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**U.S. COURT OVERTURNS ORDER  
THAT EXTRADITED DEMJANJUK****By Deborah Kalb and Steven Weiss**

WASHINGTON, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- Disappointment and dismay greeted a federal appeals court's decision to overturn the 1985 court order under which John Demjanjuk, who was tried in Israel as the Nazi guard "Ivan the Terrible," was extradited to Israel.

The appellate court in Cincinnati also ruled Wednesday that Justice Department prosecutors had committed fraud when obtaining the extradition order.

The court did not address the earlier proceedings that had removed Demjanjuk's U.S. citizenship.

Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) called Attorney General Janet Reno on Wednesday to urge an immediate appeal of the verdict to the Supreme Court.

Nathan Lewin, president of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, American Section, said the decision must be reviewed. It is a "tragedy of major proportions," he said.

The Justice Department said it was reviewing its options and "intends, as it previously stated, to effect Demjanjuk's prompt removal from the United States as soon as his legal status is resolved," according to a statement from Reno's office that was forwarded to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Alan Dershowitz, a law professor at Harvard University, said Wednesday that "if the standard applied to John Demjanjuk's extradition order were applied universally to all criminal cases, prison doors around the United States would be flung wide open and tens of thousands of convicted prisoners would be freed.

"This decision applies a double standard to Nazi war criminals that is almost never applied to other criminals," he said.

**Court Blames Prosecutors For Misconduct**

"Why this court has such a special solicitude toward a Nazi collaborator still needs to be explained," Dershowitz added.

A three-judge panel of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued the ruling that targeted prosecutors working in the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, which investigates and prosecutes suspected war criminals living in the United States.

According to the decision, prosecutors working with the OSI committed "prosecutorial misconduct" in stripping the Ukrainian-born Demjanjuk of his U.S. citizenship and sending him to Israel, where he was sentenced to death for being a Treblinka death camp guard known as "Ivan the Terrible."

Demjanjuk, 73, was freed by Israel after the court there ruled that it could not be proven beyond a doubt that he had not been a victim of mistaken identity.

Escorted by family members, he returned to the United States on Sept. 22 and has been living in seclusion at his home in suburban Cleveland.

At the time, the Justice Department allowed Demjanjuk into the country on a temporary basis under the attorney general's parole authority.

He was allowed to return to this country so that he could be present at a trial to determine whether he should once again be deported for having lied about his past when he first applied for American citizenship.

Demjanjuk was extradited to Israel from the United States in February 1986 to stand trial for war crimes committed as the sadistic gas chamber operator at Treblinka. He was convicted and sentenced to death in 1988.

But on July 29 of this year, the Israeli Supreme Court overturned the conviction, saying that there was now reasonable doubt that Demjanjuk was the notorious "Ivan."

However, the Israeli court found that there was compelling evidence that Demjanjuk had served as an SS guard at the Sobibor death camp and the Flossenburg and Regensburg concentration camps.

It was on these grounds that Holocaust survivors and others, including the World Jewish Congress, called for a new trial.

On Sept. 19, the Israeli Supreme Court upheld the recommendation of Attorney General Yosef Harish, who had argued that a new trial would not be in the interest of the state and that a conviction was uncertain.

Earlier this year, two former U.S. Justice Department lawyers defended their actions in an investigation into the handling of the case.

Both former prosecutors appeared in a court-ordered review of whether lawyers for OSI suppressed evidence that might have cleared Demjanjuk during the nine-year investigation leading to his extradition to Israel.

**'Disappointed But Not Surprised'**

In June 1992, the Cincinnati appellate court, on its own initiative, ordered a probe into whether OSI prosecutors concealed documents that might have buttressed Demjanjuk's claim. The court appointed U.S. District Judge Thomas Wiseman Jr. of Nashville as a special master to oversee the investigation.

Wiseman ruled that the Justice Department had not perpetrated fraud in the case. However, he expressed sufficient doubt that Demjanjuk was the man identified as "Ivan."

Between 1977 and 1986, the U.S. government made its case against Demjanjuk in three sequential phases: denaturalization, deportation, and finally extradition to Israel.

In Washington, Schumer said he was "angry and disappointed but not surprised" by the decision. "The 6th Circuit has been consistently mistaken and misguided in its handling of this case," he said. "Demjanjuk clearly lied about his Nazi past when he entered the U.S. and firm evidence ties him to the death camps."

**VATICAN, ISRAEL NEAR ACCORD  
ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS****By Deborah Kalb**

WASHINGTON, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- Israel and the Vatican are on the verge of an agreement to establish diplomatic ties, according to an official at the Israeli Embassy here.

The accord would create the first official ties between Israel and the Catholic Church.

"Israel and the Vatican are very close to establishing diplomatic relations," Avi Granot, counselor for church affairs at the embassy, said Wednesday.

Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, welcomed the development in a statement issued in New York.

"This is the most important step in the normalization of relations between Catholics and Jews since Nostra Aetate," he said.

Bronfman was referring to the 1965 document from the Second Vatican Council that promoted dialogue with the Jews and rejected the centuries-long position that Jews bore guilt for Christ's death.

The agreement would have to be ratified by the Israeli government and the Vatican.

Granot said that the agreement could come "tomorrow or in a month, I don't know," but that it would come in weeks rather than months.

He said that "1993 has been quite a miraculous year," and that it would be "nice if 1993 were remembered also" for the establishment of relations between Israel and the Vatican.

This year already has seen the landmark Israeli-Palestinian accord and an agreement between Israel and Jordan.

Granot said that once the agreement was announced, the two sides would discuss a possible papal visit to Israel.

The Vatican has resisted establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel since the state was founded in 1948.

Pope Paul VI visited Jerusalem in 1964, but the Vatican's formal recognition of Israel has always been sidelined by a number of issues, including Israeli recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people.

Last year, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres invited Pope John Paul II to visit Israel.

Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau repeated the invitation when he met the pontiff in September.

#### SENATORS, CONCERNED FOR SYRIAN JEWS, ASK EUROPEAN BODY TO DENY SYRIA AID By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- In a move demonstrating concern for the plight of Syrian Jewry, nine U.S. Senators have urged members of the European Parliament not to give economic assistance to Syria.

The senators, led by Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) and Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), sent a letter to 36 members of the European body.

"We hope you will consider declining to grant Syria any additional aid" until "Syria, at a minimum, completes the one gesture in human rights which it began -- permitting all those Jews remaining in Syria who desire to travel to do so," the senators wrote.

The Nov. 10 letter was hailed by the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews, an organization that educates people about the plight of Syria's Jewish population.

The group's president, Alice Harary, noted Wednesday in a statement that the letter "reiterates the U.S. Senate's unceasing commitment to gain the prompt release of Syria's Jews."

Syria's small Jewish population has become a controversial issue here.

In April 1992, Syria announced a free-travel policy for its Jewish community, reversing the older practice of barring Syrian Jews from leaving the country in family groups.

But between October 1992 and January 1993, none of the approximately 1,350 Jews remaining in Syria were granted travel visas. In recent months, only a few Jews per week have received visas.

"Clearly, Syria's Jewish community is being used as a pawn in the international arena," the senators wrote to the European Parliament members.

In the wake of the Persian Gulf War, when Syria fought with the United States and its European and Arab allies, the European Parliament gave Syria about \$180 million in economic aid.

A request for an additional \$200 million was later blocked in the parliament, and it is those additional funds the parliament may reconsider.

Some in the parliament support granting Syria, once a patron of the former Soviet Union, the additional aid to encourage Syrian cooperation in the Middle East peace process. But other parliamentarians are opposed.

Other reasons the senators cited in their letter for opposing the aid included Syrian support for terrorism and drug trafficking.

Grassley and Kennedy sent a letter signed by some 66 senators to President Clinton earlier this year expressing concern about the Syrian Jews.

The Clinton administration has raised this issue with top Syrian officials.

Among other senators signing the letter to the European Parliament members were Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) and Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.).

#### PERES REFERS TO PALESTINE STATE, BRINGS THE HOUSE DOWN IN KNESSET By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- While speaking before the Knesset this week, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres made a comment that almost brought the house down around him.

During a Knesset debate Wednesday on the rising violence in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, Peres answered criticism from members of the opposition, some of whom were calling on the government to call off the peace talks until radical Arabs ceased their attacks on Israelis.

Peres responded by saying that Israeli security forces were doing everything possible.

He then added: "The most that (Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman) Yasser Arafat can do at the moment is to denounce the attacks -- until he forms a Palestine state in Gaza and Jericho."

His reference to a "Palestine state" created a furor in the Knesset.

Peres backtracked by apologizing for what he described as a "slip of the tongue," stressing that what he had meant to say was "until he establishes the Palestine police force in Gaza and Jericho."

But opposition members claimed that Peres' remark was a Freudian slip.

They said it betrayed his real expectations for the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state, launched into a noisy and angry interruption of the Knesset debate.

#### OCTOBER LIVING INDEX UP UNEXPECTEDLY

TEL AVIV, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- October's cost-of-living increase of 1.4 percent considerably exceeded expectations and is contributing to a spiraling annual inflation rate. The increase was partly due to a 2.9 percent rise in housing costs.

**ANALYSIS:****FLARE-UP ON LEBANON BORDER  
SEEN AS HINT OF SYRIAN ANGER**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- A major flare-up on Israel's border with Lebanon this week was being interpreted by officials here as a "hint" from Syria of its displeasure at being sidelined in the peace process.

On Tuesday -- just one day after the announcement that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will visit the Middle East next month with the specific purpose of reviving the stalled Israeli-Syrian negotiations -- guerrillas with the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah movement escalated their attacks on Israeli positions in southern Lebanon.

The latest attacks by Hezbollah, which is backed by Syria, were seen here as an indication of impatience and frustration in Damascus over the negotiations with Israel, which have been stalemated for months.

Syria has been calling for a return of the Golan Heights, while Israel has been calling on Damascus to establish a "full peace" with Israel that would include open borders between the two countries, free trade and an exchange of ambassadors.

Hezbollah's attacks on Tuesday were described by Israel Defense Force sources as the most serious assaults since Israel launched "Operation Accountability," which combined tank, infantry and air operations in southern Lebanon in late July.

Hezbollah began its daylong attack at dawn, with shelling by mortars and Katyusha rockets at bases of the IDF and its allied South Lebanon Army in both the eastern and western sectors of Israel's security zone in southern Lebanon.

During the day, scores of Katyusha missiles fell not only within the zone but also on the border separating the two countries.

Two IDF soldiers were lightly wounded by shrapnel as they were traveling inside the zone, close to the Israeli border.

**Waves Of Horror Through Israel**

Israel's retaliatory response later in the day carried a pointed political message: Apart from a heavy artillery counter-barrage of guerrilla positions, Israel sent its warplanes to bomb and strafe Hezbollah facilities near Baalbek, in the Bekaa Valley -- deep in the heart of the Syrian-controlled portion of Lebanon.

It was as if the Israelis were telling the Syrians that they, too, are adept at using violence as an extension of diplomacy.

During his visit to Washington this week, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was urged by President Clinton and other administration officials not to leave Syria out of the peacemaking loop.

At the same time, Rabin had to come to grips with the spiraling violence in the West Bank and Gaza, where Palestinian extremists opposed to the self-rule agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization are attacking Jews almost daily.

The terrorist attacks have sent waves of horror through Israel and have also triggered a violent response from Israel's settlers.

Both of these reactions are entirely to the liking of the Palestinian terrorists.

Israeli revulsion at their deeds inevitably saps public support for the peace process.

And the vigilantism of the settlers adds fuel to the flames, provoking moderate Palestinians who find themselves and their property caught in the crossfire -- which inevitably reduces support for the peace negotiations among the Palestinians as well.

For the IDF, the situation is a veritable nightmare.

A reserve unit, ending a tour of service on the West Bank on Tuesday, told reporters that there were no clear orders regarding how to restrain the settlers -- beyond an order not to use force or even tear gas.

Professional officers privately confirmed this complaint, adding that the deployment of units to confront rioting settlers automatically meant there were fewer troops available to hunt terrorists.

In the meantime, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators are continuing their meetings in Cairo to conclude a detailed agreement on security arrangements in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho after the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the regions, scheduled to begin in less than a month.

That agreement, Israeli officials hope, should at least partly end the atmosphere of uncertainty currently prevailing on the ground.

But according to the terms of the Palestinian self-rule accord signed in Washington in September, Israel must complete its troop withdrawals from Gaza and Jericho by April -- four months after the withdrawal process begins.

Israeli officials are viewing with increasing worry the prospect of this four-month period.

Opinion polls show slippage in the popularity of both the Rabin government and the peace agreement among the Israeli public.

And with each new terrorist incident, Knesset members are beginning to wonder out loud whether the prime minister can hold together his coalition during this tension-filled waiting period.

*(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv.)*

**JEWISH AGENCY ACTS TO STEM  
SPENDING ABUSES BY OFFICIALS  
By Cynthia Mann**

JERUSALEM, Nov. 17 (JTA) -- The Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization are clamping down on spending by senior officials.

New policies announced last week will eliminate the use of corporate credit cards, require detailed monthly expense reports and ban the personal use of "frequent flier" bonuses accrued through agency travel.

Also, everyone, including the chairman and the directors-general, will be accountable to someone for their expenditures.

The rules were recommended by a committee formed last February after the revelation that the agency's chairman, Simcha Dinitz, had personal credit card bills paid by the Jewish Agency and was otherwise lax in handling expenses.

The district attorney here has reportedly recommended that Dinitz be charged on fraud counts that could bring up to a 10-year sentence.

The new rules apply to about 50 agency officials.

Agency Treasurer Hanan Ben-Yehuda told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the procedures for work-related expenses already on the books provided too little accountability and too many loopholes. "Now, everyone is responsible to someone else."

# **THE JEWS OF MEXICO: MEXICAN PRESIDENT COURTS JEWS IN ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE U.S. BILL** By Tom Tugend

MEXICO CITY (JTA) -- Late in 1991, leaders of the Mexican Jewish community had a rare audience with the country's president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

Toward the end of the meeting, Salinas announced that he had just instructed the Mexican delegation to the United Nations to vote to rescind the infamous 1975 U.N. resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Salinas' decision was a direct reversal of Mexico's stand 16 years earlier.

The meeting was an emotional high for Mexico's 50,000 Jews, as much for the honor of having been invited by the nation's chief executive as for the nature of his announcement.

"I almost cried," recounted Mario Nudelstejer, executive director of the Jewish Central Committee, which, in a sharp departure from its resolutely low profile in national politics, had discreetly lobbied for the reversal of Mexico's earlier anti-Israel vote.

Mexico's Jews are nearly unanimous in their praise of Salinas for his astute leadership, economic reform program and friendliness toward the Jewish community.

While there are no Jews in the country's Senate and Chamber of Deputies, for the first time Jews have been named to high government posts under the Salinas administration.

The president's favorable attitude, though genuine, carries as a subtext the realization of his top economic-foreign policy priority: Approval by the U.S. Congress of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which would tear down trade barriers between Mexico, the United States and Canada.

Passage of NAFTA -- which has considerable opposition among American lawmakers -- before the expiration of Salinas' term next year is an almost obsessive preoccupation among Mexican officials.

The Jewish angle in all this rests on a naive but firmly held equation: Mexico's Jews are closely linked to their brethren in the United States, who are believed to influence American government and society. Therefore, the wisdom holds, if Mexico's Jews can win over American Jews, the NAFTA deal is as good as done.

## **PROUD, SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY FINDS ITSELF 'FOREIGN' AT HOME** By Tom Tugend

MEXICO CITY (JTA) -- Mexico's Jewish community, only 80 years old, appears secure and content in its Jewishness and ardently pro-Zionist.

"We have the most vibrant Jewish community outside Israel," said Rafael Kopeliovich, a successful Mexican City architect.

"There is hardly a Jew here who is not involved," said Kopeliovich, whose father came to Mexico from Russia in 1920.

That community is remarkably wealthy and generous in a generally poor country, leading its rabbis to warn regularly but unsuccessfully against ostentatious displays in daily life and especially at Bar Mitzvahs and weddings.

The Jews of Mexico are groping for a common Mexican-Jewish identity, both among their own smaller communities and within the nation.

The community inevitably shares certain traits with its Mexican countrymen, including a belief in consensus rather than confrontation.

Yet, socially, the 50,000 Jews in Mexico City and 3,000 or so in the rest of the country are largely isolated from the other 99.9 percent of their countrymen.

"In the collective unconsciousness of Mexico, the Jew is a foreigner," says Dina Siegel, director of the Tribuna Israelita, which functions as a combination community relations council and Anti-Defamation League.

"De jure we are Mexicans, de facto we are foreigners," she said.

"Mexican society rarely allows infiltration," agreed Picha Rubinstein, who is prominent in the tourism industry.

"Mexican society is a combination of race, religion and how long your people have been here," he said. "Very few Jews can penetrate it."

One result is that the Jewish community in national politics seems almost invisible.

"Mexico is not an immigrant country like the United States or Argentina," said Judit Bokser-Liwerant, a political science professor at the national university and head of the Jewish Studies Program at the Iberoamerican University.

"Mexican identity has been historically defined by the mestizo, the ethnic fusion of Spaniards and Indians," she said. "The Jewish culture was not part of it."

The "otherness" of Jews, imposed both from within and without, often comes into sharpest relief in times of crisis.

Anti-Semitism is then fanned by the press, relying less on ideology than on the general population's virtual ignorance of Jews and Judaism.

## **Didn't Mention Jewish Relief Effort**

After the 1985 earthquake that devastated large areas of Mexico City, for instance, newspapers, led by the daily Excelsior, ran numerous articles charging that Jewish factory owners had let their workers die while saving their own goods, and that Jews were profiting from the disaster.

There was no mention of the vast relief effort quickly organized by the Jewish community, which greatly exceeded that of the Catholic Church.

Communal cohesion is one of the strengths of the Mexican Jewish community, especially when compared with the Jewish community in the United States, according to Mario Nudelstejer, executive director of the Jewish Central Committee.

Other strengths include the near impossibility of assimilation by conversion or other means, and the preservation of diverse traditions from the countries of origin.

The community's weaknesses, he said, include the lack of long-range planning, demographic studies and professional community workers.

One weakness, said Marcelo Rittner, a Conservative rabbi, is the absence of democratic elections within the community.

Mexican Jewry's has intense emotional attachment to Zionism and Israel.

"Everybody has gone to Israel, everybody has to go," said Nudelstejer. And it is a given that Jewish high school graduates head for Israel.

The enthusiasm, however, does not translate into any substantial aliyah, Nudelstejer said.

"Jews," he said, "live very well in Mexico."