting ceremony by survivors.

A Testimony To Survival

The Lisker shul itself is a testimony to survival. It is a beautiful melange of artifacts brought to the East Side sanctuary, the only Hasidic shtetel on the Upper East Side, from emptied and vandalized synagogues in The Bronx where the Lisker shul stood from 1949 to 1977. Mismatched chandeliers, menorahs, clocks and even the doors to the Ark where the Torahs are kept were all brought to the new Manhattan location nine years ago as The Bronx emptied of its once heavily concentrated Jewish population.

Rebbetzin Judith Friedlander, a gracious woman, eagerly talked about the synagogue and the 275-year-old dynasty of Lisker, from the Hungarian city which goes by the name of Olaszliszka and in which the synagogue still stands, unused, surrounded by the old Jewish cemetery.

Her father, the rebbe who brought the Torah to America with them in 1949, was interested in Bikor Holim, the visiting of the sick. It was this interest, she said, that brought them to the Upper East Side, the locale for so many of New York's hospitals. It is to this seemingly unusual location for a Hassidic shtetel that the memories of Hungary and, more recently, of The Bronx, have come.

NO LIFT TO CABLE CARS

TEL AVIV, March 17 (JTA) — The Haifa municipality's new cable car system linking the top of Mt. Carmel with the beach at Bat Galim, has been sold to a private consortium for \$1.4 million. The purpose of the sale was to circumvent the ban on Sabbath operation of the facility imposed by the government under heavy pressure from the Orthodox religious establishment.

Saturday is the only day off for Israeli workers who might like to use the cable car to go to and from the beach. But the Orthodox say they will not tolerate a Sabbath desecration no matter who owns the cable car. They are supported by Premier Shimon Peres, who like all past Prime Ministers has complied with Orthodox demands rather than risk a coalition crisis.

The cable car, idle since completion, has other problems. The cars are Swiss-made glass gondolas of the type found at Alpine resorts. Critics say they may be fine for the snowy slopes but not for the intense heat of the long Israeli summer when passengers are likely to broil in the glass cocoons rather than enjoy the view.

TEL AVIV (JTA) — The cost of living index rose by 1.6 percent during February, after falling by 1.3 percent in the previous month, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced.

**SPECIAL INTERVIEW
FIGHTING INTOLERANCE AND
POLARIZATION IN ISRAELI SOCIETY**
By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, March 17 (JTA) -- The Golda Meir Educational Association (GMEA), which was established in Israel in 1978 to support the values of democracy, cultural and religious pluralism, and humanistic Zionism, is increasing its efforts to combat growing trends of intolerance and polarization in Israeli society.

"We have the largest program in Israel today against extremism and Kahanism," David Freilich, executive director of the American Friends of the GMEA, said in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "We are fighting Kahanism," Freilich said, referring to the ideology of Rabbi Meir Kahane, which advocates the ouster of all Arabs from Israel, "as part of our overall fight against extremism -- from the right as well as from the left and our task of strengthening Israel's basic values of an open, democratic and pluralistic society."

Boris Krasny, director general of GMEA in Israel, who was also interviewed by the JTA, pointed out that recent surveys and public opinion polls in Israel have shown a dramatic increase for Kahane and his racist views among Israeli youth.

Youths Don't Know Meaning Of Democracy

"In our meetings with Israeli youngsters we found out that many of them do not know the meaning of the word democracy. Although we fight the phenomenon of Kahanism, our fight is against the general drift of Israeli society to the margins -- right and left. Our primary goal is to teach and explain to the young generation of Israelis the meaning and essence of democracy," Krasny said.

He noted that while in previous years the GMEA approached adults, the emphasis in the last three years is to reach mostly the youth. "There are about 80,000 students in the 11th and 12th grades in Israel's high schools, and we will reach about 25,000 of them this year," Krasny said.

He said that the new program of the GMEA includes six seminars on democracy, pluralism and humanistic Zionism in which the high school students participate, in cooperation with their schools, during a two-and-a-half-month period. He said that Israel's Ministry of Education has recommended that all high-schools in Israel use the GMEA program.

Thousands Of Participants In GMEA Programs

According to Freilich and Krasny, thousands of adults and youths, including Arabs, have participated each year in GMEA seminars, workshops and leadership training sessions. They said that prominent authors, such as Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua, academics and scientists, as well as local and national leaders, volunteer to conduct discussions on issues such as the nature of Israeli society and democracy, the state of the economy, and the prospects for peace between Israel and its neighbors.

"We view it as our duty to reach out to the Israeli-Arab community as well, with a view to ending the predominance of the PLO-inclined Communist Party and to provide Arab citizens with a positive channel of expression within the mainstream of Israeli life," Freilich said. He added, however, that the numbers of Arabs exposed to the

program is still limited and that most of the effort is conducted among Jews. Freilich and Krasny expressed the view that Israel's democracy is in danger. They said that the combination of economic instability and the continued unresolved issue of the West Bank and Gaza with its demographic and security implications poses a danger to Israeli democracy. They said the GMEA stresses "the importance of the principle of territorial compromise -- within the framework of a peace settlement guaranteeing Israel's security."

The GMEA also teaches the importance of religious pluralism within Israel. "to counter the growing domination of secular life by the extreme Orthodox, and seeks ways to promote integration between the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities in Israel," Freilich and Krasny said.

Both said that the future of Israel and the kind of society it is going to be will be determined in the next few years. "We believe that we can win and that we can retain the fundamental values on which Israel was established. But in order to win, we need the help and the support of the Jewish people, especially the support of American Jewry," they said.

**ZIMBABWE JEWISH ASSEMBLY
CONDEMNNS APARTHEID, ANTI-SEMITISM**

HARARE, Zimbabwe, March 17 (JTA) -- Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen of Rumania, in the keynote speech before a national assembly of Zimbabwe Jewry, condemned all forms of racism and anti-Semitism and on behalf of the Jewish people expressed specific condemnation of apartheid in South Africa, the World Jewish Congress reported here.

Rosen, as a member of the WJC Governing Board, was the guest of honor at the 24th biennial congress of the Central African Jewish Board of Deputies, the representative body of Zimbabwe's Jewish community and the WJC affiliate here. The Jewish community of Zimbabwe, the largest in Black Africa, numbers some 1,300 members.

Rosen explained at a press conference, carried by the national television network, the religious meaning of Zionism and the right of the Jewish people, having paid with the blood of six million martyrs, to return to their homelands as this was the elementary right of all people.

"At the same time," he stated, "we recognize the rights of the Arabs and if the big powers do not interfere, peace might be realized for the benefit and progress of both sides."

The Chief Rabbi and his wife, Amalia, were received in audience by the President of Zimbabwe, the Reverend Canaan Banana, where they were accompanied by the president and the secretary-general of the Jewish Board.

The President of Zimbabwe warmly welcomed the Chief Rabbi and his wife and underlined in his conversation the goodwill of the Zimbabwe government for the Jewish community and the assurance that the same policy of goodwill will be continued. He asked Rosen, who is also a member of the Rumanian Parliament, to transmit friendly greetings to President Nicolae Ceausescu of Rumania.

The Chief Rabbi met also with the Speaker of Parliament, Dne Mutasa, and the representatives of various churches of Zimbabwe. A reception was given in his and in Amalia Rosen's honor by the Jewish community of Harare.