

VOL. 69 - 74th YEAR
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1991
NO. 215

DUKE IS DEFEATED IN LOUISIANA, BUT BATTLE MAY NOT YET BE OVER By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- The morning-after euphoria of Louisiana Jews and others who worked to defeat state Rep. David Duke in his bid for governor was tempered by the sobering realization that the former Ku Klux Klan leader racked up a whopping 39 percent of the vote in Saturday's runoff election.

While former Gov. Edwin Edwards' 61 percent share constitutes a landslide victory in ordinary political terms, observers maintained that Duke must be measured by a different yardstick than normal candidates.

"Even losing, Duke is victorious," said Daniel Levitas of the Atlanta-based Center for Democratic Renewal, which tracks right-wing extremist groups.

Duke received nearly 700,000 votes, a significant increase over his unsuccessful showing last year in a race for the U.S. Senate.

"Even though Duke has been repudiated at the polls, the fact is that he received a large percentage of the Caucasian vote," said Steve Gutow, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council.

"This indicates that there is a hard core of racism in Louisiana and across the country," he said.

Saturday's election saw a record voter turnout, particularly among the black voters, who make up 28 percent of Louisiana's population and overwhelmingly opposed Duke.

The get-out-the-vote effort was a high priority for the Jewish community, which "worked like the dickens" on a "war zone" footing, said Jane Buchsbaum, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans.

Jews Have Been 'Deeply Afraid'

As non-profit organizations, the federation and other Jewish groups are barred from partisan political activity. But as individuals, Buchsbaum and other Jews worked hard in the Louisiana Coalition against Racism and Nazism, a political action committee that has fought Duke since 1989, when his first successful quest for political office elevated him to the Louisiana Statehouse.

"Jewish professionals and businessmen of Louisiana were the backbone of fund-raising efforts (for Edwards), assisted by Jewish groups and individuals all over the country," said Rabbi Edward Cohn, head of the New Orleans Rabbinical Council. "We tried to be as invisible and behind the scenes as possible."

Before sitting down to watch the election returns Saturday night, the Jews of Louisiana braced themselves for the worst. Cohn scheduled an assembly for his religious school, in which he feared he might have to explain to the schoolchildren what Duke's election meant for them.

In the three weeks since Duke placed second in Louisiana's open primary, Louisiana Jews have been "deeply afraid," said Buchsbaum. "We haven't felt like that in a long while."

"We began to understand what the black community goes through all the time. Wearing our 'No Duke' buttons, we got looks from people. We

saw people we thought were our friends were really Duke people," she said.

In one incident, she said, a Molotov cocktail was tossed at a New Orleans synagogue but did not ignite.

The campaign reinvigorated black-Jewish coalitions. "Duke has maybe brought us together again," said Buchsbaum.

Those coalitions are not expected to fade away. But neither is David Duke.

\$2 Million In Duke Contributions

The election "is over, but Mr. Duke's desire for power is not. It is conceivable that he may one day win higher public office," Alfred Moses, president of the American Jewish Committee, said in a statement.

Levitas pointed out that Duke has "generated more than \$2 million in contributions, more than 15,000 active contributors, more than 100,000 people on his mailing list. He has become the pre-eminent leader of the white supremacist movement in America."

Levitas predicts that Duke will run in the early presidential primaries this spring and will ultimately be elected to Congress from a mostly white Louisiana district next year.

Levitas said Duke's defeat has taught an important lesson in the battle against extremists.

"In order to win against racism, you have got to be willing to confront directly those who promote hate," he said. "For the past several years, we've seen people trying to dodge Duke, ignore Duke and hope it goes away."

One problem, said Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, is that laws governing tax-exempt organizations prohibit the ADL and similar groups from disseminating what they know about extremists like Duke.

The real message of this election, Foxman said, is that the American political etiquette has changed for the worst.

"There used to be a time in this country where somebody who was a racist publicly, in the present or in his past, was automatically viewed as illegitimate in the public affairs arena."

"Duke declared it legitimate," said Foxman. "You can be a neo-Nazi, a former Klansman, and you are still legitimate to run for office, to appear on 'Meet the Press' or 'Nightline.'"

SHAMIR BEGINS A 10-DAY U.S. VISIT BY ACCEPTING DEGREE IN LOS ANGELES By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- Beginning a coast-to-coast U.S. junket that involves major speeches and a White House meeting Friday with President Bush, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel ran into a few snags here Sunday, but took them in stride.

For starters, a number of alumni of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion objected to its conferral of an honorary degree on the leader of the right-wing Likud bloc.

Then some major fund-raisers complained that he was slighting the official leadership of the organized Jewish community in favor of local Likud supporters.

But despite these hitches, his Los Angeles

appearance seems to have begun well, and his remarks were vintage Shamir.

Accepting an honorary doctorate in humane letters from the Reform seminary, the premier gently chided his hosts about their movement's opposition to Zionism in its early days.

"At the beginning of this century, when our national flag was unfolded, your organization was not among the most ardent supporters of the Zionist movement," Shamir recalled.

"But with the passage of years, the perception changed, and some of your leaders became the most outspoken advocates of our ideas and goals," he added.

Shamir paid tribute to the late Abba Hillel Silver, a leading Reform rabbi and Zionist, and to the work of the HUC-JIR campus in Jerusalem.

It is not certain whether he was aware of the letter sent several days earlier by 33 seminary graduates, reminding HUC-JIR President Alfred Gottschalk of Shamir's opposition to the Camp David accords and his "cynical deals with religious zealots and extremist politicians."

Four of the 11 HUC-JIR faculty members at the Los Angeles campus absented themselves from the academic procession in protest.

A Meeting With Thatcher

Bestowing the degree, Gottschalk lauded Shamir's efforts to assure religious pluralism and an equal status for Reform Judaism in Israel. The prime minister was also praised for his opposition to changes in the Law of Return, which would have nullified conversions performed by Conservative and Reform rabbis.

Accepting the honor, Shamir warned that the road to Middle East peace "may turn out to be full of difficulties and complications," but he pledged that Israel would continue "with all our might to strive for peace."

He described his government's two primary obligations as assuring the security of the state and the ingathering of the exiles.

Yet despite the emphasis on armed defense, "we have not become and we shall not become a martial people," he said. "Judaism has never glorified martyrs or encouraged martyrology. Judaism is a faith of life."

Following the HUC-JIR ceremony, Shamir visited the Simon Wiesenthal Center to address students at the Yeshiva University High School.

Although he postponed some scheduled private meetings with entertainment industry leaders Saturday, he met later with some 30 pastors, writers and television preachers, representing about 20 million evangelical Christians.

Their spokesman, the Rev. Frank Eiklor, assured Shamir that the group had not come to give him advice, but to lend him their prayers and their "arm of solid support."

During a few minutes with Israeli reporters, Shamir touched briefly on his upcoming meeting with Bush.

He said he would urge that Israel and the United States coordinate their policies on the Middle East peace process. He warned that unless existing disagreements were resolved, neither country would achieve its peace goals.

Shamir had an unscheduled meeting early Sunday morning with his old friend, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Thatcher told reporters afterward that there is now a universal interest in settling conflicts in the Middle East and that she is optimistic a solution will be found in time.

PERES URGES LABOR PARTY TO ENDORSE TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE ON THE GOLAN

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- Labor Party leader Shimon Peres has come out publicly in favor of "territorial compromise" on the Golan Heights and is urging his party to endorse that position at its national convention, which opens here Tuesday night.

His unequivocal stand on the issue comes at a time when the party is faring worse than ever in the public opinion polls and is sharply split on territorial compromise, the Palestinians and peace.

Peres gave his backing to a policy statement hammered out by the party's Platform Committee after lengthy, acrimonious debate. It advocates both "territorial compromise" on the Golan Heights and "strengthening existing settlements" there.

That essentially means Labor would be willing to freeze settlement-building on the Golan during negotiations with Syria, a concession the Likud-led government has so far refused to make.

In media interviews Sunday, Peres said Israel "must not go down from the Golan," but that does not mean it has to retain the entire territory, which it captured in 1967 and annexed in December 1980.

The Likud position, backed by the Knesset last week, is that the Golan is not negotiable and that Syria will get only peace in exchange for peace, not territory.

Peres claimed that "as every child knows," it is "nonsense" to oppose any withdrawal whatsoever. But according to the latest polls, that is what a majority of Israelis do.

In another compromise plank, the Platform Committee called for recognition of the "national rights" of the Palestinians, but stopped short of endorsing a Palestinian state.

The recommendation omitted a specific ban on talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization, as demanded by hawks within the party. It endorsed continued talks with the delegation of Palestinians the Israelis met with in Madrid.

Bitter Fights Expected

Political observers predicted bitter fights over the platform during the three-day convention. The 1,200 convention delegates must adopt the platform and vote on a new system of party primaries to select its leadership and its Knesset slate for elections that are still a year away.

While Peres said he was pleased with the platform as is, Labor's No. 2 leader, Yitzhak Rabin, said the party must adopt clear positions on the peace issue which differentiate it not only from Likud but also from the "leftist extremists."

Rabin, who speaks for the hawkish or "centrists" wing, says the party has veered too far to the left and blurred its differences with the "peace alliance" comprising Mapam, Center-Shinui and the Citizens Rights Movement.

"What matters is how to bring the party back into power," he said.

At the moment, Labor is weathering its lowest public approval rating ever against the Likud, according to the latest public opinion surveys.

Peres dismissed the polls Sunday. He claimed they "reflect the government's transient popularity" after the Madrid peace talks and will change "down the road, when the real issues will have to be faced."

**ISRAEL BACKS OFF FROM ARRESTING
HANAN ASHRAWI, AFTER BUSH REMARK
By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- President Bush is credited with thwarting any plans the Israeli authorities may have had to arrest Hanan Ashrawi, who was spokeswoman for the Palestinians at the Middle East peace talks in Madrid.

Israeli police said late last week that they had sufficient evidence to hold her for trial on charges of violating the Israeli law forbidding contacts with Palestine Liberation Organization representatives. But they have not acted.

Bush is said to have expressed concern about "the plight of Hanan Ashrawi" at the end of a meeting Friday with 23 prominent Arab Americans.

One of them, George Salem of the executive board of the Arab American Institute, reported that the president "shook my hand as he was leaving and said, 'Please know that Hanan is on my mind and I'm paying very close attention to what is happening over there.'"

In Washington, State Department deputy spokesman Richard Boucher also expressed concern Friday about media reports that the Israeli police had recommended Ashrawi's prosecution.

The West Bank activist, who lectures at Bir Zeit University, gained global recognition for her eloquence in presenting the Palestinian case in Madrid.

Members of Israel's far-right wing were furious after the police acted on a complaint against Ashrawi by Knesset member Elyakim Haetzni of the Tehiya party and then failed to follow through.

Science and Energy Minister Yuval Ne'eman, the Tehiya leader, complained that he found it hard to serve in a government which "does not enforce the law."

In Attorney General's Hands

Responding to queries by Ne'eman, Police Minister Ronni Milo explained at Sunday's Cabinet meeting that the material the police passed to the state prosecutor consisted of findings, not recommendations.

The role of the police is to investigate and present their findings to the proper legal authorities, Milo told the Cabinet.

Attorney General Yosef Harish has greater latitude. He can evaluate whether it is "in the public interest" to press charges against Ashrawi. He is entitled to consider the political implications and is even required to consult with the prime minister or any other minister, Milo said.

Harish announced Sunday he would consult on the matter with Justice Minister Dan Meridor.

Health Minister Ehud Olmert said at the close of the Cabinet session that he saw no point in taking action against Ashrawi for meeting with PLO representatives, inasmuch as she herself is a member of the PLO.

Before the Cabinet session began, about 30 members of the Israeli Women's Peace Network met with Ashrawi in Ramallah to protest plans to arrest her. Ashrawi told them she was "touched" by President Bush's comment that he was "thinking" about her.

The Israeli women at the meeting included Knesset member Shulamit Aloni of the Citizens Rights Movement, Professor Galya Golan of Hebrew University and author Yael Dayan.

(JTA correspondent Howard Rosenberg in Washington contributed to this report.)

**BUSH DISCUSSES MIDEAST PROCESS,
SETTLEMENTS WITH ARAB-AMERICANS
By Howard Rosenberg**

WASHINGTON, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- A group of prominent Arab-Americans met with President Bush on Friday and emerged from the White House session apparently satisfied with the president's stance on the Middle East peace process.

"There is no question in my mind that this administration is dedicated to a just peace in the Middle East," Philip Habib, a former U.S. special envoy to the Middle East who is of Lebanese descent, told reporters after Bush met with him and 22 fellow Arab-Americans.

Bush requested the meeting to discuss the peace process with them, according to White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater. The session came three days after Bush met in New York with a delegation of top American Jewish leaders, again at the president's initiative.

At that meeting, Bush pledged to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge and to work to repeal the 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution denigrating Zionism as racism.

But those promises did not seem to bother the Arab group. "Those are longstanding positions of every administration which I find nothing to object to," said Habib.

"We come here as Arab-Americans not to discredit Israel," said David Sadd, chairman of the Arab American Leadership Council. "We come here to look for ways to help find peace for the region, which includes security for Israel, fulfillment of Palestinian rights, territory for peace."

During the hour-long meeting, there was no mention of Israel's request for guarantees covering \$10 billion in loans for immigrant absorption.

Eye-To-Eye On Settlements

But George Salem, a member of the executive board of the Arab American Institute, said the group raised Israel's settlements in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights.

Salem said the group told Bush that not only are the settlements the "obstacle to peace that he says, but they are against international law."

Bush, who opposes Israeli settlement-building as an "obstacle to peace," made "very clear" that he agrees with that assessment, Salem said.

Bush also told the group "he will continue in his efforts to encourage the Israelis to curtail that activity," Salem said.

On another subject, the group presented Bush with a proposal to allow Palestinian goods to enter the United States as Palestinian-made, rather than as Israeli products.

Such a policy would "enable the Palestinian economy to begin, perhaps, to move" and to "relieve the miseries that they are experiencing now, particularly after the (Persian) Gulf War," said Fouad Sahouri, president of the Arab-American Business and Professional Association.

Joining Bush in the meeting were White House Chief of Staff John Sununu, himself an Arab-American; Brent Scowcroft, the national security adviser; Edward Djerejian, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs; Dennis Ross, director of the State Department's policy planning staff; and Richard Haas, senior director for the Near East on the National Security Council.

Among the other U.S. Arab leaders in the meeting were Reps. Mary Rose Oakar (D-Ohio) and Nick Rahall (D-W.V.).

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH LEADER INVITES JEWS TO MOSCOW FOR TALKS

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- The head of the Russian Orthodox Church, calling for greater cooperation between his faith and the Jewish people, has invited a delegation of Jewish leaders to visit Moscow to establish a formal dialogue.

Aleksy II, patriarch of Moscow and primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, which claims some 70 million adherents, also condemned anti-Semitism during meetings here last week with Jewish leaders. He is in the United States on an 18-day visit that ends Nov. 25.

"The hierarchy, clergy and theologians of our church decisively and openly condemn any manifestation of anti-Semitism, hostility, as well as pogroms against Jews," he told Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis at a Nov. 13 meeting here organized by the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, an ecumenical group dedicated to promoting religious freedom around the world.

Acknowledging that popular anti-Semitism exists in the Soviet Union, he faulted the "difficult time of crisis, disintegration, and growth of national separatism and ethnic chauvinism."

"The task of the Russian Church," he said, "is to help our people overcome this."

"We hope to achieve the understanding and help of our Jewish brothers and sisters, in order to build up, through joint efforts, a new democratic, free, open and just society."

According to Rabbi Arthur Schneier, president of the foundation, Aleksy II's remarks are "the most comprehensive statement and stand" on anti-Semitism made by any of the three Russian Orthodox Church primates he has known.

"The most we can ask of a leader is to give direction clearly and without ambiguity," he said.

IJCIC Trip Planned For January

Not all who listened to the primate's remarks were completely satisfied, however.

Martin Wenick, executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, said that in citing more than a dozen Orthodox Church leaders who protected Jews through different historical periods, the primate seemed to "gloss over history, both in the czarist and postwar periods."

"The church was part and parcel of the czarist regime, which confined Jews to the 'Pale of Settlement,' and was certainly not a major force for Jewish rights in the last century," said Wenick.

"I would like to have heard in more detail precisely how the church plans to move forward in building tolerance," he said.

During a separate meeting with Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress and newly elected chair of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, Aleksy II invited IJCIC to visit Moscow and begin the formal dialogue process.

Five IJCIC representatives are expected to go to Moscow in January.

It will be the first formal dialogue ever established between Jews and the Russian Orthodox Church, said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the WJC.

"To set up a relationship with them is a breakthrough. It opens up new vistas," said Dr. Leon Feldman, secretary of IJCIC, which represents world Jewry in dealings with the Vatican and other religious institutions.

AUSTRALIAN WAR CRIMES TRIAL ADJOURNS BECAUSE OF ILLNESS

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- Australia's first war crimes trial was adjourned last Thursday, when defendant Ivan Polyukhovich complained of dizziness and was hospitalized.

It was not the first adjournment of the case of the Ukrainian-born Polyukhovich, who is the first person to be tried under a law enacted in December 1988 that allows Australian courts to try persons living here for war crimes they allegedly committed on foreign soil.

He was formally charged in January 1990, but the trial was delayed because of a court challenge to the war crimes law and because of Polyukhovich's health.

In July 1990, the accused war criminal was found in an Adelaide street with a self-inflicted bullet wound to the chest.

Polyukhovich, about 75 and a longtime resident of Adelaide, South Australia, finally went on trial there Oct. 28, accused of the mass murder of Jews in the Ukrainian village of Serniki during World War II. Testimony began Nov. 11.

Inside the courtroom last week, videos were shown of the exhumation of the graves of his alleged victims and their skeletal remains.

Outside, a small demonstration protesting the trial was staged by the anti-Semitic Australian League of Rights.

The demonstration gained media attention when the participants were joined by a 90-year-old former lieutenant governor of South Australia, Sir Walter Crocker, who told reporters that the war crimes trials were the immoral "contrivances" of a "financially powerful lobby" which never had "Australian interests" at heart.

Inside the court, police witnesses testified that they had examined the mass graves and found that "most of the bodies were women and children" shot in the head or bludgeoned by rifles.

More than 60 of the 553 skulls were identified as the remains of girls under age 10.

Prosecuting attorney Gregg James told the court he would prove not only that Polyukhovich was guilty of war crimes but that this was part of a deliberate policy of genocide.

MAN CARRYING TIME BOMBS NABBED AT JEWISH CEMETERY IN ARGENTINA

NEW YORK, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- Police in Buenos Aires apprehended a man last week in front of the Ciudadela Jewish cemetery who was found to be carrying four powerful time bombs, the Anti-Defamation League reported.

The timer on one of the bombs had already been activated. When police detonated the bomb in an empty lot, the resultant explosion broke windows and was felt as far as 20 blocks away, ADL said. The three other bombs were defused.

The bombs were made of trotyl, a powerful explosive used in the military.

The man arrested, Jose Maizon, about 40 years old, was apprehended after cemetery officials became suspicious of his repeated entry into the cemetery.

Rabbi Morton Rosenthal, director of ADL's Latin American Affairs Department, praised the "prompt response of the police, which prevented the possible loss of innocent lives and the massive destruction of tombstones."