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LABOR RETAINS CONTROL OF HISTADRUT; LIKUD SHOWING WEAKER THAN EXPECTED

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 13 (JTA) -- Israelis who voted in the Histadrut elections Monday left the giant trade union federation in the hands of the Labor Party, depriving Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of a political advantage he had hoped to exploit on his visit to the United States this week.

Shamir's Likud bloc was aiming for a third of the votes in the new Histadrut Executive.

It won 28 percent, according to an Israel Television sample poll broadcast at 10 p.m. local time, just as the 3,000 voting stations around the country closed.

According to the poll, Labor scored 54 percent, about as expected. Mapam surprised many by winning an estimated 10 percent share of the vote. The joint Jewish-Arab list got 5 percent, and the Citizens Rights Movement squeezed by with 3 percent, the threshold for representation in Histadrut bodies. All other parties fell short.

Pollsters Mina Zemach and Yohanan Peres warned there was a 2 to 3 percent margin for error in their survey, which was based on a sampling of 7,560 voters.

But as returns began to come in, they seemed confident of the accuracy of their projection.

There was jubilation at Labor Party headquarters over the apparent results.

Likud's reaction was more subdued. A spokesman said the party hoped to reach 30 percent when all of the votes are counted. But their goal of 34 percent appeared to be out of reach.

Mapam Makes Strong Showing

That must have been a disappointment for Shamir, who departed for the United States shortly after the results were announced on television. He will be having important diplomatic talks, including a meeting with President Bush at the White House on Wednesday.

The prime minister had hoped to be able to point to a strong showing in Histadrut, a traditional Labor stronghold, as evidence that Likud's foreign policies enjoy massive popular support in Israel.

Throughout the election campaign, Shamir hammered away at the idea that the Histadrut vote would be as much or more a referendum on peace policy than on labor-related matters.

The Labor Party denied that at first. But when it became clear that Likud was bitterly divided over Shamir's peace plan, Laborites stopped rebutting the prime minister's argument.

Likud did make gains. Its 28 percent, if it holds, is a considerable improvement over the 22 percent it won in the last Histadrut election in 1985.

Moreover, it was disadvantaged by running the little known Ya'acov Shammai for Histadrut secretary-general against Labor's popular Yisrael Kessar, who is now assured of a second term.

Nevertheless, if Likud still lacks the clout to block major constitutional measures in the Histadrut Central Committee, it may be able to console

itself by winning control of a string of local labor councils dominated up until now by Labor. The local councils ran separate slates.

Laborites played down the success of Mapam, noting that it achieved 12 percent when it ran jointly with Labor in 1985.

But independent observers credited its popular candidate, Yair Tsaban, with a fine showing. When Mapam announced it would run independently, pollsters hardly gave the small left-wing party the 3 percent minimum.

Kessar said Labor and Mapam together were likely to end up in a stronger position than what they attained in 1985. That would be an important achievement, given Labor's downward drift in the political arena in recent years.

U.S. STANCE ON ISRAELI REQUESTS IN DOUBT ON EVE OF SHAMIR VISIT

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Nov. 13 (JTA) -- One the eve of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's arrival in Washington, the State Department maintained it had not yet made a decision on the assurances sought by Israel for talks with the Palestinians.

Shamir, who arrives in Washington on Tuesday, is scheduled to meet President Bush at the White House on Wednesday afternoon, after a working luncheon with Secretary of State James Baker at the State Department.

The White House announced the meeting late last Thursday, after weeks of stalling on an invitation for Shamir, who is coming to the United States to address the 58th General Assembly of the Conference of Jewish Federations Thursday night in Cincinnati.

Before his address to the CJF, Shamir plans to have a 30-minute meeting with former President Ronald Reagan.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said Monday that the Shamir-Bush meeting will run from a half-hour to an hour. At the State Department, deputy spokesman Richard Boucher said the meeting there will be "small," in terms of people participating.

This could mean a more vigorous exchange of views on Israel's terms for accepting Baker's five-point proposal for Israeli-Palestinian talks. Israel accepted the plan with the understanding that it would receive six "assurances" from the United States, including no Palestine Liberation Organization participation in the negotiations.

No Acceptance Yet From Egypt

Boucher said that the United States is still waiting for Egypt's acceptance of the "basic framework" outlined in Baker's five points. He indicated that after Egypt gives its acceptance, the United States will consider "Israeli assumptions" and Egyptian requests for clarifications.

In an appearance Sunday on ABC-TV's "This Week with David Brinkley" program, Baker said progress in the Middle East can only be made with "small steps."

"As long as there's any hope in the Middle East peace process, you've got to keep plugging away," he said.

While in Washington, Shamir is also scheduled to have separate meetings Thursday with the

House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations committees, before flying to Cincinnati.

He leaves Cincinnati for Los Angeles, where he will address the World Affairs Council on Friday and a Jewish community rally Sunday at Temple Beth Am.

Shamir's last stop will be New York, where he will meet Monday with Mayor-elect David Dinkins and then address the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Before leaving for Israel on Monday night, Shamir will address a Jewish community rally at the Edward R. Murrow School in Brooklyn.

NEWS ANALYSIS:

SHAMIR NOT LOOKING FOR SHOWDOWN, BUT IS DISSATISFIED WITH U.S. POLICY

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 13 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir anticipates a warm and enthusiastic welcome from the leaders of American Jewry during his visit to the United States this week, a key government official told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on the eve of the premier's departure.

The official made a point of stressing that "if anyone in Washington is thinking" of putting down Shamir or clashing head-on with him, "this will achieve precisely the reverse result -- his standing at home will be strengthened."

The premier will meet with President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker on Wednesday, and with congressional leaders on Thursday. Later that day, he is to address the 58th General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, meeting this year in Cincinnati.

Shamir himself, in interviews with the Israeli news media, said he does not want or anticipate a confrontation with the Bush administration.

But he has conceded that differences could well surface over the ongoing U.S. effort to bring Israeli and Palestinian representatives together for a dialogue in Cairo.

Israel has announced its agreement to Secretary of State James Baker's five-point proposal for convening such a dialogue, but is insisting on a series of U.S. assurances to accompany that agreement.

Officials in Washington have made it clear they will not accede to all of Israel's requested assurances. At the same time, the secretary is under pressure to offer parallel assurances to the Egyptians and Palestinians.

Several Grievances Cited

The key government official, briefing JTA, aired a series of grievances that he said the Israeli government holds regarding the Bush administration's diplomacy in the Middle East.

Chief among these is a perceived "trend by the U.S. administration toward a position of evenhandedness between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"This is intolerable: to treat Israel, a long-time ally, and the PLO as though they were equal in U.S. thinking," he said.

The official cited several examples of this trend and other complaints about U.S. policy:

- * Baker's speech last May to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's policy conference in Washington. The secretary called for Israeli acceptance of the land-for-peace principle, just eight days after Shamir had presented the

Israeli government peace initiative, providing for Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

If the secretary had voiced his strong and unequivocal support for the Israeli initiative at that time, the official mused, the actual implementation of the elections might now be closer at hand than it in fact is.

- * The U.S. call in August for "all sides" to return hostages. Coming immediately after Israel's capture of Sheik Abdul Karim Obeid, the statement implicitly equated Israel's capture of the radical Shi'ite chieftain with his group's kidnapping of innocent Western civilians.

- * The U.S. reluctance to pressure Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt to meet with Shamir, even though his refusal to do so is an ongoing slight to Israel.

On the one hand, the official pointed out, Mubarak keeps proclaiming that Egypt cannot substitute for the Palestinians in negotiations; yet on the other, he insists on substantive Israeli concessions as a precondition for a meeting between him and Shamir. This is both inherently contradictory and demeaning for Israel, the official maintained.

PLO Involvement In Terrorism

- * The U.S. failure to abide by its own terms for dialogue with the PLO. The repeated attempts by PLO-linked splinter groups to infiltrate across Israel's northern border flout the U.S. government's policy of dealing with the PLO only if it renounces terrorism, the official said.

He pointed out that Yasir Abed Rabbo, who heads the PLO team meeting with the Americans in Tunisia, is a leader of one of the groups that has been implicated, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

- * Baker's preoccupation, during current negotiations for the Cairo dialogue, with so-called "bottom-line issues" of the Israeli-Arab dispute, such as "land for peace," even though he has said there is no need at this time to address them.

"Why doesn't the U.S. simply endorse the Israeli offer of elections, without adding any other element?" asked the official. "Elections are the rallying call in hot spots around the world."

Jerusalem is truly hoping, the official said, that the White House meeting Wednesday will "put U.S.-Israeli relations back on the alliance level."

ARAB WITH FIREBOMB NABBED AT THE WALL By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Nov. 13 (JTA) -- A young Arab carrying a gasoline bomb in her handbag was arrested Sunday at a security checkpoint near the entrance to the Western Wall plaza.

The authorities described the suspect as young, but would not disclose her name or age.

A police spokesman said, however, that she might be arraigned before a Jerusalem magistrate Tuesday.

According to the police, a soldier at the checkpoint spotted a Palestinian flag in the handbag and summoned border police officers, who emptied its contents.

They found a plastic bottle filled with gasoline and Egged bus timetables.

It was unclear why the suspect chose to go through a security checkpoint carrying a bomb she may have planned to throw at a bus.

WJC LEADER, VISITING CZECHOSLOVAKIA, PREDICTS 'NEW ERA OF FREEDOM FOR JEWS'

By Ruth E. Gruber

PRAGUE, Nov. 13 (JTA) -- A "new era of freedom for Jews and all people in Eastern Europe," was predicted by Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, here Sunday night.

He spoke of sweeping changes that seem to be transforming the Eastern bloc, including the Soviet Union, where the WJC will participate in a historic conference of Soviet Jewish communities next month.

Bronfman, an internationally known industrialist, addressed a reception in his honor by Prague's tiny Jewish community at the historic old Jewish Town Hall. He arrived here Sunday afternoon, on his first official trip to Czechoslovakia.

The WJC leader spoke on the eve of a series of meetings with the country's top leadership. He affirmed that one of the subjects he plans to raise will be the restoration of diplomatic relations with Israel, which the Czechs broke in 1967, at the time of the Six-Day War.

He noted that now there are full diplomatic relations between Hungary and Israel, which were restored in September. "This matter I will discuss with the Czechoslovak government and also with the Polish government," he said.

Bronfman had a meeting Sunday night with the minister for foreign trade, Jan Sterba. He was to meet Monday with Czech Communist Party chief Milos Jakes, Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec and Foreign Minister Jaromir Johannek.

Israel Singer, the WJC secretary-general accompanying Bronfman on his tour, noted that the desire for talks on the highest state and party levels was mutual.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman, Lubomir Marsik, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on Sunday that the Prague government hopes to re-establish diplomatic relations with Israel in the future. He said furthering commercial links could be a first step in that direction.

'A New Era Dawning'

A Western diplomatic source here said it appears the Czechs are looking for alternative trading partners because of a predicted sharp drop in trade with the Soviet Union.

There are 5,000 to 6,000 Jews in Czechoslovakia, about 1,000 of them in Prague, once one of the world's richest and most important centers of Jewish culture.

Bronfman spoke encouragingly to the community. "The winds of freedom are blowing across the world like a gale," he said.

"There is a new era dawning on everyone. It seems that people won't be governed without their consent. In Eastern Europe, we see a non-Communist government in Poland.

"We see a government in Hungary by a party that used to be Communist, but now is not. In East Germany, there is the promise of free elections under the eyes of the entire world," Bronfman continued.

"I have been told, and I am convinced, that here (in Czechoslovakia), too, things will change along those lines. From a Jewish point of view, this is important," he said.

Bronfman announced that he and WJC executives will go to Moscow in mid-December to meet with representatives of 60 to 65 Jewish communities from throughout the USSR.

"They are going to discuss Jewish cultural

and religious activities, and asked us to be there to be of help," he said. "I wouldn't be surprised if they formally apply to join the WJC."

"It is important that the Jewish people in Eastern Europe begin to feel closer together," the WJC president stressed. "The Jewish world will go from strength to strength."

Zdenek Ornest, speaking on behalf of the Jewish community here, called Bronfman's brief visit "a breakthrough between Czechoslovakia and world Jewry."

The WJC delegation leaves Tuesday for Sofia, Bulgaria.

ARENS WINS AGREEMENT FROM JAPANESE FOR ANNUAL BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS

By Neil A. Weinberg

TOKYO, Nov. 13 (JTA) -- Israel and Japan will conduct annual bilateral discussions on international issues and projects of mutual interest, beginning in January.

Japanese leaders agreed to the discussions during a five-day official visit here by Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, which ended Saturday.

The trip was described as successful, even though Arens did not see eye to eye with his Japanese hosts on the Middle East peace process.

The plan to hold regular meetings, the first of which will take place in Tokyo, was announced Nov. 9, following Arens' talks with Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu and Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama.

The meetings, to be conducted by directors general of the respective foreign ministries, are designed "to strengthen dialogue about Middle East peace and other international affairs, and bilateral relations in the economic, cultural and scientific fields," said Yasukuni Enoki, director of the Foreign Ministry's first Middle East division.

Although Japan and Israel are at odds over inclusion of the Palestinian Liberation Organization in the peace process, both say they expect Japan's role in the Middle East to increase.

Little Progress On Boycott

"It is not impossible to conceive that encouragement by the Japanese government" could move Arab nations toward peace with Israel, Arens said during a speech at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan last Friday.

Arens' strong interest in promoting bilateral relations was underscored by his itinerary, which included visits to Keidanren, the powerful Federation of Economic Organizations, and to scientific institutes in Tsukuba.

But the foreign minister appeared to have little success in persuading Japan not to collude in the Arab boycott of Israel.

Fear of retaliation from Arab countries has prompted numerous Japanese companies to shun the Jewish state, although two-way trade jumped to \$1.14 billion in 1988 from \$385 million three years earlier. However, much of that rise was due to growing Japanese diamond imports, rather than broadened contacts.

The Japanese government has so far declined to repudiate the Arab boycott of Israel, saying instead it is up to individual companies to decide with whom to conduct business.

During his stay, the Israeli foreign minister paid visits on a number of Japanese political party leaders, as well as on the speakers of the lower and upper houses of the Diet, Japan's parliament.

JEWISH WOMEN AND MEN JOIN RALLY IN CAPITAL FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

By Allison Kaplan

WASHINGTON, Nov. 13 (JTA) -- Marching behind a banner reading "Jewish Tradition: Women's Lives Are Also Sacred," Jewish women and men made their way along the banks of the Potomac River on a sunny Sunday morning to join thousands of Americans rallying for reproductive rights.

The group, which included two and even three generations of Jewish families, were walking to the rally at the Lincoln Memorial from an American Jewish Congress briefing that drew a crowd of more than 300.

Those who took part in the "Mobilize for Women's Lives" rally under Jewish auspices sounded a common theme: that they came to Washington because reproductive rights are among the civil liberties that Jews in America have traditionally fought to protect.

"We know too well that when one group's rights are taken away -- whether they are poor women, women of color, rural or city women, women in Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania or Illinois -- others can have the same thing happen to them," Lenore Feldman, president of the National Council of Jewish Women, said as she addressed the crowd at the Lincoln Memorial, estimated at 150,000.

"If we remember nothing else, we do remember as Jews that human rights must be respected and protected," Feldman said.

'Pro-God' And 'Pro-Choice'

During her turn at the microphone, Rabbi Lynn Landsberg, associate director of the Reform movement's Religious Action Center, declared, "I am pro-God, pro-family and pro-choice.

"Religious doctrine does not speak with a single voice nor declare a single stand on the abortion issue," she said.

"Fundamentalists have duped this nation into thinking that the religious voice is the voice against freedom of choice, and that it is the godless who are in favor of reproductive rights," she said.

Feldman and Landsberg were among the long list of speakers at the rally. Fourteen Jewish organizations formally lined up under the pro-choice banner, by endorsing the Nov. 12 mobilization. In addition to the Washington rally, there were demonstrations at the capitals of every state in the nation.

Wandering among the crowds of college students and families, and looking at the clever, often provocative, signs and buttons with which people decorated themselves, one could easily spot signs identifying the demonstrators as Jewish.

A tall young man named Philip Michaels stood close to the podium, waving a sign reading, "An Iranian Jewish Male for Choice."

Michaels came to the rally from Somerville, Mass., with a group of 12 friends from his progressive havurah. He said he created his sign, because he "wanted to show that the issue really affects everyone. It's not just a women's issue."

Seventy-year-old Esse Levine and her friend Edith Brook relaxed on their beach chairs on the edge of the reflecting pool between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, as they listened to the rally's speakers.

Proudly holding triangular banners reading "Hadassah Is Pro-choice," Levine recalled how, in

the days before legalized abortion, some women tried to perform abortions on themselves.

"There's more cruelty and danger in that" than in abortion, said Levine, who lives in Had-donfield, N.J.

Lending A 'Voice Of Morality'

In her mind, she said, the pro-choice stand "in no way conflicts with the Jewish view of reverence for life or responsibility for life."

A few yards away, a group of 25 women from three sisterhoods of synagogues in Roslyn, N.Y., picnicked on the grass. The women said that their synagogues, two of which were Reform and one Conservative, had paid for the bus trip, and that they began their journey to Washington with a Shacharit (morning) service held aboard the bus.

Both the national movements to which their sisterhoods are affiliated, the Reform movement's National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods and the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, support freedom of choice.

Earlier this month, at its biennial convention, NFTS passed a resolution affirming its support for choice and deploring the Supreme Court's decision last summer permitting states to enact restrictive abortion laws.

Involvement by Jewish organizations gives the pro-choice forces spiritual ammunition, said Democratic party analyst Ann Lewis, because, in a struggle where those supporting abortion rights are often branded as amoral, the Jewish leadership "lends a voice of morality and values to the discourse."

Lewis spoke at the AJCongress forum, along with Lynn Cutler, vice chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee; Elizabeth Holtzman, New York's comptroller-elect; and Sen. Robert Packwood (R-Ore.), a longtime supporter of abortion rights.

All pointed out that the abortion issue was pivotal in the last week's elections of pro-choice supporters for the posts of mayor of New York, governor of New Jersey and governor of Virginia.

"The map of American politics will be drawn in the 1990 elections, when the abortion issue is at its height," Lewis predicted.

IN PARIS, 50,000 JEWS TALK TORAH

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Nov. 13 (JTA) -- Part instructional and part country fair, a daylong Yom Hatorah drew nearly 50,000 Jews from all over France to a Paris suburb Sunday, much to the delight of Chief Rabbi Joseph Sitruk, who organized the event to bring French Jews back to the faith.

People came from as far away as Lille and Marseille, to visit stands promoting Jewish foods and displays of religious ritual objects, periodicals, books and even furniture.

They listened to lectures on Judaism and heard appeals to return to religious ways.

Yom Hatorah was intended to demonstrate that "Jews have a place in a multicultural society such as France is today and should be better acquainted with their heritage," Sitruk explained.

He said he had expected 15,000 to show up and was surprised by the huge turnout, which included two prominent visitors from Israel: Sephardic Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu and Religious Affairs Minister Zevulun Hammer.

According to observers, Yom Hatorah was the largest Jewish religious gathering in France since the war.