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**HIGH COURT: JEWS FOR JESUS
ARE NOT AUTOMATIC CITIZENS**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- The decades-long controversy over who is a Jew has not yet been resolved, but the High Court of Justice has ruled who is definitely not a Jew -- Messianic Jews, commonly known as "Jews for Jesus."

Although Gary and Shirley Beresford, immigrants from South Africa, filed for Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return, a three-judge panel reached the unanimous conclusion this week that they are not entitled to it, even though both petitioners were born to Jewish parents.

The Law of Return states that every Jew has the right to come to Israel as an immigrant and receive automatic citizenship.

It defines a Jew as a person born of a Jewish mother or who converted to Judaism.

But according to the decision written by Justices Menachem Elon and Aharon Barak, and concurred with by Justice Avraham Halima, the Beresfords do not qualify, because they are voluntary converts to a different faith.

Elon's interpretation of the Law of Return from a halachic, or religious, viewpoint upheld the Interior Ministry's denial of citizenship to the couple on grounds of their religious beliefs.

Barak, arguing from a "secular, liberal and dynamic" position, reached the same conclusion.

Members Of A Different Faith

According to Elon, the petitioners are "members of a different faith" who regard their belief in Jesus as the Messiah as the central element of their faith.

"Messianic Jews attempt to reverse the wheels of history by 2,000 years. But the Jewish people has decided during the 2,000 years of its history that Messianic Jews do not belong to the Jewish nation and have no right to force themselves on it.

"Those who believe in Jesus are, in fact, Christians," the justice wrote.

Barak stressed that the Law of Return is a secular law intended to guarantee the national goal of returning Jews to their homeland.

The law therefore should be interpreted in secular terms, based on the feelings of the majority of the Jewish people as well as on the Jewish religion, he wrote.

The 90-page ruling was not made public but was widely quoted in local newspapers on Tuesday.

It has no bearing on demands by the Orthodox establishment to amend the Law of Return in a manner that would exclude persons converted to Judaism by non-Orthodox rabbis.

The Beresfords insist they are Jews and deny they have converted to a different religion. They registered with the Jewish Agency for immigration to Israel after their marriage in 1982, and entered Israel on tourist visas in 1986.

The three justices suggested that they apply for citizenship under the Citizenship Law, which allows non-Jews to acquire Israeli nationality, though not as an automatic right.

(JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.)

**SHAMIR CAUTIONS AGAINST CELEBRATION
OF SYRIA'S RAPPROCHEMENT WITH EGYPT**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir urged Israelis on Thursday not "to rejoice too soon" over Syria's rapprochement this week with Egypt.

He said there were no signs whatever of Syrian moderation or flexibility with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict, even though Damascus may be reconciling itself with the "Egypt of Camp David."

Syria is still preparing for the day it can go to war, Shamir warned in a speech at Beit Jabotinsky in Tel Aviv on Thursday.

His comments highlighted the division within the Israeli political community over Syria's decision Wednesday to resume diplomatic ties with Egypt after a 12-year rupture.

Professor Itamar Rabinovitch, a highly regarded academician who heads the Dayan Center, a Tel Aviv University think tank, offered several cogent reasons for considering the possibility of a peace process that includes Syria.

According to Rabinovitch, President Hafez Assad and other Syrian leaders recently have projected an uncharacteristically moderate attitude toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, in conversations with ranking American visitors.

Rabinovitch attributed the apparent softening in Damascus to recent developments, notably the Soviet Union's cooling of its relationship with Syria.

Bellicose Syrian Policy

Mikhail Gorbachev is no longer encouraging or supporting a bellicose Syrian policy politically or militarily, Rabinovitch said.

Soviet arms still flow into Syria, but at a slower rate and in smaller quantities, according to Rabinovitch.

Soviet officials have spoken openly of the need to pursue a political solution of the Middle East conflict, which is a far cry from Syrian rhetoric about attaining strategic parity with Israel.

In addition, Assad faces pressing domestic problems that have worsened in recent months.

His involvement in Lebanon has become a thankless burden, and tension between Syria and Iraq, far from abating, has become a permanent threat to Assad.

Syria was the only Arab state to back Iran during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war.

Rabinovitch believes that all of those converging elements have prompted Assad to attempt to end his country's relative isolation in the Arab world.

That could also mean a softening of his attitude toward Israel, and at any rate, it should be looked into, the professor said.

A spokesman for Shamir was quoted as saying that the restoration of ties with Syria ought to strengthen Egypt in its pursuit of the peace process with Israel.

That is close to the Labor Party's position, which tends to welcome Egyptian-Syrian ties as a tacit acknowledgment by Syria that Egyptian policy was correct in seeking political solutions.

EL AL BRINGING SOVIETS, ISRAELIS WHO ARE STRANDED IN BUCHAREST

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- An empty El Al plane will fly to Romania on Friday to take back to Israel stranded Soviet emigrants and Israelis waiting to leave Romania.

The flight was scheduled after Tarom, the Romanian airline, canceled a flight that was supposed to bring them to Israel on Thursday.

The airport in Bucharest was caught up this week in the fighting between Romanian citizens and the security forces of the late Nicolae Ceausescu, and its radar was knocked out.

Jewish Agency Chairman Simcha Diniz said, meanwhile, that he hoped Bucharest would be restored "as soon as possible" as the major transit point for immigrants flying from Moscow to Israel.

He also expressed hope that Jewish emigration from Romania, which had reached about 1,500 a year, would increase as the turmoil in that country died down.

Diniz had just come from Ben-Gurion Airport, where a jumbo jet landed over 500 more Soviet olim.

They flew via Budapest, which has become the principal alternative route to Bucharest since the turmoil in Romania closed its borders and the airport was impaired.

Diniz stressed throughout the interview that he is anxiously awaiting the establishment of direct flights from Moscow to Tel Aviv.

Agreement Reached On Service

El Al and Aeroflot, the Israeli and Soviet national airlines, have reached agreement on joint service. But it has yet to be ratified by the Soviet government.

On Wednesday, Ha'aretz reported from Moscow that a direct ocean route has been opened from Odessa on the Black Sea to Haifa, by which Jewish emigrants can ship personal effects too bulky to send by air.

The report said the possibility of an ocean passenger service between the two ports was also under consideration.

Diniz disclosed the five Soviet cities where the Jewish Agency plans to send emissaries to promote immigration.

They are Riga, Leningrad, Moscow, Tbilisi, Tashkent and Kishinev.

He said the emissaries were presently undergoing training and would set out initially on short-term visas, probably three months, which could be extended.

Most of them will be of the "multipurpose" type, serving as teachers and community organizers, as well as promoting aliyah.

"This is the classical work of the Jewish Agency," Diniz remarked.

According to Diniz, the resurgent interest in aliyah does not exist solely because the United States has introduced quotas limiting the number of Soviet immigrants it will take.

"I don't say they don't want to go to America," he said. "But psychologically," the Jews "have become disillusioned with America. The quotas came not just as a practical blow but as a psychological shock.

"They realize there are lots of lands, but only one homeland for them as Jews," said Diniz.

(JTA Tel Aviv correspondent Hugh Orgel contributed to this article.)

ISRAELI DOCTORS VISIT ROMANIA, INFORMED OF NEED FOR SUPPLIES

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Two Israeli doctors who flew to Romania on Wednesday with eight tons of medical supplies for victims of the civil war received a warm welcome.

However, their hosts told them that medicine and medical equipment was more urgently needed than medical personnel, according to word reaching here from Bucharest.

That means that the six Romanian-speaking Israeli doctors and two nurses who have been standing by this week to fly to Bucharest may not go after all.

The Israeli medical rescue team was organized by the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Health and Magen David Adom, Israel's counterpart of the Red Cross.

It consisted of Dr. Ya'akov Adler of Sha'are Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem, and Dr. Ilan Erez of Meir Hospital in Kfar Sava.

They flew with the supplies in an Israeli air force Hercules transport to Bucharest, where they were received by representatives of the Israeli Embassy, the Romanian Health Ministry and the International Red Cross.

The doctors were taken on a tour of hospitals in Bucharest on Thursday.

Their plane returned to Israel on Wednesday night, taking with it the families of embassy personnel.

Meanwhile, Moses Rosen, Romania's chief rabbi, reported Wednesday that Jewish communities throughout the country are safe and well in the aftermath of the popular upheaval that ended the 24-year regime of President Nicolae Ceausescu.

He also said that he and his wife, Amalia, were visited Wednesday by the U.S. ambassador to Romania, Alan Green.

Rosen sent a handwritten message by fax from Bucharest to his friend Rabbi Arthur Schneier, president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation in New York.

The Romanian rabbi wrote that "thanks to the Almighty, Amalia, myself and all our friends in the communities throughout the country are well and hopeful that, in short time, dangers will no more exist."

JDC ESTABLISHES MAILBOX TO HELP AID ROMANIANS

NEW YORK, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee announced Thursday that it was establishing an "open mailbox" for humanitarian aid to Romania.

All contributions will be used for urgently needed medical supplies and assistance to the thousands of civilian casualties injured in the revolution that overthrew the 24-year regime of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

It will be distributed on a strictly non-sectarian basis for the benefit of the Romanian people, according to JDC President Sylvia Hassenfeld.

Hassenfeld said the JDC has been in touch with the Romanian Jewish community through its chief rabbi, Dr. Moses Rosen, throughout the crisis.

Donations may be sent to the Open Mailbox for Romania, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 711 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**JEWS DISAGREE WHETHER TO PROTEST
TUTU'S APPEARANCE AT INAUGURATION**
By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- The New Year's Day inauguration of David Dinkins as the first black mayor of the nation's largest city was intended to be an event of healing in a city with deep racial and ethnic tensions.

But many Jews here are concerned that South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu's participation in the inaugural ceremony will cast a shadow over the festivities and possibly exacerbate strains in black-Jewish relations.

Tutu, who is scheduled to offer a blessing at Dinkins' installation, deeply offended many Jews this past week during his visit to Israel and the administered territories.

The 1984 Nobel laureate, who has often expressed support for the Palestinian cause, repeatedly compared Israel's treatment of Palestinians to South Africa's treatment of blacks under apartheid.

Israelis were also offended by his refusal to meet with the top political leadership of the country.

But the comments that most outraged Jews took place at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and museum, in which he suggested that Jews should forgive the Nazi perpetrators of the Holocaust.

As Tutu's scheduled arrival in New York approaches, Jewish leaders in the city are faced with the delicate question of expressing their displeasure at Tutu's statements without marring a day that would be historic for blacks in New York and across the nation.

At least one Jewish leader here, Rabbi Avraham Weiss of the Bronx, plans to organize a public protest, both against Tutu, for his statements in Israel, and against Dinkins, for refusing to rescind the invitation to Tutu, in light of those remarks.

'Respectful' Protest Planned

"Mr. Dinkins' choice of Tutu to help set the tone for his administration is offensive to the Jewish community," Weiss said.

"It is cause for alarm. Tutu should not be speaking at the inauguration of the 'healing mayor' of New York."

Dinkins stressed the theme of healing and bringing together various ethnic groups in his hard-fought campaign this fall against Republican rival Rudolph Giuliani.

Weiss sent Dinkins a letter Wednesday, asking that Dinkins reconsider his invitation, as Tutu's presence "sends the wrong message to a city that needs so much healing."

Dinkins responded by telephoning Weiss on Thursday, but would not be persuaded to cancel Tutu's invitation.

As a result, Weiss plans to gather as many as 100 people for a "respectful and dignified" demonstration that "would not disrupt" the inauguration, if Tutu does make an appearance.

Weiss said he has not made a final decision as to whether the vigil will be held at the inauguration itself or in front of Tutu's hotel, although he said he is "leaning toward doing it during the inauguration."

According to the mayor-elect's press secretary, Albert Scardino, the question of whether or not Tutu will appear is moot.

He said that "under no circumstances" will the bishop's invitation be withdrawn.

Tutu is participating in the inauguration "in a position of honor because of his dedication to human rights and freedom in South Africa," Scardino said.

He added that the mayor-elect has made it clear that he "does not agree with the positions that Bishop Tutu has espoused" on the Middle East and the Holocaust.

Tutu will offer his blessing as a representative of the Protestant faith, along with Cardinal John O'Connor, who will offer a Catholic blessing, and Rabbi Gilbert Klapperman, who will deliver a Jewish benediction.

Putting Aside Differences

"The purpose of the inauguration is to celebrate the fact that we do have differences, but we live in the same city and have the same government," said Scardino.

Scardino pointed out that while many attending the inauguration deeply disagree with O'Connor's views on abortion and homosexuality, they are also being encouraged to put aside their differences for the duration of the inaugural ceremony.

Some New York Jewish communal leaders feel that staging a public protest against Tutu at the inauguration is not worth tainting their relationship with the Dinkins administration, especially considering that Dinkins himself has publicly disputed Tutu's views on Israel.

The New York Jewish Community Relations Council, while it has notified both Dinkins and black organizations about its unhappiness over Tutu's recent remarks, has not called on Dinkins to withdraw the invitation.

Likewise, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith issued statements criticizing Tutu's "profound insensitivity," as NJCRAC put it.

But none of those organizations mentioned Tutu's scheduled appearance at the Dinkins inauguration.

Michael Miller, JCRC's executive director, said that while he is concerned about the prospect of a demonstration by Weiss or others, he nevertheless believes that they have the right to express their views through whatever channels they feel are appropriate.

Miller was echoed by Henry Siegman, executive director of AJCongress. Siegman has clashed with Weiss in the past, but he said that, while he would not encourage protest, "a silent, dignified demonstration is a perfectly legitimate right of free speech."

But whether there is a demonstration or not, the unfortunate timing of Tutu's politicized trip, just before the inauguration, will not allow some Jewish New Yorkers to celebrate Dinkins' installation as wholeheartedly as they may have wished.

"I think it is inevitably an embarrassment to Dinkins, because Jews are angry, and rightly so, about Tutu's remarks," said Siegman.

"It's an unfortunate situation, and I understand (Dinkins') predicament. I do not envy him."

REMINDER: JTA will not publish a Daily News Bulletin on Tuesday, Jan. 2. We wish all of our readers a happy new decade.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM, SOVIET JEWS TOP ADL'S '10-BEST' LIST OF 1989

NEW YORK, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- The surge for democratic reform in Eastern Europe and freer emigration of Soviet Jews were the most significant events for the Jewish people in 1989, according to the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

They topped the list of 10 events deemed most vital to Jews during the outgoing year, a list compiled by Burton Levinson and Abraham Foxman, chairman and national director, respectively, of the ADL.

The two observed that since Jews historically thrive in democratic societies, they should be among the main beneficiaries of events in Eastern Europe.

The departure of 60,000 Jews from the Soviet Union during the past year -- exceeding the 1979 high -- was another milestone, while inside the Soviet Union, Jews enjoyed more cultural and religious freedom.

But those Soviet Jews who remained also faced a serious menace in the rise of virulently anti-Semitic groups like Pamyat, which also have benefited from glasnost.

Third on the list of the ADL officials was Israel's peace initiative toward the Palestinians, advanced with U.S. support.

But with Yasir Arafat's ambiguous acceptance of Israel's existence, the Palestinians remained intransigent, according to Levinson and Foxman.

They noted an alarming increase in anti-Semitic violence and vandalism in the United States, particularly on college and university campuses.

The Skinhead menace continued to proliferate, with acts of violence occurring in various parts of the country, but federal indictments have been forthcoming.

The ADL regretted strained Jewish-Catholic relations over a number of issues during the year, the most serious being the Carmelite convent on the grounds of the former Auschwitz death camp.

The election of former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke to the Louisiana State Legislature was seen by the ADL as a gain for the forces of racism and bigotry.

Israel's slow but steady gains in diplomatic relations with the Soviet bloc and black African nations was cited as a favorable development.

Another was the conviction and sentencing of political extremist and anti-Semitic propagandist Lyndon LaRouche.

Finally, the ADL saw significance for Jews in the U.S. Supreme Court's seemingly contradictory decisions in two cases involving the separation of church and state.

The court ruled that a Nativity scene in a Pennsylvania county courthouse was unconstitutional.

At the same time, it upheld the display of a Chanukah menorah on the steps of the Pittsburgh City Hall, a block away, "delivering at best a mixed message," the ADL said.

SHARON URGES OPEN BORDER WITH JORDAN By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Minister of Industry and Trade Ariel Sharon has urged Jordan to open its borders to Israeli tourists, and in turn offered that Israel open its borders to Jordanian tourists.

Sharon -- a chief advocate for turning Jordan into a Palestinian state -- made the offer Wednesday in a meeting with an economic delegation from Egypt.

He used the parley with the Egyptians to propose a joint industrial and agricultural program between the two countries, in preparation for the full economic integration of the European Community in 1992.

Sharon, talking to the economic delegation from Cairo, did not conceal his disappointment over the low level of commerce that exists between Israel and Egypt, despite the peace treaty between them.

HONDA TO SUPPLY CAR PARTS TO ISRAEL, SIGNALING AN END TO ARAB BOYCOTT By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Honda, Japan's second-largest automobile maker, has signaled an end to its compliance with the Arab League boycott of Israel.

The parent company in Tokyo announced Thursday it would guarantee to supply spare parts in Israel for Honda cars assembled at the Ohio plant of the Honda of America Co., the U.S. subsidiary of the Japanese firm.

The cars made in Ohio are expected to go on sale in Israel beginning next summer.

At least 25 percent of the parts come from Japan, where Honda has heeded the Arab boycott for years.

Although Honda of America guaranteed the parts when the export deal was concluded several months ago, the Israeli Foreign Ministry insisted on a public statement from Honda headquarters in Tokyo as a condition for importing the cars into Israel.

Four smaller Japanese auto manufacturers have been selling cars in Israel for several years. They are Mitsubishi, Subaru, Daihatsu and Suzuki.

But the Toyota Motor Co., Japan's largest, still does not do business with Israel.

PANAMA RELIEF FUND ESTABLISHED

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- B'nai B'rith launched a Panama disaster relief drive Thursday to aid the nation devastated by fighting and looting in the wake of the U.S. invasion to oust dictator Manuel Noriega.

B'nai B'rith Community Volunteer Services, chaired by Harvey Gerstein of St. Louis, will coordinate the international effort.

B'nai B'rith Panama will channel the funds for food, medical supplies and rebuilding.

The Jewish community in Panama, meanwhile, welcomed the new democratic government, and pledged support for the administration of President Guillermo Endara.

"We mourn the loss of Panamanian and American lives, and extend sincere condolences to the bereaved families," the community said in a statement transmitted to B'nai B'rith International headquarters here.

The statement urged the new government to adopt legislation that will provide incentives for private investment to benefit the labor force and the general economy.

Tax-deductible checks made out to B'nai B'rith Panama Relief may be sent to B'nai B'rith CVS, 1640 Rhode Island Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.