

Verdict of Brother Daniel

Davar (Histadrut) writes: "It is reasonable to assume that the great majority of Israelis agree... with the judges who declared that someone who is a member of another religion is no longer a Jew." The paper goes on to say that the Knesset presumably did not specifically mention the case of Jews who had converted to another religion in the Law of the Return because "they thought this was unnecessary. The great majority of Israelis and their representatives in the Knesset — and in this matter there is no difference between the religious, the non-religious or even the anti-religious — do not consider Judaism as a nationality without a religion any more than they consider it as a religion without a nationality... Brother Daniel is not a Jew so far as we are concerned. He is an Israeli like the other Israelis who are not Jews. We will not only be happy but also proud to have him as an Israeli citizen, but not as a Jew under the Law of the Return."

Ha'aretz (non-party) writes: "There can be no such thing as Christian Judaism. On the other hand, there can be national Judaism which denies many of the religious laws... The great majority of the people, so it would seem to us, consider the majority judgment in the Rufeisen case as a just one."

Haboker (Liberal) writes: "It is to the credit of the High Court Judges that they stood the test of history no less in this case than in the Eichmann judgment... The appellant, who left the Jewish religion and holds a Catholic religious post, tried to obtain in the Courts what the Catholic Church was unable to obtain over hundreds of years: to obscure completely the historical barrier between the religion of Moses and the religion of Jesus in its Catholic form... It is well that sentiments about Father Daniel's bravery in the past did not in any way influence the approach to a matter... which is so important that it should not be sacrificed on the altar of sentiments."

Hatzofe (National Religious) wonders whether it is really true that "the convert had great achievements to his credit in saving Jews and therefore his request was made in good faith." It adds that it is impossible to ignore the extreme opinion of Justice Cohn, which is supported in influential circles in Israel, the wavering arguments of Justice Berinson, and Justice Silberg's view that, according to religious law, Rufeisen is a Jew. Since the question is a national-religious one in character, it is only right that an institution dealing with religious law should clarify it... in order to prevent any obscurity and to make the principles clear."