

**PALESTINIAN POLICE STILL WAITING  
TO TAKE UP POSITIONS IN GAZA STRIP**

By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, May 9 (JTA) -- A first contingent of 100 Palestinian police was poised to enter the Gaza Strip on Monday evening, but there was still no official word as to when the Palestinians would replace the Israeli forces still stationed there.

Throughout the day, excited Palestinian residents of the newly autonomous Gaza area crowded around the Rafah border crossing from Egypt, where the Palestinian police had been assembled since Saturday evening.

But the hours dragged on Monday with no word of when the contingent would arrive. Eventually, nervous Israel Defense Force soldiers had to fire tear gas into the crowd of Palestinians to disperse them.

Clashes between the IDF and frustrated Gazans took place in several locations Monday. At least 10 Palestinians were wounded when Israeli troops fired rubber bullets into crowds of stone-throwing youths.

After arriving at the Rafah crossing Saturday night, the Palestinian police, dressed in new olive-drab uniforms donated by the Norwegian government, spent all day Sunday and Monday waiting for the order to cross.

Preceding them across the border on Sunday were the light weapons they would eventually use. After arriving on the Gaza side of the border, Israeli and Palestinian officials inspected the weapons one by one, with the Israelis listing their serial numbers in case it would some day be necessary to identify any of the weapons.

**Several Accounts Regarding The Delay**

As both Palestinians and Israelis waited for the police to move off into the Strip, there were several accounts attempting to explain why the delay had occurred.

According to one news report, the Palestinians had not assembled enough police to guarantee security in Gaza. More police had been scheduled to arrive from Yemen, but they were unable to leave the country because of the civil war raging there.

The Israelis, according to this account, were calling for at least 1,400 police to assume control.

Another reported explanation was that Israel had stated that no police could enter the autonomous areas until the Palestine Liberation Organization supplied a list of the 24-member Palestinian Authority that will have overall responsibility for Palestinian affairs in Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho.

Gad Ben-Ari, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's spokesman, flatly denied that Israel had made this demand.

A third explanation, based on the reported comments of a senior PLO official in Gaza, was that the Palestinians simply did not have the necessary funds to move their police into position.

In Jericho, meanwhile, the Israeli Nature Reserves Authority has been ordered to relinquish

control of three national sites it has been responsible for since 1967: the ancient synagogue, the Tel of Jericho and Hisham's Palace.

Three right-wing Knesset members -- Dov Shilansky, Tzachi Hanegbi and Hanan Porat -- who have been camped out at Jericho's ancient synagogue in defiance of IDF orders told a news conference on Sunday that they are still trying to negotiate a continued yeshiva presence at the site.

While the IDF has been able to keep other protesters away from Jericho, the Knesset members have parliamentary immunity from any IDF orders.

"The government had better realize that we won't leave one single place where Jews are settled, no matter what happens," Porat, of the National Religious Party, said.

**MANDELA VISITS CAPE TOWN SHUL  
AND REASSURES JEWS ON THEIR FUTURE**  
By Suzanne Belling

JOHANNESBURG, May 9 (JTA) -- The largest synagogue in the Southern hemisphere -- Cape Town's Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation -- was packed to capacity last Saturday to welcome South African President-elect Nelson Mandela to a Shabbat service there.

As Mandela addressed the congregation on the first Saturday after his election, cheering crowds of all races lined the street outside.

And inside, some members of the congregation were sporting yarmulkes in the black, green and gold colors of the newly empowered African National Congress.

The congregants heard Mandela make an appeal from the pulpit for Jewish expatriates to return to South Africa.

Pointedly excluding aliyah by saying he understands the Jewish community's commitment to Israel, Mandela said: "We want those who left (for other countries) because of insecurity to come back and to help us to build our country."

He added that those who do not return should contribute their money and skills to South Africa.

Mandela thanked the Jewish community for its contribution toward the development of South Africa and assured Jews they have nothing to fear from a government of national unity.

He said he felt an affinity with the Jewish community, since it was a Jewish firm that gave him an apprenticeship in the early days of his law career, when discrimination was rife.

He also said that he had befriended his Jewish defense counsel during the treason trial which led to his imprisonment in the 1950s and that he was still in contact with the lawyer.

He stated that he recognizes the right to existence of the State of Israel, along with the right of Palestinians to live in their own homeland.

He noted that he considered it significant that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat last week signed an agreement in Cairo

implementing Palestinian self rule -- the same week that South Africa elected its new leadership.

At the reception following the service, some of the younger members of the congregation raised clenched fists in solidarity with the ANC, while the shul choir led in the singing of the country's new national anthem, "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika."

Mandela later addressed the media from the steps of the synagogue, where he was flanked by Israeli Ambassador Alon Liel; South African Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris; the congregation's spiritual leader, Rabbi Jack Steinhorn; and the national chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Mervyn Smith.

Mandela said that the prophets of doom, who had predicted widespread anarchy should an ANC government come to power, have been proved wrong.

Mandela also stated that the empowerment of the country's black, colored and Indian population will not be at the expense of the white community.

An elated Smith, who later described the morning's events to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency as "a high point" and "a peak in Jewry's relationship with the new South Africa," pledged the Jewish community's support to Mandela.

"The Jewish community of this country is committed to playing a full role in supporting you and the elected government in establishing a non-racist, non-sexist, democratic South Africa," said Smith, addressing Mandela.

"The determination of South Africans from all walks of life to make the transition work was never more manifest than in the last week," Smith said.

The Board of Deputies and the Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation each made a presentation to Mandela "as a token of respect and admiration on his election as a first State President of a new democratic South Africa."

Mandela was scheduled to be present at talks later this week between Israeli President Ezer Weizman and Arafat, both of whom traveled to South Africa for Tuesday's inauguration ceremonies.

#### **GREECE TO LIGHTLY ARM AND CLOTHE FLEDGLING PALESTINIAN POLICE FORCE** By Jean Cohen

ATHENS, May 9 (JTA) -- Following through on a request from Yasser Arafat, the Greek government has agreed to supply light arms and uniforms to the newly created Palestinian police force for the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

But the government did not include heavy military equipment in its aid package.

Greece will give the Palestine Liberation Organization police uniforms and helmets, light vehicles and radar, and a still undetermined number of rifles and handguns.

While agreeing to supply light arms, the Athens government has flatly rejected the idea of supplying other equipment to the Palestinians.

During a visit to Greece in November, PLO Chairman Arafat had asked for armored vehicles, patrol boats, minesweepers and helicopters.

His request was forwarded to the Greek Foreign Ministry, which passed it on with a

favorable recommendation to the Ministry of National Defense.

The Defense Ministry sent the request on to the army and navy chiefs of staff, who rejected it during a closed meeting last Dec. 4.

In declining the request, the military said that providing the assistance would decrease Greece's military arsenal at a time of instability in the region.

The military noted that during the 1980s, Greece had given military equipment to Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein and to the Nicaraguan Sandinistas led by Daniel Ortega. Both times, the military officials said, "the equipment was used in the wrong way with no benefit to Greece."

Those favoring the PLO request pointed to the fact that the PLO has been recognized by the United States and Israel.

They added that fulfilling the request would help Greece have influence over the Palestinians without jeopardizing the good relations that have been established with Israel in recent years.

Earlier this year, Greece attempted to offer the Palestinians old military hardware, some of which dated back to World War II. The Palestinian leadership rejected it.

#### **JERUSALEM DAY IS CELEBRATED AMID UNCERTAINTY OVER CITY'S FUTURE** By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, May 9 (JTA) -- The 27th annual observance of Jerusalem Day was celebrated here on Monday with prayers, marches, flags and a pervasive sense of uncertainty about the future of the city as Israel attempts to establish peace with the Palestinians.

The day marks the anniversary of the reunification of the city during the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israeli forces captured the Old City from Jordan, which had ruled there since the 1948 War of Independence.

In a Jerusalem Day speech, Teddy Kollek, who was mayor of Jerusalem for close to 30 years, was adamant that no part of the city would become the capital of a Palestinian entity.

The dovish ex-mayor said Jerusalem had always been the Jewish people's capital, but had never enjoyed that status among Muslims.

"Muslims don't make holy sites their capital cities," he stated.

Speaking at a ceremony of remembrance at Ammunition Hill, one of the most fiercely fought-over battle sites of the 1967 war, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was chief of staff during that war, spoke of Jerusalem as "the very heart of the Jewish people; the united, unique capital of the State of Israel. Jerusalem is, was and will always be ours."

"But we have and we will always ensure freedom of religion to all faiths and free access to all holy places. Today we remember and honor the memory of all those who fought so hard for this city and never lived to see it united. To them we owe our deepest thanks," said Rabin.

One jarring note was struck during the day by an ultra-nationalist group known as the Temple Mount Faithful, who demonstrated in front of Orient House, the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization in eastern Jerusalem, to demand their expulsion from Jerusalem.

The group was dispersed by police.

## CONSERVATIVE RABBIS AVERT DEBATE OVER HOMOSEXUALITY AT CONVENTION

By Larry Yudelson

KIAMESHA LAKE, N.Y. (JTA) -- A potentially stormy debate over homosexuality was avoided by Conservative rabbis last week, when activists on both sides of the issue decided to withdraw conflicting resolutions on the topic.

The decision to avert a confrontation was typical of this year's convention of the Rabbinical Assembly, and in notable contrast to the heightened tensions and tempers of the body's past two annual meetings.

"It's a different convention. People are here to heal," said Rabbi Ismar Schorsch, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Even passionate discussion of the groundbreaking pastoral letter issued by the R.A.'s Committee on Human Sexuality was accompanied by little rancor.

In part, this reflected prudent planning by leaders of the organization, who have voiced their concern over the tone the homosexuality debate has taken in the past.

Following the report by the sexuality commission, the rabbis broke into discussion groups, with the explicit aim of allowing all members of the assembly to speak on the issue.

These recorded discussions are to be presented to the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, which is to establish Conservative policy on the points raised by the letter.

Among other issues, the report strongly advocated marriage and called on Jews to have three or four children. But it also acknowledged and accepted the notion of loving, committed non-marital relationships.

The letter also discussed Jewish sexual values within marriage, analyzed Jewish teachings on contraception and delicately summed up the debate over homosexuality that has rocked the movement since 1990.

### Gay Rabbi's Case Drew Attention

Last year, a passionate speech by Rabbi Harold Schulweis calling for modifying traditional halachah, or Jewish law, concerning homosexuality was followed the next day by an equally powerful rejoinder by Schorsch.

But after neither address were the assembled rabbis given a chance to respond.

The issue that could have led to conflict this year concerned rabbinic placement, or, in other words, job hunting. This seemingly technical issue is always a major concern for the R.A. insofar as it is a professional association.

But the resolutions at hand were responding to the case of Rabbi Howard Handler, a Conservative rabbi in New York and R.A. member whose contract was not renewed after he was "outed" as a gay man.

Conservative Judaism does not accept into rabbinical school or ordain sexually active homosexuals, a policy implemented after extensive debate two years ago by the Rabbinic Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards.

How to treat an already-ordained rabbi was a still trickier case. The Law Committee gave no clear guidance on the matter and in the end the R.A.'s executive council decided that while the organization would not circulate Handler's resume,

it would look the other way if he sought a pulpit independently. So far, his efforts at finding a job have been unsuccessful.

R.A. rules generally prohibit members from directly approaching congregations for jobs.

One of the resolutions offered this week would have called on the placement committee not to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation -- in effect, saying Handler's resume should be treated like any of his colleagues.

This was sponsored by B'Tsalmenu, a group of Conservative rabbis who support an interpretation of halachah that would allow gay and lesbian Jews to be fully included in Conservative life.

The counter-resolution would have urged the R.A. not to change its current procedures.

This measure was introduced by the Forum for Conservative Jewish Renewal, a group formed to articulate the traditionalist position. In a meeting, leaders of B'Tsalmenu and the Forum agreed to withdraw their resolutions.

Said Schorsch: "I think the membership realizes we've done as much as we can to address the needs of gays and lesbians at this time and there is no wisdom in destroying ourselves by pushing for things we're not ready to do."

It was the sex lives of heterosexuals that dominated the convention's discussions, with the pastoral letter on human sexuality coming under most criticism for saying that non-marital relationships "can embody a measure of holiness" if they otherwise embody Jewish values.

### Gays Speak At Workshop

In a section devoted to homosexuality, the letter said that both the traditional view of homosexuality as an "abomination" and the contradictory view that that moral assessment no longer applies have been accepted by the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards.

Those who take the more liberal view toward homosexual activity, suggested the letter, should apply the values and ethics spelled out in earlier sections of the report for heterosexual relations. The letter thereby implies -- though it does not directly state -- that the "measure of holiness" that can apply to non-marital heterosexual relations could apply to homosexual ones as well.

The letter was criticized as insufficient by Jewish Activist Gays and Lesbians, a New York-based organization, which said its recommendations failed "to address the practical concerns of lesbians and gays in everyday synagogue life."

At a table at the entrance to the dining room, representatives of B'Tsalmenu and the Jewish Activist group distributed information.

And at one of several workshop sessions, 50 people heard the experiences and perspectives of a founder of the activist group; a Conservative rabbi whose son is gay; and a lesbian who grew up in the Conservative movement.

"I will not join a congregation where I must be closeted" and "where my daughter has to watch what she says," said Judy Ribnick, describing why she joined a Reconstructionist congregation rather than a Conservative synagogue.

"The encouraging thing is that this issue left the realm of abstract discussion and moved into struggling with real human beings and real human questions," said Rabbi Simkha Weintraub, director of public affairs for the New Israel Fund and one of the initiators of B'Tsalmenu.

## AUSTRALIA ONCE AGAIN REJECTS VISA FOR HOLOCAUST-DENIER IRVING

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, May 9 (JTA) -- The Australian government has once again rejected an application by British Holocaust-denier David Irving to visit Australia, on grounds that the writer is not of "good character."

Sen. Nick Bolkus, Australia's minister for immigration and ethnic affairs, told the Senate that Irving has not reformed following his deportation from Canada in November 1992 and exclusion from Germany in 1993.

Last September, Bolkus was instructed by the federal court to reconsider the application for a visitor's visa made by Irving in December 1992, after the court found that the original exclusion order did not fully comply with Australian immigration law.

"The regulations enable a range of conduct to be taken into account when assessing a person's character, such as a person's past conduct," Bolkus said.

Since the government refused Irving's first visa application, Australia's immigration laws have changed. But Bolkus' decision was based on the pre-existing regulations.

Bolkus also informed the Senate that he had rejected a second application made by Irving on June 3, 1993, based on current legislation, also due to the "character" assessment.

Civil liberties organizations have objected to the decision and vowed to campaign to have it overturned. However, the only immediate opposition came from the tiny Australian Civil Liberties Union, led by Holocaust-denier John Bennett, which has no affiliation to recognized groups.

## LUBAVITCHER REBBE'S CONDITION WORSENS, WHILE VICTIM IN VAN ATTACK IS IMPROVING

By Pamela Druckerman

NEW YORK, May 9 (JTA) -- The health of the Lubavitcher rebbe, who has been hospitalized in very critical condition since March, has reportedly deteriorated further.

A hospital spokesperson said members of the Lubavitch community were "hoping for a miracle."

The 92-year-old rebbe -- who is in a coma and breathing with the help of a respirator -- was diagnosed Friday with pneumonia, but is reportedly responding to treatment.

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson has been hospitalized in Manhattan since suffering a massive stroke, his second in two years, on March 10.

Meanwhile, Nachum Sasonkin, 18, one of four Lubavitch students shot on the Brooklyn Bridge on March 1, was released May 4 from another Manhattan hospital, where he was being treated for a bullet wound to the head.

Though said to be mentally intact, he was transferred to a rehabilitation facility where he is relearning to walk and overcome other physical impairments.

Sasonkin was a passenger in a van that was part of a convoy accompanying the rebbe's return to Brooklyn after successful eye surgery in Manhattan. The van was attacked by a lone gunman as it approached the Brooklyn Bridge.

One of the other victims of the attack, Aaron Halberstam, 16, died of his wounds.

## GEN. AHARON YARIV DEAD AT 74; HEADED ISRAELI MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, May 9 (JTA) -- Retired Brig. Gen. Aharon Yariv, widely regarded as the most prominent of Israel's military intelligence chiefs, was buried here Monday with full military honors. Yariv, who was 74, died late Saturday of an undisclosed cause.

Yariv had suffered a stroke last September while driving and had crashed his car into a tree.

At the time, he was head of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, which he founded. As head of that think tank he recommended several changes in the Arab-Israeli peace process, including direct talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In the 1970s, together with Victor Shemtov, a leader of the Mapam party, Yariv, a Labor Party member of Knesset, devised the so-called "Yariv-Shemtov Formula," which called for direct talks with the PLO if it would agree to cease terrorism and give up its plans to destroy Israel.

That formula was never rejected by the governments in which he served, but neither was it adopted, and he resigned from politics in 1975. He established the Jaffee Center in 1977, where he remained until recently.

Yariv was born in Moscow in 1920. His family moved to Palestine in 1935. In 1938 he joined the Haganah, the precursor of the Israel Defense Force. In 1941, he joined the British Army as a captain in the Jewish Brigade.

Prior to the establishment of Israel, he was active in organizing illegal immigration and in purchasing arms for the Haganah.

### 'Thank You, Arele, From The Soldiers'

Among his many posts was that of military attache at the Israeli Embassy in Washington and, from 1964 to 1972, head of military intelligence.

Following that, he was an adviser on terrorism for then-Prime Minister Golda Meir. It was during that time, in September 1972, that Israel's entire Olympic team in Munich was slaughtered by Palestinian terrorists.

In a November 1993 Israel Radio interview, Yariv disclosed that Meir had approved the assassinations of between 10 and 15 terrorists in reprisal for the murders of the 11 Israelis.

Yariv was also among the negotiating team for the Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreement in the aftermath of the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

After retiring from the IDF he entered politics as a Labor member of Knesset and was minister of transport and of information.

Eulogizing Yariv at the graveside, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said that Yariv's career in the IDF had been marked by "thoroughness and professionalism."

As IDF chief of staff, Rabin appointed Yariv to head the military intelligence.

"His was the first appointment I made as chief of staff. The intelligence he provided just before the Six-Day War was the fullest; it was the foundation of that victory," Rabin said.

"Thank you, Arele, from the soldiers, the mothers, the people of Israel.

"It is of officers like you that it may be said, 'Never have so many owed so much to so few,' " Rabin said.