

NEWSPAPER CHRONICLE  
HITLER RGN. PA.  
W-15,000

228

SEP- 8-88

## Labor, Likud open campaigns far apart

TEL AVIV -- As expected, Israel's two major political parties kicked off their election campaigns this week with clear-cut policy positions on the land-for-peace issue.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, head of the Labor Party, opened his bid for the November 1 elections by promising to "rid ourselves of Gaza; we shall rid ourselves of areas densely populated by Arabs." He also vowed to terminate Israeli rule over 1.5 million Palestinian Arabs in Judea-Samaria and Gaza.

His remarks probably took the Labor Party position closer to endorsing Palestinian autonomy than it had ever gone before and a long way from such Labor luminaries of the past as Golda Meir or Levi Eshkol.

The Labor Party platform speaks of negotiating with Jordanians and Palestinians but also denies the formation of an independent Palestinian state.

Likud opened its election drive a day later by touring followers and newsmen through the West Bank, pointing out the danger to the state if Labor would win and give back this land.

Nearly all of the West Bank area is within artillery range of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Ben-Gurion airport, it was pointed out, is just five miles from the border.

Prime Minister Shamir's Likud Party stresses "peace for peace," without territorial concessions. Likud has rejected the Peres plan for an international conference as an umbrella for negotiations.

Shamir promised his followers to seek direct peace talks with Jordan, Egypt and unidentified Palestinians "without preconditions." He added, however, that a Likud victory would end "delusions of a Palestinian state or a temporary government or any similar alternative."

Meanwhile, pollsters have indicated that if the election were held now, it would end in a dead heat, with neither side likely to win enough votes to secure anything but the narrowest of coalitions. In addition, the coalition partners needed by either party might be difficult to deal with.

Peres has stated publicly that Labor will not again join Likud in a Unity government, meaning that a coalition could only be formed with the smaller political parties.