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**CABINET ENDORSES FINDING THAT ARABS
WERE TO BLAME FOR TEMPLE MOUNT RIOTS**
By David Landau and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 28 (JTA) -- Israel's Cabinet on Sunday unanimously endorsed the report of a three-member investigatory panel that placed most of the blame for the Oct. 8 Temple Mount riots on an Arab mob it said was incited by Moslem clergy.

The report singled out for sharp criticism some top-ranking police brass, whom it faulted for failing to foresee trouble on the occasion and for not deploying their forces accordingly.

But while it referred briefly to "uncontrolled" or "indiscriminate" firing by the police, it essentially justified the use of live ammunition in the melee, which left up to 20 Palestinians dead and 150 wounded.

The exact number of fatalities remained uncertain three weeks after the riots. Police put the count at 19 or 20 fatalities, while a Palestinian human rights group that originally counted 21 dead revised its figure to 17 last week.

Whatever the number, the Cabinet was split over whether any of the police commanders should be relieved of their duties or otherwise disciplined for mishandling the situation.

But no action has been taken against anyone yet, and chances seemed to be fading Sunday night that anyone would receive more than the public reprimand contained in the panel's report.

Police Minister Ronni Milo, who must eventually make the decision, told the Cabinet he would seek further consultations before acting.

Milo and possibly Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir are, expected to meet separately with the three ranking police officers directly criticized by the commission.

They are national Police Inspector General Ya'acov Terner; the southern regional police commander, Rahamim Comfort; and Arye Bibi, the Jerusalem district commander of police.

None has spoken to the news media since the commission's report was issued Friday.

Cabinet Backs Police

Whatever shortcomings the panel might have found on their part, the three ranking officers and the police in general would seem to have powerful support in the Cabinet.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon told a radio interviewer that, as far as he was concerned, no "personal conclusions" needed to be drawn from the commission's report. He concurred entirely with its main finding that the Moslems on the Temple Mount instigated the violence.

Transport Minister Moshe Katsav said that, in his opinion, no heads need roll, even though the panel found serious technical errors on the part of the police.

Health Minister Ehud Olmert was the most vocal among the ministers in insisting that personal blame should be assessed. He said the tragedy could have been avoided if the police had been properly prepared.

But Defense Minister Moshe Arens argued that now is not the proper time to draw "personal conclusions."

Sharon agreed with him, as did Finance

Minister Yitzhak Moda'i, Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan and Avner Shaki, the minister of religious affairs.

While Shamir offered no opinion, the prime minister is said to oppose any measures against the police.

Policemen's wives demonstrated outside the Prime Minister's Office in support of the police while the Cabinet was in session.

They demanded that nobody be fired or disciplined and that the rules be changed to allow police to shoot to kill in life-threatening situations, instead of first firing a warning shot and then aiming at the legs of their adversaries.

They blamed that procedure for the death of Shalom Charlie Shloush, a 26-year-old police trainee who was one of three Israelis stabbed to death by a Palestinian laborer in Jerusalem's Baka neighborhood on Oct. 21.

Political observers said Sunday that whatever pressure there might have been to dismiss or take disciplinary action against some top police officers has eased, because world opinion seems largely to reject the conclusions of the Israeli investigation.

According to these observers, government circles thought a report that cracked down on the police and recommended dismissals would blunt the U.N. Security Council's anger at Israel for rejecting its two resolutions urging the Jerusalem government to cooperate with a U.N. investigation of the Oct. 8 events.

But since the report did not urge such action, there would be little gain to a crackdown, the observers said.

Praise From U.S. Jewish Groups

The commission, appointed by Shamir on Oct. 10, was headed by reserve Gen. Zvi Zamir, a former chief of Mossad, Israel's top secret intelligence agency.

Its other members were Haim Kubersky, a former director general of the Interior Ministry, and Ya'acov Ne'eman, former director general of the Finance Ministry. They did not have the power to subpoena witnesses, nor were their recommendations to be binding.

Judged by its content, their report seemed to rely heavily on the testimony of members of the security forces.

The panel apparently attached little importance to the testimony of the few Arab who appeared before it, including Palestinian nationalist leader Faisal Husseini and Sheikh Mohammad Sa'id el-Jamal, the deputy mufti of Jerusalem. Both were jailed immediately after the riots and released last week with no charges brought against them.

The commission said that many of those on the Temple Mount at the time of the riots refused to testify, including members of the Moslem Supreme Council.

In New York, American Jewish organizational leaders praised the report and said it attested to the strength of Israel's democracy.

Typical was the statement released Friday by Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, an umbrella body that represents 46 national Jewish organizations in the United States.

"The report of the Zamir commission reaf-

firms once again Israel's distinction as a strong, vibrant democracy that does not shrink from self-examination and self criticism. The honesty and candor of the report give the lie to Israel's critics and enemies," Reich said.

"In particular, the report reflects shame on the United Nations Security Council, which rushed to judgment without taking into accounts the basic facts -- that an unprovoked, vicious attack against peaceful Jewish worshipers at the Western Wall, launched by Palestinian supporters of Iraq and the PLO, and incited by fanatical Moslem fundamentalists calling for 'jihad,' or holy war, caused a melee that led, tragically, to deaths and injuries," said Reich.

Live Fire Justified But 'Uncontrolled'

A statement by Arden Shenker, chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, lauded "the timeliness and credibility of the report issued today by the Zamir commission."

"The thorough and serious manner in which the Zamir commission fulfilled its mandate underscores, once again, the vitality of Israeli democracy," Shenker said.

Among the panel's main findings were that:

- * The religious leaders who incited the Moslem worshipers on the Temple Mount are principally to blame for the tragedy.

- * The police commanders failed in not deploying a large force, which would have deterred the rioters.

- * The General Security Service (Shin Bet) did not give police advance intelligence warning of the explosiveness of the situation.

- * The use of live ammunition by police who stormed the Temple Mount was justified, but there was "uncontrolled use of live fire."

While much of the report was devoted to the failure of police intelligence and therefore inadequate preparedness, relatively little attention was given to the painful question of whether live bullets had been necessary.

The only section dealing with that subject states that in order to rescue soldiers trapped in the police station on the Temple Mount, the "use of fire -- rubber bullets, tear gas and then live ammunition -- in the face of the stone-throwers was unavoidable."

But in other sectors, "only those policemen who were attacked and whose life was in danger had full justification to open fire," the report said.

"The use of live ammunition was done without a thorough control by the commanders," it concluded.

PALESTINIANS FROM THE TERRITORIES ALLOWED TO RETURN TO JOBS IN ISRAEL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 28 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Moshe Arens on Sunday lifted the ban against Palestinians entering Israel and immediately ran into sharp criticism from most of his Cabinet colleagues, who were angry he had not consulted them first.

The defense minister had sealed off the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Wednesday. He said he acted to prevent bloody encounters between Israelis and Palestinians from the territories after several days of escalating violence left dead and wounded on both sides.

The blockade kept more than 100,000 Arab day laborers away from their jobs in Israel,

causing serious economic dislocations in some sectors.

They streamed back to work Sunday morning, many of them to find that in their enforced absence their jobs had been given to unemployed Israelis and new Soviet immigrants, who were as willing as the Palestinians had been to do menial work for minimum pay.

The closure of the territories, which Israel captured in 1967, was originally intended to be of indefinite duration. But defense officials apparently concluded the move could be misconstrued.

Palestinian nationalist leaders were already touting it as a demonstration that the administered territories were indeed detached from Israel and ripe to become the independent state demanded by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Arens ran into deep trouble when he reported at the weekly Cabinet meeting Sunday that the ban was lifted. He was told by fellow ministers that had he held off until the Cabinet session, he would have been instructed to continue the blockade for the time being.

The ministers said they wanted to teach the Palestinians a lesson and to allow more time to weigh the benefits of replacing Arab labor with unemployed Jews and new immigrants.

According to some observers, Arens' only support came from Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and David Magen, the minister responsible for Israeli Arab affairs.

Some Palestinians Still Excluded

Not all restrictions were lifted on entry into Israel from the territories.

Arens issued new guidelines Saturday night excluding Palestinians with records of offenses or criminal records related to the intifada.

In addition, he ordered strict enforcement of regulations requiring Arab workers from the West Bank and Gaza Strip to be hired only through the official labor exchanges.

It is estimated that about 60 percent of the Arab labor force circumvents the exchanges and makes private arrangements with their employers.

Now, another rule facing more stringent enforcement forbids Arab workers from the territories to stay overnight in Israel without a special pass.

Last week, hundreds of Palestinians were reported to have stayed behind in Israel, at the urging of their employers. While both employers and workers were clearly violating the Defense Ministry's edict, the police were not sure how to treat them.

"The matter is being reviewed by our legal advisers, and once they make their recommendations, we shall act accordingly," a senior police official said.

Palestinian workers have been employed mainly in the construction trades, in small factories, in restaurants, as street sweepers and garbage collectors.

Many Jewish employers have hired the same people for many years and consider them hard-working and loyal friends. Those employers have often gone out of their way to protect their Arab workers from police harassment and spot searches.

But there are other employers who now say they would rather hire Jews than Arabs and pay higher wages if necessary.

They give as their reasons fear of the Arabs and the fact that most absent themselves from work every time the intifada underground declares a political strike in the territories.

LABOR PROBLEM WON'T SLOW BUILDING OF IMMIGRANT HOUSING, SHARON VOWS

By Charles Hoffman

ASHKELON, Israel, Oct. 28 (JTA) -- Housing Minister Ariel Sharon told Jewish Agency leaders here last week that problems with Arab labor would not impede the construction of badly needed housing for immigrants and low-income Israelis.

If Palestinians from the administered territories are unavailable to build immigrant housing, "then unemployed Israelis will be put to work on construction sites. And if the Jews don't want to do the work, then we'll bring in construction workers from abroad," Sharon vowed.

The fiery Likud Cabinet minister spoke here last Thursday to members of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors, who are meeting in Jerusalem this week to discuss programs for Soviet aliyah and Jewish education. The 70 members of the board, who include Diaspora fund-raising and community leaders, toured construction sites in Kiryat Gat and Ashkelon with Sharon.

Work on many construction sites came to a halt last week as tens of thousands of Palestinian workers from the territories were kept from entering Israel proper, as a security precaution in the wake of a series of knifing attacks on Jews. They were allowed to return to work on Sunday.

Sharon said that of the 100,000 people working in construction, half are Palestinians from the territories, 40,000 are Arab citizens of Israel and 10,000 are Israeli Jews.

Sharon assured the Jewish Agency leaders that the pace of housing construction is picking up, even though the government still lags behind targets set earlier this year.

He said that 128,000 immigrants, most of them from the Soviet Union, have arrived so far this year, and the total is expected to climb to 180,000 by the end of December. Some 200,000 Soviet immigrants are expected next year.

Prefab Houses Hastily Set Up

During this fiscal year, which ends next March 30, the Israeli government is supposed to start construction of 45,000 apartments, and the private sector has agreed to begin work on another 20,000.

But work has begun on only 8,100 of the government-sponsored flats, Sharon and his aides acknowledged. Work is in progress on 17,000 of the 20,000 private-sector apartments.

The government is also ordering 15,000 prefabricated housing units, to be set up at 14 sites around the country, and 5,000 mobile homes.

The Jewish Agency leaders inspected four prefab units in Kiryat Gat, a development town in the northern Negev. The four units, the first of 450 that will be built in the town, were put in place only the day before. The one-story homes, which will be ready for occupancy in another three months, will sell for about \$40,000.

The first several hundred mobile homes have been set up in the last week or so. These homes are designated mainly for low-income Israeli families who were forced into tents over the summer due to the sharp rise in rents.

Sharon said that there are only 300 families still in tents, compared with 2,200 this summer.

Last week, Sharon bitterly attacked the Finance Ministry for hampering his attempts to use liberal incentives to speed up housing starts. In his meeting with the Jewish Agency leaders,

however, Sharon studiously avoided controversy. He ignored repeated questions about the reasons for the slow progress on housing construction.

Over the next few years, Sharon said, the public sector will be building about 60,000 apartments a year, with the private sector holding at about 20,000.

Most of these apartments will be built in Galilee, the Negev and along the Green Line separating the administered territories from pre-1967 Israel. About 5,000 apartments a year are to be built in Jerusalem, most of these in areas annexed in 1967.

800 SOVIET IMMIGRANTS ARRIVE TO FIND AIRPORT STAFF ON STRIKE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 28 (JTA) -- About 800 new immigrants from the Soviet Union who landed at Ben-Gurion Airport on Sunday morning had their first encounter with an Israeli problem that would immediately and directly affect them.

Because of a strike, only a skeleton staff from the Absorption Ministry was on hand to process them, not enough to get the job done.

Most employees walked out after their shop committee called a strike to protest the ministry's failure to hire additional staff to cope with the extra workload represented by the overwhelmingly successful Soviet aliyah.

Absorption Ministry employees say their work is 10 times heavier than a year ago, before the massive influx of Soviet Jews began, but no extra hands have been brought in.

Those on hand at the airport Sunday morning were unable to cope with the hundreds of immigrants who poured off seven charter flights.

Most of the new arrivals were sent directly to hotels in Tel Aviv. They were bused back to the airport in the afternoon after a labor court declared the strike illegal and ordered the employees back to work.

The Soviets seemed baffled. They had been taught that strikes were the way starving, underpaid workers were forced to fight their wicked bosses in the capitalist West.

But instead of militant workers they found well-dressed, polite clerks who apologized for the inconvenience and explained that the walkout was aimed at getting additional personnel to make the processing of immigrants more efficient.

CONCERNS RAISED ON ETHIOPIAN ALIYAH

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 28 (JTA) -- Jewish Agency Chairman Simcha Dinitz sharply criticized Knesset member Geula Cohen over the weekend for going to Ethiopia to try to accelerate the emigration of Ethiopian Jews.

Cohen, a member of the pro-settlement Tehiya party who holds the rank of deputy Cabinet minister, left last Thursday, saying she would attempt to use her influence with the authorities to get permission for several thousand Jews stranded in Addis Ababa to leave for Israel.

But Dinitz told a Jewish Agency Executive meeting Saturday night that the matter was too sensitive for Cohen to interfere.

The Executive adopted a motion stating that it considered the Jews in Addis Ababa to be in transit to Israel. The leadership body asked Dinitz to act immediately, in cooperation with the government, to facilitate their immigration.

EX-NAZI GIVES UP U.S. CITIZENSHIP IN FASTEST DENATURALIZATION EVER

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Oct. 28 (JTA) -- A former Waffen SS officer who served at three subcamps of the Mauthausen death camp during World War II gave up his U.S. citizenship last week, rather than face denaturalization proceedings.

Martin Zultner, 79, a former resident of Chicago who has lived since 1975 in Salzburg, Austria, voluntarily renounced his citizenship at the U.S. Consulate there on Oct. 23. He will be barred from entering the United States.

His action enabled the Justice Department to conclude the fastest denaturalization proceeding it has ever undertaken, according to Eli Rosenbaum, principal deputy director of the department's Office of Special Investigations.

"We consider this is a big victory for us," said Rosenbaum, who conducted an interview with Zultner in May in Salzburg, during which he admitted his wartime activities.

Zultner is the 33rd former Nazi to have lost his American citizenship. Of these, 29 have been removed from the United States.

Zultner, an ethnic German born in Romania, in fact agreed to give up his citizenship in August, shortly after the Justice Department filed suit to denaturalize him. But U.S. regulations governing such cases require that certain steps be taken before the renunciation is accepted.

Zultner admitted that as a corporal in the Waffen SS between August 1943 and April 1945, he had served as administrative aide to SS supervisors and camp commandants at the Schwechat, Floridsdorf and Modling concentration camps.

He confessed to assigning armed guards to escort prisoners to slave labor locations and issued rifles to SS guards at the camps. He also admitted concealing his SS service when he applied in 1949 for a visa to enter the United States. Zultner immigrated to the United States from Salzburg in 1950.

Among the war crimes he admitted taking part in was "the infamous death march from Modling to Mauthausen in April 1945," said OSI Director Neal Sher. Hundreds of prisoners were shot to death during that march, he said.

ADL WELCOMES U.S. INDICTMENT OF SIX SKINHEADS IN OKLAHOMA

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 28 (JTA) -- The indictment last week of six neo-Nazi Skinheads in Tulsa, Okla., has been welcomed by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, which concluded a three-day meeting of its national executive committee here Saturday.

The indictments, served for intimidation of minorities, were announced by U.S. Assistant Attorney General John Dunne, who addressed ADL's Civil Rights Committee at a luncheon here last Thursday.

Dunne, who heads the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, spoke about the growth of the Skinhead movement in America.

He enumerated a spate of violent crimes committed by Skinheads, who are active in at least 100 American cities. There are now 200 white supremacist groups in existence throughout the United States, he said.

In a statement, ADL National Chairman Melvin Salberg said the latest indictments reaffirm "the fact that the Bush administration

continues to vigorously prosecute the perpetrators of hate crimes. This consistent and aggressive prosecution is the most effective way to curb their propensity for violence. We hope these indictments will contribute to the demise of the racist Skinhead phenomenon."

As an example of the proliferation of hate-group activities, Dunne cited a rise of 75 percent in hate crimes in Los Angeles last year, the highest level in 10 years.

"Today we have a new public enemy No. 1: that growing mob who commit crimes of hatred, tearing deep holes in the fabric that binds our society together," he said.

He spoke of the Justice Department's success winning a conviction or guilty plea in every hate crime it has prosecuted so far this year and told the ADL delegates he appreciated "the activities of groups such as yours."

ADL leaders met last year with Attorney General Dick Thornburgh to discuss the activities of hate groups, particularly Skinheads. They urged him to establish within the Justice Department a Skinhead Task Force to deal with the problem of the violent youths, who espouse a neo-Nazi credo and sometimes don Nazi garb.

ADL cautions, however, that not all Skinheads are racists. Some youths who have adopted the shaved-head look and admire punk rock are in fact anti-racist.

Last week, a jury in Portland, Ore., awarded \$12.5 million to the family of an Ethiopian man killed there two years ago by Skinheads at the instigation of white supremacist leaders living in southern California.

ADL joined the Southern Poverty Law Center in representing the plaintiff in a civil case against Tom Metzger, head of the White Aryan Resistance, and his son, John, who heads the Aryan Youth Movement. Two Skinheads were also fined in the wrongful death case.

ADL is hoping the award, the largest of its kind ever against a hate group, will bankrupt the white supremacist network.

ARIDOR ASSUMES POST AT THE U.N.

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 28 (JTA) -- The new Israeli ambassador to the United Nations, Yoram Aridor, officially took up his post Friday, after presenting his credentials to the United Nations.

Aridor, a former Likud Cabinet minister, has spent the past six years in private legal practice. Prior to this he held a number of government posts, most recently serving as finance minister under former Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

Aridor was trained as a lawyer at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and also received bachelor's degrees in political science and economics. Married with three children, Aridor, 57, speaks fluent English and some French.

He replaces Johanan Bein, who has served as Israel's acting ambassador to the United Nations for the past two years. Bein stepped in when former Ambassador Benjamin Netanyahu resigned in the spring of 1988, to run for the Knesset. Netanyahu is now deputy foreign minister.

Aridor comes to the United Nations at a difficult time for Israel. This month alone, the Security Council has twice adopted resolutions criticizing the Jewish state, both times with U.S. support. The issue has been Israel's handling of the Oct. 8 riots on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and the government's refusal to cooperate with a U.N. investigation of the incident.