

**IDF UNIT INVOLVED IN NEGEV ACCIDENT
MAY HAVE BEEN PLANNING COMMANDO RAID**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 24 (JTA) -- The Israeli army unit involved in a training accident in the Negev three weeks ago was planning a commando attack on a Shi'ite fundamentalist leader in Lebanon, according to a report in the Miami Herald.

If true, the report sheds light on why the military censor here barred publication of several key details of the accident, in which five soldiers died and six others were wounded.

According to the Herald, the accident occurred hours before an elite commando unit of the Israel Defense Force was to make a strike in Beirut on Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, a leader of the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah, which has stepped up attacks against Israel in recent weeks.

The paper said the mission was scrapped after the accidental firing of a missile during what was intended to be a dry run.

In Jerusalem, the Prime Minister's Office refused to confirm or deny the Miami Herald report.

If the report is accurate, it would explain why the military censor initially barred publication of the names of top generals who were present at the training exercise.

It took 10 days to reveal that the IDF chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, and his deputy, Maj. Gen. Amnon Shahak, witnessed the Nov. 5 accident at the Tze'elim training grounds.

And it was only after mounting media pressure that the censor earlier this week allowed publication of the fact that the chief of army intelligence, Maj. Gen. Uri Saguy, was present at the exercise.

One Newspaper Dissents

Israeli journalists wondered why the names of top officers at the ill-fated training exercise were blanked out, in contrast to past practice by the censor.

And when members of the generally well-informed Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee found out that the presence of the top officers had been withheld, they were outraged.

But ironically, the ensuing allegations of an army coverup shifted public focus away from questions over the accident itself to the broader issue of censorship.

The controversy over reporting of the affair underlines the ambivalence of Israeli journalists as they report on defense issues.

Like all other eligible Israelis, reporters serve in the army reserves, and there is not much they are not aware of. Their efforts to inform the public are balanced by a desire to protect national security.

These considerations stand in contrast with the perspective of major overseas media, whose correspondents are assigned to Israel for a year or two before being posted elsewhere. Their insistence on the public's right to know remains unqualified.

The powers of Israel's chief military censor derive from a 1945 law dating to the period of the British Mandate. At the time, it was vigor-

ously opposed by the Jewish Yishuv as an attempt to stifle protests against the anti-Zionist policies of the British.

Later, an understanding was reached with Israeli editors tempering the summary powers of the military censor to close down a newspaper for infractions.

A three-member appeals board rules on appeals against censorship rulings, with the army chief of staff remaining the final court of appeal. The board represents the censor and the editors, with a neutral civilian as the swing vote.

Last week, the country's most respected newspaper announced its withdrawal from the agreement. Ha'aretz said it would look to the Supreme Court rather than the chief of staff as the final court of appeal.

Whether other news organizations follow suit remains to be seen.

But one thing is clear: The Tze'elim incident has had an impact on Israeli national affairs far beyond that of a simple army training accident, of which there have been several in recent months.

How much the issue is in the forefront of the Israeli psyche at the moment was illustrated when Israel Radio announced Tuesday that "the only general whose name is not affected by the censor has arrived: Gen. Winter rushed in last night, with full pomp and circumstance, accompanied by thunder and lighting, ushering in the first major storm of the winter."

**GOVERNOR ATTEMPTS TO CLARIFY
HIS 'CHRISTIAN NATION' REMARK**

By Cynthia Mann
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24 (JTA) -- Mississippi Gov. Kirk Fordice's effort to respond to concerns raised about his claim last week that the United States is a Christian nation has been welcomed by Jewish organizational leaders.

At the same time, they say his attempt to clarify his remarks shows he does not really understand why the Jewish community is concerned.

Fordice issued a clarification last Friday saying he had been defending Christianity under attack and that the "values and beliefs of Judaism should, of course, not be denigrated either."

Fordice realizes that his views were "incorrect politically," said Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League. "But I don't think that, down deep in his heart and soul, he understands. His comments indicate he's got problems with (the community's) response."

Foxman co-authored a letter to Fordice last week in which he called the remarks "appalling" and "unworthy of any governor elected to represent a diverse and pluralistic constituency."

"His latest comments (show) he doesn't get it when it comes to a pluralistic society," said Kenneth Stern, program specialist on anti-Semitism at the American Jewish Committee.

AJCommittee issued a statement last week calling Fordice's statement "religiously bigoted and harmful to the fabric of American pluralism."

"I welcome the conciliatory tone of the governor's public statement," said Mark Pelavin, director of the Washington office of the American

Jewish Congress, which last week called on Republican Party leaders to repudiate the remarks.

But "it is still not clear to me he understands exactly why the term 'Christian nation' is so offensive to American Jews and others," he said. "The term can mean nothing other than second-class citizenship for non-Christians."

"The fact that he did respond indicates the message sent by the community was heard," said Dan Mariaschin, international affairs director for B'nai B'rith International.

Fordice's remarks were made Nov. 17 at the close of a meeting of the Republican Governors Association in Fontana, Wis. He was quoted as telling reporters: "The United States of America is a Christian nation."

He added that this was a "simple fact of life" that did not imply religious intolerance or that a religious dogma was being "forced on anybody else."

"The less we emphasize the Christian religion, the further we fall into the abyss of poor character and chaos in the United States of America," he said.

He then chided Gov. Carroll Campbell Jr. of South Carolina, who tried to soften the remarks by stressing the country's "value base" was of "Judeo-Christian heritage."

"If I wanted to do that, I would have done it," Fordice said.

'Deeply Regret Any Offense'

The remarks triggered protests from Jewish groups, including the AJCongress call on the chairman of the Republican National Committee, Richard Bond, to repudiate the remarks. Bond issued a statement signed by several party leaders that did not mention Fordice but which condemned religious bigotry and intolerance.

Fordice's own clarification last Friday said he had risen in defense of Christianity because Christianity had been under "severe attack."

"I believe that many Mississippians of the Jewish faith, particularly those that I know personally and love, are confident that, had it been Judaism and Jewish citizens that were under attack, I would have also risen in their defense," Fordice said.

"My statement in Wisconsin was meant to convey that an overwhelming majority of Americans say they are Christians, and (that) Christian values and beliefs should not be denigrated."

"The values and beliefs of Judaism should, of course, not be denigrated either; indeed they are the very foundations of Christianity," he said, adding: "I deeply regret any offense that any Mississippians might have taken at my remarks."

Despite the conciliatory nature of this statement, the night before it was released, Fordice appeared on the Cable News Network's "Crossfire" program and told commentator Michael Kinsley that he did not understand why non-Christians might be upset about his comments.

"The media always refer to the Jewish state of Israel. They talk about the Muslim country of Saudi Arabia, of Iran, of Iraq," he said. "America is not a nothing country. It's a Christian country."

Kinsley replied that the United States has a Constitution that says there is no state religion.

Fordice's initial comments had particularly strong reverberations because they came at the close of a conference intended to rehabilitate the party's image of after its recent election setback.

GERMAN JEWISH WRITER CALLS FOR JEWS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST NAZIS

By David Kantor

BONN, Nov. 24 (JTA) -- German Jews have called for demonstrations against Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government, and a leading writer has urged Jews to arm themselves to protect them from neo-Nazi attack.

The leader of the German Jewish community called for protests to press the German government to neutralize right-wing extremists, in the wake of an arson attack Monday night that killed three ethnic Turks in Molln, near Hamburg.

But Ignatz Bubis termed "nonsense" a proposal to carry arms that was advanced by German Jewish novelist Ralph Giordano.

The writer charged, in a widely published open letter to Kohl, that the government had exhibited "inexcusable" weakness in fighting a wave of right-wing extremist violence.

"We have lost our belief and hope that you and your government can offer effective protection against right-wing extremism and its anti-Semitic criminals," he wrote.

Giordano, 69, who survived World War II in hiding in Hamburg, has produced several documentaries for German television on his experiences.

Aides to Kohl, citing the chancellor's statement that the murder of the ethnic Turks was a "shame for our state," reacted angrily to Giordano's charges.

They termed his accusations of government indifference to mounting neo-Nazi violence "an insulting slander" and warned against the danger of individuals taking the law into their own hands.

German radio and television gave wide coverage to Giordano's letter. One station coupled it with interviews Monday night in which Jews said they would seize any opportunity to leave the country.

Parliament Voices 'Shame And Rage'

The Bundestag on Tuesday paid tribute to the three victims, who were legal residents of Germany. In fact, one of the three was born in Germany. The oldest, a 51-year-old woman, had lived in Germany for many years. The children were her 10-year-old granddaughter, born here, and a 14-year-old girl.

The German parliament issued a statement expressing "shame and rage over this grisly peak in a wave of violence."

Last week, Bubis, the Jewish leader, said he would not tell young Jews to remain in Germany.

"Everyone has to make their own decisions," he said. "But as long as we are here, it is our duty to point to the dangers of right-wing extremism and to urge the country to do something about it."

He said he opposed the call to carry arms because the government had both the duty and the capability to protect its Jewish residents.

In New York, the World Jewish Congress voiced support for the call by Bubis to demonstrate against "unspeakable brutality committed by Nazis in Germany today."

WJC President Edgar Bronfman also called on Jewish communities worldwide to meet with German ambassadors to demand action by authorities in that country "against this unacceptable wave of violence and barbarism."

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Igal Avidan in Berlin.)

DUTCH NAZI MUST LEAVE CANADA FOR LYING ABOUT WARTIME PAST

By Gary Pogrow

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Nov. 24 (JTA) -- The first Canadian to lose his citizenship because of war crimes has been ordered to leave Canada because he lied about his past when he entered the country and continued to lie when he applied for Canadian citizenship.

After four years of hearings and appeals, 73-year-old Jacob Luitjens, a retired University of British Columbia botany instructor, was ordered out of Canada because he failed to disclose his past Nazi activities.

He had also failed to say that he had been convicted in the Netherlands in 1948 and sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment for collaboration.

Luitjens was a member of the Landwacht, a local police force established by the Nazis to round up Jews and resistance fighters in Holland.

Immigration Adjudicator Daphne Shaw-Dyck ruled that "the evidence respecting Jacob Luitjens' involvement in the Landwacht were, and his conviction is, more than sufficient to satisfy me that he was a Nazi collaborator and as such inadmissible to Canada."

She emphasized that Luitjens "knew of his conviction, but deliberately failed to disclose it on his application for admission to Canada."

Luitjens still has 72 hours to decide whether to appeal the order. He can either appeal to the federal court or to an immigration review panel.

Shaw-Dyck said she still must decide whether Luitjens will be deported immediately or given notice to leave to a county of his choice.

The Netherlands has asked for Luitjens' return to serve out his life sentence. The Dutch government formally sought Luitjens' extradition in January under a new treaty that went into effect on Dec. 1.

Luitjens' sister, Anna Portma-Luitjens, disclosed in an affidavit that she told her brother 21 years ago, before he applied for Canadian citizenship, that he had been convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for collaborating during the war.

She said she did this in 1950 in Paraguay, telling her brother this had been reported in the newspapers.

Jewish Groups Gratified

Luitjens immigrated to Canada from Paraguay, where he had lived for 13 years.

At the end of the war, Luitjens spent two years in Allied prisons in the Netherlands before escaping to Germany, from which he fled to Paraguay.

In 1961, Luitjens moved to Canada, where he applied for citizenship in 1971.

In 1983, Sol Littman, director of the Canadian office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, tracked down Luitjens in Vancouver.

In 1987, Justice Jules Deschenes released a report of Nazi war criminals living in Canada, among whom Luitjens was listed. In 1991, federal Judge Frank Collier upheld a decision to strip Luitjens of his citizenship.

The Canadian Supreme Court refused to consider an appeal of the judge's decision.

Jewish groups expressed gratification on the ruling.

"We would like to see him out of the country as soon as possible," said Michael Elterman,

spokesman for the Canadian Jewish Congress, Pacific Region.

"We are hoping and we are requesting that the government see this as the opening up of a new avenue for bringing war criminals to justice in Canada," Elterman said.

According to the latest figures released by Ottawa, there are 150 such cases that are actively being investigated.

Luitjens' lawyer, John Campbell, claimed his client is a political scapegoat. "What happened 50 years ago might not necessarily be all that relevant."

Said Campbell, "I am not saying that what he did should necessarily be washed away. He's not proud of it either. He'd be the first to admit that to you."

"He made a mistake when he was 20 years old. He went the wrong way. He wasn't the only one. It's just that he, through a series of circumstances beyond his control, has become a scapegoat."

A Dutch Holocaust survivor demurred. "When you do something like this, you should be punished for it," said Len Schraff.

Placing this decision in a greater perspective, Ian Kagedan, director of government relations for B'nai Brith Canada, said, "Events unfolding in Europe today show that the battle against Nazism is not ended. Our quest to bring Nazi war crime suspects to justice is part of that battle."

AUSTRALIAN ACCUSED OF WAR CRIMES IN UKRAINE TO STAND TRIAL IN JANUARY

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, Nov. 24 (JTA) -- A 68-year-old Adelaide resident, Heinrich Wagner, will face trial early next year on war crimes charges, including the murder of 19 "mixed-blood" children in the Ukraine in 1942.

The decision was reached in Magistrates Court last Friday.

Magistrate Kym Boxall ruled that the accused must answer charges that he was involved in the mass murder of 104 Jews from the Ukrainian village of Izraylovka in 1942, the 1943 killing of a Ukrainian railway worker and the deliberate shooting of the children, who were between the ages of 4 months and 11 years.

Wagner is due to appear in the South Australian Supreme Court on Jan. 11.

Prosecution lawyers were visibly elated at the decision, especially in the wake of a ruling in July that there was no sufficient cause to bring charges against another accused war criminal, Mikolay Berezowsky.

Wagner will be the second, and probably the last, Australian resident to face the court on charges of war crimes. The first accused, Ivan Polyukhovich, is due to appear in court later this month. He has pleaded "not guilty" to charges against him.

Wagner was apparently enabled to make his way to Australia after he changed his name to Woiitjenko and lied in other details when he applied to the International Refugee Organization in post-war Europe. He did not enter a plea.

Responsibility for preparing cases against Nazi war criminals in Australia has been given to the federal police, following the closure last June of the Special Investigations Unit.

Observers do not believe there will be further court hearings on such cases.

HUNGARY'S RULING PARTY CALLS FOR RESIGNATION OF ANTI-SEMITES

By Agnes Bohm

BUDAPEST, Nov. 24 (JTA) -- In a move welcomed by a visiting U.S. congressman, the ruling Hungarian party has called for the resignation of one of its top officials known for anti-Semitic diatribes.

Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) said he is "very pleased" by the sentiment that led the presidium of the center-right Hungarian Democratic Forum to call last week for the resignation of Istvan Csurka, who is vice president of the party.

It is an indication, Lantos said, of an understanding across the Hungarian political spectrum that "there is no longer any difference between domestic and international issues."

Anti-Semitism in Hungary has come under increasing international focus since Csurka published a report blaming national ills on liberals, Jews, Western financiers and the press.

He has also published articles blasting Jews in the newspaper of the ruling party, and has made inflammatory statements in his regularly scheduled Sunday radio program.

The Hungarian-born Lantos, a Jew who was saved by Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, said he is encouraged by changes over the last few months in Hungarian attitudes toward anti-Semitism, which he attributed to concern over the country's world standing and its prospects for attracting international investment.

"It is obvious that the Hungarian political spectrum across the board, with the exception of the far left and the far right, clearly understands that the good name of the country, and its economic future in terms of international investments," depends on the strengthening of democratic influences, Lantos said.

Lantos spoke with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency at the start of a tour which will take him to Slovakia, Romania, Serbian Yugoslavia and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Not Just A Domestic Issue

The California Democrat predicted a "dramatically more energetic" foreign policy by the Clinton administration which, he said, considered it one of its "top priorities" to stabilize conditions in Eastern and Central Europe.

He charged the Bush administration had "abandoned its responsibility" by failing to exercise the strong leadership that could have averted war in Yugoslavia.

"If deterrents worked against the very powerful Soviet Union for 35 years, deterrents surely would have worked against (Serbian leader Slobodan) Milosevic," he said.

He said there was a "mistaken impression" abroad that the Clinton administration would be turning inward to deal with domestic issues.

But the new Democratic leadership understood that "the world does not stop just because the United States has a few domestic problems."

He termed "ludicrous" the claim of some that anti-Semitism is a domestic issue that does not concern the rest of the world.

"If the world had concerned itself with Hitler at a time when Hitler had two dozen supporters in a beer hall, and would have focused global attention seriously on this menace, maybe the Second World War could have been avoided," Lantos said.

He also expressed optimism over growing

recognition in the region that unacceptable practices come with an international cost.

"It is important that people who are engaged in ethnic cleansing in Serbia, human rights violations in Transylvania and the fanning of anti-Semitism in Hungary will have their countries pay a very heavy price."

MURDER OF DOMINICAN MAY SIGNAL ARRIVAL OF XENOPHOBIA IN SPAIN

By Judith Lew

MADRID, Nov. 24 (JTA) -- The recent murder of a Dominican woman in a Madrid suburb has raised concern that the wave of xenophobia rocking Germany and other European countries has arrived in Spain.

On Nov. 13, four hooded men broke into an abandoned discotheque which tens of Dominicans had made into a makeshift home. The attackers shot Lucrecia Perez point-blank, killing her, and also wounded a man.

Although police have juggled with the theory that her murder might be connected with Dominican gangs who smuggle workers to Spain, most people tied the incident to a rising hatred of foreigners, something that seemed to be extrinsic to Spain.

Politicians, including Cabinet members, spoke out immediately after the incident. Activists quickly organized a series of demonstrations of solidarity, which culminated in a 12,000-strong march last Saturday that included representatives from Madrid's Jewish community.

The march was followed by previously scheduled right-wing demonstrations that occur every year around Nov. 20 to honor the memory of Gen. Francisco Franco, the late fascist leader.

On Sunday, some 5,000 followers of the late dictator gathered in front of the Royal Palace to honor Franco, who ruled Spain for 40 years until his death on Nov. 20, 1975.

Over the years, Nazi groups have converged here from all over Europe because Spain has no laws banning Nazi or racist gatherings or symbols.

But CEDEADE, the most prominent neo-Nazi organization, chose to lie low this year. Its leader, Pedro Varela, is now in jail in Austria awaiting trial for his activities there.

And another right-wing group, the Falange Espanola, expelled seven members of the neo-Nazi Free Workers Party from its rally, which paid homage to Franco and Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the Spanish Falangists.

The group said it did not want to be identified with hate groups or violence.

Spain has been considered more tolerant toward foreigners. But it is also true that the number of refugees and foreign workers here is low compared to England, Germany or France.

Among a population of 45 million, there are 400,000 legal foreign residents, of which some 250,000 are citizens of European Community countries. There are also between 90,000 and 170,000 undocumented workers believed to be living here.

In the past year, the Spanish government has tightened its borders. The E.C. has described Spain as a natural entry point for North Africans and Latin Americans, who then make their way to other European countries.

Painter Juan Genoves, who spoke the final words at Saturday's anti-racist rally, pleaded that "the wave of racism that is invading Europe should not take root in Spain."