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ISRAEL PRODUCING NEW TANK, THE MERKAVA, WHICH IS DESCRIBED AS REVOLUTIONARY IN ITS DESIGN

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, May 15 (JTA)--Israel has developed, successfully tested and is now producing a new 56-ton tank which is, in many ways, revolutionary in design, it was disclosed officially today. The tank, known as the Merkava (Chariot), presents an unusually low silhouette making it a difficult target even for sophisticated anti-tank missiles and affords maximum protection for its crew, according to the descriptions just released. The new tank carries special equipment against chemical warfare. It is hermetically sealed and carries an air conditioning system.

The Merkava has been tested on the Golan Heights and in the Sinai--rocky and sandy regions, respectively--and is now on the production line although it has not been delivered yet to the armored corps. The development of such a tank by Israel has long been rumored in professional publications, including the American Armed Forces Journal. Confirmation that it exists was made only after President Carter promised last week that the U.S. will continue to assist Israel to manufacture weapons for its defense.

The Merkava is driven by a 900 hp American-made engine manufactured by Teledyne Continental Motors. Otherwise it represents an entirely Israeli conception and design that has been in the making for seven years and is credited to Gen. (Res.) Israel Tal, the former armored corps commander who directed the giant tank battles of the Yom Kippur War.

Features Of The Merkava

The Merkava is heavier than the American Patton tank, the British Centurion or the Russian T-62. It is armed with a 105 mm. cannon which gives it fire power equal to that of any other tank but it is said to have greater mobility. Its flat turret makes for the lowest silhouette of any known tank. Its engine is in the front, allowing for a rear escape hatch for its crew, a revolutionary safety feature. The Merkava normally will carry a four-man crew but it can transport 10 fully equipped infantrymen in addition to a payload of 62 105 mm. shells.

Each new tank will cost about IL 7 million to produce which is less expensive than the British Chieftain or the projected new generation of American-West German tanks. But Israel has made a huge investment for its production. About IL 80 million was spent to adapt the Oran steel plant to produce armored plate said to be unpenetrable by any anti-tank projectiles now in the Arab arsenal. Another IL 140 million was invested in the assembly plant. About 100 Israeli factories and workshops are involved in manufacturing various parts for the Merkava.

ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT BANS SALE, DISTRIBUTION OF TWO HATE BOOKS

By Asher Mibashan

BUENOS AIRES, May 15 (JTA)--The government has banned the sale and distribution of two anti-Semitic books on the grounds that the proliferation of ideological-racial conflicts does not

contribute to the task of national reorganization. Julio Cesar Urien, the author of one of the books, "The Way of Man," has been detained.

Jean Boyer, the author of the other book, "The Worst Enemies of Our People," does not live in Argentina. But his book has been branded as containing Nazi tendencies.

Meanwhile, a delegation from the DAIA, the representative body of Argentine Jewry, met with Gen. Albano Harguindeguy, the Minister of Interior, and asked for a strong statement from the government ending the vitriolic anti-Jewish statements which have been appearing in the press because of the government investigation into the scandal regarding the financial empire of David Graiver, an Argentine Jewish banker who was believed to have died in an air crash in Mexico last year.

The DAIA also asked for adequate legislation to punish the promotion of religious or racial discrimination in any form and by any media. The delegation comprised Dr. Juan Gurevich and Marcos Kornhendler, DAIA vice-presidents and Ricardo Gordon, DAIA secretary.

WIESENTHAL CHARGES THAT TWO RIGHT-WING GROUPS PROVIDE MONEY FOR LEGAL DEFENSE OF WAR CRIMINALS

NEW YORK, May 15 (JTA)--Simon Wiesenthal charged here that two right-wing foundations in the United States are channeling tax-free donations for the legal defense of Nazi war criminals and said that one of them is connected with a world-wide disseminator of anti-Semitic and other racial hate propaganda. Wiesenthal, who heads the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna, made the disclosures yesterday at an address at a special session held in his honor during the 71st annual meeting of the American Jewish Committee.

The Nazi-hunter named the foundations as the Hermine Ryan Defense Fund of New York and the Patriotic Legal Fund of Marietta, Ga. He said they collected monies from about 80 neo-Nazi and Fascist groups in the U.S. and Canada. According to Wiesenthal, the Patriotic Legal Fund is connected with White Power Publications of Liverpool, W. Va.

He said that White Power prints 60 publications in five languages which are distributed in the U.S., South America, notably Argentina, Europe, especially West Germany, and South Africa. It also sends German language editions of Nazi books to German underground groups, he said. Its titles include "Adolf Hitler's Testament," "My Part in Germany's Fight" by Goebbels and "Mein Kampf."

Wiesenthal said that the Hermine Ryan Fund paid the legal expenses for the Austrian-born former Queens housewife Hermine Braunstein Ryan during a nine-year battle against deportation and continues to pay her legal fees as she stands trial in West Germany for the murders of 250,000 Jews and others when she was a concentration camp guard at Maidanek during World War II.

Active In Various Countries

According to Wiesenthal, neo-Nazi groups are in various stages of development in different parts

of the world. "In Germany and Austria, they are still at the first stage of propaganda," he said. "In Argentina, they have already moved on to the formation of terror commandos, striking synagogues, Jewish community centers and Jewish cemeteries. In South Africa, they foment the conflict between Blacks and whites...."

He said that in the U.S. and Canada "the several dozens of small organizations are not dangerous for these big democracies themselves but they harm the American image abroad because neo-Nazi and neo-Fascist groups all over the world receive this dirty propaganda from their counterparts in the States and pass it on as American propaganda."

Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman (D.NY), who spoke at the session honoring Wiesenthal, called on the House Subcommittee on Immigration to investigate why the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has failed to deal with cases of Nazi war criminals living in the U.S. She demanded that the subcommittee find out why these individuals were permitted to enter the country and to become American citizens.

Feels Compelled To Expose Nazi Menace

Speaking last week in Chicago to 150 members of the Jewish United Fund (JUF) social welfare agencies' division at a fund-raising meeting in the Jewish Federation building, Wiesenthal described himself as "a survivor who feels compelled to do my duty." He noted, "Young people today cannot comprehend the horror of the Nazis. For them it is something as impersonal as a history book. That is why I must expose the Nazi menace which persists today, so that our young people will not be contaminated."

Wiesenthal stressed his deep concern about the fate of the three million Soviet Jews. He said that even if Soviet Jewish emigration should again reach the level of 30,000 to 40,000 a year, instead of the current approximately 12,000 a year, there would still be three million Jews in the Soviet Union, to whom the world Jewish community has not given sufficient attention.

EZRA SHAPIRO DEAD AT 74

JERUSALEM, May 15 (JTA)--Funeral services were held here today for Ezra Z. Shapiro, world chairman of the Keren Hayesod and a Zionist leader in Israel and the United States for more than a half century, who died here yesterday at the age of 74. Mr. Shapiro had been ill for several weeks. His funeral was preceded by a special mourning session of the Keren Hayesod, Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization Executives.

Shapiro was born in Poland on May 7, 1903 and was brought to the United States as a child. He earned a law degree at Ohio State University and was a practicing attorney in Cleveland for many years where he was also active in Jewish community and Zionist affairs. In 1934 he was elected chairman of the national executive committee of the Zionist Organization of America and, beginning in 1937, he participated at seven World Zionist Congresses.

At the 1951 Congress, he served as chairman of the Committee on Fundamental Problems which drafted the Jerusalem Program that re-defined Zionist goals for the post-State era. He was elected in 1956 to the Zionist General Council (Actions Committee) and in 1972 to the WZO and Jewish Agency Executives. He became world chairman of Keren Hayesod in 1971 by which time he had settled permanently in Jerusalem.

Was Active In Numerous Organizations

Shapiro was a member of the National Board of Governors of the Israel Bond Organization from 1951-65 and a national vice-president of the United Jewish Appeal from 1955-66. His activities in Cleveland included service as a trustee and as president of the Jewish Community Federation between 1935-70, and president of the Bureau of Jewish Education.

On the level of national Jewish affairs, he was a vice-president of the American Association for Jewish Education from 1959-66; a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Friends of the Weizmann Institute of Science; and a trustee of the American Friends of the Hebrew University. Since 1971 he had served on the boards of governors of the Weizmann Institute, the Hebrew University and the Negev University at Beersheba.

In 1945 Mr. Shapiro was one of a group of 19 American Jews summoned by David Ben Gurion to organize American support for Haganah. He was president of the World Confederation of General Zionists.

In a eulogy delivered at the mourning session, S.J. Kreutner, director general of Keren Hayesod, described Shapiro as a man "universally loved and respected by all those who were privileged to know him and work with him. His humanity and nobility of spirit were a constant source of inspiration for the leaders, co-workers and contributors of the Keren Hayesod appeals throughout the world to increase their efforts on behalf of Israel. The world-wide family of Keren Hayesod has lost not only its world chairman but also a father and mentor."

SENATE COMMITTEE FOREIGN AID BILL INCLUDES STRENGTHENING ISRAEL-U.S. MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, May 15 (JTA)--The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has adopted a \$4.6 billion foreign aid authorization bill that includes language strengthening the Israeli-U.S. military supply relationship in a compromise reached between President Carter and key Committee members.

The bill, which is expected to pass easily in the Senate and probably also in the House without significant changes, authorizes \$1 billion in military credits and \$785 million in economic supporting assistance for Israel. Egypt is allocated \$750 million in economic aid, Syria \$90 million and Jordan \$93 million. In addition, Jordan is earmarked for \$131 million in military assistance.

The authorization bill sets the policy for the programs that are to begin next Oct. 1 for fiscal year 1978. They must be implemented by a companion appropriations bill which has yet to be drafted.

Without dissent, the Senate Committee approved a provision Thursday sponsored by Sens. Frank Church (D. Idaho) and Jacob Javits (R.NY) that says: "In accordance with the historic special relationship between the United States and Israel and previous agreements and continuing understandings, the Congress joins with the President that a policy of restraint in U.S. arms transfers, including arms sales ceilings, should not impair Israel's deterrent strength or undermine the military balance in the Middle East."

With Carter having specified co-production arrangements with Israel on certain weapons in a

meeting with five Senators earlier Thursday, the Committee dropped the provision endorsing that point in the draft legislation. Furthermore, in a letter to Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey (D.Minn.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Aid, Carter wrote: "I recognize the special responsibilities the United States has towards Israel and the particular consideration that must be given to our military arms and co-production arrangements with Israel."

The co-production arrangements, which Sens. Humphrey and Clifford Case (R.N.J.) had offered as a provision in the bill, includes weapons such as the American F-16 fighter plane and Israel's new Chariot tank, informed sources told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

The President also noted to Humphrey that if co-production language were made a part of the law, it would create demands by other countries to become special clients. This, Carter said, would risk destroying the essence of his arms restraint policy he feels is supported by the American people.

QUEBEC JEWISH LEADERS CONFIDENT IN FUTURE OF THEIR COMMUNITY

By Michael Solomon

MONTREAL, May 15 (JTA)--Quebec Jewish leaders, attending the 18th plenary meeting of the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) over the weekend, stressed their confidence in the future of the Jewish community in the province regardless of the efforts of the ruling Parti Quebecois to become independent of Canada. "The Quebec Jewish community is here to stay," Joel Pinsky, chairman of the CJC's Eastern and Atlantic Region, told a press conference.

"I am absolutely not worried about the future of the Jewish community nor the treatment of Jews in Quebec," Pinsky stressed. "Certainly the history of French Canada with respect to the Jewish population has been good. There is no reason to believe that it will change and I challenge anybody to find otherwise."

The press conference Friday was held at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel after Quebec Premier Rene Levesque addressed a CJC luncheon and sought to assure the Jewish community particularly about continued government aid to its schools. Following the talk, newsmen were excluded so that Levesque and the some 2000 delegates to the CJC meeting could hold a "frank and open expression of opinion."

At the press conference which followed this closed-door session, Joseph Nuss, a lawyer and an official of the CJC's Eastern and Atlantic Region, said that the Jewish community "can accept French as a common language, that is a priority language. But changes to bring this about would best be done gradually because of the Jewish concern of nationalism being restrictive and insular." He noted that there was a "potential for extremism," although he pointed out that Zionism was also a movement of nationalism "and others have the same feeling toward the collectivity."

Reassures Quebec Jewish Community

In his address to the CJC, Levesque said that the government's bill to require French as the language of Quebec was neither discriminatory nor revengeful. "Jews are experts in discrimination because they have suffered a lot," he said. "But if you read the legislation regarding the use of French attentively, we respect the identity of people with regards to school and jobs."

Levesque received loud applause when he said

"the exceptional privilege which means taxpayers money for the support of Jewish elementary schools and for your religious and linguistic requirements will not be abolished."

The Premier stressed that "the 125,000 Jews living in Montreal are very important to me because they are a civic-minded community...." He said the Montreal Jewish community was the most bilingual ethnic group in Quebec and noted that the 25,000 Sephardic Jews in Montreal, most of them French-speaking, should help bridge the gap between the mostly English-speaking Jewish community and Quebec's majority French-speaking population.

Noting the concern among the Jewish community about his government's pledge to hold a referendum on leaving Canada, Levesque stressed that "rapid and major changes will come as democratically as possible." He said "We intend to implement whatever decision the people of Quebec will make and if we lose we shall respect its decision but we hope to achieve independence and see other ethnic groups live with this fact."

The Premier said that this should not frighten the Jewish community. "Is there any national group in the world which is not somehow ethnocentric?" he asked. "I doubt it. All people are ethnocentric, but being different does not imply hostility against any other ethnic group. One of our basic ingredients is our language and this should not come to you as a surprise when you have resurrected your own language in another part of the world," an obvious reference to Hebrew in Israel. Levesque said his government proposes "teaching French in the Jewish schools at the elementary level in order to prepare children for an active life in Quebec society."

Plaut New CJC President

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut of Holy Blossoms Temple, was unanimously elected president of the CJC for a three-year term. Two Jewish community leaders were awarded the Samuel Bronfman Medal. Judge Sidney Harris, the CJC's outgoing president, presented one medal to Saul Hayes, former vice-president of the CJC, for 40 years of service to the organization. The other medal was presented by Judge Harold Lande to Monroe Abby, a former CJC president, for his many years of service.

CURFEW IMPOSED ON NABLUS

TEL AVIV, May 15 (JTA)--A curfew was imposed on Nablus today after security forces used tear gas to disperse rioting students in the main square of the town. The occasion was a general strike that closed down businesses and schools on the 29th anniversary of the founding of Israel according to the Gregorian calendar.

There were partial school strikes in Ramallah and at the Balata refugee camp near Nablus. But the West Bank as a whole was more peaceful than it was on this date a year ago. Security forces remained alert for possible trouble tomorrow which is the first anniversary of the fatal shooting of a Nablus schoolgirl by an Israeli soldier during student demonstrations in May, 1976.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--The rate of Soviet Jewish dropouts en route to Israel remained at 51 percent in April, according to the latest report of the Jewish Agency Immigration and Absorption Department. Of the 1252 Jews who left the USSR last month, 638 went via Vienna to other countries, and 614 continued on their way to Israel.

CARTER DENOUNCES ACCUSATION THAT JEWS CRUCIFIED CHRIST; CLARIFIES REMARKS AT BAPTIST BIBLE CLASS

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, May 15 (JTA)--President Carter, in a clarification of his remarks to a Baptist Bible class here in March, has personally denounced the false charge against the Jewish people over the crucifixion of Christ and expressed his gratification that Christianity's leaders have "totally and decisively rejected" the "unjust accusation."

Carter's clarification came in a letter dated May 12 to the Rev. John F. Steinbruck of the Luther Place Memorial Church in Washington in response to a letter dated May 6 from the Lutheran pastor who had written to him that "an uneasy concern" prevails in the Jewish and Christian communities that press accounts of the President's remarks "will undermine progress that has been made in the Christian world removing the basis of decide charges against the Jewish people."

The President, in March said, among other things, at the First Baptist Church, that "a turning point" in Christ's life was that "he had directly challenged in a fatal way the existing church, and there was no possible way for the Jewish leaders to avoid the challenge. So they decided to kill Jesus." Carter, in his response to Steinbruck, wrote:

Text Of Carter's Response

"Several weeks ago, I conducted a Bible study class during which the subject of the role of the Jewish people in the crucifixion of Christ was discussed. A number of newspaper reports have appeared about my comments which have led to some questions about my views on this subject. I am glad to have this opportunity to set forth my personal position and to clarify any misunderstanding which may have resulted from these incomplete accounts of my convictions:

"The Christian religion holds that Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Jew, gave his life to redeem the sins of all humanity. The Gospels declare that the death of Jesus was foreordained, and without that death and the resurrection which followed it, Christians would not be saved in Christ. Yet the crucifixion required human instruments. Among these were Judas, who was a Christian disciple, Caiaphas who was a Jewish priest appointed by the Roman authorities, and Pilate, a Gentile, who actually condemned Jesus to death.

"In accordance with the Gospels, I know that Jesus forgave the preordained human instruments of his death, but I am also aware that the Jewish people were for many centuries falsely charged with collective responsibility for the death of Jesus, and were persecuted terribly for that unjust accusation which has been exploited as a basis and rationalization for anti-Semitism.

"I know and am personally gratified by the fact that the highest authorities of the major Christian churches--Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Greek Orthodox--have totally and decisively rejected the charge that the Jewish people as a whole were then or are now responsible for the death of Christ. My own denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, adopted an official resolution on June 7, 1972, declaring 'anti-Semitism as un-Christian' and as being opposed to any and all forms of it.

"Further the Baptist Churches have resolved that we covenant to work positively to replace all anti-Semitic bias in the Christian attitude and

and practices with love for Jews, who along with other men, are equally beloved of God. To that I can only say 'Amen' with all my heart."

President's Response Hailed

Hailing the letter, Steinbruck responded to the President: "There is no question that the authority of your office as President of the United States, combined with our respect for you as a committed Christian, will make this response an historic repudiation of the 'Christ-killer' canard that has so long and so unjustly been the burden of the Jewish people--our older sisters and brothers."

Steinbruck also told Carter that Christian and Jewish leaders "share with me the profound appreciation of this moment in which you have made a compassionate, just and constructive contribution to destroy the poisonous roots of anti-Semitism and prejudice."

\$250,000 ENDOWMENT GRANT

ESTABLISHED BY THE BLAUSTEIN FAMILY

NEW YORK, May 15 (JTA)--Dr. Morton K. Blaustein, new chairman of the National Executive Council of the American Jewish Committee, announced the establishment of The Hilda Katz Blaustein Leadership Development Program. Its principal purpose is the development of leaders for the AJCommittee. The announcement was made at the 71st annual meeting of the AJCommittee which ended today.

Blaustein said it is expected that those who participate in the program shall, as a result, be able to render more effective service to the general Jewish community. An additional purpose of the program is to provide for the further development of leadership skills for members of the AJCommittee staff.

The program was created in honor of the 85th birthday of Mrs. Hilda Blaustein, Dr. Blaustein's mother, and the widow of Jacob Blaustein, the industrialist and philanthropist, who died in 1970. An endowment grant of \$250,000 was provided by members of the family, plus an additional \$50,000 to fund the first five years' activities of the program.

It was the second large endowment gift of the Blaustein family. At the annual meeting in May, 1971, the family announced a million-dollar endowment grant to the AJCommittee, which established the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights, in memory of Mr. Blaustein.

Dr. Blaustein announced the gift on behalf of his two sisters--Mrs. Barbara Hirshhorn, of Pikesville, Md., and Mrs. Betty Roswell, of Bridgewater, N.J., and their husbands--and on behalf of Dr. Blaustein's wife Rona and himself.

Maass Elected New AJCommittee President

Richard Maass, of White Plains, N.Y., an investment management specialist, former Mayor of White Plains, and a nationally prominent figure in Jewish affairs, was elected 17th president of the AJCommittee. He succeeds Elmer L. Winter, Milwaukee business leader and former president of Manpower, Inc., who served two two-year terms in the presidential post. Winter was elected an honorary president.

Also elected to top positions were Maynard I. Wishner, of Chicago, chairman, Board of Governors; and Howard I. Friedman, of Los Angeles, chairman, Board of Trustees. Maass, a former chairman of the AJCommittee's Board of Governors and NEC, was first chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry.