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# **HERZOG RECEIVES COLORFUL WELCOME IN URUGUAY, AFTER ARGENTINE VISIT**

By Eliezer Strauch

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- President Chaim Herzog of Israel, on his first official visit to Latin America, got as regal a welcome in Uruguay on Monday as he received when he landed in Argentina a week ago.

But crossing the River Plate, Herzog discovered entirely different conditions prevailing in the two republics. And differences in their respective relationships with Israel were evident in the Israeli president's dealings with their leaders.

In Uruguay, which is economically stable and relatively serene, the Israeli chief of state and his host, President Julio Maria Sanguinetti, were able to celebrate four decades of uninterrupted friendship and good will between their respective countries.

In Argentina, a nation in economic disarray, Herzog may have struck a deal with President Carlos Saul Menem, who has been grappling with rising unemployment and runaway inflation since he took office in July.

Menem was suspect in the Jewish community, partly because he represents the populist Peronist party, which has a dubious record with respect to Jewish concerns, and partly because of his Syrian ancestry.

Menem, who is a Moslem convert to Catholicism, gave Herzog and his wife, Aura, an unusually friendly welcome. He even asked to be invited to Israel, where he will would like to make an official visit next September.

Although his warmth was undoubtedly genuine, it was also intended to impress Jews, and not just those in Argentina.

## **Menem Offers To Mediate**

At least one Argentine Jewish banker is convinced that by pleasing Israel, Menem expects to please influential Jews in the United States, who he believes can help Argentina get the economic assistance and private investments it needs.

During his talks with Herzog, Menem reportedly offered to use his close personal relations with the Syrian government to mediate peace with Israel.

But Herzog told the Argentine leader that for the time being, his most valuable contribution could be in two other areas of great concern to Israelis.

One is the situation of Syrian Jews, who are barred from leaving the country, even to visit relatives abroad. Another is the release of Israeli soldiers held hostage by Syrian-backed groups in Lebanon.

Menem is believed to be willing to intercede in both matters and hopes to get positive results before he visits the region. Herzog's visit to Argentina may have helped shore up the Menem administration, which has declared a moratorium on Argentina's \$7 billion internal debt and devalued the austral, the national currency -- measures that disturbed the middle class.

The lack of dramatic issues in Uruguay was made up for by the pomp and color of Herzog's reception here.

A guard of 300 horsemen resplendent in 17th-century cavalry uniforms with helmets and lances accompanied his motorcade through streets festooned with Israeli flags to the presidential palace.

Several hundred children from Jewish and non-Jewish schools lined three floors of staircases, singing Hebrew and Spanish songs as the two presidents entered.

At a private luncheon in Sanguinetti's office, Herzog recalled that Uruguay supported the Zionist cause as early as 1922, when its delegate to the San Remo conference upheld the idea of a Jewish national home.

He also recalled that Uruguay helped save tens of thousands of Jews from the Holocaust.

Last month, on the 51st anniversary of Kristallnacht, the first organized pogrom in Nazi Germany, special candles were lit in churches in Montevideo, in remembrance of the tragic event.

## **U.S. WON'T PRESSURE ISRAEL TO TALK WITH PLO, SAYS BUSH**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- President Bush reaffirmed Monday that his administration would not pressure Israel into negotiating with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"I don't think it is the role of the United States to force Israel to negotiate with the PLO," Bush was quoted as saying at a question-and-answer session with newspaper editors.

The PLO has insisted that it have a role in proposed Israeli-Palestinian negotiations that the United States is now trying to put together. Israel's Likud-led government is adamantly against any PLO involvement, whether direct or indirect.

Bush's comment comes almost exactly one year after his predecessor, Ronald Reagan, decided on Dec. 14, 1988, to open a dialogue with the PLO, to be conducted by the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia.

At their most recent meeting in Tunis last Saturday, the United States asked the PLO what it "might be able to do to help defuse" the ongoing civil war in Lebanon, a State Department official said Tuesday.

## **ARENS INQUIRY ABOUT PLO STANCE DRAWS FIRE FROM LEFT AND RIGHT**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens became embroiled in controversy this week, as he tried to clarify the extent to which Egypt has been representing the Palestine Liberation Organization's positions to the United States.

Arens came under fire from both the left and the right, after expressing interest in what Egypt had said about the PLO in its official reply last week to Secretary of State James Baker's five-point proposal for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

The storm erupted after Arens told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Monday that he asked Baker about the PLO's position on the five-point plan, as communicated by Egypt.

He explained that he wanted to find out if Egypt was no more than a messenger for the PLO, which, if the case, was unacceptable.

Foreign Ministry sources said later that Arens expressed no interest in the PLO's views, but merely checked with Baker to see if he was aware of the PLO's reply.

But in Washington, State Department officials said Tuesday that the Egyptian response did not attempt to convey the PLO's position. It merely referred to an unofficial position paper on the Baker plan that the PLO sent Dec. 1 to the U.S. ambassador in Tunisia, Robert Pelletreau.

According to State Department sources, that paper seeks a number of assurances, including a request that any Palestinian delegation that is to conduct preliminary talks with Israel include Palestinians from East Jerusalem and at least two Palestinians from outside Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

#### 'Deviating From Government Policy'

Arens is due in Washington in about three weeks for talks with Baker and Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel Meguid about setting up such a dialogue, which would take place in Cairo early next year.

To Knesset committee members on both the left and right, Arens' inquiry about the PLO was a deviation from Israel's position that the PLO's views are of no interest, since Israel will never accept the PLO as a negotiating partner.

Yossi Sarid of the opposition leftist Citizens Rights Movement put it bluntly to Arens. "By asking the secretary of state what the PLO said, aren't you deviating from government policy?" he asked.

Deputy Prime Minister David Levy, a hard-liner from Arens' own Herut faction of Likud, muttered angrily that the very question put by the foreign minister amounted to a "serious breach" of government policy and decision.

Labor Knesset member Uzi Baram asked Arens, "Why do you pretend that Egypt conveys messages in her name, and that the Egyptian reply has no connection with the PLO?"

"We all know that Egypt is only the mailman who conveys the message to the Americans. If this causes a crisis, say so and don't insult our intelligence by maintaining the Egyptian reply is an independent one," Baram said.

In response, Arens stressed that if Egypt does not undertake a role independent from the PLO, Israel will seek "other channels to advance the peace process."

(JTA Washington correspondent Howard Rosenberg contributed to this report.)

#### **IDF LIFTS CURFEW, RAIDS VILLAGES**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- A 12-day curfew was lifted Tuesday in the West Bank city of Nablus.

The curfew had been imposed on the largest town in the administered territories after the capture of members of the Black Panther terrorist gang in the Nablus casbah.

But unrest continued in the territories, as the Israel Defense Force raided two villages as part of its ongoing effort to keep the intifada activists off guard.

Twelve youths were apprehended in Kafr Abbush, near Tulkarm, and several others were detained in the West Bank village of Yamon.

A commercial strike was in effect in the Gaza Strip, to protest Sunday's fatal shooting of a youth by an Israeli civilian security guard.

The guard was released on bail by authorities Tuesday. Initial investigations have determined that the security guard fired in self-defense while being attacked with stones and iron bars by masked youths.

#### **ANOTHER IDF SUICIDE PUTS CLOUD OVER ARMY REPORT ON ACCIDENTS** By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- A dramatic decrease in the number of accidental deaths of armed service personnel was reported Tuesday by the Israel Defense Force.

But the achievement was marred by yet another suicide of an IDF soldier on active duty, the second in less than a month.

The semiannual report of the IDF's Manpower Division, submitted to the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, said accidental deaths declined more than 50 percent from the same six-month period last year.

The improvements were in three areas: military road accidents, accidents during maneuvers and accidents not on maneuvers.

But road accidents involving off-duty soldiers have increased threefold, compared to accidents on duty.

There has also been an increase in self-caused accidents and in the number of suspected suicides, the IDF report said.

The most recent suicide occurred Sunday when Shmuel Mu'alem, 19, of Or Yehuda, near Tel Aviv, hanged himself, three days after an unsuccessful attempt to shoot himself to death.

He was supposed to be under surveillance at the time.

The youth had been denied a request for transfer to a unit closer to home to be near his widowed mother.

On Dec. 7, he fired his army-issue gun into his abdomen, inflicting a serious but non-fatal wound. Taken to Meir Hospital in Kfar Sava, Mu'alem recovered after surgery.

Two soldiers were detailed to guard him. However, on Sunday afternoon, when he seemed much improved physically and mentally, the soldiers left together for a snack. Mu'alem hobbled into the bathroom, put a knotted sheet around his neck and hanged himself.

The last previous IDF suicide occurred on Nov. 18, when Sgt. Eli Sahar of the crack Givati Brigade put a bullet through his head at a military base.

He was alleged to have been harassed by his superiors and other soldiers. Disciplinary action was taken against his company commander.

#### **SHAMIR RECOVERING FROM OPERATION** By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was operated on for a hernia Tuesday and pronounced "OK" afterward by his surgeon, Dr. Arye Durst, who described the procedure as simple and easy.

The 74-year-old prime minister was admitted Monday to Hadassah-Hebrew University Hospital, and he is expected to stay there a few days to rest up.

Shamir was conscious during the operation, which was performed under a local anesthetic.

# ISRAEL IS PREPARING TO RECEIVE UP TO 1,000 SOVIET JEWS A DAY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Up to 1,000 immigrants a day could be flown to Israel from the Soviet Union, as soon as the two countries ratify an agreement just reached between their respective national airlines, according to Uri Gordon, head of the Jewish Agency's Immigration and Absorption Department.

Gordon, speaking Monday at a meeting of the World Zionist Organization Executive, said Israel is capable of receiving that large a number.

He said El Al and the Soviet air carrier Aeroflot have agreed on direct flights between Moscow or Leningrad and Tel Aviv. The flights are expected to start next month on a weekly basis, but could be increased to daily flights if the traffic warrants.

Israel is anticipating an upsurge of immigration from several countries, though mainly from the Soviet Union.

A total of 11,191 Jews left the Soviet Union in November, of whom 1,963, or 17.3 percent, went to Israel.

Those were the final figures released Tuesday in New York by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. They are a shade higher than the preliminary figures the organization put out Dec. 3 in Malta, where it was monitoring the Bush-Gorbachev summit conference.

According to the National Conference, 62,527 Jews have left the Soviet Union this year, the highest number for any year since its Soviet Jewry Research Bureau began tabulating emigration statistics in 1968. The last previous high was 51,320 in 1979.

## Reports Of Pogroms In Soviet Asia

Gordon reported that since the start of this year, the Jewish Agency has processed invitations for 364,000 Jews in the USSR. Soviet Jews must have an invitation from "relatives" in Israel to apply for an emigration permit.

Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the WZO and Jewish Agency Executives, told the meeting that in issuing invitations, Israel will give priority to Jews in the Soviet Asian republics, where there have been disturbing reports of ethnic violence and anti-Semitic outbursts.

Dinitz said the Jewish Agency has no information to confirm reports of anti-Jewish riots in Tashkent and Bukhara. The reports came from Jews who had recently emigrated from or returned from visiting the Soviet republic of Uzbekistan.

Dinitz said anti-Semitism is rife in the region because of ethnic strife and the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalists.

Gordon told the meeting that Israel is also expecting immigrants from Argentina, Ethiopia, France, Romania and the United States. He said he expects more than 20,000 immigrants by the end of the year, half from the Soviet Union.

About 25 percent of the newcomers will be housed in absorption centers, but the rest will be go through the "direct absorption" system, Gordon said. He cautioned, however, that there is a shortage of apartments in the country.

Dinitz disclosed that the Jewish Agency has asked the Soviets for permission to have its representatives work in the Soviet Union, to assist prospective immigrants before they leave. He said the request was made recently to the head of the Soviet consular delegation in Tel Aviv.

# LE PEN TO BE TRIED FOR RACISM NOW THAT HIS IMMUNITY IS LIFTED

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the extreme right-wing National Front, will go on trial here for racist libel and anti-Semitic hate-mongering, probably in February.

The way was opened Monday night, when the Parliament of Europe, convening in the French city of Strasbourg, voted 178-91 to strip Le Pen of the immunity he enjoys as a member of the European Community's legislative body.

The action came at a time when the National Front is riding a crest of electoral popularity in areas where its racist and xenophobic campaigns, aimed at Arabs from former French territories in Africa, seem to have struck a sympathetic chord.

The French Justice Ministry, however, wants to prosecute Le Pen for several anti-Semitic remarks, including his mocking allusion to death camp crematoria on Sept. 2, 1988, when he made a pun on the surname of Public Service Minister Michel Durafour, the last syllable of which is French for "oven."

If found guilty, Le Pen would face a prison term and a fine.

The vote in Strasbourg was credited in large measure to the efforts of Simone Veil, a former president of the Parliament. She used her personal prestige and influence to raise the sentiments of liberals and center-rightists against Le Pen.

Veil, a Jewish Holocaust survivor, lobbied for weeks to convince them that while one anti-Semitic statement might be forgiven, though never forgotten, Le Pen overstepped the bounds by his repetitive Jew-baiting.

As recently as last week, during a Dec. 5 television debate, he badgered another Cabinet minister, Lionel Stoleru, about alleged dual loyalty by repeatedly asking if he held Israeli as well as French citizenship.

Le Pen is also on record as publicly questioning the authenticity of the Holocaust. He has claimed that there were no Nazi gas chambers.

But many deputies, including some of Le Pen's most bitter foes, were reluctant to lift his immunity, because of the precedent it would set.

Le Pen said he had been targeted for "political persecution." But most political parties and the Jewish community welcomed the vote.

Jean Kahn, president of CRIF, the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France, said, "The European Parliament acted in a healthy way to prevent Le Pen from hiding behind his immunity. He will have to face justice like any other citizen would."

## NEO-NAZIS MARCH IN WEST GERMANY

By David Kantor

WEST BERLIN, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- About 80 neo-Nazi carrying anti-Jewish banners marched through the West German city of Gottingen on Saturday, shouting, "Foreigners out."

The marchers, who belong to an extreme right-wing group called the German Freedom Workers Party, were confronted by 500 counter-demonstrators. Heavily reinforced police kept the two groups apart.

The likelihood of clashes has increased since a left-wing activist was murdered Nov. 25 by a Skinhead identified as a neo-Nazi. Both the left and the extreme right have been staging demonstrations ever since.

# GREETING-CARD INDUSTRY RESPONDING TO GROWING RATE OF INTERMARRIAGE

By Elena Neuman

NEW YORK, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- For Christians, December is the season to be jolly; for Jews, it is the time to celebrate the festival of lights. And for card manufacturers, regardless of faith, it is the season to sell greeting cards.

This year, a new variety of holiday cards have appeared on the market, and they are causing a stir among both Jewish and interdenominational groups.

One such card depicts an ostensibly Christian angel lighting a Chanukah menorah. Another shows Santa gleefully spinning a dreidel. A third is a graphic design of a Christmas tree transforming itself into a Star of David.

Aimed specifically at the growing number of interfaith households in America today, these cards appear to validate the increasing trend of marriage between Christians and Jews.

"We are depicting some universal symbols that make people in interfaith marriages feel good about the holidays," said Philip Okrend of Mixed-Blessing card manufacturers, a line of interfaith holiday cards designed by his wife, Elise.

"Interfaith couples are a reality. We are simply finding an adaptable solution to what can be an awkward situation," he said.

But officials at the American Jewish Committee and the National Conference of Christians and Jews fail to see any blessing in the firm's line of cards.

"Greeting cards that mingle Santas and menorahs, angels, trees, stockings and Stars of David are objectionable," the two groups said in a joint statement issued last Friday.

## 'An Affront To Judaism'

"To combine the religious and cultural symbols of Chanukah and Christmas in greeting-card art is to diminish the sacred symbols of each faith and is an affront to Judaism, to Christianity and to serious interfaith relations," the statement said.

"We're not saying that such cards are anti-Semitic or anti-Christian," explained Judith Banki, deputy director of AJCommittee's interreligious affairs department. "What we're saying is that they are offensive to serious religion in general."

Elliot Wright, senior vice president for program at NCCJ, agreed. "Cards like these weaken the distinctiveness of Chanukah as a Jewish festival; they make it seem like a Jewish Christmas. But the mixing of religious symbols is as inappropriate for Christians as it is for Jews," he said.

AJCommittee and NCCJ have appealed to card manufacturers to refrain from producing future editions of interdenominational cards.

At MixedBlessing, however, their appeal will not be heeded. "If people look in greeting-card stores, they will see cards for all types of ethnic and cultural groups. Why shouldn't there be cards for interfaith households?" said Okrend.

"People should remember that these are greeting cards and only greeting cards. And if they don't like them, they just shouldn't buy them."

Okrend expressed his surprise and dismay at the joint statement. "We never intended that it would become like this," he said. "I don't know what we're doing that's so wrong."

Neither does Egon Mayer, a sociologist who

has done extensive research on intermarriage at City University of New York. "Focusing on the greeting-card companies misses the point," he said.

## Half A Million Intermarriages

"The fact that these cards exist points to an incredible need: to create a family life in interfaith homes in which both heritages are acknowledged and respected. It's a real problem for these families. The companies are touching on a sensitive nerve."

According to Mayer's research, the rate of intermarriage has grown substantially in recent years. In the 1950s, only about seven Jews out of 100 married outside the faith. By the 1980s, that trend had increased to about 35 out of 100, a five-fold increase.

Last year, there were between 400,000 and 600,000 Jewish-Christian marriages in the United States.

"In a majority of interfaith homes, Christmas is celebrated in some fashion, often with a tree," said Mayer. "Jews feel a sense of urgency that their culture not be completely swallowed up."

But Mayer feels strongly that attacking the juxtaposition of religious symbols in printed matter is not a solution to the problem.

"The printing of interreligious cards places a tremendous challenge before the organized Jewish community. The Jewish community must make our symbols understandable to the community at large."

Mayer specifically suggested a massive public education campaign and organized pressure for public and private television programming of Chanukah specials.

## BELLY DANCER'S CASE SHAKING UP ISRAEL'S HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Three of Israel's best legal minds are mulling over the question of whether a belly dancer's right to a living can be pre-empted because her performance offends the sensibilities of a kashrut supervisor.

Justices Gabriel Bach, Theodor Or and Shaul Aloni of the High Court of Justice spent most of Tuesday hearing arguments on whether belly-dancing is kosher. They will rule at a future date.

The Israel Civil Rights Association brought suit against the Jerusalem Rabbinical Council on behalf of American-born belly dancer Ilana Ras-kin.

She claimed that her bookings at hotels, restaurants and wedding halls began to plummet a year ago, when the rabbinical council threatened to withdraw the kashrut certificate of any establishment that hired her.

The council has the exclusive authority to issue the certification to public and private eateries, which must employ a kashrut supervisor during business hours.

The civil rights association's lawyer, Netta Ziv-Goldman, appealed to the court to advise the public that kashrut rules apply to food, not entertainment. The type of artist an establishment hires should not be the criterion for granting kashrut certificates, she said.

But attorney David Kirshenbaum, representing the rabbinical council, said it is impossible for a kashrut supervisor to fulfill religious duties in a room where a scantily clad woman is performing.