

**PALESTINIAN POLICE FIRE ON WORKERS,
ISRAELIS AS MELEE ERUPTS AT CHECKPOINT**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 17 (JTA) -- Israel Defense Force Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Ehud Barak has placed the blame squarely on the Palestinian police for the outbreak of violent riots by day laborers from the Gaza Strip seeking entry to Israel.

At least two Palestinians were killed and some 75 were wounded in Sunday's riots, believed to be the worst episode of violence since Palestinian self-rule began in Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho in May.

Some 21 Israelis were also reported injured by shots fired by Palestinian police and by rocks thrown by the laborers.

Among the Israelis injured were 17 border police, three soldiers and a civilian employee of the Egged bus cooperative. One of the border police was reported in serious condition.

In an interview with Israel Radio on Sunday, Barak said Palestinian police officers had failed to show up at the Erez checkpoint in the pre-dawn hours of Sunday to oversee the first check of Palestinian workers before they were allowed entry into Israel.

The Palestinian police are responsible for ensuring that the day laborers who seek work in Israel possess valid work permits and are not carrying weapons.

By the time the police arrived and began the procedure, Barak said, it was already after dawn. Pressing forward at the Erez crossing, a group of laborers began throwing rocks at the Israeli officials on the other side of the checkpoint.

Barak insisted that Palestinian authorities investigate the behavior of their police, who, unable to handle the mob, fired on both the Palestinian workers and on Israeli security personnel located on the other side of the crossing at the northern end of the Gaza Strip.

Most Shots From Palestinian Police

Israeli soldiers and border police opened fire on the legs of the rioters, but most of the shots fired were said to have come from the weapons of the Palestinian police.

The mob overran the checkpoint and rushed the Egged bus terminal located near the Erez crossing.

The Palestinian workers set fire to some 20 Egged buses that were waiting in the parking lot to transport the laborers to places of work within Israel.

They also torched the Egged gas station.

In addition, the rioters threw gasoline bombs at an IDF armored personnel carrier, which burst into flames.

According to news reports, smoke could be seen from 10 miles away.

Barak said the crossing would remain closed and Gaza residents would not be permitted to work in Israel until arrangements had been made to insure that Gaza police screen the entry of workers in a satisfactory manner.

A week earlier, Palestinian workers frustrated by delays at the checkpoint had also rioted, prompting Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to seal off Gaza for 24 hours.

Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur said Israeli and Palestinian officials had held several meetings during the past week in an effort to speed up the inspection process.

But the Palestinians had failed to abide by the agreements reached, Gur said.

In the wake of the rioting, Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat reportedly complained to the U.N. Security Council over what he said was Israeli fire at "innocent Palestinians" who were merely seeking employment in Israel.

As word of the riot spread, violent demonstrations erupted in West Bank towns, including Hebron and Nablus. In Hebron, the army imposed a curfew in the main square after engaging in clashes with stone-throwing Palestinians. Clashes were also reported in Ramallah.

**ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, ISRAEL
WELCOMES NEWS OF RABIN-HUSSEIN SUMMIT**
By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, July 17 (JTA) -- Israeli leaders across the political spectrum reacted enthusiastically to last Friday's announcement that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Jordan's King Hussein will meet at the White House on July 25.

"We are talking about the end of a state of war and the beginning of an era of peace, about economic development and the ways these ends can be achieved," an upbeat Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said.

Although the Washington summit is not expected to lead to a peace agreement, the meeting between Rabin and Hussein is expected to be a giant step forward in that direction.

In announcing the summit, President Clinton said the commitment to meet publicly for the first time "reflects the courageous leadership and the bold vision which both King Hussein and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin have displayed as they work together to create a new future for their people and for all the region."

In addition to their summit meeting with Clinton, Rabin and Hussein are expected to address a joint session of Congress.

Rabin is also expected to use the occasion to invite Hussein to visit Jerusalem to pray at the mosques on the Temple Mount.

Former Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek has already conveyed a similar invitation to Hussein.

Among Israeli opposition parties, reaction to the upcoming summit was almost universally favorable, with the sole exception of the right-wing Moledet party, which has three Knesset seats.

"Every step towards a contractual peace with Jordan is to be applauded," Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu said of the planned White House meeting.

But for Rehavam Ze'evi, Moledet's leader, the talks with Jordan signaled the possibility that

Israel might be required to cede more territory.

"This is not peace, it is self-destruction," he said.

Meanwhile, Israeli teams from the foreign and defense ministries paid a brief visit to Jordan last Friday to make arrangements for talks scheduled to take place later this week between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Peres and Jordanian Prime Minister Abdul Salam al-Majali at a Jordanian Dead Sea resort.

Israeli and Jordanian teams were due to begin talks on border and water issues on Monday.

Israeli journalists are already installed in a hotel in the Jordanian capital of Amman, where their presence has aroused somewhat mixed reactions from the local populace.

Jordanian officials were apparently not quite ready for an Israeli presence at news conferences surrounding the three-way meeting, and over the weekend an Israel Television reporter was permitted to file reports freely by phone, but could not film.

But other Israeli journalists reported being inundated with invitations to the homes of senior Jordanian officials eager to show their hospitality.

SENATE PASSES FOREIGN AID BILL WITH \$3 BILLION TO ISRAEL INTACT

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, July 17 (JTA) - The Senate has passed a \$13.6 billion foreign aid package that includes \$3 billion in aid to Israel and \$78 million to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

The House of Representatives passed a similar bill earlier this year.

House and Senate negotiators will meet later in the summer to hammer out differences between the versions.

The Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, which passed 84-9 last Friday, also included numerous amendments relating to Israel and the peace process.

An amendment authored by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) prohibits the United States from sending any aid to the Palestinians until the Palestine Liberation Organization amends the parts of its covenant calling for the destruction of the State of Israel.

The Specter amendment also prevents the president from certifying PLO compliance with the peace accords without congressional oversight.

Sens. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) sponsored an amendment that prevents American diplomats from meeting with members of the Palestinian authority anywhere in Jerusalem.

The bill also prohibits the U.S. Agency for International Development from opening any new offices in Jerusalem to dispense aid to Gaza or Jericho.

The amendment was sponsored by Sen. Hank Brown (R-Colo.).

In a non-binding amendment expressing the sense of the Senate, the Senate also voted to urge the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund not to give money to any countries that comply with the Arab boycott of Israel.

All three measures passed unanimously.

Like the House bill, the Senate also included \$2.1 billion in aid to Egypt and an additional \$80

million to assist Israel in resettling refugees from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

It also provides for \$7 million for Middle East regional co-operative ventures between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

JEWS DENIED ENTRY TO TEMPLE MOUNT FOR FEAR OF ENDANGERING WORSHIPERS

By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, July 17 (JTA) -- Fallout from the rioting at the Erez checkpoint between the Gaza Strip and Israel landed in Jerusalem on Sunday, when the local police chief forbade the ultranationalist group, Faithful of the Temple Mount, to enter the Temple area.

The police chief, Aryeh Amit, said that given the disturbances in Gaza, permitting the group to enter the Temple Mount endangered the safety of the thousands praying at the adjacent Western Wall during Sunday's Tisha B'Av fast.

Amit was acting in accordance with the terms of the High Court of Justice's ruling last week.

The court granted the group permission to enter the area under certain conditions.

According to the court's ruling, the police had the right to withhold permission if public safety was endangered.

The Faithful of the Temple Mount, under the leadership of militant Gershon Salomon, had for years been denied permission by the court to enter the Temple Mount on Tisha B'Av.

Tisha B'Av, a day that consists of fasting and prayer, commemorates the destruction of the First and Second Temples.

On Saturday night, meanwhile, Women in Green, another right-wing group that had successfully petitioned the court, carried out its plans to circle the walls of the Old City.

The group was en route to prayers at the Western Wall.

The group, however, flouted the High Court's ruling by exceeding the permitted 500 marchers.

The police expressed anger over the women's action, but did not try to stop them.

PERES VISITS UZBEKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN

By Lisa Glazer

MOSCOW (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres paid a three-day visit to the former Soviet states of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan earlier this month.

Arriving first in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent, Peres remarked on parallels between the two countries.

"Like Uzbekistan, Israel is fighting fundamentalism, poverty and war," he said.

Peres' visit to Central Asia, where Islam is making a strong comeback, marked the first trip to the area by a high-ranking Israeli official since the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991.

His visit was not welcomed everywhere.

Iran, which has established generally friendly relations with a number of Muslim states of the former Soviet Union, blasted it.

In a commentary, Teheran Radio called Peres' visit a symbol of a "holy alliance" between Communist leaders and Israel against Muslims in Central Asia.

JEWES JOIN BLACK INITIATIVE TO INCLUDE RACIAL JUSTICE PROVISION IN CRIME BILL

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, July 17 (JTA) -- Blacks and Jews have joined forces in an attempt to ensure Congress passes a crime bill that guarantees defendants the right to appeal death sentences if racial bias is suspected.

The Racial Justice Act, included in the House of Representatives version of the crime bill, allows a defendant to challenge a death sentence based on his or her belief that the sentence was imposed as a result of the race of the victim or defendant.

Both the House and Senate passed crime bills earlier this year that extend the death penalty to an additional 50 federal crimes. As members of Congress meet to hammer out the differences between the two versions, the House-passed Racial Justice Act has become a primary stumbling block.

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus have pledged to scuttle the crime bill if the final version comes before the House without racial justice provisions.

Most Jewish organizations have consistently opposed the death penalty over the years. But some groups, believing that national political opinion supports some form of the death penalty, have chosen to back the Racial Justice Act to ensure that racism does not factor into executions.

"It's a matter of simple justice," said Mark Pelavin, Washington representative of the American Jewish Congress. "If you're going to have a death penalty you have to make sure there is no room for racism."

In a letter to President Clinton, the American Jewish Congress called on the president to "end your troubling silence" and to ensure that "racism must not be allowed to play a role in meting out justice in America."

'Pattern Of Evidence' In Racial Disparities

AJCongress and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism have joined with U.S. Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), a Jewish member of Congress, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and the American Civil Liberties Union to actively push to include racial justice provisions in the final congressional bill.

In a 1990 study, the General Accounting Office, Congress' investigative arm, found a "pattern of evidence indicating racial disparities in the charging, sentencing and imposition of the death penalty."

The study found that a person accused of killing a white victim was over four times as likely to be sentenced to death as a person convicted of killing a black person.

The effort on behalf of the crime bill has given blacks and Jews an issue to rally around together, according to those involved in this issue.

"Clearly this has been a year where we've seen a lot of tensions," Pelavin said, referring specifically to a series of conflicts and anti-Semitic statements made by Nation of Islam leaders this year.

"Despite these high-profile tensions, there remains a very important and very solid day-to-

day working relationship between the communities," he said.

Though her group has chosen not to take an active stance in the crime-bill debate, Sammie Moshenberg, director of the Washington office of the National Council of Jewish Women, expressed the views of many Jews on the death penalty when she said, "If you are going to mete out the most Draconian and horrible, irreversible penalty to a criminal, any and every precaution should be taken to ensure that bias does not factor into the decision."

Other Jewish groups, including some Orthodox organizations, have chosen not to take a position in this debate because of their unequivocal opposition to the death penalty.

Betty Ehrenberg, executive director of the Orthodox Union's Institute for Public Affairs, said her organization "opposes the death penalty in all cases for all races."

FRANCE INAUGURATES PARIS MEMORIAL TO DEPORTED VICTIMS OF VICHY REGIME

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, July 17 (JTA) -- French President Francois Mitterrand was among the French and Jewish leaders who attended inauguration ceremonies here Sunday for a monument to the Jews in France who were deported to the Nazi death camps by France's collaborationist Vichy regime.

The monument was located near the Vel d'Hiv, the now-demolished cycling stadium where French police held some 13,000 Jews during the infamous July 16 and 17, 1942 roundups.

About 4,000 of the Jews, those without family, were sent to the Drancy internment camp near Paris, from which they were deported to Auschwitz. The remaining 9,000, which included 4,000 children, were kept at the Vel d'Hiv for a week and then sent directly to Auschwitz.

The inauguration of the monument took place on the day Mitterrand designated last year as a day of national commemoration for the 76,000 Jews in France deported to Nazi death camps during the war. Only some 2,000 survived.

The monument was created by artist Walter Spitzer, who was himself a survivor of Auschwitz, where all his family perished.

Along with Mitterrand at the inauguration ceremony were French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac and Jean Kahn, head of CRIF, the umbrella organization of French Jewish organizations.

Paris Chief Rabbi Alain Goldmann, who recited a prayer, was joined at the commemoration by other religious leaders, including Paris Archbishop Jean-Marie Lustiger and the head of the Paris Mosque, Dalil Boubakeur.

The absence of France's newly re-elected chief rabbi, Joseph Sitruk, was widely noted.

Officially, he left for a long vacation until the end of August, but Jewish observers had other explanations for his absence.

According to one version, Sitruk did not come because he was denied the right to speak, although Mitterrand himself did not address the audience.

Others said that Sitruk preferred not to show up because the commemoration was held on Tisha B'Av, the Jewish fast day commemorating the destruction of the First and Second Temples.

SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIAL ANGERS JEWS WITH STATEMENTS ON ISRAELI POLICIES

By Suzanne Belling

JOHANNESBURG, July 17 (JTA) -- South African Jews have expressed concern and anger over recent statements by Defense Minister Joe Modise that lashed out against Israel and compared Israeli policies toward Palestinians with the old apartheid regime.

Local media commentators suggested Modise's remarks signaled an end to South Africa's special relationship with Israel.

"Israel was the main partner of this country, the biggest buster of sanctions, including the arms embargo," Modise said in a recent interview with Reuters.

He said that Israel had continued to supply the old South African regime with arms even after other countries like France and Italy had stopped doing so.

Comparing Israel to the old South Africa, Modise said, "Politically they were more or less in the same trench."

"The things the Israelis did to the Palestinians were not very different from what South Africa did to its own inhabitants," he said.

"The only difference between Israel and South Africa is that it was not in the law books of Israel like it was in this country."

Jewish groups reacted swiftly to the remarks.

The comparison of Israel's policy toward the Palestinians and the apartheid years in South Africa are "not only absolutely untrue, but also a deliberately hurtful comparison," Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, Abe Abrahamson, chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, and Mervyn Smith, chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, said in a joint statement issued July 14.

"Moreover, the attack on Israeli-South African arms deals in the past was highly selective, particularly in the light of what is now becoming known regarding the purchase of oil from Iran and the sale of arms to Iraq, all in breach of sanctions and boycotts," the statement added.

'Unfair In The Light Of Changes'

"An attack on Israel is a very sensitive matter to the South African Jewish community," the statement said.

"This attack is, moreover, unfair in the light of changes that have and are taking place in the Middle East, especially the events of the past few weeks.

"There is now a new political climate in South Africa," the statement observed.

"And the minister's intemperate statements are all the more to be regretted as they are in sharp conflict with the spirit of reconciliation and national unity initiated by President Mandela," the statement said.

In an interview, Harris noted that Mandela had recently called on Jewish professionals who had left to the country to return to South Africa.

"The damage caused by Modise's statement will make it all the more difficult to realize this," Harris said.

"It is regrettable for Modise to call up relationships between past governments of both

Israel and South Africa at a time when the Israeli government is proceeding with peace."

South Africa's foreign minister, Alfred Nzo, said the country conducts its relations with the countries in the Middle East in the context of the "evenhanded approach."

That approach, Nzo said, was revealed at the time of Mandela's inauguration.

At that time, Israeli President Ezer Weizman and Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat met here at the specific request of both parties.

"This was an indication of the positive role which they expected President Mandela to play in the unfolding Middle East peace process," Nzo said.

In a statement released to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency by Israeli Ambassador Alon Liel, Nzo said, "Modise made his remarks specifically with reference to matters relating to arms sales and arms contracts."

In his interview, Modise also promised to act against Israel if proof were provided of police charges that the Mossad, the Israeli secret service, murdered two people here in an effort to halt the shipment of strategic chemicals to other Middle Eastern governments.

Liel strongly denied the allegations when reports of a Mossad connection to the murders surfaced earlier this month.

FOR JEWISH TOURISTS: SLOVAK CAPITAL BOASTS KOSHER RESTAURANT AND HOTEL

By Ruth E. Gruber

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia, July 17 (JTA) -- Unlike Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, Bratislava, the capital of neighboring Slovakia, is still off the beaten track for most tourists.

Innovations over the past year or so, however, have made Bratislava a more attractive place for Jewish visitors.

Key among these innovations was the opening a year ago of the Chez David, a kosher restaurant and hotel in a fully refurbished building owned by the Jewish community.

The building is on a quiet street not far from the Jewish community's offices.

Chez David offers eight plain but comfortable double rooms.

Each room comes with telephone and satellite television, and one suite has its own cooking facilities.

A small, modern mikvah is expected to begin operation in the basement of the building soon.

The hotel staff will handle travel, sightseeing and other arrangements for guests.

The hotel hopes to provide access to the underground tomb of the early 19th-century rabbi and scholar, the Chatam Sofer.

The Chatam Sofer, whose given name was Moses Sofer, was one of the towering figures of Orthodox Jewish life in Central Europe.

Chez David is located near Bratislava's new Jewish Museum, which opened a year ago.

The museum, though small, is one of the best examples of a Jewish museum in East-Central Europe.

It is designed not only to display precious Jewish ritual objects and other Judaica, but also to teach visitors about Jewish life and traditions in this country.