

The surrender of the 'elites'

Akiva Eldar
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Strike ends, but most outsourced workers to remain off payroll

By Haim Bior

A three-day general strike over conditions of outsourced workers ended yesterday with an agreement under which only a relatively small number of these workers in the public sector will be hired directly.

Nevertheless, the agreement, signed by Histadrut la-

subcontracted workers constituted "core professions," as far as the employer is concerned, and would be hired directly. Such "core professions" include bank tellers, factory assembly-line workers, chambermaids in hotels and messengers.

According to the agreement struck between Eini and Stein-

gists working under such conditions.

The treasury adamantly opposed the Histadrut's demand for the direct hiring of thousands of cleaners and security guards working in ministries and local government and other public agencies. However, the agreement stipulates that these workers will be paid no less than NIS 4,500 a month and will be included in any pay hikes given in the public sector.

For example, public sector workers are due a 2.25 percent pay raise in January 2013 and another 1 percent in 2013, which will bring their salary to a total of NIS 4,650.

Cleaners and security guards will also receive all the social benefits due salaried state employees, including an increase to 19.5 percent of the deduction to their pension fund.

The agreement is far from the goal the Histadrut set when it embarked four months ago on its campaign to improve the status of outsourced workers. That goal was to significantly reduce the number of such workers, which is estimated at 350,000 to 400,000.

However, Eini can chalk up the achievements of putting the issue of subcontracted workers at the top of the public agenda, and holding a strike in which a number of labor

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Garbage piling up in Jerusalem. Public-sector workers returned to their jobs yesterday morning.

Michal Sattari



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bor federation chairman Ofer Eini and Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz, improves pay and benefits for cleaners and security guards.

The end of the strike was made possible when the Finance Ministry withdrew its demand that the Histadrut pledge not to strike for four years over outsourced workers. As a compromise, the Histadrut agreed that it would not raise demands with regard to pay for outsourced workers for a period of three years.

Another dispute was resolved when the parties decided to establish a joint committee to decide which

itz, following a night-long bargaining session, municipalities and government ministries, university administrations and other public agencies will hire outsourced workers directly when these individuals do the same job as employees directly on the payroll, following approval by the joint Histadrut-treasury committee and the nine-month initial employment period as a contract worker.

These conditions will apply, for example, to municipal social workers considered outsourced because they are hired through a social service organization, and to psycholo-

Subcontracted workers / Avirama Golan

The brutal reality of post-strike Israel

No one could have done a better job of describing the mysterious agreement between the Finance Ministry and the Histadrut labor federation over the general strike than Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz himself.

"We have reached an agreement because both of us want to go home," he said, joking around with reporters. "If it had continued like

this for another two weeks, Ofer wouldn't be getting married and I would be getting divorced."

Now, he added, both he and Ofer Eini, the Histadrut chairman, can sleep peacefully.

You don't need to be a genius to realize that when Steinitz and Eini (and, possibly even more importantly, Shraga Brosh, who heads the Manufacturers Asso-

ciation of Israel) are happy, the workers need to check extra-carefully to find out who's paying the price.

And when Steinitz and Eini go to sleep instead of going head-to-head on the rights of subcontracted workers – an issue depicted as the most serious problem in Israel's workforce – those workers must know they're not going to be the ones sleeping all that

peacefully. Not in the next three years at least, during which time the Histadrut has pledged to refrain from making wage demands on behalf of those outsourced workers.

Sure, it seems like the Histadrut won some nice victories that will improve the working conditions of subcontracted workers – an increase in the minimum wage, a provision that subcontracted public-sec-

tor workers will have the same working conditions as their non-outsourced counterparts, pension that accumulates from the first working day, holiday gifts, and so on. But none of these victories cancel out the arrangement that allows employers, and primarily the state, to continue to employ subcontracted workers.

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Be'er Sheva holds table leader Kiryat Shmona to a draw

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Gov't backs bill to prosecute clients of prostitutes

By Jonathan Lis

Individuals who use the services of prostitutes could face criminal prosecution, under a bill approved yesterday by the Ministerial Committee for Legislation. The bill was proposed by MK Orit Zuaretz (Kadima), who chairs the Subcommittee on Trafficking in Women, with several other MKs signed on it, including Uri Orbach and Zevulun Orlev (Habayit Hayehudi), David Azoulay (Shas) and Uri Ariel (National Union).

The ministerial panel's approval means the bill goes to the Knesset with government backing.

Under the bill, courts could sentence those who patronize prostitutes to up to six months in prison or, if it's a first offense, order them to attend workshops given by former prostitutes who will talk about their past. The bill will be debated by the subcommittee on Wednesday.

"To date, the prostitution chain always had a link that was invisible to the eye, and from which society never demanded an accounting,

even though [these people] are the ones who enable this injustice and terrible exploitation of women in distress to continue and flourish right under our noses," said Zuaretz.

"If we really want to fight the shameful phenomenon of prostitution, we have to hold its consumers responsible, and get the enforcement authorities to act against them as well," she continued. "In the Scandinavian countries and in France, where they've passed a law like this, prostitution dropped by half in a short time."

According to the Task Force Against Trafficking in Women, a third of Israeli prostitutes are minors; the average age at which girls start working is 14. Some 90 percent of prostitutes are controlled by pimps, and 55 percent have been raped.

A survey done in Sweden following passage of a similar law showed that before it was passed, 13.6 percent of Swedish men patronized prostitutes, while in 2008, nine years after the law was passed, the rate had dropped to 7.8 percent.

Arab women's reports of domestic violence up 20%

Panel to discuss issue of abuse in Arab community

By Jack Khoury

Reports of physical and sexual violence against Arab women were up 20 percent in 2011 over the previous year, the Center to Help Victims of Sexual and Physical Abuse said over the weekend. Some 45 percent of the women calling the center's hot line said it was the first time they had told anyone that they had been abused.

The issue of violence in the Arab community in general, and against women in

particular, is to be discussed today at a seminar under the auspices of a parliamentary inquiry committee chaired by MK Ahmed Tibi (UAL-Ta'al).

"Violence, crime and the murder of women in the Arab sector are of top concern to Arab citizens and harm the social fabric of everyone," Tibi said yesterday.

The center reported that while in 2010 it had been approached by 385 Arab women reporting emotional or physical domestic violence, in 2011 it had received 414 reports.

Reports of sexual violence had jumped from 178 in 2010 to 229 last year, the center added, noting that 17 of the victims required psychological treatment as a result of the sexual assault.

Some 39 percent of those complaining of sexual violence said they had reported the matter to the police, but 75 percent of those who reported physical or emotional abuse said they weren't able to pluck up the courage to file a complaint with police because they were embarrassed or feared for their families.

According to the center, most of the violence against the women was meted out by their husbands, another family member or an acquaintance. Eighty percent of those who asked for help said they had been attacked by their husbands, with 21 percent of these reporting sexual assault by their husbands. Sixty percent of those complaining of sexual assault said they had been under 25 when the violence occurred. Sixteen percent of the reports were by women saying they had been sexually harassed at work.

Women Against Violence, the nonprofit association that



A crime scene in Lod where an Arab woman's body was found.

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Settlers rebuilding a structure in Migron last year.

Emil Salzman

Migron relocation plan isn't feasible, officials claim

By Chaim Levinson

A tentative compromise that would allow residents of the West Bank outpost of Migron to relocate to nearby land is "not feasible," sources recently quoted Civil Administration officials as saying.

It's doubtful that a new settlement on the designated land would be approved by the planning authorities and, if it is, it would take a long time, the officials, who are experts in the field rather than political or military appointees, reportedly said at internal meetings.

The proposal, which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu supports, is intended to prompt residents of the West Bank's largest outpost to leave their homes voluntarily. In that way, the government hopes to avoid the violent clashes that could accompany a forced evacuation next month.

The High Court of Justice ruled last year that Migron must be evacuated by March 31. The court says the illegal outpost was built on privately owned Palestinian land, though Migron residents dispute this.

In the last few weeks the residents have agreed, in

principle at least, to relocate, though many had previously expressed opposition to the proposal and despite heavy pressure from the right not to agree to it.

The site to which Migron would move under the compromise plan is part of a 64-dunam, or 16-acre, enclave of state-owned land in an area that is almost entirely privately owned. It has been designated as a tourist site and already includes a winery, a visitors center and a gas station. The remaining land, between the gas station and Psagot Winery, comes to 35 dunams, or 8.6 acres.

As of last year, 45 families, a total population of 280 people, were living in Migron. "The legal issues related to the relocation of Migron are currently being examined, in accordance with the decision of the political leadership," the coordinator of government activities in the territories said in a statement.

There are still significant differences between the sides on what will remain in present-day Migron. The state is willing to use vague wording, indicating that it will examine the options regarding what

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Doctors with borders

35 East J'lem physicians not granted Israeli license

By Nir Hasson

Health Ministry officials refuse to allow 35 Palestinian doctors from East Jerusalem to attend Israeli certification exams – and help relieve a shortage of doctors there.

The ministry claims the doctors, who graduated from Al-Quds University, are not eligible to sit the certification exams, usually taken by doctors who quali-

fied abroad to enable them to practice in Israel. The ministry says Al-Quds cannot be considered a "foreign university" since it holds offices in Jerusalem.

Due to a shortage of doctors in East Jerusalem, many uncertified doctors treat patients, and there is an active black market for certified doctors' stamps.

In 2006 the Health Ministry rejected requests by a group Al-Quds University

medical graduates from East Jerusalem to take the Israeli certification exams that would enable them to practice in Israel. After attorney Shlomo Lecker petitioned the Jerusalem District Court on their behalf, Judge David Cheshin ordered the ministry's former director general to appear in court and explain his decision.

Shortly after the judge's order, the state prosecutor

announced, on behalf of the Health Ministry, that the graduates' request had been accepted, following a meeting of all "senior officials of the Council for Higher Education and the Health, Justice and Education ministries." But despite the formal announcement, Health Ministry officials still failed to allow the graduates to take the tests, and did so only after Lecker requested a court hearing, citing con-

tempt.

A year ago the Health Ministry again refused to allow 35 graduates to sit the exams. Lecker, who was again asked to represent the graduates, believed he had an easy case, due to his former success, but Judge Noam Sohlberg, who has since been appointed to the Supreme Court, refused a request to hear the case

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