ISRAELIS DISMISS PLO ‘OLIVE BRANCH’ AS VIOLENCE ERUPTS IN GAZA
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- Both Likud and Labor appeared indistinct on different Monday to continuous reports that the Palestine Liberation Organization was about to adopt a more flexible stance toward Israel.

Premier Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres dismissed as mere words Sunday’s declaration by Yasser Arafat’s deputy that the PLO was ready to negotiate with Israel.

Meanwhile, a curfew was imposed on the Gaza Strip as disturbances continued to rock that area and the West Bank.

On Sunday, Salah Khalaf, popularly known as Abu Iyad, was quoted in a French news weekly as saying that a provisional government being planned by the PLO for the West Bank and Gaza would be “wholly different from the actual PLO’s national covenant.”

The covenant calls for Israel’s destruction.

Abu Iyad called for mutual recognition by Israel and any Palestinian state that might be created.

PLO leaders abroad, as well as their backers in the Israeli-administered territories, seem determined to move the Palestinian uprising, now nine months old, into a political course.

Isreali political analysts believe Abu Iyad’s declaration might be an indication that the mainstream PLO, loyal to Arafat, has succeeded, or believes it can succeed, in adopting a common formula with the extremists, by claiming that a basis for negotiations with Israel would be the United Nations partition resolution of 1947.

But Israeli leaders’ immediate reactions were negative.

Playing With Words

The Prime Minister’s Office dismissed the report as “playing with words.” Shamir told Israel TV Monday night that Abu Iyad’s ideas do not bring peace closer, but rather push it away. He said Israel would never deal with the PLO even if it did change its charter.

He also maintained that the idea of a Palestinian government in exile was not accepted by anyone in Israel.

Shamir told Yediot Achronot he did not believe the international community would recognize a Palestinian government in exile, and said Israel was determined to thwart such a development.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Israel could not mold its policy according to “one declaration or another,” and sources at the Foreign Ministry said they would not become Abu Iyad’s interpreters.

PLO leaders have been meeting in Tunis to evaluate their next move, following the decision of Jordan’s King Hussein to sever Jordanian ties and responsibilities to the West Bank.

The PLO is now trying to lay out a blueprint for a provisional government for the territories now administered by Israel.

A meeting of the Palestine National Council is planned for Algeria at the end of this month.

Israelis did not appear open to whatever declaration would come of the meeting.

Foreign Ministry sources asked rhetorically, “What is the point of reacting to that statement or another, if hours after it is being made, a petrol bomb is thrown, wounding children and mothers in a vicious terrorist act?”

In this case, they were referring specifically to a bombing attack on Jewish settlers traveling in a van in Gaza Sunday night, casting a shadow over any political developments. Four children and their two mothers were injured in the attack.

Eight-month-old Nathan Kramer, who suffered wounds over most of his body, is still hospitalized in serious condition in Sheba Hospital at Tel Hashomer.

Continued Manhunt

The others were only slightly burned—Natan’s mother, Semadar, 30, and her other child, daughter Efrat, 11; Sima Altaraz, 30, of Gedera, her son, Itai, 8, and daughter—Michal, 2. The entire Gaza region was placed under curfew, and security forces continued the manhunt for the perpetrators Monday. No one was permitted to enter or leave the Gaza Strip.

In fact, the curfew was imposed after a day of serious disturbances reminiscent of the earliest, most violent days of the intifada.

At least 22 people were wounded by shots from Israel Defense Force troops during disturbances concentrated especially along the northern part of the Strip.

In another incident, a fire bomb was thrown from an orange grove at an Israeli vehicle Sunday night. IDF soldiers proceeded to uproot the grove.

However, Jewish settlers from the local Katif region insisted on harsher punitive measures, demanding that local military commanders cut security zones of five meters (about five-and-a-half yards) width on both sides of all main roads in the Gaza Strip.

Tension also continued Monday in Judea and Samaria, although disturbances were much less than in Gaza. One person was killed during riots early Monday at the Tulkarm refugee camp.

A curfew was imposed on the camp following the event. Curfews were also in effect in the towns of Kabatiya and Kalkilya as well as the refugee camps of Dehaishe and Jenin.

Justified Measures

The disturbances in the territories took place on the same day in which Rabin told the Cabinet that the harsh measures adopted by the security forces brought down the number of petrol bomb attacks.

Rabin repeated Monday his conviction that the harsh measures were justified and proved successful, despite the “unfortunate” attack.

Rabin toured the site of that attack during a general tour of the Strip Monday, meeting with settlers from the Katif settlement bloc and trying to cool tempers.

Rabin saw no connection between the disturbances and recent statements by PLO leaders.

“I do not believe that events here take place according to certain political developments.” He expressed his belief that developments in the territories are being determined by local elements, and less by outside influence.
MAX FISHER TELLS JEWS TO JOIN REPUBLICAN PARTY
By David Friedman

NEW ORLEANS, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- Max Fisher, the dean of Jewish Republicans, made a personal appeal to American Jews from the podium of the Republican National Convention Monday to end their traditional support for Democratic presidential candidates.

"To my fellow American Jews, come join with me, and with this great (Republican) political party which shares your values, and which has labored steadily to earn your trust," Fisher said.

"The Republican Party's interests are your interests, its goals are your goals."

Fisher, honorary chairman of the National Jewish Republican Coalition, was one of several representatives of ethnic groups who addressed the opening session of "Wreck Convention." They were there to urge the members of their communities to vote for Vice President George Bush for president this November.

Fisher said that during his 40 years as an active Republican, he has watched the GOP become "an inclusive party" and "reach out to American Jews in many ways"

"At the same time, I have seen the Democratic Party -- the party of so many of our immigrant forbears -- move away from the needs and concerns of American Jews," the Detroit industrialist and philanthropist declared.

He attacked the platform adopted by the Democrats in Atlanta last month for not denouncing anti-Semitism or the U.N. resolution equating Zionism with racism, and for not supporting Soviet Jewry or rejecting a Palestinian state.

The Republican Party will not support an independent Palestinian state because it is wrong, Fisher said. "Wrong not only for Israel, but also wrong for America."

He said the Reagan administration had supported Israel because of "shared strategic interests. For Republicans, commitment to Israel is not a numbers game, it is a pillar of American foreign policy."

AUTO EXEC NO LONGER WITH COMPANY AFTER ALLEGATIONS OF ANTI-SEMITISM
By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- The eastern regional manager of Hyundai Motor America, accused in separate lawsuits of making anti-Semitic remarks and discriminating against a Jewish auto dealer, "is no longer with the company," according to a spokesman for the Korean-based auto maker.

The spokesman declined further comment about Edward Gormley, who held the regional office in Cranbury, N.J., because of the pending litigation.

In a federal suit filed in U.S. District Court in Queens, N.Y., Tom Nemet, who operates an import car dealership in Jamaica, N.Y., charged that he was denied a Hyundai franchise because he was Jewish.

The charges were based on a deposition by Susan Tetley, a Hyundai employee whose own lawsuit, filed in New Jersey State Superior Court, alleges Gormley made anti-Semitic comments and tried to limit the number of Jews receiving Hyundai dealerships.

Hyundai denied the charges, saying that 20 percent of its eastern region dealers are Jewish, and said Nemet was denied his request for a dealership because of "sound business principles."

A spokesman for the company acknowledged, however, that Gormley had received a letter of reprimand in September 1987 for anti-Semitic remarks directed toward Tetley.

Gormley has also denied the charges, telling the Newark (N.J.) Star Ledger, "This whole thing is a farce."

Letters written in support of Gormley have appeared in the Automotive News, an industry publication. According to one Jewish dealer, Paul Singer of Paragon Hyundai in Long Island City, N.Y., "Religion has never entered in any issue. Gormley has always been a fair person and a man of his word."

In a telephone interview, Singer said he and a number of other Jewish dealers will take out an advertisement in the Automotive News "expressing our dissatisfaction with these allegations against the company."

According to Tetley's deposition, however, Singer had written the company in late 1985, objecting that a dealership awarded to Nemet "would be too close to his own."

Singer denied he wrote such a letter. "My philosophy is not to tell factories where to put dealerships," he said.

PEACE ACTIVIST ABIE NATHAN REPORTEDLY MET WITH PLO
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- Sources in Jerusalem were quoted Monday in Haaretz as saying that peace activist Abie Nathan met in Tunis with Abu Mazem, one of the advisers to Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasar Arafat.

Nathan's alleged flight to Tunis, now headquartered in the PLO, was discussed briefly at Sunday's daily meeting of top Foreign Ministry staff, but the Ministry refrained from issuing any kind of official statement.

An Israeli law provides up to three years' imprisonment for "an Israeli citizen or resident who knowingly, and without authorization, has contact in Israel or abroad with a person who fills a function in the executive council or other similar body in a terrorist organization, or who serves as an official representative of a terrorist organization."

Nathan declined to deny or confirm that he had indeed visited Tunisia. He has denied reports that he met with Arafat.

In June, four Israelis were convicted for having met with PLO representatives in Rome in November 1986.

Sources in Jerusalem believe that the attorney general will have no choice but to recommend a police investigation, in light of that precedent.

Davar reported that Teshiyah party member Avi Farhan has already submitted a complaint to the police against Nathan.

Israeli radio correspondent Shimon Shiffer reported from Washington yesterday that Nathan had actually met with Arafat.

Shiffer reported that Nathan left the office of a high-ranking official in Washington, although it is not clear how he deduced from this that Nathan had met with Arafat.

Nathan is owner of a boat called "Peace Ship," which broadcasts music and peace slogans.
CRAXI ATTACKS SHAMIR'S POLICIES, URGES LABOR TO FIGHT 'FANATICISM'
By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- Socialist Party leader Bettino Craxi has launched a sharp attack against Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

The former two-time Italian premier accused Shamir of shortsightedness, extremism and fanaticism for his tough stand against the Palestinians in the Israeli-administered territories.

In a statement published Friday in the Italian press, Craxi, long known as a friend of the Palestinian cause, also noted that Israel had a right to be recognized and to live in peace. He urged Israel's Labor Party to be more active in opposing Shamir's policies.

"The policy of the iron fist cannot be the policy of the Israeli people," said Craxi, referring to strong rhetoric spoken by Shamir last week as rumors flew of a Palestinian plan for declaring an independent state.

Shamir told a special session of the Knesset that international calls for Palestinian self-determination were "hypocritical, phony and meaningless."

He warned that those sections of the Camp David Accords preventing Israel from annexing the West Bank or Gaza Strip "cannot last forever."

According to Craxi, "The prime minister speaks a language that should be considered unacceptable by the international community. It is not the language of peace, of reasonable solutions, of negotiations, of the respect for the rights of all people."

"Using, as he himself has said, the iron fist, presents only the face of the oppressor and points to only one direction for the future: that of force as a solution."

"Declaring as Israeli the Arab territories, inhabited by Arab populations, amounts to de facto annexation which, if it were sanctioned, would have disastrous consequences. This clearly and fully is the policy of extremism."

Craxi said that he hoped that Israeli Laborites would distance themselves from Shamir's policies, which he called "short-sighted and dangerous."

Earlier this week, Craxi vowed support for the establishment of a Palestine Liberation Organization-led government on a provisional basis as a step toward formation of a joint Palestinian-Israeli confederation.

In an interview with the Tunisian news agency TAP, Craxi said King Hussein's decision to break Jordan's administrative ties with the West Bank meant that the Middle East peace process is "moving again."

AJC CONGRESS ASKS JUSTICE DEPT. TO INVESTIGATE SAUDI GIFT

NEW YORK, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- The American Jewish Congress has asked the Department of Justice to investigate a report about an Arab-American lobbying group that may have broken the law by agreeing to accept a $1 million gift from Saudi Arabia, although the group has failed to register as an agent of a foreign government.

In a letter to the chief of the foreign agents registration division of the Justice Department, Will Maslow, general counsel of AJCongress, cited a published report of a meeting in Saudi Arabia held last April between a delegation from the National Association of Arab Americans and King Fahd, who allegedly promised the group $1 million.

Maslow said that as a matter of law, if the group received the gift and is using the money to further the interests of Saudi Arabia, it must register with the Department of Justice and report its activities in the future.

When the association's delegation returned from the Middle East, it embarked on a campaign to overcome Congressional objections to the sale of AWACS ground-support equipment to the Saudis. The association has chosen a professional lobbyist, George Moses, as its new president.

A spokesman for the Arab Association in Washington said it was up to Moses to authorize any organizational statement on the issue, but that Moses is in New Orleans for the Republican convention and could not be reached for comment.

But the spokesman added that "it's all news to us."

In his letter to Joe Clarkson, chief of the foreign agents registration division of the Justice Department, Maslow noted that an article in the May 16 issue of Mideast Markets, a newsletter published by the London-based Financial Times, reported that the Arab association's board of directors had been informed of King Fahd's promise of $1 million.

The association was founded in 1972 and claims to be the principal political voice of Arab-Americans in the U.S. It registered as a domestic lobbying group in 1978 and reportedly has a membership of 4,000 as well as some 40,000 "supporters."

Its annual budget is estimated to be $500,000, derived mainly from Arab advertisements in its publication, Middle East Business Survey, which is distributed in this country and throughout the Arab world.

PLO REPRESENTATIVE MEETS WITH VATICAN OFFICIALS
By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- Senior Vatican officials met here last Thursday with a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Nemer Hammad, to discuss recent Middle East developments, including Jordanian King Hussein's decision to sever its ties with the West Bank.

A vatican spokesman said the half-hour meeting was a "working session."

He quoted Pope John Paul II, who said earlier this year, "The Holy See supports the right of the Jewish people to have their own homeland, but at the same time supports the same right for another people, the Palestinian Arabs, to have theirs."

After the meeting, Hammad said that he "furnished all the information and political evaluations concerning the new situation that has been created. According to us, Israel cannot pretend to resolve the question of the Palestinian people with King Hussein of Jordan."

Furthermore, the PLO official added, "At this point, time has to be given to the Vatican to bring to maturity its own evaluation."

"The PLO has always had contacts with the Vatican, because of the special character of the Palestinian and the Palestine question. That is, of the Holy Land."

The newspaper Corriere della Sera said the meeting between Hammad and Vatican officials "is destined to irritate Israel and the Italian Jewish community."
feels Labor's opposition to annexation would prevent it from getting the broad national consensus it requires to be implemented.

Sharon, the minister of commerce, presented his proposals earlier Tuesday at a press conference in Jerusalem.

Using a map of the Allon Plan -- Labor's longstanding territorial compromise scheme for Judea and Samaria -- Sharon said that the areas incorporated under the Allon Plan, along with other areas "required for security," should be annexed forthwith as a response to King Hussein's decision to sever Jordan's ties with the territories.

According to knowledgeable sources, Sharon appeared to be pushing the annexation of close to half of the West Bank.

Sharon, who uses the term "apply Israeli law" rather than "annex" when referring to his plan, insisted that he was not in effect proposing the abandonment of the Camp David Accords, nor provisions for Palestinian autonomy contained in the accords.

Regardless of Camp David, he said, autonomy would not apply in the entire area.

"For instance, could we weaken our position in the area overlooking our only international airport?" he asked rhetorically, referring to areas of the West Bank that straddle the pre-1967 border near Lod.

Sharon urged national unity on this issue.

"Let us transcend party politics," he declared.

The commerce minister dismissed reports that his proposals have caused discord within the Likud, since both Shamir and the party's official platform remain faithful to Camp David.

Sharon said that at Shamir's advice, he discussed his proposals with Labor leaders, but without success.

Key Labor figures told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that Sharon's plan, if implemented, would inevitably cause an instant break in relations with Egypt, since the plan was tantamount to a massive breach of Camp David and hence of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.

They said the United States would doubtless react with grave hostility to any Israeli move along the lines suggested by Sharon.

Commanding officer Maj. Gen. Avihu Biznun immediately set up a commission of inquiry of seven experts to investigate the accident.

This is believed to be the first accident involving one of the 50 U.S.-built F-15 fighter aircraft in service in the Israeli air force.

ARMY CRACKDOWN ON GAZA EXTENDS TO SECOND DAY
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 16 (JTA) -- A general curfew in the Gaza Strip continued Tuesday for the second consecutive day, as the Israel Defense Force tried to grab the initiative in the Palestinian uprising with an aggressive new security policy.

The policy is intended to discourage ongoing strikes and rioting, to crack down on the popular committees organizing the "intifada," and to prevent nationalist Palestinian circles from filling in the vacuum that was created by Jordan's decision to sever administrative links to the territories.

Despite the curfew, limited riots continued in the territories, and spread to the Ketzriot detention camp in the Negev.

Two prisoners were killed and one slightly wounded from shots fired by IDF soldiers during rioting by hundreds of detainees in the desert camp.

The army closed off the Gaza Strip entirely. No newsmen were allowed in, and reports on the area were based almost entirely on Arab sources.

Army sources did not confirm reports of large numbers of wounded in the Gaza Strip.

A laconic communiqué said that, by and large, the curfew was observed, and that the few attempts to break it were suppressed.

But Arab sources reported that dozens of wounded were admitted to Shifa Hospital in Gaza, reportedly beaten by IDF soldiers for breaking the curfew.

One 63-year-old resident of the Shati refugee camp was brought to the hospital already dead.

Arabs claimed he was suffocated by tear gas, but military sources said they could not confirm the claim. An autopsy was ordered.

By Tuesday night there was no indication how successful the security forces have been in restoring order to the Gaza Strip, nor how long the general curfew would continue.

Meanwhile, an army spokesman announced Tuesday that the security forces recently infiltrated a number of terrorist cells in the Hebron and Bethlehem regions.

One of the cells was allegedly responsible for a number of petrol bomb attacks and arson directed against automobiles.

Others are suspected of murdering an Arab policeman in the town of Beit Jala, throwing grenades in Hebron and placing explosives in several places in Israel, including Jerusalem's Gilo neighborhood.

The army also announced Tuesday that a division commander, suspected of killing an Arab during a riot four months ago contrary to regulations, has been removed from his command.

The officer, a colonel, will face a disciplinary hearing before the deputy chief of staff.

According to Israel Television, the officer was charged with chasing and shooting a resident of the village of Bani Naim near Hebron, following a local demonstration.

TWO ISRAELI PILOTS DIE IN CRASH OVER DESERT
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 16 (JTA) -- Two veteran Israeli air force pilots were killed over the Judean Desert-Dead Sea area Monday, when their F-15 fighter jets collided on a routine training exercise, according to a spokesman for the Israel Defense Force.

Lt. Col. Ram Koller, 36, of Tel Aviv and Major Ehud Polk, 33, of Kibbutz Merhavya, were buried Tuesday in their hometown cemeteries.

The mid-air accident occurred when the planes were flying wing to wing at very close quarters and the two wing tips struck each other. Eyewitnesses said the aircraft plummeted to the ground in a large fireball.

One of the pilots was said to have died instantly in the collision, while the other managed to eject his parachute seat but was badly wounded and died on the way to the hospital aboard a helicopter.

Three Bedouin women were slightly injured when the main wreckage impacted a short distance from their encampment.
UNSINKABLE SOVIET JEWS
SET SAIL FOR FREEDOM
By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- Alexander and Luba Berman of Moscow last week became the first Soviet Jewish couple to leave their country for Israel on a yacht.

Luba, 33, and Alexander, known as "Sasha," 51, are presently in Stockholm, trying to raise more money for a continuation of their sea-borne aliyah.

In a telephone interview from Stockholm Sunday night, the Bermans told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that they sailed from Riga in Estonia and arrived at the small village of Fårösund on Gotland, a Swedish island south-west of the mainland.

Arriving without a flag or Swedish visa, the couple were briefly detained at a local police station while awaiting the arrival of an interpreter.

The Israeli Embassy issued the couple temporary travel documents.

Still, the Bermans are some $2,200 short of the $2,500 they need to continue their voyage. They have found shelter in the central Stockholm home of their interpreter, a former Soviet Jew named Eugenia Purite, and are now busy trying to raise funds.

They completely refuse to consider the possibility of failure. "We will get the money," said Sasha. "It is not a question of if, but how we will come to Israel on our yacht."

Sasha Berman, a scientist, and Luba Berman, a musician, received emigration visas on April 18, and immediately started preparing for their voyage.

According to the couple, many Jewish families would like to leave the Soviet Union by boat, but "due to the enormous difficulties involved in preparing the boat for the sea voyage, they can't make it."

The two readied themselves for the cruise by eating as little as possible during the months prior to their departure. According to Sasha, who studies the biology of the arctic tundra, they expect few problems in adjusting to the Israeli climate. "The arid climate of the Russian tundra is quite similar to that of the Negev."

The Bermans plan to leave Stockholm on Aug. 26 or 27. Their course will take them down towards the Danish island of Bornholm, through the English Channel, around the Iberian peninsula through the Straits of Gibraltar, and then through the Mediterranean Sea towards Israel.

AUSSIE CHUTZPAH OPENS DOOR FOR MUSICAL GROUP TO TOUR USSR

MELBOURNE, Australia, Aug. 15 (JTA)- Australian Jews have used traditional Jewish chutzpah to break a long-standing Soviet wall, and are now embarking on an ambitious project which they hope will breathe new life into the Soviet Union's languishing Jewish population.

Soviet-sanctioned auditions were held in Melbourne last week for Australian Jewish singers who are expected to tour the Soviet Union in November under the auspices of the Soviet Ministry of Culture.

The choir will sing traditional hasidic as well as modern Hebrew songs. They will be the first foreign Jews to perform in the Soviet Union in many years.

The story began about three months ago, when Izi Leibler, president of the executive council of Australian Jewry, received a letter from the artistic director of the Moscow Jewish musical theatre, Mikhail Gluz, asking the Jewish community to welcome his troupe during its first visit to Australia.

"I wrote back to him and told him it was obscene to imagine the Jewish community here, which has campaigned strongly for Soviet Jewish rights for three decades, would welcome this group while the Soviet Union still denies its Jews the rights to emigrate and denies them freedom of religion and culture," Leibler said.

"I said they would only be welcome here when Australian Jews are allowed to return the favor."

"I never imagined at that time the Soviet authorities would really take me up on it."

Series Of Concerts

But they did, and Leibler, together with leading members of the Australian Jewish community, found themselves on the inside of a Melbourne theatre last week watching a Soviet cultural performance, instead of Outside with placards and banners.

The Jewish community here is flabbergasted, but has given Leibler the go-ahead for negotiations for a series of concerts in Moscow and possibly other Soviet cities.

The Soviet Embassy's deputy head, Valery Zemskov, has agreed to address Australian Jewry's leaders at a meeting in Melbourne next month.

"I have made it clear in all my discussions with the Soviets that we will not stop our campaign for Soviet Jews until all Jews who so desire are permitted to go to Israel or elsewhere," Leibler said.

"But we are prepared to adopt a two-track policy of exploring official contacts at the same time, especially if such contacts enable us to build bridges with Soviet Jews and provide them with Jewish culture and religious input."

"We hope that through the official contacts, we will be able to do a little to raise Jewish consciousness in the Soviet Union through the vehicle of Jewish music," Leibler said.

SYRIAN AND ISRAELI DELEGATE EXCHANGE WORDS AT U.N. HEARING

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- The Syrian delegate at the United Nations headquarters here sharply attacked Israeli Monday, accusing it of racism and comparing Israel and Zionism to the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Addressing the U.N. subcommission on human rights, which is meeting here to debate the issue of racial discrimination, the Syrian delegate, Sami Glaisel, claimed that criteria of color, race and religion were the pillars on which both Israel and South Africa were established.

"These regimes are odious and constitute a crime against humanity," he declared. He said that while apartheid is aimed at the slavery of blacks, Zionism is aimed at the dispersion of non-Jews and the usurpation of their land.

When the Israeli delegate, Rafael Walden, rejected the Syrian charges and declared that Israel and Zionism are not racist and cannot be linked to South Africa, the Syrian diplomat replied that the United Nations already adopted a resolution equating Zionism with racism in 1975.