

ULTRA-ORTHODOX PARTIES HOLD KEY TO ISRAEL'S POLITICAL FUTURE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 2 (JTA) -- Three ultra-Orthodox parties and the aged rabbis who are their spiritual mentors seem to hold Israel's political future in their hands, in the aftermath of Tuesday's Knesset elections.

The National Religious Party, Agudat Yisrael and Shas command 16 Knesset seats among them, according to the all but final results of the vote.

Two additional religious seats have been won by the new ultra-Orthodox party Degel HaTorah, an Agudat Yisrael breakaway. It remains to be seen whether the fierce personal and doctrinal disputes that caused the split can be resolved.

One thing is clear, however: Neither Labor nor Likud can form a government without the religious right.

The religious bloc is considered far more likely to align with the nationalist Likud than with the socialist and strongly secular Labor Party.

Messianic and exultant in their victory, these religious parties are expected to drive a hard bargain in the coming weeks, one that may be unpalatable to Likud, some analysts say. Therefore, the possibility of another Labor-Likud unity government cannot be ruled out. But at this juncture it seems remote.

The real winners in Tuesday's elections appear to be Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Schneerson, 85, who supported the Agudat Yisrael ticket from his Chabad Hasidic headquarters in Brooklyn; Rabbi Eliezer Schach, 92, of Bnei Brak, a foe of the Chabad movement and a spiritual guide to both Agudat Yisrael and Shas; and Israel's former Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, 70, of Jerusalem.

Among them these venerable rabbis inspired,

cajoled, encouraged and threatened a large and rapidly growing constituency to show its true strength for the first time. In fact, the stunning rise of the religious vote appears to be the single most salient feature of the election.

Demographic Factor

Demography and the continued surge of the return-to-religion movement among Sephardim and Ashkenazim point to further increases in its strength in the future. Such aliyah as there is, moreover, is largely Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox, enlarging the Orthodox sector in Israel.

The various religious parties fought this election with a passion born of schism and factionalism. As it turned out, this contributed greatly to their huge success. It made for a higher turnout of religious voters.

By contrast, both Likud and Labor produced a lackluster performance in Tuesday's balloting. With 99 percent of the vote counted, they held 39 and 38 Knesset seats, respectively. This was a net loss from the 1984 elections, when they won 41 and 44 seats, respectively.

Labor's humiliation was especially bitter. As soon as the shock and disappointment over the exit poll results was absorbed, a wave of disaffection swept through the halls of a Tel Aviv hotel where a victory party had been planned earlier.

Its focus was party leader Shimon Peres, the foreign minister and former premier who led Labor to its fourth consecutive defeat.

Peres had built the entire campaign around his record, his achievements and his hopes, to the virtual exclusion of all of the top echelon of the Labor Party, except Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

'Soul-Searching' For Labor

Peres played for high stakes, lost and now the knives are being sharpened.

Energy Minister Moshe Shahal, party Secretary-General Uzi Baram and other party leaders all vented their spleen and frustration to representatives of the news media Tuesday night.

The result was headlines in Wednesday morning's newspapers such as "Labor Leaders Demand a Soul-Searching -- Now!"

There were celebrations at Likud headquarters Tuesday night. The political arithmetic of the ballot makes the hard-line party the most likely leader of the next government.

Premier Yitzhak Shamir, the Likud leader, emerged as the only man capable of forming a new government. But his joy is by no means unbounded.

His options are to be prime minister of a narrow-based government, in partnership with the ultra-Orthodox and the far right-wing secular parties, or of another broad coalition with Labor.

Both options are fraught with personal, political and ideological difficulties. Shamir's experience as head of a narrow government in 1983 and 1984 left a bitter taste that has not entirely gone away.

At age 73, he would dearly have wished to be spared the need to conduct arduous negotiations with half a dozen extremist parties--extreme rightists and extreme Orthodox -- most of which believe correctly that he needs them as

ELECTION BREAKDOWN FOR 12TH KNESSET

TEL AVIV, Nov. 2 (JTA) -- With some 99 percent of ballots counted, here are the results of Tuesday's elections for the 12th Knesset. The numbers listed are seats won by each party. Final results will not be known for a few days and may reflect changes, based on counting of late and contested ballots. --Hugh Orgel

Party	Tuesday	1984
Likud	39	41
Labor	38	44
Shas	6	4
National Religious Party	5	5
Agudat Yisrael	5	2
Citizens Rights Movement	5	3
Hadash Communist Party	5	4
Mapam	3	0
Tehiya	3	5
Center-Shinui Movement	2	3
Moledet	2	0
Tsomet	2	0
Degel HaTorah	2	0
Progressive List for Peace	2	2
Arab Democratic Party	1	0

much as they need him.

It became clear during the preliminary consultations between Likud and the religious parties Wednesday morning that a string of concessions would have to be made on divisive religious issues.

Pressure On 'Who Is A Jew'

Foremost is the controversial "Who is a Jew" amendment to the Law of Return. This is not seen as a major pitfall for Likud, since its Herut wing has always supported the Orthodox measure, which would provide a restrictive definition of conversion in the classification of Jews entitled to Israeli citizenship.

Herut and its Liberal Party partners in the Likud can presumably live with that. But passage of the amendment would arouse the fury of the non-Orthodox, who comprise the majority of affiliated Jews in the United States and elsewhere overseas.

Herut, presumably, could also live with demands for fatter government subsidies for the ultra-Orthodox community's educational and welfare institutions.

But the religious parties plainly do not intend to stop there. Dealing, as they see it, from a position of strength, they are expected to demand government enforcement of all kinds of religious customs and restrictions, such as the closing of movie theaters on the Sabbath.

In the eyes of many secular Israelis, of all political persuasions, such measures would constitute a direct assault on their personal freedom.

On the far right, moreover, Shamir can expect constant pressure to abrogate the 1978 Camp David accords, to annex the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and to embark on a vast new settlement program in those territories.

The far-right Tsomet party and the NRP also urge the mass expulsion of Palestinian activists as the way to curb the uprising.

Shamir knows well that such an approach would trigger a devastating response from Israel's friends abroad, notably the United States, regardless of which party wins the presidential elections next Tuesday.

Unity Coalition Still Possible

Likud went into the elections cleaving to Camp David, which was the achievement of its longtime revered leader, Menachem Begin. One of its likely coalition partners, the expansionist Tehiya party, fought its election campaign on an anti-Camp David program.

The even more extreme Moledet party demands the mass transfer of Arabs from Israel and the administered territories, as part of a negotiated peace settlement.

Yet without Moledet's two seats, Shamir's majority would be whittled down to the barest minimum, and his government would be at the mercy of the whims of any one of its components.

All of these factors lead observers not to rule out another unity coalition with the Labor Party -- though one in which Likud clearly would be the dominant partner and Peres would play no role.

Shamir's animosity toward Peres is on the personal as well as political level. Many pundits believe that if Shamir can be rid of Peres, he would actually like to keep Rabin as defense minister, rather than have to appoint his powerful and fiercely controversial Herut rival, Ariel Sharon, to that office, or the even harder-line

Tehiya leader, Yuval Ne'eman.

Within Likud, the fact that it edged out Labor means that neither Sharon nor the ambitious Housing Minister David Levy can immediately press their challenges to Shamir's leadership of the party.

Yet Likud's own relatively weak performance has hardly enhanced Shamir's standing. He cannot afford to offend his rivals by offering them less than the plum posts they consider their due.

ARAB TURNOUT AT POLLS IS HIGH, BUT VOTE IS SPREAD AMONG PARTIES By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Nov. 2 (JTA) -- Israel's Arab community failed again on Tuesday to realize its potential as a force in Israeli politics.

Although some 270,000 of the 350,000 eligible Arab voters cast ballots -- a 78 percent voter turnout -- they benefited neither themselves nor the Jewish moderates who could be their allies, analysts said.

Altogether the Arabs won 13 Knesset seats, which, if united, would constitute a formidable bloc. But the Arab vote was fragmented among half a dozen or so parties, diluting whatever political influence it may have brought to bear.

Instead of creating a bloc that might have enabled the Labor Party to form a governing coalition, the Arabs failed even to establish a "preventive bloc" to keep Likud from forming a coalition with the ultra-Orthodox and extreme right-wing parties.

For the first time, Arab support for the Zionist parties fell below 50 percent. Most Arab votes went to the Hadash Communist Party, the Progressive List for Peace and the newly formed Arab Democratic Party.

The Communists and the Progressive List dissociate themselves from the Zionist nature of Israel and are automatically excluded from the coalition-building process.

The Arab Democratic Party was founded by Abdel Wahab Darousha, a former member of Labor's Knesset faction. It is the only purely Arab party, Hadash and the Progressive List being binational.

Labor Lost Arab Support

Labor gained a seat and a half from the Arab vote, in contrast to the 3 seats it won from Arab voters in the 1984 elections.

This was certainly due in part to Arab anger at the harsh measures taken by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin to suppress the Palestinian uprising in the administered territories. The rest of the Arab votes were split among the Citizens' Rights Movement and Mapam, on the left; Likud, on the right; and the National Religious Party.

Likud and the NRP have traditional power bases among Israeli Arabs, because they control services granted to them.

Arab political clout is further fragmented by the strong animosity between the Communists and the Progressive List.

They were unable to reach an agreement on the allocation of surplus votes (those that result in a party winning a fraction of a seat, which can then be combined with another party's fraction).

The result was that 30,000 to 40,000 Arab votes were wasted. The two Knesset seats they represented could have prevented Likud from forming a government.

ANALYSTS BEMOAN ELECTION RESULTS, SAYING ISRAEL LACKS CLEAR DIRECTION

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, Nov. 2 (JTA) -- Israeli and American observers offering instant analysis of the Israeli election results bemoaned the fact that neither Likud nor Labor had received a clear mandate from the electorate Tuesday.

Even Likud supporters appeared subdued discussing the results on a special post-election broadcast over the Council of Jewish Federation's closed-circuit satellite network Tuesday evening, just a few hours after the Israeli polls had closed.

Although they felt confident that party leader Yitzhak Shamir could piece together a ruling coalition with the cooperation of the religious parties, the Likud analysts joined others in talk of reforming Israel's parliamentary election system, to allow voters to send a clear signal to their leaders and the world what course they want to see charted in foreign and domestic policy.

"It is a pity from our point of view that people did not give a very clear vote," Jewish Agency Treasurer Meir Sheerit said in an interview from Tel Aviv.

Once a rising star in Likud ranks, Sheerit said that while Israelis seemed to have shifted clearly to the right, "it may be time to act seriously to change the elections."

More than a dozen Israeli and American experts were interviewed during combined broadcasts from New York and Jerusalem. They based their opinions on early projections of a virtual dead heat between Likud and Labor, with the religious parties holding the balance of power.

No Election-Night Revelry

The program, sponsored by a coalition of American Zionist organizations, was aired in 32 cities in the United States and Canada.

For North Americans, the program offered a rare glimpse of Israeli politics in action. Footage of both major party headquarters showed no revelry or American-style hoopla, but an atmosphere of gloom that infected panelists in both countries.

In Jerusalem, none seemed as dismayed as Hirsh Goodman, the former military correspondent for the Jerusalem Post and a strategic fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Studies.

"I'm disappointed, but I suppose we should have seen the writing on the wall," said Goodman.

There exists, he said, a potential for a national consensus, but Israel "lacks the leadership able to deliver it. The future is decided by minorities," meaning the smaller parties, he said.

"You won't fund my yeshiva, you won't give me money for another settlement, I'm leaving the government," he said the religious parties might threaten.

Goodman had scorn for two scenarios that he said could shape up in back rooms over the next few weeks. Either Shamir would head another schizophrenic unity government, or Labor would sit in opposition to a Likud government ruling by the narrowest of margins.

But the vote appeared decisive to one expert. In New York, Yosef Olmert, an analyst at the Shiloah Institute at Tel Aviv University, said the election results are portentous for Labor.

"They appear to be at the end of the road,

even after making some internal changes," said Olmert, whose brother, Ehud, was re-elected to the Knesset on the Likud list. "They need an extensive soul-searching. Among Israeli Jews, a decisive majority have swung to right-wing parties."

Impact On U.S.-Israeli Relations

Samuel Lewis, who served as U.S. ambassador to Israel from 1977 to 1985, also believes that, based on historical precedent, an Israeli government could act decisively with only a slim majority.

For Lewis, that possibility could have a significant effect on "the fundamentals of U.S.-Israel relations."

If Likud makes good on promises of using harsher measures to put down the nearly 11-month-old Palestinian uprising, or pumps new life into the settlement program in the territories, said Lewis, "that sort of policy has the potential of stirring up quite a lot of static in Jerusalem and Washington."

Joining Lewis in New York was Morris Abram, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, who put a positive face on the likelihood of a Shamir government.

According to Abram, Shamir has appeared willing in the past to engage in direct negotiations with Arab leaders with "no preconditions." Abram said others' fears of intransigence on Shamir's part "may prove to be a shinbooth."

In Jerusalem, one expert argued that Likud may represent a modicum of continuity for the next administration.

"When it comes down to it, the American government feels peacemaking depends on actions taken in other parts of the Middle East," said Eytan Gilboa, a senior research fellow at the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations at Hebrew University.

Is Reform Possible?

Another analyst had a good word to say about a unity government. Alan Dowty, a professor of political science at Notre Dame University, said in New York that despite its deadlock on foreign policy, the unity government succeeded over the last four years in stabilizing Israel's once wildly inflationary economy.

But for most, another four years of "unity" seemed a disheartening proposition. Said Haim Ramon, a member of Labor's young guard interviewed in Jerusalem:

"The best thing for Israel would be a government based on the present situation for the next six to 12 months, during which time we can change the electoral system and ask the public to clearly decide for Labor or Likud."

Is reform possible? Dan Patir, a political scientist at Tel Aviv University, does not think so. After all, he said in New York, the decision would be up to the electorate, which knows the parliamentary system gives voice to smaller groups that may not be heard in a majoritarian system.

"It would be difficult to get 60 to 70 percent to choose political suicide," he said.

Ya'akov Kirschen, who draws the "Dry Bones" cartoon in the Jerusalem Post, gave this unconventional commentary in Jerusalem:

"As a cartoonist, I would say that if we hated our politicians, then we have handed them the worst punishment: We've forced them to sit together for the next four years."

THREE DETAINED BY POLICE IN ISTANBUL PROTESTING WALDHEIM VISIT TO TURKEY

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Nov. 2 (JTA) -- Nazi-hunter Beate Klarsfeld, Rabbi Avraham Weiss of New York and another American were detained twice Wednesday by Turkish police in Istanbul and reportedly beaten following their second detention, after demonstrating against visiting Austrian President Kurt Waldheim.

According to Glenn Richter, national coordinator of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, the three were first detained for six and a half hours Wednesday morning, after they unfurled signs in a schoolyard. They were trying to confront Turkish President Kenan Evren, who was dedicating the school and was to meet later with the Austrian president.

Weiss is national chairman of the Student Struggle and founder, with Richter and Klarsfeld, of a small group called the Coalition for Concern. The group has protested other appearances by Waldheim, including his audience in Rome with Pope John Paul II and his inauguration as Austrian president.

Waldheim has been accused by Jewish groups of involvement in Nazi atrocities during World War II, when he served as an intelligence officer in the German army. He has denied any knowledge of war crimes committed against Jews.

On Wednesday, Weiss and Klarsfeld were accompanied by another American protester, Solomon Eljashev, who traveled from the United States with Weiss. The three held up signs that read, "Don't meet war criminal Waldheim," "Don't meet Nazi Waldheim" and "Don't rehabilitate a Nazi war criminal."

After their release, the three proceeded to protest again at Turkish army headquarters, where Evren was to hold a 20-minute meeting with Waldheim. Police detained them again, took them to Taksim Square, the main square in Istanbul, and released them.

Not Viewed As State Visit

"They went for our signs, picked us up, pushing and shoving, ripping up our signs with a great deal of force and beat us up again," Weiss was quoted as saying in Istanbul. "They banged us on the head and twisted Beate's leg and slapped Eljashev across the face with tremendous force," he charged.

Turkish sources in New York and Washington disputed accounts of the incident. They also emphasized that Austrian authorities had requested the stopover for Waldheim on his way back from Syria and Kuwait, and that Turkey was not regarding this as a state visit.

Waldheim was staying at a hotel and not at a guest house where official state visitors are always placed, a Turkish Embassy counselor told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Turkish officials also reported that Prime Minister Turgut Ozal canceled his meeting with Waldheim because of protests from the West.

Waldheim arrived in Istanbul on Wednesday, following state visits to Kuwait and Syria. He was received at the airport by Turkish Foreign Minister Mesut Yilmaz, rather than President Evren.

Last week, eight members of the U.S. Congress sent a telegram to Evren and Ozal, urging them not to meet with Waldheim. They said such a meeting could damage Turkish relations with the American government, which has barred Waldheim

from entering the United States.

In New York, a staff member at the Turkish Mission to the United Nations claimed that because of the Western protests, Evren would not meet at all with Waldheim. That claim was disputed by a Turkish newspaper in New York, and could not be verified independently.

A press spokesperson at the Turkish Mission said beating demonstrators is against Turkish law.

GREEK COURT OVERRULES PRESIDENT ON STATUS OF JEWISH MUSEUM

By Jean Cohen

ATHENS, Nov. 2 (JTA) -- The High Court of Justice here has decided in favor of the Jewish community's request to change the status of the Jewish Museum in Athens from a private institution to the ward of a foundation.

The decision overruled President Christos Sartzetakis of the Greek republic, who since 1986 has twice denied the request for a change. The presidential signature is required for such transformations.

The court ruled that the president's position was unreasonable and groundless. The case was the first time a religious minority in Greece appealed against a presidential decision.

The museum's exhibits cover a period of almost 2,000 years of Jewish presence in Greece, starting with the apostle Paul who came to Greece to preach the word of Jesus.

It is a cultural center of which the Jewish community here is deservedly proud. The need to change its status was purely financial, according to the Central Jewish Board of Greece, the umbrella organization of Jewish communities in this country.

Since it is a private museum, contributions are not tax-deductible in Greece or in the United States, where there is an association of friends of the Jewish Museum of Athens.

The establishment of a foundation alters that situation.

Greek Jews were particularly incensed by Sartzetakis' stated reason for opposing the change.

"If the Jews are allowed to have a museum (under such conditions), then the Turks will want one, and the Bulgarians," he said.

To Jews, who consider themselves full citizens of Greece, though of a minority faith, the remark was insulting because it equated them with foreign nationalities living in Greece.

FORMER KNESSET SPEAKER DEAD AT 70

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 2 (JTA) -- Menachem Savidor, a former speaker of the Knesset and a member of its Likud faction, died of a heart attack at Ichilov Hospital here Wednesday, at the age of 70.

Savidor entered political life in 1977 when Likud unseated the Labor Party after 30 years of governing Israel.

He was elected speaker in 1981 and was also, for a time, director general of the Transport Ministry and of Israel Railways.

He was forced out of Likud in 1984 after he supported an opposition call for a secret ballot, which led to the breakup of the Likud-led coalition.

Savidor was born in Russia and came to Palestine in 1940, traveling via China and Japan.