

PRISON OFFICIALS PUNISHING VANUNU

By David Landau and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Dec. 25 (JTA) -- Prison authorities are punishing Mordechai Vanunu for flashing a message to reporters indicating that he was kidnapped in Rome last September. Police, meanwhile, are questioning Bernard Josephs, Jerusalem correspondent of the Standard of London who was the first to transmit Vanunu's message abroad, in violation of censorship.

The Foreign Ministry has acknowledged that the Israeli Ambassador in Rome, Mordechai Drory, had been summoned to the Italian Foreign Ministry and asked for clarification of Vanunu's allegation which was published worldwide.

Yossi Beilin, Political Director General of the Foreign Ministry here, said Tuesday that the Israeli envoy told the Italian authorities he had no information and would pass their request to Jerusalem.

Beilin said Israel would "very seriously consider" a request from the Italian government. He told reporters that Vanunu's message should not be "taken too seriously." "Tomorrow he might say he came via Tanganyika," Beilin said.

Vanunu, a former technician at the Dimona nuclear facility, accused of giving Israeli nuclear secrets to a British newspaper, was remanded in custody until the end of this trial by a Jerusalem District Court Sunday.

While being driven to the court, he pressed a palm against the window of the police van. Printed in ink on his skin was the message: "Vanunu M. was hijacked in Rome 30.9.86 2100. Came Rome by BA Fly 504." The latter was taken as a reference to British Airways daily flight from London to Rome.

The date coincided with the first report that Vanunu was missing from London. Israeli authorities refused to acknowledge until last month that he was in fact in Israel. They said he came voluntarily but would not disclose when or how.

Held Virtually Incommunicado

Vanunu has been held virtually incommunicado and had only fleeting contact with the media on his way to and from the district court last Sunday.

For attempting to pass a message he has since been deprived of visits by his family, barred from receiving reading matter in his cell, and his Walkman was taken from him.

A Reporter Is Under Investigation

The Government Press Office announced Wednesday that Josephs, who is also a member of The Jerusalem Post staff, will be denied any privileges in his capacity as correspondent for the Standard, pending conclusion of a police investigation.

GPO source said they would cooperate fully with the censorship board to crack down on foreign newsmen working in Israel. Israeli newspapers were allowed to publish Vanunu's message only after his photographed palm had appeared on front pages and television screens all over the world.

POLICE DENY EMERGENCE OF A NEW JEWISH TERRORIST UNDERGROUND

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 25 (JTA) -- Police denied this week that a new Jewish terrorist underground has emerged, two years after one in the West Bank was exposed and its leaders jailed.

Rafi Peled, Deputy Chief of Police Intelligence, told the Knesset Interior Committee Wednesday that the recent wave of attacks by Jews on Arabs and Arab property was the work of unconnected individuals. He said neither the police nor any other intelligence organization had evidence of a new terrorist network. The recent incidents were "individual and separate acts," Peled said.

Mapam MK Muhammed Wattan has complained to the police that the authorities were not doing enough to end Jewish attacks on Arabs. He warned that if "Jewish provocation against Arabs" continued, he would support demands to dispatch an international force to Jerusalem to defend its Arab citizens.

MINISTERIAL UNIT SEEKS TO SLASH DEFENSE BUDGET BY 180 MILLION SHEKELS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 25 (JTA) -- The Ministerial Economic Committee began deliberations Thursday on the 180 million Shekel (\$122 million) cut in the defense budget, part of the 486 million Shekel (\$328 million) national budget reduction proposed by Finance Minister Moshe Nissim.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin has vigorously opposed the cut and is demanding that 150 million Shekels be restored to the defense budget, which has already been reduced. He is expected to continue the fight while the Committee tries to reach a decision, not expected until the middle of next week.

Meanwhile, Nissim's economic plan continued to be attacked by Histadrut, which has threatened a general strike if the government tries to implement it without changes. Haim Haberfeld, head of Histadrut's trade unions department, charged Thursday that Nissim intends "to totally change the structure of the Israeli economy." He called Nissim the "most dangerous Finance Minister for the country's workers and the Labor Party" since the State was formed.

Haberfeld spoke at a joint meeting of trade unionists, organizations for the handicapped and other groups opposed to the plan. All of the speakers shared his views. Histadrut leaders will convene next week to plan sanctions.

TERRORIST GANG CAPTURED

TEL AVIV, Dec. 25 (JTA) -- Security forces have uncovered and captured a gang of Moslem terrorists operating in the Gaza Strip, the IDF spokesman announced Thursday.

The gang members are reported to have been responsible for the recent stabbing murders of Chaim Azran, 35, and Yisrael Kitaro, 43, two Ashkelon residents, while they were shopping in

Gaza. The gang also wounded another man, Shabtai Shwili.

The IDF spokesman said the gang members belonged to the Islamic Jihad movement, regarded as the most extreme of all the terrorist groups operating in the Gaza area.

JEWISH UNDERGROUND MEMBER GETS 30-MONTH PRISON TERM

TEL AVIV, Dec. 25 (JTA) -- Ira Rappoport was sentenced Tuesday to 30 months in prison and bound over for an additional 18 months by a Jerusalem District Court. The Gush Emunim emissary, who returned to Israel from the U.S. this month to face charges stemming from his membership in a Jewish terrorist underground, told the court, "Prison in Israel is better than life abroad. Living abroad is the real prison."

The American-born Rappoport was convicted of belonging to a terrorist group and participating in the car bomb attack that crippled former Nablus Mayor Bassam Shaka in June 1980. The prosecution had demanded a three-year jail sentence plus a two-year suspended sentence. But the court decided otherwise because Rappoport had returned to Israel voluntarily.

SOLDIER JAILED FOR HASHISH SMUGGLING

TEL AVIV, Dec. 25 (JTA) -- Israel Defense Force Lt. Col. David Leiser was sentenced to seven years in prison and reduced in rank to private by a military court Tuesday for smuggling hashish from Lebanon into Israel. He was dismissed from the army. Leiser had been in command of a border check point. He was found guilty on seven counts of drug smuggling involving the illegal transportation into Israel of about a half ton of dangerous drugs valued at \$158,500.

MK PROPOSES LEGALIZED PROSTITUTION

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 25 (JTA) -- Labor MK Ora Namir appealed Tuesday for the legalization of prostitution in Israel as a means to control the spread of AIDS and other diseases and out of concern for the health and welfare of prostitutes.

Namir, who chairs the Knesset's Labor and Social Welfare Committee, was interviewed on "New Evening," a program sponsored jointly by Educational Television and the Israel Defense Force Radio. She quoted rabbinical authorities on the recognition of prostitution.

Namir indicated her primary concern was over AIDS, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, which affects primarily homosexual and bi-sexual males. She noted it has been determined that the virus can be transmitted by females to males, though women do not suffer from the invariably fatal ailment to the same extent as men.

Recent investigations by Israeli doctors and social workers indicated, however, that the incidence of the virus is higher among women than men and that 30 percent of prostitutes in Israel carry the virus. Most carriers do not come down with the disease.

Namir said she spoke to prostitutes "who, after all, are human beings and deserve protection and rights," and almost all of them favor licensed premises from where they could provide their services in a sheltered, controlled environment. As long as there are men willing to pay for those services, there will be prostitutes, she observed.

Namir recalled that a Cabinet-appointed committee several years ago recommended legalizing prostitution as a mean of controlling it. "But as with many other committee recommendations, the government never had the courage to implement the committee's findings," she said.

SHAMIR ATTENDS XMAS FEST IN BETHLEHEM

JERUSALEM, Dec. 25 (JTA) -- Premier Yitzhak Shamir attended a Christmas celebration in Bethlehem Wednesday night, hosted by Mayor Elias Freij. He was accompanied by Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. Aides to Shamir noted that he was the first Likud Prime Minister to lend his presence to such an occasion. They said his purpose was to stress the possibility of a dialogue with moderate pro-Jordanian Palestinians, such as Freij.

In brief remarks, Shamir called on "men and women of good will" to strive for "the highest goal, which is the quest for peace." Freij, in response, spoke of Palestinian national rights.

The reception, at the Paradise Hotel, preceded Midnight Mass at the Church of the Nativity. The crowds in the church and outside in Manger Square were smaller than in previous years. Tourism circles in Bethlehem attributed the reduced turn-out to the recent violence in the West Bank.

UJA-FEDERATION PANEL TO ASSESS FUNDING FOR PROGRAMS IN ISRAEL OF THE REFORM AND CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENTS

NEW YORK, Dec. 25 (JTA) -- UJA-Federation has formed an ad hoc committee to assess the levels of funding for programs in Israel of both the Reform and Conservative movements.

Morton Kornreich, chairman of the Board of Directors of UJA-Federation, said the committee was formed following a recent meeting between rabbis and lay leaders, sponsored by UJA-Federation. Reform and Conservative leaders have expressed concern that their programs and institutions receive inadequate funding from the Jewish Agency.

Campaign contributions are allocated through the UJA-Federation Overseas Affairs Division to the Jewish Agency. The Jewish Agency gives financial aid to various humanitarian programs in Israel, including immigrant absorption, youth aliya, education, rural settlement, and neighborhood rehabilitation.

Rabbi Saul Teplitz, of Congregation Sons of Israel, in Woodmere, N.Y., and chairman of the Rabbinical Advisory Council of UJA-Federation, will head the six-member committee, it was announced. Members include Rabbi Jerome Davidson, of Congregation Beth El in Great Neck, L.I.; Billie Gold, chairman of the UJA-Federation Jewish Information and Referral Service and vice president of the Board of Jewish Education; Ira Kellman, vice president of the Board of Jewish Education; Rabbi Binyamin Walfish, executive vice president of the Rabbinical Council of America; and Robert Goldman, a captain in the Vanguard Club of UJA-Federation and a member of its board of directors.

An all-day meeting with Jewish Agency and UJA officials and representatives of the three movements is planned for January 12 in New York.

The committee will then fly to Israel in early February on a seven-day fact-finding trip.

Members will hold discussions with Jewish Agency officials as well as leaders of the Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox movements. They will also visit various institutions associated with the three movements.

The committee will report its findings to UJA-Federation leadership. A follow-up meeting will take place between rabbis and presidents of the three movements and UJA leadership.

JCT PROJECT COMBATS WORLD FAMINE

NEW YORK, Dec. 25 (JTA) -- In an international effort to combat world hunger, Prof. Meier Schwarz of the Jerusalem College of Technology (JCT) is in Peru working on a project he developed in Israel which is being funded by the United States, according to JCT president, Prof. Zvi Weinberger.

Schwarz is exploring ways to grow food in the arid regions of the world where both arable land and fresh water are in short supply and crops have never been grown before. The project is officially listed by the State Department as U.S. Agency for International Development Project CS-325, "Growing Commercial Crops Under High Saline Conditions Using Advanced Sand Culture Methods."

The new system developed by JCT of growing crops in sand using brackish or saline water previously thought unusable for growing anything, offers a way to counter the threat of large-scale famine, Weinberger said. That threat is especially real in the Third World nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America where the problem of feeding ever-growing populations grows more acute every day, he observed.

Using A New Technique

The new technique is being used to grow crops of tomatoes, lettuce and cucumbers at the Universidad Nacional Agraria Campus, 14 kilometers east of Lima and the Pacific Ocean where the soil is sandy and where no rain falls at all during the year. The project is under the direction of JCT Prof. Meier Schwarz in conjunction with a Peruvian staff headed by Dr. Salomon Helfgott Lerner.

The technique of growing crops in sand with saline (relatively salty) water grew out of extensive work in hydroponics. Hydroponics is the science of growing plants without soil, in an inert medium such as gravel, and supplying them with a chemical nutrient solution. Moving from hydroponics in the laboratory to growing plants in sand was a logical next step, according to Schwarz.

Growing plants in saline water imposes a strain on them, causing them to grow more slowly and with smaller yields. The main stumbling block has been getting the plant to channel less of its energy into the root system and more into building up photosynthesis tissue and producing the yield product.

JCT researchers have found that by carefully monitoring and controlling the flow of the saline water according to precise formulas during the various growing stages of the plants, this problem can be overcome and the plants made to produce satisfactory yields.

By successfully exploiting the planet's abundant resources of sand and saline waters, new, previously uninhabited areas of the world could become available for settlement, Schwarz noted. Established settlements in such areas would gain

new sources of food and new sources of income from selling their surplus.

EIGHT NEW GRANTS ANNOUNCED BY THE JEWISH FUND FOR JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 25 (JTA) -- The Jewish Fund For Justice -- a two-year-old national Jewish grantmaking institution which funds efforts to combat poverty and social injustice in this country -- has announced the award of eight year-end grants with which the Fund will exceed its 1986 grantmaking goal of \$100,000.

One of the JFJ grants will provide continuing support for an innovative program that assists Navajo Indian farmers in their efforts to employ Israeli desert cultivation techniques; other grants will support community organizations in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Connecticut, Kentucky, Texas, New Mexico and California which are working to change the conditions that keep people poor and powerless.

Under its newly established Fund for Israeli Technical Assistance, JFJ will award \$30,000 to the Seventh Generation Fund for its Navajo-Israeli Intensive Crop Production Project in Arizona's Painted Desert.

The grant will underwrite the salary of Ron Scherzer, an agronomist on leave from the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, who is helping Navajo farmers adapt Israeli drip irrigation methods for use on their own land. The Project, now in its third year, has dramatically increased crop yields and has brought the Navajos new income and increased self-sufficiency, according to JFJ.

Other Grant Recipients

Si Kahn, chairperson of JFJ's Board of Directors, said that other grant recipients include:

- Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD), a church-based community organization which voices the concerns of Baltimore's low-income and minority residents.

- Pennsylvania Public Interest Education Fund (PennPIEF), which provides assistance to economic justice campaigns in the state.

- Naugatuck Valley Project, a coalition of labor, religious and community organizations in Waterbury, Connecticut, which is working to avert economic disinvestment in an area of aging industries and high unemployment by promoting worker ownership and other alternatives to plant closings.

- Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition in Prestonsburg, Kentucky, which supports grassroots organizing in rural Appalachian counties to promote progressive taxation, prudent land use and environmental protection.

- Proyecto Libertad, a legal support project based in Harlingen, Texas, which provides assistance to Central American refugees who are fleeing political violence in their homelands and face detention, mistreatment and the threat of deportation upon their arrival in this country.

- Southwest Organizing Project, a community organization in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which has launched a program to fight toxic contamination of the water supply in the city's low-income neighborhoods.

- Women's Economic Agenda Project (WEAP), an organization in Oakland, California, which promotes public awareness and legislative advocacy to reverse the growing impoverishment of women and their families.

FOCUS ON ISSUES: LEGAL STRUGGLE OVER MENORAHS, CRECHES

By Andrew Muchlin

NEW YORK, Dec. 25 (JTA) — Jewish organizations are more active than ever this holiday season in an intramural legal struggle over the display of Chanukah menorahs on government property.

The Lubavitch movement has placed large menorahs in 50 or 60 such sites this year, including Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Trenton, N.J., and Washington, D.C., according to Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, a Lubavitch spokesman. And the movement has helped municipalities to defend themselves in court with nearly complete success as they cooperate with Lubavitch's 12 or 13-year program of placing menorahs in hundreds of public places.

That effort has been opposed in policy statements and behind-the-scenes negotiations by the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, its local affiliates and the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, as well as in litigation aided by AJCongress and ADL. These organizations also dispute the placement of creches on government property.

At issue is how to interpret the nine-candle candelabra and the nativity scene: Are they religious objects, and if so, does that preclude their display on public land?

Two Relevant Supreme Court Rulings

Two recent Supreme Court rulings seem most relevant. In *Lynch v. Donnelly* (1984), the court held that a nativity scene sponsored by the City of Pawtucket, R.I., and displayed in a private park with model reindeer was permissible because it was a seasonal holiday display, not exclusively a Christmas one.

In *McCreary v. Stone* (1985), a 4-4 decision on the constitutionality of a privately-sponsored creche displayed alone on Scarsdale, NY, public property left unchanged a lower court ruling that allowed the creche.

The *Lynch* ruling was the basis of Federal District Judge Barron McCune's decision December 15 to turn down a request for a preliminary injunction against the display of a menorah and creche in Pittsburgh.

The menorah was built on the grounds of the Pittsburgh City-County Building beside a Christmas tree. The creche was placed inside the Allegheny County Courthouse next to arrangements of poinsettias.

The plaintiffs, a group of Pittsburgh residents represented by the ADL and the American Civil Liberties Union, plan to continue their protest in the federal courts, according to Ruti Teitel of the ADL legal affairs department.

'Establishment Clause' Cited

They point to the "Establishment Clause," which prohibits the government from making "a law regarding the establishment of religion." Because the menorah and creche are religious objects, they argue, to display them on government property implies government sponsorship, and thus violates the First Amendment.

Howard Ross, western Pennsylvania and West Virginia regional director of ADL, contended that just as a nativity scene is relevant only to the celebration of Christmas, the nine-candle menorah, donated by a local Lubavitcher, is a religious

symbol associated only with the celebration of Chanukah.

Not surprisingly, Lubavitch movement spokesman Krinsky presented a different interpretation. He said the "Establishment Clause means ... that the government cannot establish a specific religion and recognize a specific religion as a state religion, but at the same time the freedom of religion does not mean the freedom from religion, which means that everyone can practice their religion freely."

As for the menorah, Krinsky said that it symbolized Chanukah, a holiday with "a universal message of freedom ... It's not indigenous only to Judaism to have the victory of right over might. To say that it is solely religious and has no secular relevance at all is foolish."

Defends The Creche And Menorah

Allegheny County Assistant Solicitor David McTiernan and Pittsburgh Deputy Solicitor George Specter defended the creche and menorah, respectively, with the *Lynch* case. Specter added that Lubavitch representatives "urged us to adopt the position that the overall display is seasonal..."

In Los Angeles, California Superior Court Judge Robert O'Brien rejected a citizen's request December 18 to bar the display of a menorah in the rotunda of City Hall. Moreover, attorney Marc Stern of the American Jewish Congress, which filed an amicus brief in the case, said the judge ruled that the Constitution doesn't require the purging of religious symbols from public spaces.

The AJCongress side had better luck in Des Moines, Iowa. On Monday, Federal District Judge Harold Victor turned down a request for a court order sought by Lubavitch that would have allowed a menorah to be placed on the grounds of the State Capitol. The State Attorney General had issued an informal opinion that the display would be unconstitutional, Stern said.

In Eighth Circuit Federal Court Wednesday, Lubavitch lost an appeal of Victor's decision. Krinsky said Des Moines Lubavitchers are considering alternatives, such as displaying the menorah in other sites or erecting it on State Capitol grounds for several hours each non-Sabbath night of Chanukah, and then dismantling it.

Litigation Draws Criticism

All of this litigation during the Christmas season has drawn criticism from some ideological allies of AJCongress, who worry about fostering societal ill will. Stern said he understood that argument, and that it had been the "prevailing wisdom for years" to avoid the lawsuits during this season.

But he said that after Christmas, the plaintiffs run the risk of having their case called irrelevant. "Next year, who knows what will happen?" he asked. "The only sure time to litigate is when the creche or the menorah is up." And he said litigation is the only way to protest these displays.

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JERUSALEM (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force unit clashed with terrorists in Maidoun village north of the south Lebanon security zone Wednesday morning. A military spokesman said they destroyed buildings and vehicles in the village which has been a base and training camp for terrorist operations in Israel. There were no casualties among the soldiers.