

56th General Assembly

Dor L'Dor: Israel and North America — Partners Across the Generations

Overseas Plenary
Thursday Night

Address given by Hon. Yitzhak Shamir, Prime Minister of the State of Israel

Security this evening was very tight, everyone was screened before entering. Even handbags and cameras were thoroughly checked.

The evening began with the singing of the three national anthems: U.S., Canada and Israel. This was followed shortly by a live satellite speech by Mendel Kaplan, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency, from Johannesburg, South Africa. What a technological feat!

Martin Levine, president of CJF Canada, spoke of the 308,000 Jews in Canada. In 1987 they raised over \$90 million; this year \$820 million is being raised. This dedication is overwhelming.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, speaking on the 10th anniversary of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem, offered to return the gesture by traveling to Jordan or other Arab countries for new peace talks. He told the Assembly that King Hussein of Jordan is Israel's obvious next partner in the quest for a comprehensive Middle East peace. He appealed for face-to-face talks with Hussein — anywhere, anytime.

"We would like to play host to him, as we did to President Sadat, but, if necessary, we shall travel anywhere and negotiate until we shall reach agreement". He further stated that "I call on the leaders of the Arab states that are neighbors of Israel to respond to our call for peace and to come to the negotiating table. I pledge that, once we sit at the table, we shall not get up until an agreement is reached".

During his speech, which was interrupted 20 times by appreciative applause, Shamir also addressed several other concerns of American Jews.

Although leaders of America's six million Jews have remained steadfast in their political and financial support of Israel, the relationship has been strained recently by revelations of Israeli spying on the U.S. and by the Israeli role in the Iran-contra weapons deal.

Shamir preferred to accentuate the positive, stressing the need for unity and saying that Jews in Israel and the U.S. "represent the two main pillars of the thousands-of-years-old Jewish nation."

"My friends, despite occasional irritations, mistakes and misunderstandings, the relationship between Israel and the U.S. has never been better than it is at present", Shamir said.



Yitzhak Shamir

One of those misunderstandings, he said, concerns the "Who is a Jew?" controversy in Israel. Some American Jews fear that religious zealots in Israel want to disenfranchise any Jew who does not subscribe to Orthodox doctrine.

"Every Jew, with absolutely no exception, is welcome in Israel and can become an Israeli citizen", he said.

"Aliyah is the fulfillment of the Zionist dream. It is the guarantor of the Jewish character and future of Israel. It is the main purpose of our state."

American Jews, he stressed, who do not move to Israel, still have a responsibility to their people. The greatest danger for Jews, he said, is annihilation through assimilation.

He further stated, "You must give top priority to Jewish education, Jewish awareness and Jewish identity. To survive as a people, all of us...must adhere to our history, our culture, our traditions, our values and our heritage."

"It would be tragic, indeed if by default, through neglect and indifference, we shall help bring about what pogroms, persecutions and the Holocaust did not succeed in doing. "My message", he said, "is Unity. Nothing is impossible. For people of little faith, everything is impossible."

After his speech, Shoshana Cardin presented Shamir a Havdalah spice box.

At the end of the Plenary, there was a gala reception hosted by the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, "Miami — See It Like a Native". It was very colorful and exciting. Buffet tables were set with ethnic food for which Miami is famous. We greeted old friends and new as we listened and danced to the best of both Klezmer and Latin music.

Running for Jewish Freedom on Miami Beach Mike Minkin Brings Home Trophy

With the first light of dawn, on Friday, Nov. 20, hundreds of Jews from across the U.S. gathered on the beach behind the Fontainebleau-Hilton Hotel and participated in a five kilometer Freedom Run/Walk for Soviet Jewry. Among

This plenary session was a "loaded" one. Havdalah service was held. We listened and saw Ida Nudel "Live" via Satellite from Israel. When Ida Nudel was asked about what she feels about Israel, she simply stated "great"... just "great!" She said "thank you for bringing me home".

She said that she would be in the pro-Soviet Jewry Rally in December. If the Jews remain in the USSR they will become only Russians; they must not become Russians... they must not lose their identity. She made a warning that whatever the outcome there, "we must be careful...we must not be overconfident...we can not trust them...we must be careful". The audience was inspired by her message.

Esther Leah Ritz presented the William J. Shroder Awards for outstanding programs within the community. Winners were: Toronto Jewish Congress and Kehilla Residential Program (large city); Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County and Jewish Family Service of Northern Middlesex County, N.J. (intermediate city); Calgary Jewish Community Council and Calgary Jewish Center (small city). Honorable Mention went to Jewish Federation of Omaha and Jewish Family Service of Omaha.

The new president, Mandell L. Berman, Detroit, was installed. His message was brief but to the point. He stated that his main commitment is



Rita Mond (R) receiving "best newspaper" award from Adrienne Offman, chair CJF Public Relations Award Committee.



Irving Mond cavorting with "The Gator" at "Miami — See It Like a Native".



Havdalah Service led by Ricky Turetsky, Miami. On his left, his mother-in-law; on right, Jeane Kirkpatrick and Mandell Berman, new CJF President.

for the growth of the community, especially in the Sunbelt.

Guest speaker was Dr. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (1981-1985). Dr. Kirkpatrick has always been pro-Israel. She said that "if there had been an Israel, there would not have been a Holocaust". She further quoted Simon Wiesenthal that if there had been no oppressions, there would have been 200 million Jews today.

She lambasted the attitude of the Arab states towards Israel. "Tyranny is a one-way street"...Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lybia...it's o.k. for them to do acts of aggression, but if Israel protects herself, then that's tyranny. Israel has made two major peace attempts: the Camp David Accords and the giving up of the Sinai to Egypt. It's a long and rocky road ahead with little hope in the immediate future of peace

with the present Arab attitude.

Shoshana Cardin made her "farewell speech" which was very moving. She was presented a beautiful glass-encased shofar for her three years of dedicated service as CJF president.

Afterwards there was a Young Leadership Party, "Moon Over Miami", a celebration featuring jazz music, dancing, refreshments and plenty of ruach. And for the older "generation" a film festival "Musical Passage", the success story of the Soviet Emigre Orchestra. As far as I'm aware, no one of our contingent attended, as the hour was late, we were exhausted and the next morning we were to return to Charlotte. Next year the GA will be in New Orleans and we are all hoping to attend. In fact, Vicki is already busy booking a block of hotel rooms before they sell out!

Soviet Jewry: Rescuing Next Generation

One of the several forums that I attended was on Soviet Jewry which was held in cooperation with the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and NJCRAC. This was a subject which I felt quite at home with, since I had been part of a group in Charlotte which had worked with the Soviet Jews who had come to settle in our city a few years ago.

Morris Abram, Chairman National Conference on Soviet Jewry, stated that many ask if demonstrations have any diplomatic effect? "Of course", he went on to say. He noted that 300,000 Jews to date have left the Soviet Union. He then introduced Yuli Edelshtein, formerly a refusenik and now a citizen of Israel. Yuli was a former Hebrew teacher in the USSR who was arrested in 1984 with a trumped up charge of corrupting the youth. He was convicted of selling drugs to his students and sentenced to 3 years in prison. When he was released on Independence Day of Israel, his guard said to him, "I want you know you're not acquitted".

Yuli said that there is a new generation of Torah students in Russia. They do have new leaders, but you have to know them and help them. He has been fighting for Jewish culture for 8 years. He said, "We need free Aliyah of Jews to Israel...the only way to save Soviet Jewry. They must get visas without any endangerment."



All four of our P.R. Awards. Sculpture to hold Shabbas candles was for a "gold award".



Dancing to the strains of the Klezmerim.