

ISRAEL NAVY NABS 50 TERRORISTS ABOARD SHIP BOUND FROM CYPRUS TO LEBANON
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- The Israeli Navy intercepted a merchant ship bound from Cyprus to Lebanon Friday and seized 50 El Fatah terrorists on board. A senior Naval officer said Sunday that the action clearly averted a series of terrorist attacks and sabotage attempts against Israel.

The 400-ton Maria R., which flew the Honduran flag and is owned in Lebanon, was en route from Larnaca to Khalde in Lebanon. It was halted about 65 miles from the coast because it appeared to be carrying far more people than the normal crew for a ship of that size.

The Egyptian captain offered no resistance and allowed Israeli sailors to board and search his vessel. They questioned the eight-member crew and the "passengers," all of whom were found to be carrying forged passports. The latter acknowledged being members of the Palestine Liberation Organization, several of them officers in El Fatah.

They said they were carrying medical supplies for refugee camps in Lebanon. But no medical material was found in the vessel. The terrorists were transferred to a Navy craft and brought to Israel for further questioning. There was no announcement about the crew, but it is assumed the ship was allowed to proceed.

Foiled A Number Of Sabotage Attempts

"Assuming there are some five members in a terrorist squad, this has foiled a number of sabotage attempts against Israel," the senior Navy officer said. Israeli officials believe that the Navy has forestalled at least 20 sabotage attempts in the last two years by intercepting terrorists at sea.

Israel insisted Sunday that it has not established a blockade of the Lebanese coast. But it is watching the sea lanes between Cyprus and Lebanon. Last month, the Israel Navy stopped two Cypriot car ferries at sea, en route to the Lebanese port of Junieh, on suspicion that terrorists were aboard. None was found but the vessels were ordered to return to Cyprus.

The seizure of 50 terrorists indicated that Cyprus has become an embarkation point for PLO people attempting to reach Lebanon.

3 ISRAELIS WOUNDED, 5 TERRORISTS KILLED IN SOUTH LEBANON SECURITY ZONE
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Three Israeli soldiers were wounded and five terrorists were killed in a clash early Friday morning near Tibnin village in the south Lebanon security zone. The terrorists were attacking a position of the Israel-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA).

One SLA soldier was killed and three were wounded and evacuated to hospitals. Two terrorists were killed in a clash with an Israel Defense Force unit in the same area Thursday afternoon.

According to a military spokesman, Friday's incident occurred at 2 a.m. local time. "Dozens of

terrorists attacked an SLA outpost on the border of the security zone," the spokesman said. "The terrorists were repulsed and in the course of their retreat they encountered an IDF force." Israeli helicopter gunships took part in the operation.

Two of the Israeli soldiers received slight wounds. The third had "moderate" wounds, according to the spokesman. He said a large quantity of sabotage equipment, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, machineguns, demolition bombs, belts and protective jackets were found near the bodies of the terrorists.

Unofficial reports said the terrorists involved include more than 30 members of Hezbollah, the Shiite extremist organization.

There were no Israeli casualties in Thursday's clash. The two terrorists killed were in possession of a Kalachnikov rifle and a battle order, an IDF spokesman said. An SLA soldier was killed Thursday in a clash with terrorists north of Beaufort Castle.

TWO WOMEN EXPECTED TO RECEIVE THEIR CANTORIAL DIPLOMAS FROM THE JTS SAY THE DECISION WAS LONG OVERDUE IN THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT
By Margie Olster

NEW YORK, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Two women expected to be the first to receive the Jewish Theological Seminary of America's diploma of Hazzan (cantor) agreed that the landmark decision was long overdue in the Conservative movement.

Erica Lippitz, 30, and Marla Rosenfeld-Barugel, 31, are scheduled to graduate from JTS in the 1987 commencement. Both will have completed a five-year course in the JTS' Cantor's Institute-Seminary College of Jewish Music.

Traditionally, only men received the diploma of Hazzan in addition to a Bachelor's Degree in Sacred Music after completing the curriculum. But women who completed the identical curriculum only received the degree.

JTS Chancellor Ismar Schorsch announced last Thursday that JTS will begin granting the diploma of Hazzan to women also in the 1987 graduation. The diploma will certify women to lead prayers in Conservative synagogues, although women already function as cantors in some Conservative synagogues.

The decision to certify women cantors followed a landmark break with Conservative tradition in 1983 when JTS decided to ordain women rabbis. Currently 11 women out of 25 students study in the Cantor's Institute.

Glad About The Responsibilities

Lippitz and Barugel discussed the decision during a press conference Thursday. Although the new policy was long awaited, Lippitz said she wouldn't have wanted such important changes to be instituted rashly.

"Women wanted the decision to be in the framework of halacha," Lippitz said. "I'm glad we have certain responsibilities to take on."

Lippitz referred to the halachic reasoning JTS drew on to support the decision to give women more active leadership in the synagogue.

According to this reasoning, a woman can take on all the time-bound obligations which traditionally applied only to men and perform the role of rabbi or cantor.

Both Lippitz and Barugel came to JTS from careers they found did not satisfy all their Jewish or musical interests. Lippitz graduated college with a degree in Music Therapy but said she was "hungry for more Jewish knowledge." She went on to complete a Masters Degree in Jewish Communal Service at Brandeis University. She then worked as the Hillel Director at Loyola University in Chicago before coming to JTS.

"I was compelled to work in music and in the Jewish community," Lippitz said. "This role will enable me to do so many things; to build a community, to work with people. I think it is a tremendous honor and responsibility to deal with people in life-cycle events so critical in their lives."

Lippitz said her family also played an influential role in her decision to become a cantor. One of her grandfathers was a cantor and one grandmother worked in a Jewish women's organization campaigning vigorously for women to be permitted to read the Torah on Shabbat. "I'm following in her footsteps, I guess," Lippitz said.

Barugel, the mother of a five-month old baby, said her route to cantorial school was "long and circuitous."

Need For Women Role Models

Barugel worked as a Spanish teacher and international banker and then began taking courses in music at the Hebrew School of Music. "Music was becoming a dominant force in my life and Judaism had always dominated my life," she said.

"It seems I was always teaching people about Judaism. So I thought I could combine teaching with my Judaism and languages," Barugel said. With that in mind, she enrolled in the School of Jewish Music, not intending to become a cantor initially.

During her studies, Barugel served as a student cantor in a Reform synagogue in South Salem, NY.

Both women also discussed the need for women role models in synagogue leadership, noting that the cantor is one of the most influential figures for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah-aged child.

Schorsch said he hoped women cantors will fill a critical shortage of cantors in North America, saying "Cantors were a dying breed."

Cantors Assembly Pleased

Meanwhile, the Cantors Assembly issued a statement Friday expressing a similar hope to alleviate the cantors' shortage.

"We are pleased that the Jewish Theological Seminary has lifted the cloud of indecision that has hovered over this issue for some time. The Executive Council of the Cantors Assembly will give the matter a fair and thorough hearing in deciding what action we should take in admitting women members," the statement said.

POC RELEASED HALFWAY THROUGH HIS THREE-YEAR TERM IN A LABOR CAMP

NEW YORK, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- A Soviet Jewish Prisoner of Conscience, Roald Zelichonok of Leningrad, has been released early from a labor camp and the Soviet Supreme Court may review the case of another POC, Vladimir Lifschitz.

The freeing of Zelichonok halfway through his three-year term in a labor camp in the Kazakh region was apparently the result of a decree issued by the government last week ordering the release of several dozen political prisoners.

The decree, issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, appears to apply mainly to prisoners serving time under Article 70 of the Russian Republic's criminal code which prohibits "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda." According to some of the prisoners released, the decree named 51 people to be freed. More than 40 have been identified so far. Many of these freed were serving their sentences in the notorious Perm labor camp in the Ural Mountains.

Those released included artists, scientists, clerics, Jews and Ukrainian nationalists. There was no immediate indication of which Jewish POCs, in addition to Zelichonok, were released. Some who were freed said they had to sign agreements not to violate Soviet laws in the future as a condition of their release.

Zelichonok, 50, an electrical engineer, was sentenced in August 1985 for "defamation of the Soviet state and social system." He and his wife Galina first applied to emigrate in 1978.

Lifschitz, 45, a mathematician and economist from Leningrad, was sentenced last month to three years in a labor camp in the closed far eastern region of Kamchatka.

WJCONGRESS PROBING MORAL, LEGAL ISSUES OF RETURNING TRIFA'S BODY FOR BURIAL AT GRASS LAKE

NEW YORK, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- The World Jewish Congress has begun an investigation into the possible role played by the State Department in facilitating the transport of the body of Rumanian Orthodox Archbishop Valerian Trifa from Portugal where he died of a heart attack last month for burial in Grass Lake, Michigan, in a church cemetery on Episcopate property.

Trifa, who was stripped of American citizenship in 1982 for concealing his Nazi past, fled in 1984 to Portugal under the threat of deportation. American courts found he had secured entry into the U.S. in 1950 by hiding his role in anti-Jewish pogroms as a leader of Rumania's fascist Iron Guard movement.

Trifa's body was accompanied to the U.S. by officials of the Rumanian Orthodox Episcopate of the United States in Grass Lake where Trifa was the head of a large congregation.

The WJCongress said it was concerned that Trifa's burial place might become a Shrine on American soil by his remaining followers. In addition, the WJCongress said that allowing the body of a non-American former Nazi to be buried here raises "disturbing moral questions and a serious legal issue."

U.S. AIRCRAFT CARRIER TO REMAIN IN HAIFA FOR A WEEK By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- The U.S. aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy arrived unscheduled at Haifa Friday and will remain there for a week. It is part of a Sixth Fleet combat group assembled in the Eastern Mediterranean during the past two weeks, apparently in connection with the hostage crisis in Lebanon.

The fleet reportedly has been withdrawn from Lebanese waters in order to reduce tension.

which was thought to endanger the lives of the hostages, a number of Americans among them.

The JFK was accompanied by the USS Nitro, an ammunition storage vessel which had been scheduled to visit Haifa. The giant carrier, well over 1,000 feet long and too large to enter the port, is anchored in Haifa Bay. It carries 90 aircraft and several thousand officers and crew.

The JFK was reported late last month to have sailed from Spain for the Eastern Mediterranean in what was seen as a show of force aimed at the rash of hostage-taking in Beirut. Israel Radio reported at the time that a Soviet Navy task force which had just completed maneuvers in the central Mediterranean, was ordered to delay returning to its Black Sea base in order to keep the American warships under surveillance.

Although the JFK was unexpected in Haifa, the port has been preparing for an influx of foreign seamen. Twenty destroyers representing the U.S., British and Italian navies are scheduled to call there during February, six of them American.

BEILIN SAYS NOW IS THE BEST POSSIBLE TIME FOR PEACE INITIATIVES

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Foreign Ministry Political Director-General Yossi Beilin says that now is the best possible time for peace initiatives.

Speaking to the Israel-America Chamber of Commerce here last Thursday evening he said that, "In view of the U.S. Administration's strong backing of Israel, the apparent changes taking place in the Soviet regime, Egypt's stated commitment to peace and Syria's dire financial straits, it is difficult to imagine a more convenient time for policy initiatives than right now."

"While it's very difficult to read the present situation in the Soviet Union, changes are undoubtedly taking place," he explained. "Some say this is only a facade, others say it's a real change, but in any event the situation can be utilized to our advantage."

Beilin said that foreign policy must express "the voice of national values," and noted that cynical, so-called pragmatic foreign policy is harmful to Israel's genuine national interests.

"We cannot be contemptuous of human rights in certain countries," Beilin stated, "while striving to convince the world to join us in the struggle for Soviet Jewry on the basis of human rights. Nor can we condemn the world for ignoring a racist, or anti-Semitic regime, while at the same time we, too, ignore such regimes."

Examples Of Harmful Foreign Policy

Beilin said two examples of "pragmatic" foreign policy which have been counter-productive and harmful to this country's genuine interests were Israel's arms sales to the former Somoza regime in Nicaragua, and its indifferent attitude toward the Iran-Iraq war.

The Director-General said it would be both moral and pragmatic for Israel to encourage an end to the Gulf war, not merely because of the terrible loss of life, but because Iraq is becoming increasingly stronger and more dangerous militarily as it receives new weapons systems and gains battlefield experience.

And while noting it was unclear what kind of dialogue Israel might have entered into with the Sandinistas, Beilin said that, "in retrospect,

moral policies vis-a-vis Nicaragua could have been very pragmatic."

In response to a question on Israel's South Africa policy, Beilin said he concurred with Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's recent statement to the effect that, if Israel is forced to make decisions to ensure continued U.S. aid, "we will opt for American aid."

On the question of an international conference on the Middle East, Beilin said he did not understand the "sudden opposition," noting that the governments of Golda Meir, Rabin and Menachem Begin had supported continuing international mediation attempts.

PANEL URGES CRACKDOWN ON CULTS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- An interministerial committee examining the activities of cults in Israel has submitted a 500-page report to Education Minister Yitzhak Navon urging a tough policy to crack down on the various sects it investigated.

The report maintained that the religious-mystical cults posed a serious threat to Israeli society and said the leaders of the various groups were enriching themselves. The committee chairman, Likud MK Miriam Glazer-Taasa, told an Israel Radio interviewer that membership in the sects was "a form of dependence, bondage, self-enslavement and sometimes the handing over of an individual's property to the leaders who are soul-traders and abuse our laws."

But civil rights lawyer Avigdor Feldman dissented sharply. He charged that the report only "encouraged the persecution of those in our society who do not conform. The area of self-expression is one with which the law should not deal."

The interministerial committee was established in 1982 by then Education Minister Zevulun Hammer of the National Religious Party. It investigated 10 groups, including Scientology, EST, Transcendental Meditation, the Unity Church, the Divine Light Mission, and Hare Krishna. The Unity Church members are known as "Moonies" after their founder, the Korean businessman Rev. Sun Yung Moon.

A statement issued by the Education Ministry after receipt of the report said: "The interdepartmental committee which looked into the issue of new sects operating in Israel warns against the emergence of a deliberate severance between the individual and society in some of the groups, both as a result of physical isolation and psychological and communication methods."

The statement warned that such rifts between individual and society "can significantly affect the individual's judgement, autonomy and ability to make a choice."

The committee decided by majority vote not to include in its investigation groups promoting "return to Judaism" or the activities of ultra-Orthodox Jews who try to persuade secular Jews to adopt a strict Orthodox lifestyle.

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JERUSALEM (JTA) -- An Iranian army deserter arrived in Israel by sea Saturday. He swam the 500 meters from the Jordanian port of Aqaba to the Israeli port of Eilat and asked for asylum.

SPECIAL TO THE JTA **WIESENTHAL'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL** **BOOK TO BE MADE INTO A MOTION PICTURE** By Herbert Luft

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Simon Wiesenthal's autobiographical book "Murderers Among Us" will be made into a motion picture by Home Box Office Pictures and Robert Cooper Productions, it was announced at a press conference at the Simon Wiesenthal Center here.

Filming will begin in various European locations this spring, with HBO cable release in 1988, followed by foreign theatrical release. The actors and the "name director" have not been selected yet.

Oscar-winner Abby Mann, who wrote the screenplay for "War and Love" about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, will collaborate with Emmy-winner Lange Slate on the screenplay about the internationally known hunter of Nazis. Mann told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the movie will be a wholly produced feature film and not rely on documentary footage.

Surrounded at the press conference by relics from the extermination camps and photos of the victims and killings, Michael Fuchs of HBO said his company was honored to make this movie.

"Wiesenthal is one of the most significant men of all time," he said. "In his all too lonely vigil, he has hunted the most heinous war criminals in history, while raising the world's consciousness and conscience."

Comparable To David And Goliath

Veteran producer Robert Cooper compared the account of Wiesenthal's post-war activity with the story of David and Goliath and great modern detective yarns.

Wiesenthal himself explained his work as founding director of the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna, which has led to the arrest of more than 1,000 Nazi criminals, including Adolf Eichmann.

"I didn't stay alive to pursue my normal chores of an architect," he said. "I tried to find the truth and asked for justice. In my years of tracking down Nazis, I have never accused anyone without having absolute proof of his guilt."

He recalled that he "began preparing evidence on Nazi atrocities for the War Crimes Section of the US Army within months after being liberated from the Mauthausen death camp in May of 1945. Being asked about my motives, I replied, 'When history looks back, I want people to know that the Nazis weren't able to kill millions upon millions of innocent civilians and get away with it.'"

A film also called "Murders Among Us" was produced in Germany in the aftermath of World War II. It blamed the Holocaust on the war, equating the deliberate murder of Jewish and non-Jewish civilians with the Allied air raids and bombings of military facilities. Of course, the current film will have the opposite view.

REAGAN NAMES MEYERHOFF TO **SUCCEED WIESEL AS CHAIRMAN OF** **THE U.S. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL COUNCIL** By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- President Reagan has named Harvey Meyerhoff, a Baltimore developer and philanthropist, as chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, which is planning

ing and raising funds for a Holocaust Museum to be built here near the Mall.

Meyerhoff succeeds Elie Wiesel, the novelist and 1986 Nobel Peace Prize winner. Wiesel resigned in December saying that the Council now needs "a chairman with expertise in management, administration, finance and construction."

Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, remains on the 65-member Council of which he was chairman since it was created by Congress in 1979.

Appointed to the Council last fall, Meyerhoff was chairman of the Council's Museum Development Committee. He is a former chairman of the Associated Jewish Charities and Welfare Fund of Baltimore.

In his letter of resignation, Wiesel did not mention the incident in April 1985, when, as he was receiving the Congressional Medal of Achievement from Reagan at a White House ceremony, he appealed directly to Reagan to cancel his visit to the German cemetery at Bitburg where members of the SS were buried.

NO BUTTS ABOUT IT

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Rafa, an ultra-Orthodox organization which promotes "medicine according to halacha" announced a \$50,000 lottery to discourage smoking. According to Rafa head Rabbi Yehoshua Scheinberger, all persons, religious or secular, will be eligible for the prize if they sign a statement that they have not smoked for five years and promise to pay a fine if they are caught smoking. He said the prize money was donated by secular and religious Jews in Los Angeles.

ISRAEL AND CANADA SIGN ACCORD TO **COOPERATE IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Israel and Canada have signed an agreement to cooperate in scientific research, particularly in the field of geology, Yosef Bartov, Director General of the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, announced last week.

The signatories were the heads of the Ministry's geological survey and Canada's geological survey. Scientists from the two countries will conduct joint research projects, advanced study programs, symposia and conferences.

The agreement includes basic research in drilling for oil, study of earthquake risks and other geological phenomena, and geological mapping methods.

HIGH COURT PANEL OVERRULES **CENSORSHIP BOARD'S BAN ON PLAY**

JERUSALEM, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- A three-judge panel of the Supreme Court overruled the censorship board's ban on the play "Ephraim Returns to the Army" last Thursday and gave the producers a green light to stage it.

The censors had found the play to be critical of the army and offensive to large segments of society. But Justice Aharon Barak ruled that regardless of its artistic merits it could not be banned. "Democracy is tested by the freedom of expression by artists," he stated.

Justice Yaacov Malz maintained that banning a play was a "sharp and extreme step which should be used only when there is almost total certainty of strongly offending the public."