

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## ISRAELI MILITARY SOURCES CONFIRM ISRAEL IS AIDING CHRISTIAN FORCES BATTLING SYRIANS IN LEBANON By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, April 14 (JTA) — Israeli military sources confirmed today that Israel is aiding Christian forces battling the Syrians in central Lebanon but insisted that there were no Israelis in that region either in training or advisory capacities. The sources refused to indicate the nature of the aid.

At the same time, Moshe Arens, chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, urged Israel today not to wash its hands of events in Lebanon. He claimed that the Syrians were responsible for acts in Lebanon unheard of since World War II and chided Israelis who tended to play down the situation or to criticize the Christian elements. Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who briefed the committee today, said the U.S. was reassessing its attitude toward Syria in view of events in Lebanon.

### Says U.S. Re-examining Its View of Syria

According to Shamir, Washington had tended to regard Syria in the past as a moderating influence in the Lebanese conflict. But the Reagan Administration is re-examining that concept, partly because of the presence of 10,000 Soviet advisors in Syria. Shamir also briefed the committee on his talks last week with Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

He said the stalled autonomy talks with Egypt were not discussed in detail but an agreement emerged between Israel and the U.S. that the goal of the talks was autonomy for the Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, not the creation of a Palestinian state. Shamir said there was no discussion of possible American military bases in the area.

Shamir also said that Iraq has recently hinted to Washington that it was interested in improving relations with the U.S. But judging from his talks with Haig, the U.S. has not yet formulated a clear policy on its relations with Iraq, Shamir said.

Former Foreign Minister Abba Eban, who also appeared before the committee today, warned that the present American stress on the strategic balance in the Middle East vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and its consequent downplaying of the Arab-Israeli peace process was only temporary. According to Eban, once the Americans realize that their policy is opposed by the Arabs, a period of political tension will ensue and Israel had better be prepared for such a situation.

### Background Of Fighting In Lebanon

The military sources discussing developments in Lebanon today, discounted Christian claims that the Syrians used their air force and ground-to-ground missiles in the recent fighting around the Christian town of Zahle. They also questioned reports that Soviet advisors were with Syrian forces in Lebanon.

The sources said the latest fighting in central Lebanon began when the residents of Zahle,

mainly Greek Catholics, took advantage of the end of winter to resume work on a road linking Zahle with Christian-held areas on the Lebanese coast. The Syrians tried to halt the work and the Christians seized a bridge link on the main Damascus-Beirut road thereby blocking Syrian supplies to a large part of their army in Lebanon. The Syrians retaliated by shelling Zahle and the fighting spread to Beirut but was less intense there.

The Israeli military sources suggested that the Syrian interest in the Zahle area was due to their claim on the Bekaa valley in eastern Lebanon which was stripped from Syria in 1921 when the French Mandatory government created Lebanon as a separate state. The Syrians regard the valley as essential to the defense of Damascus, the Israeli sources said, and fear any relaxation of their hold on it, especially if the Lebanese elections next year bring to office a president less friendly to Syria than the incumbent Elias Sarkis.

The sources also said the Christians were exaggerating when they accused the Syrians of genocide. According to the sources, the Syrians are normally brutal and used heavy artillery against opponents of their regime even in Damascus.

### STATE DEPARTMENT EQUIVOCATING ON A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN LEBANON TO MAINTAIN THE TRUCE By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 14 (JTA) — The State Department indicated today that it was not advocating a United Nations peacekeeping force to maintain the truce throughout Lebanon but that it did consider it a possibility. Dean Fischer, the Department's new spokesman, said that the French proposal for a UN peacekeeping force in areas outside of south Lebanon was just "an option."

He said it was "nothing more than that and we are not necessarily advocating that." He stressed that a UN force would be an option "only if the parties in the region are unable or unwilling to deal with the problem themselves."

Secretary of State Alexander Haig had appeared to support the idea of a UN peacekeeping force in all of Lebanon when he met French leaders in Paris last week. But all Fischer would say today was that Haig had discussed the proposals with the French officials. He said the U.S. believes there is a role in Lebanon for the UN and the Security Council and was now having discussions at the UN in New York on this matter.

Fischer avoided a question about reports from Jerusalem that Israel was supplying arms to the Christians fighting Syrian forces in central Lebanon. He also declined to comment when asked if the U.S. knows what quantities of weapons the Soviet Union was supplying to the Syrians and the Palestine Liberation Organization in Lebanon. He stressed that U.S. policy in Lebanon is to support and strengthen the legitimate government in Beirut "in every way we can."

With respect to another matter, Fischer said he could not say when the Reagan Administration would officially inform Congress of its proposal to sell Saudi Arabia air-to-air missiles and extra fuel tanks

for its 62 F-15 jet fighters and AWACS aerial surveillance aircraft that the Saudis have requested. "When it's time to make an announcement we will make it," he said. The proposed sales have encountered considerable opposition in Congress.

#### PRESIDENTS CONFERENCE URGES 'INTENSIVE' CAMPAIGN AGAINST PROPOSED ARMS PACKAGE TO SAUDIS

NEW YORK, April 14 (JTA) — The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations has called on its 34 national member agencies to launch an "intensive" campaign directed to the White House, the State Department and Congress against the Reagan Administration's proposed arms package to Saudi Arabia.

Howard Squadron, chairman of the Conference, released the text of a telegram he had sent to members of the Presidents Conference urging them to organize a letter writing and mailgram campaign to the Executive and Legislative branches of the U.S. government and to request local chapters to visit their Senators and Representatives during the current Congressional recess "to express deepest concern" over the arms package which would include AWACS, air missiles and additional fuel tanks for Saudi Arabia's F-15s that would permit them to fly over Israeli air space with offensive weapons.

In his telegram, Squadron urged Presidents Conference members to "stress that America's strategic interests in the Middle East require a commitment from Saudi Arabia to the peace process and to underscore the threat posed by the arms race to the economy and security of our country's friend and ally, Israel."

#### BLUM: ISRAEL FAVORS ANY MOVE TO END MASSACRE OF CHRISTIANS IN LEBANON By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, April 14 (JTA) — Yehuda Blum, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, declared last night that Israel welcomes "any initiative that would bring about the termination of the ongoing massacre of the Christians of Lebanon by the Syrian army of occupation and the terrorist PLO."

Speaking before students and faculty members at Brown University in Providence, R.I., the Israeli envoy said: "We believe that any initiative aimed at the restoration of the effective authority of the Lebanese government throughout that war-torn country, must provide for the removal of all foreign elements from Lebanese soil."

Blum, whose remarks were made available here by the Israel UN Mission, said that the Jewish people, who experienced persecution and discrimination throughout its history, "cannot watch with indifference atrocities committed against persecuted minorities anywhere." He added: "The persecution of the Christians in Lebanon is aggravated by the fact that they seem to have been abandoned by the outside world, including their own co-religionists."

#### MARITIME DISASTER TO BE PROBED By Hugh Ortel

TEL AVIV, April 14 (JTA) — Transport Minister Haim Landau will appoint a national investigating committee to inquire into the sinking of the Zim Lines' bulk carrier Mezada in the Atlantic near Bermuda last March 8 if the

board of inquiry presently conducting the investigation recommends it, Ministry sources said today. Twenty-four officers and seamen died, including the Mezada's master, Capt. Gera Levin, in what was Israel's worst maritime disaster.

The seamen's unions have expressed concern that the board, which began its meetings yesterday, lacks the proper authority to draw conclusions as to why the 19,000-ton vessel foundered. Lawyers for the union noted that the board lacks the power to subpoena witnesses and therefore might leave many questions unanswered.

At today's meeting of the board, officials of the Zim Lines said the Mezada's captain sounded less anxious about the threat to his ship in his messages to Haifa than in his wireless calls to Bermuda. The Mezada, enroute from Ashdod to Baltimore, sank in a severe gale. Zim Lines officials told the board that events moved fast and the company management in Haifa was not aware of how serious conditions were.

#### TWO JEWISH DEPUTIES WIN IN QUEBEC'S ELECTIONS

By Michael Solomon

MONTREAL, April 14 (JTA) — Two Jewish deputies of the opposition Liberal Party were elected to the Quebec National Assembly yesterday despite their party's crushing defeat by the Parti Quebecois headed by Premier Rene Levesque. They are Herbert Marx of the D'Arcy McGee District who piled up a 23,573 vote majority, and Harry Blank of the St. Louis District who won with 8,701 votes.

A third Liberal candidate, Maximilian Pollack, who is half Jewish, won the seat in the St. Anne District. The new Quebec Assembly is composed of 80 deputies from Levesque's party and 42 Liberals.

Commenting on the election results, Jack Kantowitz, political affairs director of the Canadian Jewish Congress, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that "despite the fact that in the past the Parti Quebecois did not have any non-French Canadian members, it was open to the needs and concerns of the Jewish community. We will continue to work together with Quebecois of all backgrounds for the benefit of the Jewish community and Quebec society."

#### TORAH STOLEN FROM SYNAGOGUE

FAR ROCKAWAY, N.Y., April 14 (JTA) — All nine Torahs of the Young Israel of Far Rockaway, estimated to be worth \$90,000, were stolen sometime between Sunday night and yesterday morning, Rabbi Isaac Goodman reported. He said police have been conducting a thoroughgoing investigation of the "unprecedented" thefts.

Goodman said he had proclaimed a fast day on Thursday for the congregation and invited non-congregants, shocked by the thefts, to join in the fast day which, he pointed out, this year is the day of the fast of the first-born.

A spokesperson for the synagogue said that about three weeks ago, a passing motorist noticed a man carrying several Torah scrolls near the synagogue. When the motorist stopped his car and began asking the man where he had obtained the scrolls, the suspect dropped them and fled.

The spokesperson said that several small windows had been broken by the thief to gain entrance to the sanctuary. In his call for fasting, Rabbi Goodman noted that thefts of Torah scrolls "have been on an alarming increase."

## HURWITZ READY TO JOIN DAYAN'S PARTY By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 14 (JTA) — Former Finance Minister Yigal Hurwitz informed members of his Rafi faction last night that he is now prepared to join Telem, the new centrist political party headed by former Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan. Hurwitz, who had previously rejected Dayan's approaches, reversed himself after Dayan agreed to modify a plank in the Telem election platform dealing with Jerusalem which Hurwitz had found objectionable.

The immediate outcome of Hurwitz's announcement may be a split in Rafi, the faction that quit Premier Menachem Begin's Likud coalition when Hurwitz resigned as Finance Minister last year. Rafi members are still not satisfied with the Telem platform and demand, moreover, at least four safe seats on the list the new party will enter in the June 30 Knesset elections. The Telem list has been drawn up and it is unlikely that the original members of the party will forego their safe seats to accommodate Rafi.

Hurwitz had said only a week ago that he could not accept the Telem platform because it acknowledged that the future status of Jerusalem could be on the agenda of peace talks with the Arab states, notably Jordan. Dayan agreed to delete the plank from the platform but included a similar formulation in a footnote.

Hurwitz still objected, whereupon Dayan agreed to amend the plank and footnote to indicate that any reference to Jerusalem in future peace talks would acknowledge only a Jordanian interest in the city's Moslem holy places, not in the city itself.

### Objection To Use Of Party's Name

Meanwhile, an American Zionist leader has objected strenuously to the use of the name Telem by Dayan's new party. Faye Schenk, who heads the World Zionist Organization's organization department, pointed out in a letter to Dayan that Telem, an acronym for "Movement for State Renewal" is also an acronym for "Movement for Zionist Fulfillment", a body established on the U.S. West Coast three years ago composed of Americans pledged to settle in Israel within a specific time. It now has some 2000 members in the U.S. and several hundred in other countries.

Schenk pointed out in her letter that in addition to being unethical, the use of the name of an existing organization by Dayan's political party could create confusion at the next World Zionist Congress where both "Telems" will submit lists of candidates.

### A REFORM AND ORTHODOX RABBI CALL FOR A UNITED BETH DIN

By David Makovsky

NEW YORK, April 14 (JTA) — Leading Orthodox and Reform Judaism spokesmen jointly called for a rabbinical court (Beth Din) to include representatives of all the trends in Judaism.

At a recent dialogue on theology here, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, a leader of modern Orthodoxy and spiritual leader of the Lincoln Square Synagogue, said that the Reform movement was responsible for an "irreparable schism" of Jewish unity because of its laws on divorce. Rabbi Daniel Syme, national educational director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), responded:

"I would like to offer Rabbi Riskin to join together to begin a Beth Din in the New York area

for all branches (of Judaism). Let's have a consensus on divorce, and bring it to our colleagues. We might have a chance to serve as a model for other cities as well."

### Issue Of Halacha

Riskin's main criticism of the Reform movement was that by creating its own divorce and conversion laws, it was disqualifying many Jews on legal grounds from marrying others who abide by halacha (Jewish law). "We are torn asunder by the issue of divorce and conversion," Riskin said. "The one area of whether one Jew can marry another should be left to those whose methods are acceptable to all. The unity of the Jewish people should not be tampered with." Syme responded that he saw the value of halacha but added, "I see tradition having a vote but not a veto."

On another issue, both rabbis concurred that American Jews lacked a knowledge of Judaism. Syme pointed out that the Reform movement is committed to increase Jewish education. "We are doubling the number of Reform day schools (nationally and in Canada) by September." The number would increase from six to 12 schools. Riskin observed that such emphasis on day school education signalled a change on the part of the Reform movement's thinking regarding intense Jewish study.

Riskin, commenting on the need for increased Jewish education, said: "Let us teach every Jew the Jewish heritage to the maximum. Let a Jewish child spend a full Shabat, according to tradition. If somebody rejects it, let it come because he knows about tradition."

The dialogue was held at Columbia University and was attended by more than 300 students. The meeting was sponsored by the North American Jewish Students' Network (NAJS). Richard Horowitz, chairperson of NAJS Network-American Section, who moderated the program, later noted that "a discussion between religious leaders is important to Jewish students, as it allows an exchange of ideas, essential for increased Jewish awareness."

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TEL AVIV (JTA) — An institute for the training of World Zionist Organization emissaries abroad, to be named in memory of the late Louis Pincus, formerly WZO chairman, is to be established at Ness Ziona near Tel Aviv shortly, the current chairman, Leon Dulzin, announced. The institute, on 10 acres of land, will serve as a training institute for educators to be sent from Israel to work with young people through the diaspora.

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TEL AVIV (JTA) — Several Katyusha rockets fired from Jordan exploded in the upper Jordan Valley Tuesday but no casualties or damage was reported and work continued normally in the kibbutzim in the area. It was the second time in two weeks that rockets were fired into Israel from Jordan.

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TEL AVIV (JTA) — The Labor Party is still in the lead but preference for the Likud is growing more rapidly than it is for Labor, according to the latest public opinion poll, published by the Jerusalem Post Tuesday. The Likud would obtain 35 seats in the 120-member Knesset if elections were held now, as against 33 in last month's poll. Labor would get 46 seats, up only one from 45 last month. The number of undecided voters now accounts for 21.3 percent, down from last month's 25.5 percent.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES THE JEWS OF HUNGARY

By Rochelle Sadel-Wolk

(Part Three Of A Four-Part Series)

BUDAPEST, April 14 (JTA) -- "Hungarian Jewry in previous ages never enjoyed such equality before the law, and never had the freedom of religion and conscience that is the case today." Ilona Seifert, Secretary-General of the Central Board for Hungarian Jewry (MIOK), told journalists on a recent United Jewish Appeal-American Jewish Press Association mission. MIOK coordinates most of the Jewish activities and institutions in Hungary.

While Hungarian Jews have the opportunity to live a freer and fuller religious life than any other Jewish community in the Soviet Bloc, this "freedom" is subtly controlled by the government. Seifert is paid by the state for her work in the Jewish community. Her late husband, Dr. Geza Seifert, was both president of MIOK and was highly decorated by the Communist Party.

The president of MIOK is also paid by the state, and his nomination must be approved by the State Office for Church Affairs. The current president, Imre Heber, acknowledged that the community receives partial funding from the state, and "couldn't exist without it." Dr. Mihaly Borsa, head of the Central Committee for Social Assistance (KSB) that administers social welfare programs to the Jewish community, is also paid by the government.

The Chief Rabbi of Hungary, Laszlo Salgo, was elected to Parliament in 1980. He is a government emissary to the community and a community emissary to the government. "The Minister of Religion has a permanent connection with our leaders and knows about our problems," he said.

According to the Deputy Minister of the State Office of Church Affairs, there is a "good understanding between the churches and the socialists.... The relationship between church and state is satisfactory here. Religious people are not persecuted under socialism." This echoed Seifert's statement that "the relationship between our state and our religion is a very good one, and both our state and our religion strive to cultivate the same."

### Anti-Semitism In Hungary

The Deputy Minister also discussed anti-Semitism in Hungary, stating: "Organized anti-Semitism is not here; the government would not allow it." He acknowledged, however, that "it is possible that there are in our country persons who are anti-Semitic. We have education on fascist rule, but some traces of anti-Semitism remain."

One example of the government's "education on fascist rule" is a traveling exhibit entitled "Remember." The exhibit features large blowups of photographs: Nazi roundups of Hungarian Jews, 1940's newspaper headlines, and infamous Nazi leaders. At the entrance, a government explanation states that the Jewish population of Hungary numbered 825,000 in 1941, 570,000 Jews were deported to ghettos and camps, and 25,000 Gypsies were also deported.

With the exception of this introductory panel, the word "Jew" (Zsidonak in Hungarian) never again appears in the government explanations accompanying the photographs. MIOK officials insisted the exhibit was created by the

government as a gesture of good will toward the Jewish community. A more likely explanation is that anti-Semitism is an excellent example of fascism, and thus effective pro-Communist propaganda.

Seifert said of anti-Semitism in Hungary today, that there is none, "thanks to the Hungarian government that fights all symptoms of anti-Semitism, both preventively and repressively. In brief, our Criminal Law regards anti-Semitism as an offense and imposes heavy sanctions of prison. This is not a paper law, but practiced in reality." She added, however, that "people with anti-Semitic feelings live everywhere, surely with us, too. However, they cannot publicly express their feelings."

### Government's Subtle Control

The government's subtle control seemed apparent not only in the quasi-official status of the MIOK leaders, but also in the content of the semi-monthly MIOK newspaper, Uj Elet (New Life). At a meeting with members of the editorial board of the newspaper, which was supposed to be a journalist-to-journalist exchange of ideas, the following information was forthcoming:

The paper has existed for 35 years, publishes 7,000 copies, uses news sources from throughout the world, and has a full-time staff of five. Specific political questions were answered: "It is not surprising that on our editorial staff sit people who consider the policy of the state and (Communist) party good and adequate."

After the meeting, a journalist who writes for Uj Elet privately answered a question about government censorship. "There is no censorship, per se," he said. "Censorship is in the heads of the editorial board. They know what can be printed and what cannot."

News of Israel is not printed if it is in any way "political" or pro-Zionist. In the issue given to mission participants, the only news from Israel concerned the transfer of library materials there from Europe. (In contrast, the daily newspapers follow the Soviet anti-Israel and pro-PLO line.) Several members of the editorial board emphasized that Hungarian citizens can receive all printed matter from the West, and they urged exchanges of newspapers with editors on the mission.

The Jewish religion, as all religions in Hungary, is tolerated by the Communist government. The Jews of Hungary seem to know instinctively that this tolerance will cease if Judaism crosses the thin, almost invisible, line between religion and Zionism. Any suggested or overt affinity with Zionism, other than visits to relatives in Israel, is therefore not expressed.

(Tomorrow: Part Four)

### CEMETERY VANDALIZED IN POLAND

WASHINGTON, April 14 (JTA) -- Rep. Stephen Solarz (D. NY) has sent a letter to the Polish Ambassador to the U.S., Ryszard Frelek, demanding that his government "rectify" a recent incident of anti-Semitic vandalism at the Jewish cemetery in Bialystok. Solarz sent the letter after Rabbi Lowell Kronick, chaplain of the Bialystoker Center in New York, reported that a monument to the victims of the 1906 Czarist-inspired pogrom was removed from its place of honor in the cemetery and taken to the outskirts of the city after being broken up. Solarz asked that a new monument be erected to honor the memory of the pogrom martyrs. He also requested that the appropriate Polish authorities assure the Jewish community that this type of anti-Semitism will not occur again.