



Race to Lead Israel's Labor Party Tightening

By Briana Naiman
Guest Contributor

With Israel's primary for Labor Party leadership heating up, former defense minister Amir Peretz continues to lead polls, but the race for second place is tightening, with the gap narrowing between Knesset Members Avi Gabai and Erel Margalit.

Nine candidates, including current party leader Isaac "Boogie" Herzog, are



MK Erel Margalit
(SOURCE: HAARETZ)

seeking the leadership spot. If no candidate reaches a 40 percent threshold in the July 4 election, a runoff will be held July 13.

A recent Smith Institute survey of party members found that Peretz still leads the field with 28 percent, but support for Gabai has dropped from 26 percent to 21 percent, while backing for Margalit has edged up from 15 percent to 16 percent.

When asked, however, which candidate they believe Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu least wants as Labor Party leader, 23 percent say Margalit, while 21 percent say Peretz, and 18 percent Gabai. Herzog and former IDF Chief of Staff Omer Bar-Lev trail far behind at eight percent and five percent, respectively, and all others combine at just three percent. Twenty percent have no opinion.

When it comes to saying who they think best would confront Netanyahu, 29 percent choose Margalit, 23 percent Peretz, and 17 percent Gabai. Asked who can represent Israel internationally, 29 percent say Margalit, 22 percent Herzog and 17 percent Gabai. Peretz rates only eight percent.

An entrepreneur with nearly 30 years of experience leading successful startups,

large companies, and social and cultural endeavors, Margalit has been in the Knesset since 2013. A member of the Knesset's Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, he heads the Cyber Security Taskforce.

The late Yitzhak Rabin's sister, Rachel Rabin, and his son, Yuval Rabin, are both among those who have endorsed Margalit. In a Jerusalem Post opinion piece, Yuval Rabin called Margalit "a man of action" and "the best candidate to be the next chairman of the Labor Party and Israel's prime minister."

Ambassador (ret.) Alon Pinkas, a former Israeli consul-general in New York, and former peace negotiator Gilead Sher have both endorsed Peretz, who also served as a former Israeli defense minister and deputy prime minister. Gabai, a former member of Netanyahu's government, was a founder of the centrist Kulanu party; he joined the Labor Party in late December 2016.

On the question of who works for marginalized populations, Labor voters choose only Margalit and Peretz — at 24 percent and 23 percent, respectively — with no other candidate registering more than five percent, and with 13 percent having no opinion.



MK Avi Gabai
(SOURCE: YNETNEWS)

And as for who can best represent Israel internationally, Margalit again leads all his rivals, this time with 29 percent of Labor Party respondents. Twenty-two percent favor Herzog and 17 percent at nine percent and eight percent, and all others totaling just two percent, with 13 percent saying they don't know.

The poll was completed June 12.

A Different Kind of Pro-Life Group, EFRAT, is Honored in Washington, D.C.

By Cheyenne Plott

On June 15, 2017 dozens of Jewish leaders from Brazil, Mexico, Russia, Israel, and the U.S., along with Christian leaders and legislators, gathered on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. in honor of the 40th anniversary of EFRAT, an innovative Israeli organization dedicated to helping Israeli women choose life for their babies.

Characterizing itself as a modern-day Miriam, EFRAT aims to saving the lives of Jewish babies whose mothers think they have no other option but abortion by providing them with access to financial assistance, counseling, and other resources and forms of support.



Michael Kierszenbaum, Woli Stern, US Senator Rand Paul, Dr. Eli Schusheim, and Ezra Friedlander. (PHOTO CREDIT: SHMUEL LENCHEVSKY)

"We at EFRAT believe that every woman has the right to make decisions regarding her body," said EFRAT president and honoree Dr. Eli Schusheim. "Therefore we do not pressure women, nor do we make demonstrations or condone violence. We just offer our support and assistance."

The luncheon tribute was coordinated by The Friedlander Group. While it featured speeches from U.S. legislators, the main focus of the event was to honor Schusheim and his friend and long-time nonprofit partner, Woli Stern.

When the Israeli Parliament legalized abortion in 1977, Dr. Schusheim, a surgeon, was deeply grieved that 60,000 pregnancies were being terminated each year. He teamed up with Herschel Feigenbaum, a Holocaust survivor and the founder of EFRAT, to seek an increase in the Jewish birthrate by decreasing the number of abortions.

To date, EFRAT has saved more than 70,000 lives in Israel. To get a sense of the impact of this in such a small country: this is the equivalent of saving an entire city.

After an opening prayer for the victims of the recent shooting attack at a Congressional baseball practice, U.S. Rep-



Participants on the steps of the US Capitol (PHOTO CREDIT: SHMUEL LENCHEVSKY)

resentatives Trent Franks (R-AZ), Doug Lamborn (R-CO), Andy Biggs (R-AZ), Louie Gohmert (R-TX), Doug Collins (R-GA), and Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) delivered remarks championing the cause of life and praising Efrat for their successes.

"We need more groups like yours," said Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ). Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) discussed how fundamental the right to life is, saying "it's hard to figure out how to get to all these other rights [freedom of religion, freedom of speech, etc.] when you don't exist."

Many of the legislators echoed Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ) statement that every child "has the image of God stamped on his soul."

Among the Jewish and Christian leaders present, Richard Hellman, Founder of the Christians' Israel Public Action Campaign (CIPAC), described the importance of having a thriving Jewish population and that it's "important for Israel to be a

Jewish state — free, democratic, respecting the same Judeo-Christian values that we do here in the United States."

Joshua London, the Co-Director of Government Relations for the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), underscored the significance of a growing Jewish population, saying that EFRAT is the "most effective organization at attempting to solve a holy demographic issue."

Dr. Schusheim presented Stern, who has directly saved more than 6,300 lives, with a "Book of Life" listing all the names of the children saved through his efforts. Dr. Schusheim tearfully noted that many of these children were now having children of their own.

Dr. Schusheim said he grieves the fact that Israel is still losing about 40,000 lives to abortion each year, but he remains hopeful that EFRAT will continue to expand their work as they look to the future.