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NEWS ANALYSIS:

PLO HAS EVERYTHING TO GAIN, R. CINCINNATI
NOTHING TO LOSE, IN ELECTION
 By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- The Palestine Liberation Organization seems to have nothing to lose and much to gain from its unprecedented involvement in Israel's election campaign.

Whatever the outcome of next Tuesday's voting, the PLO is likely to emerge with an improved image among Israeli Arabs; even, perhaps, among some Jews; and most importantly, in world opinion.

The PLO seeks to shake off its identification with terrorism and appear as a legitimate political movement with whom it is possible to negotiate.

Its message is that a terrorist organization, after all, would hardly encourage its supporters to work for political change in Israel in order to pave the way for negotiations.

This is precisely what the PLO has been doing. Only a week before the elections, two PLO leaders, Abu Mazen and Khaled el-Hassan, urged Israeli Arabs to vote for the "Forces of peace."

They mentioned no specific party, but allowed for a wide range of choice -- from the Hadash Communists on the extreme left to Shinui in the center.

All of those parties favor an international conference for Middle East peace, which is the goal of the PLO.

Of course, its notion of a conference differs sharply from that of say, Shimon Peres' Labor Party.

But any kind of international conclave is abhorrent to Yitzhak Shamir's Likud party and the parties to its right.

The PLO also believes that encouragement of the "positive elements" within the Israeli public will, if successful, lead to direct Israeli-PLO negotiations, though even the Labor Party has vowed not to talk to the PLO.

Wants Moderate Government

On the face of it, the PLO wants a moderate government in Israel with which it may be able to reach some sort of understanding.

It wants to use the upcoming elections as a tool to change Israel from within, an alternative to the armed struggle which nevertheless remains on the Palestinian agenda.

But some Israeli analysts believe that by urging Israelis to vote for the left, the PLO will scare off potential Labor voters, who will support the right-wing parties out of fear of a possible deal with the PLO.

That, according to some theorists, is what the PLO in fact wants. They believe a rightist government in Israel would find it easier to negotiate with the PLO, with a cooperative leftist opposition, rather than the other way around, so the theory goes.

There is no way to tell what the PLO is really after when it encourages Israeli Arabs to "vote left." But it hardly matters.

The PLO's advice is not likely to change existing voting patterns on the Israeli left.

The change will be if Israeli Arabs and perhaps Jews perceive the PLO as a legitimate

negotiating partner instead of a terrorist organization.

Good showings Tuesday by the Communists and the Progressive List for Peace -- the two Israeli parties closest to the PLO -- would be perceived as a gain for the PLO in its struggle with the forces of Moslem fundamentalism, in Israel and the administered territories.

PLO activists here and abroad have long feared that Moslem fanatics will take over the Palestinian movement. They have legitimate cause for concern.

Meanwhile, two incidents occurred in the Israeli Arab town of Shfaram Wednesday which indicate that PLO militants who prefer armed struggle to negotiations have not given up.

Street walls, the local mosque and a church were covered with graffiti proclaiming a Palestinian state, hailing the Palestinian uprising and declaring "Palestine is Arab."

Later Wednesday, a gasoline bomb was thrown at an oil truck. Fortunately, it did not ignite. Police are searching for the perpetrator.

MOSLEM FUNDAMENTALISTS EMERGE AS A FORCE IN ISRAELI POLITICS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- The new Arab Democratic Party, the first virtually all-Moslem list, will be on the ballot in next Tuesday's Knesset elections.

It is part of a phenomenon that has emerged for the first time in an Israeli election campaign -- the intervention of Moslem fundamentalists.

In past election campaigns, Moslem fundamentalists stood aloof, and the parties that courted Arab voters avoided any religious coloration.

Now, however, leaders of the Islamic movement are urging Arabs to vote. They favor no particular party, but clearly point to the "Forces of peace."

In the Arab political lexicon, that excludes the parties of the right.

Israeli Arab voters, in theory, account for at least 14 of the 120 Knesset mandates. In the current campaign, they are being wooed by the established parties of the left.

The parties courting them range from Labor, which represents a moderate, Western European-style socialism, to the Moscow-oriented Hadash Communist Party. Somewhere in between is Mapam, the leftist United Workers Party.

It is paradoxical that the anti-religious Communists and the non-religious Mapam are trying to appeal to this nation's most devout Moslems.

A recent Mapam election ad criticizing Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin for his harsh policies in the administered territories, asked him, "Aren't you afraid of Allah?"

Darousha Stands To Gain

But the most likely beneficiary of the fundamentalist involvement is Knesset member Abdel Wahab Darousha. He quit the Labor Party earlier this year in protest against Rabin's measures to suppress the Palestinian uprising.

Darousha, 45, set up his own Arab Democratic Party, which is the first and only all-Arab

political party in Israel. The first eight candidates on its election slate are Moslems. The ninth is a Christian Arab and the 10th a Druze.

That makeup gives Darousha an advantage over the two other pro-Palestinian state parties: the Communists and the Progressive List for Peace, whose slates include both Jews and Arabs.

Darousha is likely to be re-elected to the Knesset. The polls give his party one or two Knesset seats.

But the Communists are still expected to draw the largest Arab vote, as they have done in the past, which would give them 5 to 6 seats, according to the polls.

The Labor Party is expected to get two from the Arab vote; Mapam and the Citizens Rights Movement are expected to win two or three.

The rest will be split among other Zionist parties, including even the Likud and the National Religious Party.

FOUR WOUNDED IN NABLUS CLASH AFTER DEMONSTRATORS STONE TROOPS By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- Four Nablus residents were wounded in clashes with security forces Thursday.

Military sources said the soldiers opened fire after they were repeatedly stoned.

Meanwhile, the Government Pathological Institute decided that the death of a 3-year-old Arab girl, first reported to be caused by tear gas inhalation, was actually brought on by acute pneumonia and a heart condition.

The child, Nassarin Jihad a-Najnuha of Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip, died after Israel Defense Force troops fired tear gas grenades into her home in the El-Amal neighborhood.

Arab sources said she was a tear gas victim, but the Israel government pathologists said their was no foundation to the allegation.

They said that in addition to pneumonia and a heart ailment, the child suffered from Down's syndrome.

Meanwhile, Chief of Staff Gen. Dan Shomron warned residents of the administered territories Wednesday that Israel was not going to ease up on its repression of the Palestinian uprising because of the Knesset elections next week.

According to Shomron, the Palestinians should appreciate that the IDF exercises restraint, not because it lacks force "but because we do not wish to hurt without reason."

He claimed that other armies, Arab and Western, acted differently "in similar situations."

He appealed to the residents of the territories to choose dialogue over riots.

ISRAEL SET TO DISTRIBUTE GAS MASKS AS EXPERIMENT By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- The defense establishment, concerned over the development of gas and chemical warfare weapons in Arab countries, is preparing to distribute gas masks to the public in selected areas on an experimental basis.

The experiment will start in December with residents of Shlomi in the north and Ramat Hasharon near Tel Aviv.

Brig. Gen. Aharon Vardi, chief of civil defense, told reporters it would take four days to distribute gas masks to Israel's entire population of 4.5 million.

Meanwhile, the Defense Ministry is considering for the first time allowing a commercial manufacturer of gas masks and other anti-chemical equipment to retail its products in Israel.

The Shaalon Co. produces gas masks, safety devices for infants and medical syringes. It exports and sells them to the army, but until now has never sold directly to the Israeli public.

An experimental distribution of gas masks nine years ago was a failure. More than 90 percent of the equipment was found to have been used incorrectly or damaged.

Military sources here refused to confirm or deny Wednesday that Israel had advance knowledge of a large chemical weapons plant under construction in Libya.

The report was disclosed Wednesday by William Webster, director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Webster described the Libyan plant as "the largest chemical plant that I know of for chemical warfare."

TELEVISION AND RADIO STRIKE CALLED OFF AT LAST MINUTE By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- Israel appears to have sidestepped a new wave of labor strife less than a week before election day -- and with minutes to spare.

A strike that would have blacked out radio and television was narrowly averted Thursday morning by a last minute agreement between the Treasury and Histadrut's trade unions department.

About 120,000 public sector employees were affected, including telephone engineers who operate the Israel Broadcasting Authority's radio and television transmitters.

Thousands of government hospital-employed physicians and airport personnel were forced by court orders to abandon threatened work stoppages Thursday.

The unions representing the engineers and technicians had joined with the academicians union in a united front to press wage demands. They were locked in all-night negotiations with Treasury representatives.

The strike deadline was set for 6 a.m. local time Thursday. By 5:45 the unions had alerted their members to walk off the job, but the strike was cancelled 10 minutes later.

A deal was struck on a 1988-89 wage agreement and retroactively on a 1987 agreement.

Still outstanding is the question of whether government-owned companies in financial difficulties should have to pay their employees the annual 5 percent increase called for in contracts.

All is still not well, meanwhile, at the commercial banks. Tellers and other clerical employees worked shortened hours Wednesday and Thursday, and are planning a four-day strike next week.

KNESSET MEMBER HURT IN ACCIDENT By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- Micha Reiser, a veteran Likud member of the Knesset, was seriously injured in what may have been a hit-and-run accident on the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway Tuesday morning.

Reiser was hospitalized for surgery, reportedly with severe chest injuries and possible brain damage.

REAGAN SAYS U.S. WON'T SIGN UNTIL SOVIETS IMPROVE RIGHTS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- President Reagan has reaffirmed his position that the United States will not sign a concluding document at the ongoing conference of 35 nations in Vienna until the Soviet Union puts promised human rights improvements into practice.

"We will not compromise on our human rights principles in order to conclude the Vienna meeting," Reagan said in a letter to Pamela Cohen, president of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, and Micah Naftalin, its national director.

The president's letter, dated Oct. 20 and released Wednesday, was in response to a letter Cohen and Naftalin sent Reagan last month urging that the United States not sign the concluding document until the USSR had lived up to its commitments.

They requested specifically that the Soviet Union make changes in the laws easing emigration restrictions.

The 35-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has been dealing largely with Soviet and East European compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki accords.

The conference must end with a concluding document on human rights before East-West negotiations can start on reducing conventional forces in Europe.

While West European countries are supporting the strong U.S. position on human rights, they appear more willing than the United States to accept some recent steps by the Soviets improvements as a reason to conclude the conference and begin the conventional arms talks.

In Moscow Wednesday, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl said at the end of three days of talks with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev that he received a promise that all Soviet political prisoners will be released by the end of the year.

This has been one of the major issues raised by the West in Vienna.

Addressing the issue of Jewish emigration specifically, the president said that "an increase in numbers is not enough. We must see an end to unfair restrictions and unwarranted refusals.

"Long-term refuseniks held for seemingly arbitrary reasons must be granted exit permission."

Reagan also promised that "the calendar will not hold us hostage to an acceptable agreement." The administration reportedly wants to conclude the conference before it leaves office Jan. 20.

When this was asked directly of Rozanne Ridgway, assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs, she said the United States plans to stay in Vienna until there is a successful agreement even if it has to be left to the next administration to conclude.

U.N. TO MEET ON UPRISING

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- The General Assembly will meet here next week at the request of the Arabs to discuss the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The Assembly accepted Wednesday night the request to hold the special meeting despite the

fact that the issue was not on the agenda of the current session of the assembly.

It was originally scheduled to be discussed later next month within the framework of the general debate in the assembly on the situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian question.

"The Arabs have simply hijacked the General Assembly to use it for their own purpose," Johanan Bein, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

The meeting is scheduled for Thursday.

ESTABLISHED HATE GROUPS LINKING UP WITH SKINHEADS

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- Violence-prone neo-Nazi youth gangs known as Skinheads have been co-opted by veteran adult hate groups all over the United States, according to a report made public here Thursday by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

The shaven-head youths wear Nazi insignia and engage in violence against blacks, Hispanics, Jews, Asians and homosexuals.

They have been recruited by the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi and white supremacist organizations in 21 states -- up from 12 states only six months ago.

Membership nationwide is now estimated at 2,000, compared to 1,000 to 1,500 shown in a previous ADL study last February.

Skinhead gangs have participated in virtually every recent important hate movement rally, march and conference in the nation, the ADL report said.

California has the highest incidence and highest level of their criminal activity, according to ADL national director Abraham Foxman.

The report, prepared by the fact-finding department of the ADL's Civil Rights Division, was released at the opening of the ADL's five-day National Executive Committee meeting at the Century Plaza Hotel here. The meeting will last through Sunday.

The report, culled from the ADL's 31 regional offices, singled out the California-based White Aryan Resistance headed by former Klan Grand Dragon Tom Metzger as progenitor of the most active, best organized Skinhead group in California.

Metzger uses national television to preach an unrestrained brand of racism and anti-Semitism.

The report also offered evidence that the Skinheads have joined forces with other hate groups -- mainly the KKK -- in Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Texas.

The Aryan Nation, an Idaho-based paramilitary group that promotes white supremacy and anti-Semitism is also a recruiter of Skinheads.

Foxman cautioned that all youths with shaven heads or closely cropped hair are not neo-Nazis or racists.

The report cited several cases in which Skinheads have been arrested for racially motivated crimes. Most of them involved assaults on blacks.

However, in Atlanta, two Skinheads, age 16 and 17, were tried and convicted of scrawling 50 swastikas on the walls of a yeshiva high school last March.

Highlights of the ADL meeting here include addresses by Israeli Ambassador Moshe Arad, a forum on black-Jewish relations, and an analysis of the role of the courts in the political process.

THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS: THE RELIGIOUS PARTIES

[Part 5 Of A Series]

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- The religious political parties are small. But they have always held the balance of power between the competing ideological blocs, since none of the major parties has ever amassed sufficient votes to govern alone.

The religious parties include:

NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY. The NRP is now led by Professor Avner Shaki, a law professor and longtime political activist of rightist proclivities.

He went so far as to rule out a coalition deal with Labor. But he subsequently withdrew that statement.

Another key figure of the NRP is Hanan Porat, a founder of the militant Orthodox Gush Emunim settlement movement in the West Bank. He is No. 3 on the party list.

The NRP has been campaigning hard to hold on to a dwindling constituency. It consistently held 10 to 12 Knesset seats until the 1981 elections, when its representation was reduced to six seats.

In the 1984 elections, it won only four. The polls show no prospects for substantial improvement in next week's elections.

The NRP aims to appeal to the large numbers of Israelis who are products of the religious educational system, of which the NRP is the proud creator.

The election of Shaki as leader with his hawkish political line led to the secession of a group of moderates, who formed a new religious party, Meimad.

It also has created tension among the party loyalists who hung on. Political observers speculate that if the NRP does badly and Meimad does fairly well, and/or if Labor outscores Likud, there will be more defections from the NRP.

The No. 2 candidate on the party list is NRP veteran Zevulun Hammer, who is minister of religious affairs in the current Cabinet. He has been mentioned as a potential defector from NRP. So has the No. 4 man, Mayor Yigal Bibi of Tiberias. Both vigorously deny such intentions.

MEIMAD. This new party is an NRP breakaway that shows promise in the elections, according to public opinion survey.

If the polls are right, it could touch off a domino effect in which the religious parties one-by-one end their decade-long alignment with Likud and begin to move toward Labor.

Meimad has no made no formal commitment to Labor and is keeping its options open. But its platform, which favors territorial concessions for peace, puts it squarely in the Labor camp.

Its positions on religious issues differ from those of the other Orthodox parties. Meimad does not support coercive religious legislation, such as changes in the status of converts or laws governing business on the Sabbath. That makes it a tempting partner for Labor and its non-Orthodox allies.

Meimad is led by Rabbi Yehuda Amital, founder and dean of the Har Etzion yeshiva at Alon Shvut, in the Etzion bloc of settlements south of Jerusalem.

Amital is highly respected in religious and intellectual circles.

DEGEL HATORAH. This is another new breakaway party that could be pivotal in the post-election coalition-building process.

It is led by Jerusalem Rabbi Avraham Ravitz. But the party is the creation of the venerable and feisty sage of Bnei Brak, Rabbi Eliezer Schach.

It represents the culmination of the 92-year-old rabbi's long and bitter feud with the Hasidic wing of the Agudat Yisrael.

The last straw for Schach was the refusal of the Agudah newspaper Hamodia to reject paid advertisements from the New York-based Chabad Hasidic movement, whose philosophy Schach considers heretical.

The rift left all of the Hasidic movements except Belz in the Agudah, while the Mitnagdim (non-Hasidic Orthodox) cast their lot with Degel Hatorah.

This means that for the first time, the Chabad Hasidim, headed by the Lubavitcher rebbe in New York, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, are taking an active role in an Israeli election.

The importance of Degel's role stems from Schach's basically dovish political philosophy. He is an outspoken opponent of the "Greater Israel" school of politics, which advocates the annexation of the administered territories.

But that did not prevent another of his protegee parties, the Sephardic Shas, from aligning with Likud in the outgoing Knesset.

SHAS. Known in full as the Sephardi Torah Guardians, this party represents a growing "return to one's roots" movement among the Sephardic population. It arose from nowhere in the 1984 elections to win four Knesset seats, matching the NRP, which has been in Israeli politics since 1948.

Shas should be a firm ally of Likud. Its leader, Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, a former interior minister, takes strongly hawkish positions on foreign and domestic issues. The party's rank-and-file is drawn from Likud and NRP voters.

Still, if the aforementioned domino effect were to materialize, Shas could topple, given the more liberal philosophy of Rabbi Schach, who, though Ashkenazic, is one of the party's mentors.

The Shas platform stresses Sephardic heritage and traditions. It dwells proudly on the institutions of education and welfare the young movement has established nationwide.

AGUDAT YISRAEL. Another veteran religious party, Agudat Yisrael was stripped of its Sephardic component by the secession of Shas in 1984. It was further decimated by the recent breakaway of Degel Hatorah.

The Agudah has become a pale shadow of the flourishing Orthodox force it once was. It will be fortunate to win two seats in the 12th Knesset.

The party is led by the Gur Hasidim. Its list is headed by a Gur scholar, Rabbi Moshe Feldman, who was handpicked by the aged rebbe of Gur, Rabbi Simcha Bunum Alter.

The No. 2 man is Menachem Porush of Jerusalem, one of the longest serving members of the Knesset.

The Agudah platform focuses on religious issues, but lacks a firm commitment to a "Greater Israel." It is thus a potential coalition partner of either Labor or Likud.

Which one it chooses will depend on whether the religious right in Israel, which has long underpinned Likud power, begins to erode after the elections.