OUR MAN IN HAIFA

CARL ALPERT

Behind The Election Results

HAIFA -- Whatever analysis may be made of the election results in Israel, the grand total is what counts, and the ability of one bloc to set up a coalition which can command a stable majority in the Knesset. The results are in, but it is both interesting and illuminating to take a close look at some of the elements which went into the creation of the voters' surprise.

Though Likud had all the advantages of the party in power, it was faced by an almost unanimously hostile front of the media of communications. There was not one newspaper in Israel which supported the Likud; most were virulently antagonistic, and even those which leaned to it ever so slightly afforded liberal space to consistently vicious attacks by its regular columnists. Both radio and television, though Government agencies, operated under a cloak of pseudo - freedom of the press, and the various commentators and editors shamelessly distorted the news into constant criticism of the Government.

An influential newspaper like the Jerusalem Post was anti - Likud not only in its editorials but also in its news coverage and in its headlines, to such an extent that its extremism engendered a counter - reaction from intelligent readers.

As public opinion polls began to reflect a growing swing back to Begin, the Labor bloc launched a special assault on the Likud. The public was warned that a Likud victory would spell the end of democracy, and the old label of "fascism" which had been tagged on Jabotinsky and the Revisionists years ago, was again trotted out in an effort to arouse public fear. Few stopped to think that four years ago the same charges had been made against Menachem Begin: that he would become a dictator. If there was one weakness of the Likud Government it was precisely Begin's lack of strong and authoritative control!

There were times in the past six months when Israel's Government was engaged in struggles on the international scene - struggles in the U.N., and in relations with foreign powers. Elementary patriotic duty should have dictated that the Labor opposition make common cause with Likud in such circumstances, for the national welfare. Instead, Peres and his cohorts seized on every opportunity to embarrass Israel's government and to make political capital out of national crises. Its attitude toward the bombing of the Iraqi reactor was indefensible from a Zionist point of view.

The last moment projection of Yitzhak Rabin as Labor's Minister of Defense, despite all Peres's pledges to Bar - Lev, and despite the open animosity between Peres and Rabin, was seen by most of the electorate as a cynical bit of politicking which simply proved how little Peres could be depended on.

During the weeks of electioneering a dangerous Pandora's Box was opened when ethnic issues (Ashkenazi versus Sephardi) were introduced. For thirty years every one in Israel has been laboring to eliminate artificial differences, to bridge cultural and social gaps, and to bring about a spirit of national unity. Tremendous progress was being made. More than 20% of all marriages in Israel today cross this historical community difference, and in time this alone will eliminate the conflicts. And then along came some politicians who sought to capitalize on the differences and to seek votes based on hostility to the other group. The intelligent voters fortunately rejected these appeals, but the cause of communal unity has in the meantime been set back.

The large crowds that turned out for Peres/Labor rallies were hailed as indicative of basic democracy. But when even larger crowds gathered to cheer Menachem Begin ecstatically, they were openly and repeatedly termed "rabble" by Labor spokesmen. This very reaction was in itself anti - democratic.

But as we said at the outset, it is the final total that counts. When the results are so close, any coalition set up must inevitably be unsteady. As of this writing, the betting in Israel is that new elections will take place within six months, a year at the latest.

PRO BASKETS COME TO VEGAS

Burrell Cohen, president of Sunrise Entertainment Corporation, announced the booking of two professional basketball games to be played in the 7,500 - seat Aladdin Theatre for the Performing Arts.

The first of the double - header will benefit the Independent Youth Athletic Association of Las Vegas, and feature some of the top players in the NBA on Saturday August 8 at 8 p.m.

Celebrated names like Doctor J, the MVP in the NBA this past season, Magic Johnson, star player for the Los Angeles Lakers and owner of the largest contract in pro sports history, Moses Malone, star center for the Houston Rockets and league leader in rebounding, George Gervin, one of the leading scorers in the NBA, Ricky Sobers and Reggie Theus, former UNLV greats, Mark Aguirre and Isiah Thomas, the two top NBA picks in the collegiate draft last season and many other basketball stars as Rudy Tomjonavich, Robert Page, Alan Leavell, Dwight Jones, Robert Reid, Darryl Dawkins, Maurice Cheeks, Artis Gilmore, Michael Ray Richardson, Louis Dunbar and Jimmy Blacklack will be taking their respective places on either the East or West squad for the special Las Vegas cage classic.

In addition to the impressive heavy weight line - up, there will be selected celebrity comedians coaching the two teams, special guest star appearances and half - time entertainment a "Pepsi Challenge of Champions Slam Dunk Contest" sponsored by Pepsi Cola.

Tickets are on sale now at the Aladdin Theatre Box Office and all Wagon Masters Clothing Stores. There will be limited courtside tickets at $15, orchestra seats at $12 and all others at $10. For further information on the upcoming "Pro Basketball Stampede," call the Aladdin Box Office at 736 - 1738.

Topping - off the pro engagement will be a Los Angeles Lakers exhibition preseason game against the Philadelphia 76ers on Sunday, October 18 at 2 p.m.

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