

סוכנות לקטעי עתונות

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# Context

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WITH POLLSTERS indicating a decline in government popularity (and Finance Minister Simha Ehrlich at an ebb of 19.9 per cent), it is interesting to hear a differing rating from foreign diplomats stationed here.

While both Premier Menahem Begin and his predecessor Yitzhak Rabin get equal points from diplomats I've talked to for giving drawn-out historical lectures to visiting dignitaries, Begin is much higher up the political charm chart. Both Rabin and former Foreign Minister Abba Eban are given a number of points for the extent to which they both thawed once out of office, and for their analytical capacities, with Eban far ahead of Rabin in being able to establish human contact.

But at the top of the political charm chart are (who else?) the two ex-brothers-in-law: Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and Defence Minister Ezer Weizman. Yet the latter loses points for his too-frequent tendency to lose his cool at diplomatic parties and embarrassing his more inhibited hosts. One gathers that while our diplomat sources are entranced with the kind of extra personal insights provided by Weizman's outbursts, they prefer him not to make them share it with the competition.

One friendly diplomat told me apropos Herut Knesset chairman Haim Kaufman's strictures on the constant traffic of our ministers, and MKs of both sides of the House to the Herzliya home of U.S. Ambassador Samuel Lewis, which incidentally is known in the trade as "The Viceroy's Residence," that little clandestine intelligence work is required in the country considering the way our politicians tell it all to their favourite ambassadors and their aides.

THE BIG political guessing game, naturally, concerns Begin's retirement date. Well, he intends leaving everyone up in the air for some time to come, to judge by his reply to a plea from Hillel Seidel MK (Likud-Ahdut) that he issue a formal declaration of intent about running

for another term. The Premier sent Seidel a nicely-vague answer. Thanking him for his interest, he wrote: "There is no point in advancing things. By law there are another two and half years left until the elections. So why should we bring forward the discussion on an issue that is not yet on our agenda?"

Another guessing game concerns what Begin discussed with Democrat Knesset faction chairman Shlomo Eliyahu a week ago. Economic issues? or the Democrats' prospects to join the Likud well ahead of the next elections?

JUSTICE MINISTER Shmuel Tamir marked a milestone last week when he returned to Herut HQ to deliver a lecture to Herut's local branch, some 13 years after his expulsion from the Party. The Knesset corridors are buzzing with rumours that the Democrats may either join the Likud as a separate faction, and talks to that effect have reportedly been conducted by their secretary Ram Ren; or that they may unite with the Liberal Party, an idea heartily advocated by Energy and Communications Minister Yitzhak Moda'i, who hopes to have Tamir as a hawkish ally. So where, the pundits ask does that leave the party's titular head, Deputy Premier Yigael Yadin? Will he retire from politics as it has been rumoured? Or play second fiddle to Tamir?

Former Deputy Finance Minister Zvi Dinsteln, who just stepped down as our economic minister in New York, is apparently not coming home so soon. It is said that he is going to work in the business operations of Max Fischer of Detroit, the chairman of the Jewish Agency Governors.

A bitter struggle is currently raging in the moshav movement, with wide political ramifications. The 245 moshavim, with a population of 100,000, are having their national convention in June, and the contest for the leadership is on between movement secretary-general Arye Nehemkin of Nahalal and former Agriculture Minister Aharon Uzan of Gilat. The former represents the



From left: Prime Minister Begin, Yitzhak Rabin, Abba Eban, Moshe Dayan, Ezer Weizman and Amos Oz.

## PRINCES CHARMING

PUBLIC FACES  
Mark Segal

veteran moshavim, while the latter speaks for the post-1948 immigrants, who claim that the old-timers have too much power.

Of broader interest is the political line-up. Nehemkin is hawkish and good friends with La'am's Yigal Hurwitz, and Moshe Dayan, is a schoolmate from Nahalal, while Uzan is a prominent ex-Mapai dove.

WEST GERMAN Ambassador Klaus Schulz turned his Herzliya drawing room last Saturday evening into a private studio, screening one of the best films on David Ben-Gurion I've ever seen. It lasted 45 minutes and gave B-G's life and a big chunk of Zionist history as seen through the eyes of his wife, Paula. The script was written by Mira Avrech, "Yediot Aharonot" columnist, and based on her book "Paula." This is her third film; she won second prize in the New York Commercial Film Festival of 1970 for a film on El Al.

Producer David Goldstein and Director Ilan Eldad dug up some marvellous old film from Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine and pre-World War I New York. Those present felt most nostalgic; Social Betterment and Labour Minister Israel Katz said he would like his children and other youngsters to see it for educational reasons; Tel Aviv Mayor Shlomo (Chich) Lahat would

like it shown in his city; Technion President Amos Horev gave an equally enthusiastic response, while Canadian Ambassador Edward (Ted) Lee wants to recommend it to a Canadian TV network. Yet when the producer offered it to Israel TV director Arnon Zuckerman, he declined it as "unsuitable." Is he afraid of his Likud masters? Mayor Lahat and his wife Ziva had an unexpected guest recently — the near-legendary Sir Robert Mayers, the almost 100-year-old Maecenas of musical education for youth in Britain. He came here for the winter sunshine, and the mayor hopes that perhaps in Tel Aviv we may be getting one of the famous Robert Mayers concerts for youth.

British pundit Paul Johnson has just called off his stay at Jerusalem's Mishkenot Sha'ananim as Mayor Teddy Kollek's guest, to where he has been invited for the umpteenth time. The former editor of "The New Statesman" and "The Nation" is one of Israel's most loyal friends in the UK, and he has been in constant contact with his former Israel correspondent, Naomi Sheppard-Lalish. It would appear that critical times in Albion are

keeping him away from Zion, which he last saw in 1967.

AMOS OZ, our best-selling author on the world's bookstalls (his literary agent is Deborah Owen, wife of the British Foreign Secretary) is a lifelong member of Kibbutz Hulda. The story goes that one day in the communal dining hall, the kibbutz treasurer approached Oz and said: "Amos, you are the most profitable branch of our economy. Can't we help you in some way? Maybe we can assign you two of the elderly haverim?"

Israel's flag will fly alongside those of 15 other countries, including four from the Soviet bloc, at next month's opening of the International Festival of Puppet Theatres at London's National Theatre. Our official representative (and he's got Foreign Ministry backing) will be Eric Smith, whose "Eric's Puppet Theatre" has delighted thousands of Israel children — and adults — over the past seven years. Unlike similar artists, he has no official financial support. His fame has spread, however, and last year he flew to Munich with his six puppeteers and his equipment to make seven films for Bavaria TV, which will now be submitted as West Germany's official entry to the Cannes Children's TV Festival this year.

The Festival in London — where

Smith will put on "The Snow Queen" — is under the auspices of UNIMA, the UNESCO-sponsored and Warsaw-based World Institute of Puppet Theatres. Three of his six puppeteers are Russian immigrants. The British Council has recommended the display of Smith's posters and puppetry art at the famed Sadler's Wells Theatre. In addition, British TV is expected to screen his puppets in the Israel TV Children's series "Tamari's Hut" with Cameri Theatre actor Yossi Graber as Tamari the cobbler pottering around among all those puppets. The series were sufficiently successful to bring their creator, Talma Elyagon, to produce the show's record and five books, which have already sold out their first edition, she told me. (I liked the one where Pil the elephant eats a field of spaghetti).

Ephraim Kishon's status as a German cultural monument is soon to be accorded formal sanction. He is the fourth speaker at the festive opening of the West Berlin International Congress Centre, which with 5,000 seats will be the largest hall in Europe. Appearing with Kishon will be none other than West Germany's President Walter Schell and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Klaus Schuetz, now Ambassador to Israel, initiated the Congress Centre project when he was Mayor of West Berlin. He will be flying there for the event as well as Mayors Kollek and Lahat.

ON LEARNING that Kishon will be on the same platform as conductor Herbert von Karajan of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, I asked the humorist how it felt appearing alongside a man who used to conduct Wagner in Nazi uniform.

Kishon, who is a survivor of the Holocaust, told me: "I have no connection with von Karajan. I regard my appearance as my own private revenge on Hitler."

It is no news that von Karajan has been trying to get an invitation for years to perform here with the IPO. On hearing reports that some top people at the IPO are now thinking of bringing him here, I called IPO

secretary-general Abe Cohen. He told me that "no formal proposal has been put to the IPO management," adding: "Anyhow, our boys would not play under him."

My interview last week with Ya'acov Ellav, the Bar-Ilan lecturer in criminology who served as secretary of the Shimron enquiry commission into crime, apparently caused some disturbances in the NRP which of course was not intended. I wish to go on record therefore that the NRP political advisor who advised Ellav that his career might be jeopardized if he kept pressing Interior Minister Yosef Burg to do something about the war against crime, was not commissioned to do so by Education Minister Ze'evulun Hammer, who incidentally attends the same synagogue as Ellav. In addition, I wish to go on record that holding an NRP membership card is not a condition for being appointed to the Bar-Ilan University academic staff.

Yediot Aharonot managing-editor Dov Yudkovsky last weekend hosted an all-party gathering at his home to mark the publication of Labour Party chairman Shimon Peres' latest book "Go With The Man," which his paper brought out jointly with Idanim. It is a series of portraits about David Ben-Gurion, Levi Eshkol, Berl Katznelson, Natan Alterman, Ernst David Bergmann, Moshe Haviv and Yonatan Netanyahu (of Entebbe fame). It was an unusual social event for his country, being attended by President Yitzhak Navon, Defence Minister Weizman, Education Minister Ze'evulun Hammer, former Labour Ministers: Abba Eban, Haim Barlev and Yehoshua Rabinowitz, Foreign Ministry Director-General Yosef Clechanover, Miriam Eshkol in a rare social appearance, and Yediot Aharonot publisher Noah Moses. Eban, in a witty speech, praised Peres for his fair, humane treatment of his subjects, despite political rifts with some when alive. Peres, in his response, noted that in Israel it was near-impossible to write favourable things about live people.