

**PLO DECLARES 'INDEPENDENCE DAY'  
DESPITE DISSENSION IN THE RANKS**

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- As the Palestinian Authority declared Tuesday "Palestine Independence Day," more than half of the members of the Palestine Liberation Organization's executive committee boycotted their first official meeting in Gaza.

Only eight of the committee's 18 members attended the session, four short of the necessary number for a quorum. As a result, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat declared it merely an informal meeting.

PLO officials who boycotted the meeting said they suspected Arafat was going to call on the committee to urge the Palestinian National Council, the so-called parliament-in-exile, to abrogate portions of the PLO's charter that call for the destruction of Israel.

The officials who remained in Tunis, the former PLO headquarters, said Israel first had to withdraw all its troops from the West Bank and Gaza.

When Israel and the PLO officially recognized each other in the days prior to the signing of the Palestinian self-rule accord last year in Washington, Arafat pledged to change those sections of the PLO charter that deny Israel's right to exist. Arafat has repeated the pledge on more than one occasion since.

Among those boycotting the executive committee meeting was Farouk Kaddoumi, who heads the PLO's political department in Tunis.

Despite dissent in the ranks, Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank designated Tuesday their independence day.

On November 15, 1988, the Palestine National Council, meeting in Algiers, declared an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinians have since celebrated the day, despite Israeli bans.

At a rally in Gaza City, Arafat said the struggle for a Palestinian state would continue.

Arafat appealed to all factions, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which reject the PLO's accord with Israel, to unite in building a Palestinian homeland.

Also on Tuesday, Israel handed over to the Palestinians control over welfare and tourism in the West Bank. Control over taxation and health is expected by the end of November.

Israeli settlers living in the West Bank will now obtain welfare services within Israel.

**NEWS ANALYSIS:****CHANGED U.S. POLITICAL LANDSCAPE  
POSES CHALLENGES FOR YITZHAK RABIN**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- When Yitzhak Rabin arrives in Washington next week, the Israeli prime minister may find the changed political landscape difficult territory in which to shore up support for Israel and its peace policies.

In meetings scheduled to begin on Monday,

he will be seeking support both within the beleaguered Democratic administration and among the Republican majorities that will soon control both houses of Congress.

During the past two years of the Clinton presidency, Rabin's job in pursuing these goals has been nearly effortless. Never have an American administration and an Israeli government been so closely aligned in their thinking.

Rabin left Israel this week for a visit to North America timed to coincide with an address Thursday to the Council of Jewish Federations' annual General Assembly.

When he meets with Clinton on Monday, Rabin and the U.S. president will be able to compare notes on how to confront the political doldrums that have set in at the midpoint of their respective administrations.

While Clinton has a Republican victory of historic proportions to contend with as a result of last week's midterm elections, Rabin finds himself in a similarly difficult position domestically, with recent polls showing him running neck-and-neck with Likud opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu.

Unless the trends reflected in the polls are reversed, Rabin and his Labor Party could find themselves sitting in the opposition benches after Israel's next elections in 1996.

Rabin may have time to worry about the Israeli elections, but a far more pressing concern for him as he prepares for his Washington visit is whether last week's stunning Republican victories all across the United States will alter the current state of Israeli-U.S. relations.

Within the Israeli Foreign Ministry, there are differing opinions regarding Clinton's standing when he attempts to deal with the Republican Congress that takes power in January.

Israel's ambassador to the United States, Itamar Rabinovich, along with many other senior diplomats, believes the president's foreign-policy standing will not be weakened.

**Some View Clinton As A 'Lame Duck'**

Indeed, it may actually be strengthened, some say, because he may seek greater involvement in foreign affairs as he finds himself stymied by the Republican majority with regard to his domestic agenda.

This analysis has been challenged by the Foreign Ministry Policy Planning Unit, a small team of analysts who issue policy papers on current events several times each month.

This group suggested last week in an internal memo leaked to the Israeli media that Clinton may become a "lame duck" in foreign affairs for much of his remaining two years, and that Israel should act accordingly.

Whatever Clinton's future stature, Israeli diplomats worry about support for Israel's policies in the new Congress.

Most diplomats and observers predict that aid to Israel will not be reduced, though Rabin will have to work harder for the annual \$3 billion in economic and military aid than in the past.

But they fear that financial support and

other inducements directed at the peace process -- especially those dangled before the Syrians and Palestinians in an attempt to woo them into line -- may fall prey to a new mood of parsimony on Capitol Hill.

Some Israeli government analysts say that a new American reluctance to spread dollars abroad may actually prod Syria toward taking a major step forward in its negotiations with Israel.

But others are less optimistic, saying any American tight-fistedness will reduce Syria's motivation to be forthcoming in the peace negotiations.

With prominent Republican senators like Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) railing against the cost of foreign aid and the dangers of foreign involvement, Israel may find it difficult to advance its agenda on Capitol Hill.

Helms, who is expected to become chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January, lashed out at the U.S. foreign aid program at a news conference last week, saying America "has spent an estimated \$2 trillion of the American taxpayers' money, much of it going down foreign rat-holes to countries that constantly oppose us in the United Nations and many of which rejected the concepts of freedom."

At his news conference, Helms also expressed suspicion about the motives of Syrian President Hafez Assad.

"Syria doesn't want peace with Israel. What Syria wants is the Golan Heights plus, of course, access to the American taxpayers' money," he said.

With Helms and his Republican colleagues suddenly calling the shots on Capitol Hill, Rabin will have an uphill battle convincing the new congressional leadership that American money and prestige still ought to be committed to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian peace process and to a yet-unattained Israeli-Syrian accord.

#### **Formal U.S. Alliance Sought By Some**

With regard to Syria, there are some at the top of Israel's political-defense establishment who have been urging that Israel seek a formal defense agreement or alliance with the United States as its "price" for surrendering that most vital of strategic assets, the Golan Heights, in return for peace with Syria.

But if Helms and like-minded Republicans set the foreign-policy agenda in Washington, defense alliances are not likely to be readily available for Israel -- no matter what risks it is prepared to undertake for peace.

But even Israeli government "minimalists," who do not aim as high as a formal U.S. alliance, will insist on a massive American commitment to various forms of military and intelligence assistance -- all of it costly -- as Israel's necessary compensation for giving up the Golan.

Another obstacle could present itself as Jewish American and Israeli activists opposed to Rabin's policies are likely to receive a greater hearing in the new Congress than they did in the old one.

These opposition forces have latched on to the vexing issue of a possible American military presence on the Golan in the event of a peace accord as a means of persuading American opinion to oppose a land-for-peace deal with Syria.

Rabin has always prided himself on his

credibility; it is his strongest asset on the Israeli domestic political scene.

In America, he will have to work overtime in order to persuade his various target audiences that the course he has set for Israel is, despite its many painful pitfalls, still the best course.

#### **AMERICANS OVERWHELMINGLY OPPOSE U.S. TROOPS ON GOLAN, POLL SHOWS**

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- An election-night poll has found American voters overwhelmingly opposed to stationing U.S. troops on the Golan Heights as part of any peace agreement between Israel and Syria.

Commissioned by the Middle East Quarterly, the telephone survey of 1,000 voters Nov. 8 found 64 percent opposed to American troops on the Golan and 18 percent in favor. The remainder were undecided or refused to answer.

Another of the survey's four questions showed that 70 percent of the respondents believe that President Clinton should be required to obtain congressional approval before sending troops.

The poll comes as opponents of an American presence on the Golan Heights continue to press for a congressional debate on the issue.

With the Republican takeover in Congress following last week's elections, it is not clear where the majority of legislators stand on this issue.

Both Israeli and American officials have suggested that it is likely that any peace accord between Israel and Syria would require a peacekeeping or monitoring mission by U.S. forces.

According to Daniel Pipes, editor of the Middle East Quarterly, the poll will "help both sides so they are no longer speaking in the abstract."

"The goal is to get information and not prejudice the debate," said Pipes, who is also director of the Philadelphia-based Middle East Forum, which publishes the Middle East Quarterly.

Pipes said his think tank has not taken a stand on the merits of sending U.S. troops to the Golan.

The phrasing of one of the four questions drew criticism from some pro-Israel activists who support the notion of U.S. troops on the Golan as a requirement for securing any peace accord between Israel and Syria.

The question asks whether respondents would be more or less likely to favor U.S. troops on the Golan "recalling previous American experiences with peacekeeping missions."

Some critics suggested that the phrasing moved voters to think of this year's Somalia mission, during which U.S. troops were killed.

But Pipes argued that the question was not leading. By not specifying any missions in the question, he said, voters were left to draw their own conclusions.

In any case, the results of the question -- with 64.8 percent opposed and 16.5 percent in favor -- were similar to the more general question about troops in the Golan.

The national survey was conducted by telephone on election night by the Washington firm Fabrizio, McLaughlin and Associates and has a margin of error of 3.1 percent.

## JEWISH GROUPS HOPEFUL THAT JEFFRIES WILL BE STRIPPED OF POSITION AGAIN

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- Jewish groups are optimistic that this week's Supreme Court decision requiring an appeals court to reconsider the case of City College of New York Professor Leonard Jeffries will result in his being stripped once again of the chairmanship of the Black Studies Department.

Jeffries, an outspoken black nationalist, has made public remarks denigrating Jews and Italians. He sued City College after he was demoted from his chairmanship following a controversial speech in 1991.

A federal appeals court in April upheld a lower court ruling which reinstated Jeffries on the grounds that the university had violated Jeffries' First Amendment right to free speech.

In a two-sentence order issued Monday, the Supreme Court ordered the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to reconsider its decision in light of a decision by the high court last May that may allow public employers more latitude in firing employees whose speech disrupts the workplace.

City College, which is part of the City University of New York, is a public college.

"The board of the City University of New York had the right to strip Jeffries of his departmental chairmanship because of his outspoken racism and anti-Semitism," said the American Jewish Committee, in a statement following the Supreme Court decision.

The AJCommittee filed a friend of the court brief on behalf of the City University of New York.

"In his role as departmental chair, Jeffries was a representative of the university. A university has the right not to be represented by a bigot. Today's ruling is a positive step for the battle to combat bigotry on campus," said the AJCommittee.

### Optimism About Final Outcome

The controversy erupted in July 1991, after Jeffries gave a speech at the Empire State Black Arts and Cultural Festival in which he said that "rich Jews" financed the slave trade and that Jews in the film industry had conspired with Mafia figures to "put together a system of destruction of black people."

City College then demoted him, although he remained a tenured professor.

Last year, U.S. District Judge Kenneth Conboy ordered him reinstated as chairman, despite the school's argument that Jeffries was demoted because of his poor administrative record and not because of the speech.

The jury in the case also awarded Jeffries \$360,000 in damages.

The appeals court upheld his reinstatement, although it ordered a new trial on the amount of damages. The issue of damages was not before the Supreme Court.

Among the other groups which filed an amicus brief in the case was the Anti-Defamation League.

"We are optimistic that the final outcome of this case will be a court determination that Professor Jeffries does not have an unrestricted right, as a department chair at a public univer-

sity, to deliver a message of bigotry and hate directly contrary to his employer's mission," said a statement issued by Robert Machleder, chairman of the ADL New York regional board, and Anita Sher, director of the ADL's New York regional office.

## WHITE SUPREMACIST CONFESSES TO 1977 MURDER OF ST. LOUIS JEW

By Robert A. Cohn

St. Louis Jewish Light

ST. LOUIS, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- An avowed white supremacist sentenced to life in prison for the murder of four other people has confessed to the 1977 killing of a local Jewish resident, who was shot to death as he left a synagogue here.

Joseph Paul Franklin, 44, a prisoner in the federal maximum security prison in Marion, Ill., told detectives that he "planned to kill as many Jews as he could that day," according to a report in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

The newspaper quoted one detective, Rich Zweifel, as saying, "He (Franklin) said he wanted to clear his conscience. It was calm, almost casual conversation. He wasn't cocky. And he is still a racist."

In the 1977 incident, Gerald Gordon, 42, was shot to death as he left the Brith Sholom Kneseth Israel Synagogue after a Bar Mitzvah ceremony. Two other men were wounded in the attack.

Gordon, a sales representative for a clothing firm, left behind his wife and three children.

Following his confession, Franklin was charged with capital murder, two counts of assault in the first degree and three counts of armed criminal action in connection with the attack. If convicted, he could face the death penalty.

Jeffrey Sinensky, director of civil rights for the Anti-Defamation League, called Franklin "one of America's most vicious racist killers."

A former member of the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazi National Socialist White People's Party, Franklin is already serving four life sentences for four murders committed in the mid-1970s, all of which had racial overtones.

He killed two black men as they were jogging with two white teen-age girls in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1976.

A year later, he murdered an interracial couple in Madison, Wis.

Franklin was indicted, but never convicted, in the 1978 shootings of Hustler magazine publisher Larry Flynt and Flynt's lawyer. The shooting left Flynt paralyzed.

He was also charged, but later acquitted, in the 1980 shooting of Vernon Jordan, then president of the National Urban League.

In 1984, Franklin admitted to the 1977 bombing attack on a synagogue in Chattanooga, Tenn., that destroyed the shul.

Franklin reportedly told detectives that he had bought the rifle used in the Gordon murder in Texas and then headed to St. Louis because of its large Jewish community, according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Franklin also said he drove around the area, looking at several synagogues, before choosing Brith Sholom at random. He fired five shots and left the scene, driving south.

## AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT ACKNOWLEDGES HIS COUNTRY'S ROLE IN HOLOCAUST

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- Austrian President Thomas Klestil concluded a three-day visit to Israel this week, acknowledging his nation's role in the atrocities of the Holocaust.

Addressing a special session of the Knesset on Tuesday, Klestil said a full acknowledgement of his country's complicity in the Holocaust was long overdue and that his country should do more to compensate Jewish survivors.

"All too often we have only spoken of Austria as the first state to have lost its freedom and independence to National Socialism, and far too seldom of the fact that many of the worst henchmen in the Nazi dictatorship were Austrians," Klestil said.

"No word of apology can ever expunge the agony of the Holocaust," he said.

While not making any specific pledges, Klestil told the Knesset that his country should consider following the lead of Germany and make reparations to the victims of the Holocaust.

"For far too long we have not done enough, and perhaps not always the right thing, to alleviate the plight of the survivors of the Jewish tragedy and the victims' descendants," he said.

Klestil's visit signaled a vast improvement in Israeli-Austrian relations, which were strained by the 1986 election of Kurt Waldheim to the Austrian presidency, a position he held until 1992.

Waldheim was a Nazi intelligence officer in the Balkans during the war. He has been implicated in the deportations of Jews and reprisal killings of anti-Nazi partisans in the region.

In an earlier meeting with Klestil, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres raised the issue of reparations for Austrian Jewish Holocaust victims.

More than 190,000 Jews lived in Austria before World War II. By 1945, less than 2,000 remained.

Klestil, along with Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock, who accompanied him on the trip, played down questions about the danger of growing support for right-wing extremists in Austria.

Austria's far-right Freedom Party posted dramatic gains in parliamentary elections held in October.

Austrian Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal, who also accompanied Klestil to Israel, said Austria's younger generation was more willing to confront the country's wartime past and that Klestil was setting an important example by visiting the Jewish state.

During his visit to Israel, Klestil did not meet with Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat in Gaza or with other Palestinian leaders at Orient House, the PLO's headquarters in eastern Jerusalem. President Ezer Weizman said he had asked Klestil not to meet with Arafat during this week's visit.

## JERUSALEM STUDY SUGGESTS COMPROMISE 'ACCEPTABLE' TO BOTH JEWS AND ARABS

NEW YORK, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- A new study published by the World Jewish Congress suggests there may be a way to resolve the problem of who rules Jerusalem that could satisfy both Jew and Arab.

The study, conducted by British Jewish historian Martin Gilbert, indicates that Jerusalem could remain Israel's undivided capital while maintaining Palestinian links.

Despite the decision by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators to postpone discussions on Jerusalem until final-status talks on Palestinian autonomy begin in 1996, the issue continues to be an explosive one in Israeli-Palestinian relations.

Israel has declared Jerusalem to be the eternal, undivided capital of the state, while Palestinians claim it as a future capital of their state.

After examining the historical and political issues surrounding Jerusalem, Gilbert -- the official biographer of Winston Churchill and author of numerous books on the Holocaust and other Jewish topics -- writes in his work that he foresees "a political formula, and a reality on the ground, acceptable to both sides."

For Gilbert, the formula involves keeping an undivided Jerusalem as Israel's capital while allowing Arab residents institutional ties to the emerging Palestinian Authority on the West Bank and Gaza.

"If the pace and direction of the current autonomy agreements is maintained," he writes, "there ought to be a political way forward that could satisfy both Israeli and Palestinian aspirations, while maintaining the current growth and expansion of all neighborhoods."

Under a united Jerusalem, he writes, the Arabs of eastern Jerusalem "could obtain status and self-governing instruments."

## ON AGAIN, OFF AGAIN: COMOROS SAYS YES TO RELATIONS, NO TO AMBASSADORS

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- An Israeli diplomat here is denying reports that the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros has reneged on an agreement to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel.

"It is important to stress that Comoros President (Said Mohammad) Johar didn't renege on his signature, and his recognition of Israel remains valid," said Yitzhak Eldan, Israel's representative to UNESCO in Paris.

An agreement by the Indian Ocean nation to establish diplomatic relations was signed in Paris on Nov. 10 by Johar and Israel's ambassador to France, Yehuda Lancry.

But in a statement issued in Paris this week, officials of Comoros said the exchange of ambassadors under the terms of the mutual recognition agreement will occur only after a full Middle East peace is reached, including Israeli agreements with Syria and Lebanon.

According to informed sources here, the decision to hold off on exchanging ambassadors was taken after Arab representatives in Paris pressured Johar in the wake of the agreement.

The Arab League's smallest member state, Comoros, a former French protectorate, comprises an archipelago in the Indian Ocean off the coast of southeastern Africa and has a population of some 420,000, most of whom are Muslims.

The sources added that the delay in exchanging ambassadors will not prevent Israel from sending a commission to Comoros to assess the country's agricultural needs.