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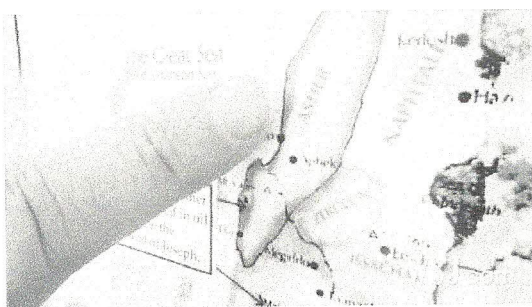
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# For One Man, Israel's Big Gas Find Is Bittersweet Victory

By CHARLES LEVINSON

HERZLIYA, Israel -- Two natural-gas fields in Israel's Mediterranean waters were found in January to contain enough resources to meet Israel's energy needs for 20 years -- a huge find after more than half a century of lackluster carbon exploration here.



Founder of Zion Oil John Brown is a true believer. So much so that he has moved his oil rig to Israel to dig for oil where he says Biblical prophecy tells him to and is hoping to hit it big for himself and his investors.

But for Yossi Langotsky, who for 10 years has been the driving force behind the project, the gusher was a bittersweet victory. He has been drilling holes in the Promised Land for nearly four decades, in a mostly futile search for energy. A month before drilling started on what would become the largest find in Israeli history, his financial backer pulled out. That forced him to relinquish his stake -- today valued at an estimated \$350 million.

"After 60 years of no success in oil exploration here in Israel, a miracle took place, and I lost out 30 days before it happened," says Mr. Langotsky, 75 years old.

The pivotal role played by Mr. Langotsky in the historic discovery is undisputed. The two fields are named for his daughter, Dalit, and granddaughter, Tamar.

The fields, which won't start producing gas until 2014, are relatively modest by Mideast standards. But they have already triggered a frenzy in the country's quiet energy industry.

Since January, Israeli oil companies' stocks have soared, some rising as much as tenfold. In 2009, oil companies have invested between five and 10 times as much in Israel exploration as at any point in the country's history, says Yaakov Mimron, head of Israel's Petroleum Commission.

In recent weeks, two international companies, including Houston-based [Noble Energy Inc.](#), which led the team that made the gas find in January, separately began extensive and costly 3D seismic surveys of more offshore prospects.

