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### MESSIANIC JEWS

NETANYA : In a two-page exposé, the weekly magazine "HAOLAM HAZEH" (24.10.90) published, under the heading, "THE SECT IMPOVERISHED AN OLD WOMAN", an article alleging that the Beit Asaf Messianic congregation in Netanya had stealthily won the confidence of an elderly woman, converted her to Christianity and proceeded to take over control of her finances despite her daughter's objections; also removing the old woman from a nursing home. A complaint was filed by the daughter with the police against members of the congregation, and she has meanwhile succeeded in regaining control over her mother's finances and guardianship. An attempt to interview the congregational leader, David Loden, proved unsuccessful; he made a hurried flight to Europe.

Earlier, Loden had dismissed the allegations of the daughter as unfounded, and affirmed that the congregation was a legal non-profit society of believers in Yeshua acting independently in Netanya, with 30-40 members. Their attorney, Nathan Binder, also denied the daughter's allegations, and asserted that the mother was of sound mind, had a poor relationship with her daughter who, she felt, was exploiting her, had pushed her into a nursing home although she was content to remain in her own home, that she was born into a Christian home in China but later converted to Judaism and eventually returned to Christian faith. She had asked the congregation to take over her finances in order to remove them from her daughter who enjoyed signatory rights, which she wanted to cancel. He defended the integrity of the congregation and its leaders. "What a pity to harass such good folk; we can learn from them, how they help one another in distress," he concluded.

The writer, Malka Shoham Doron, quotes sympathetically allegations by the anti-mission spokesmen of "Yad L'Ahim" about other alleged exploiting of distressed Jews, stopping at nothing to obtain their desires, baptizing Ethiopian youth ("We saw a member of the sect, Jean, teaching young Ethiopians to make the sign of the cross in the home of David Loden"), extorting money, handing out New Testaments to children (one of them, a youth worker, was dismissed for doing this). Now it can also be told that the reporter, Hanan Peeri, who was originally working on the story of the sect was found dead at the seashore on the eve of Yom Kippur. While the police claim it was an accident, as far as they can determine, foul play is not ruled out.

In a parliamentary query, ultra-orthodox M.K. Feldman has asked the Minister of Police Roni Milo to respond to questions about the death of Peeri while working on an exposé of the missionary sect in Netanya. In response to a local newspaper inquiry, Feldman stated: "People are capable of all kinds of things in order to gain converts, and since there is a suspicion, the matter should be carefully investigated. I'm not accusing anyone, Heaven forbid!" (NETANYA NEWS 9 Nov 90)

MESSIANIC CONCERT: The LAMB musical group of Messianic Jews is due to arrive in Israel for a series of concerts around the country, including I.D.F. bases. A letter written by Joel Chernoff, the vice-president of the roof organization of U.S. Messianic congregations, has fallen into the hands of the anti-mission activists. It is an appeal for funds for their missionary activities in Israel. "Yad L'ahim" has written the Defence Minister Arens and the Chief of Staff Shomron not to permit them access to IDF bases, and also to investigate the activities of members of the Messianic congregations serving in the IDF, who are "a time bomb" among IDF personnel. (HATSOFEH 7 Nov 90; also HAMODIYA 9 Nov; EREV SHABAT 16 Nov)

SOVIET MESSIANIC JEWS IN JERUSALEM: About a half-year ago a large conference was held at the Jerusalem YMCA with some hundred Messianic Jews (Jews who have not been baptized into Christianity but who believe in the Messiahship of Jesus), all of them immigrants from Russia during the past year. Three weeks ago the clergyman Alexander Main, a Jew who belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church, was murdered in Moscow in mysterious circumstances. He encouraged his Jewish congregants to emigrate to Israel. Many other Jewish-Christian immigrants relate to mainstream churches, such as the Russian Orthodox, the Ethiopian

Coptic, Roman Catholic and Roumanian Orthodox. A large part of these people live a double-life, not disclosing their Christian connections publicly. (KAWL HA'IR 3 Oct 90)

with the alleged discharge of U.S. new immigrant J. Hoffman from Galtronics for his alleged refusal to join the Messianic sect. The Minister of Labour & Welfare was asked whether the police would be asked to investigate possible violation of the law against missionary bribery. (HAMODIYA 24.10.90)

STATE ATTORNEY : DROP MISSION INVESTIGATION: The investigation begun by the police in Tiberias against the heads of the Mission in Tiberias on suspicion of violating the Mission Law against bribery was halted recently in the wake of the State Attorney's intervention. In the wake of investigative pieces published in YATAID NE'EMAN about the intensive missionary activity conducted by the GALTRONICS plant, which exploits an industrial plant to lead Jews into apostasy, two complaints were filed with Tiberias police and an investigation begun. Evidence was submitted of material benefits given in exchange for conversion to Christianity in violation of the Mission Law. It has been learned that local police were instructed by the State Attorney office to drop the investigation, and this was confirmed by Joshua Resnik of that office.

The following statement was issued by the Justice Department in the matter: "Attorney Joshua Resnik, chief of the criminal division in the State Attorney's office, acted on the basis of existing guidelines dating back to March 1978 when Mr. Gavriel Bach was State Attorney, under which every complaint relating to mission activity would not be investigated except on the approval of the Attorney General or the State Attorney, and no charge sheet would be submitted relating to conversion without the explicit instructions of the Attorney General." YATAID NE'EMAN 24.10.90

In an editorial (4 Nov 90) HAMODIYA, the ultra-orthodox organ of AGUDAT YISRAEL, protested the State Attorney instructions and called for coordinated investigation by the police and the State Attorney. In a feature article in HAMODIYA (19.11.90) Rabbi Yehuda Meir Abramowitz, sponsor of the Mission Law, called on his colleagues to demand cancelation of this "illegal" arrangement by the State Attorney, which he claimed in effect neutralized the law. He also reported that attorney Nataniel Memo has called on the State Attorney to permit further investigation of the Tiberias complaints; and if he does not, the attorney will appeal to the High Court to order him to do so. S. Kaufman, reporter on missions for YATAID NE'EMAN, reported on his attempts to locate the police files which were alleged to have been transferred to the State Attorney. This was in connection with the demand of attorney Memo to force the State Attorney to review the file and reopen the investigation. As of 23.11.90, the file was still "en route." In a second editorial on the subject, HAMODIYA (25.11.90) denounced the State Attorney action and called on AGUDAT YISRAEL, which has just entered the government coalition, to pressure the government to cancel the State Attorney guidelines relating to the Mission Law.

MESSIANIC "MISSIONARY" SCHOOL UNDER ATTACK: Under pressure from ultra-orthodox groups, the Tiberias municipality and ministry of education have acted to halt the continued operation of a Messianic school opened in the city for failure to obtain a license. In an article on the subject, S. Kaufman of YATAID NE'EMAN (26.11.90) linked the school issue to the first international Messianic Jewish conference ("SHAVUOT '88) in which the names of various "apostates" were mentioned: Wendell Stearns, director of the school and psychologist; Eric Morey, GAL-GROUP treasurer, David Loden, Menahem Benhayim, Daniel Yahav. At the Peniel School in Tiberias there are 53 students, including Soviet Jewish new immigrant children.

DANIEL RUFSEISEN : The Orthodox daily (HATSOFEH 26.10.90) carried a brief resumé of the convert to Catholicism Brother Daniel (formerly Oswald Rufeisen) who once appealed to the Israeli High Court for citizenship under the Law of Return as a Jewish Catholic (he regrets this now), and has been trying to convince the Pope and the Catholic Church, without success, to restore "the Jewish character" of his Church--all prayers are in Hebrew.

#### THE MISSION

SOVIET JEWISH IMMIGRANTS: A broad field of activity has opened up to the missionaries with Soviet Jewish immigration. They are taking advantage of the difficulties of the immigrants in finding work, housing, mastering the Hebrew language, and are disseminating the teaching of Jesus wherever the new immigrants are to be found. The missionaries have at their disposal large sums of money while the immigrants unfortunately have not even minimal knowledge of Judaism, religion or traditions, and they fall easily into the missionary net. It is curious that this problem has not gained the attention of the government, the rabbinate and the general public, while the missionaries under the guise of "JEWS FOR JESUS" trap naive Jews into their net, and not only new immigrants. Work must be begun to remove this plague from the State of Israel. (Moshe Avishalom, Ramat Gan) HATSOFEH 6 Nov 90.

An article of similar tone appeared in the ultra-orthodox daily HAMODIYA (12 Nov 90), including also a report of advertisements in a Russian-language Israeli newspaper, "Nasha Strana," inviting the immigrants to join Messianic congregations, and that throughout Israel there are congregations which believe in "that Man" (Jesus) and they gather together for worship. A postal address is provided for further contact and referral to a congregation near the inquirer. An organization of "prisoners of Zion" has written a sharp letter of protest for the advert's allegedly exceeding all bounds of propriety. "There is a limit to wanton misuse of freedom when it strikes at the soul of the nation," they conclude. A similar article appeared in YOM HASHISHI (16.11.90) and noted that "the Christian missionary organization KEREN AHVAH" sponsored the advertisement. The ultra-orthodox YATAID NE'EMAN (23.11), in the context of a wider article on the new Soviet immigrants, reprinted the letter of the "prisoners of Zion" protesting the ad.

In a large two-page feature article, the same paper "exposed" the missionary subversion of so-called Christian supporters of Israel like the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ), its English and Dutch branches, "Christians for Israel", and various persons associated with them, ostensibly working for the good of Soviet Jews in the USSR and in Israel, but really seeking their conversion to Christianity. Among the persons "exposed" are Jay & Meridel Rawlings, Jan Willem van der Hoeven, Arcady Margolis (an Israeli police officer), Prayer For Israel, the Messianic Jews (Esther Dorflinger; David Loden, "the unofficial leader of the Israeli Messianics since 1988"). Among those "implicated" (whether duped or not) are such well-known figures as Natan Scharansky, Ida Nudel, Yosef Begun, Mayor Teddy Kolek, and others, who have all received lavish gifts from pro-Israel Christian groups who are pursuing missionary aims. Information sources named are chiefly Sylvie Vickers and Joseph Mendelovich, along with quotations from Christian organizational literature (ICEJ Bulletin, Israel Vistas, The Messianic Times, the Lausanne evangelism booklet, "Christian Witness to the Jewish People," and "Forum"). BYLINE: S. Kaufman

TIBERIAS ; The Hebrew daily MAARIV carried a feature article (1 Oct 90) on the Messianic Jews in Tiberias, the Messianic factory GALTRONICS, and Danny Yahav, the general manager, a Messianic Jew, a captain in the Israeli armoured corps, a tank commander and a combat veteran. He denied charges that he discriminated against employees who were not Messianic Jews and pointed out that several employees in advanced positions were Orthodox Jews. It was an "astonishing" fact, the reporter noted, that 15% of the employees at the plant were Messianic Jews whereas in the general population they constitute a mere .03%, or an estimated 1,300 persons. Furthermore, there were testimonies by former employees of discrimination and intense missionizing at the factory, with people dismissed who didn't fall into line with Messianic teachings. All of this is denied by Yahav, but the reporter is not convinced. A similar article appeared in brief in HAMODIYA, the ultra-orthodox daily (1 Oct 90). A two-page feature article by S. Kaufman headed "Mission Waves" also "exposed" the entire Gal-Group Company and links to the ICEJ and conversion bribery. (YATAID NE'MAN 3 Oct 90)

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SSION HISTORY (AN ULTRA-ORTHODOX VIEW) : N. Katzin authored an article in YATAID NE'EMAN (3 Oct 90) on the history of missionary activity in the Holy Land prior to the State of Israel, and of the Jewish (especially Orthodox) response to it, which involved setting up Jewish hospitals and welfare agencies to counteract missionary endeavours.

ARIEL : Grave missionary activity is being conducted by children of the missionary Kendall family in Ariel, who are distributing the New Testament and Christian literature among local children. (HAMODIYA 28.11.90) On 30.11.90 the same paper published an "exposé" on the Kendall family, whose appeal to the High Court for rights under the Law of Return is pending. A neighbour of the Kendalls, Mrs. Ilan, claims she was persuaded by Mrs. Kendall to send her three children to view a film in their home, which turned out to be a missionary film about the endtime and described the catastrophic demise of those who did not believe in J-s-s. Another neighbour alleged that Mrs. Kendall volunteered to help her with her housework and the children with English lessons. Later she preached to them about Jesus, citing Scripture, and warned them they would go to hell if they didn't believe. When she learned that her children were quoting the New Testament, she ended the relationship.

MISSION IN TENT CITY : Four Messianic Christians visited several tent encampments of homeless Jerusalemites and offered material assistance. The tent-dwellers suggested blankets for the children, which they promised to obtain for them. There were other Christian groups who showed up and offered help. They were all received politely, it was reported. (JERUSALEM 19.10.90) R. Zvielli of YATAID NE'EMAN (22.10.90) reported that a Dutch group called BRIDGES FOR PEACE had also offered help. The tent-dwellers expressed willingness to receive any material help but would reject any missionary approaches.

THE DISPUTATION : Missionary teachings are refuted in a series of lectures by Shmuel Golding of the Jerusalem Institute of Biblical Polemics; also a screening of the BBC theatrical production of the disputation between Rabbi Nachmanides and Pablo Christiani in Barcelona in the year 1263 will be held there, followed by a public debate. (JLM POST 16.11.90)

THE MISSION & THE INQUISITION : In a passionate feature article, Mordecai Gorlitz denounces the Mission as the representative of the Inquisition in our days. "Don't see them as missionaries; see them as inquisitors!" (HAMODIYA 30.11.90)

"A PLANNED APOSTACY CRUSADE": S. Kaufman of YATAID NE'EMAN (16.11.90), under this heading, presents a two-page exposé of the booklet CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE published by the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization, based on the Miniconsultation at a conference in Thailand in 1980.

JERUSALEM REPORT : The new English-language weekly of this name published a feature article headed OPEN TO CONVERSION : ARE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY GROUPS BECOMING MORE OVERT? (Peter Hirschberg), with a photo of Joseph Shulam of Netivya Messianic congregation in Jerusalem standing beside a traditional Jewish holy ark. Comments by and about various Messianics are cited (Yaakov Damkani, Shulam, David Stern), as well as by the ultra-orthodox (Yehudit Zeevi of YAD L'AHIM), Nissim Dana of Religious Affairs ministry, and Vanderhoeven of the Christian Embassy. (15.11.90)

~~SHON~~ (CROSSES AGAIN) : A local supplement of YEDIOT AKHRONOT (RISHON LEZION 3 Oct 90) investigated reports of cross-wearing by Israeli high school students in the area. They concluded it was a marginal phenomenon by youthful devotees of "punk" music and had no religious significance to the young people, although their elders were concerned, and were working to explain the meaning of the symbol and its historic link to persecution of the Jews, especially in the Middle Ages.

CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND: The moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Prof. Robert Anderson, and other participants in the Scottish Church Leaders Study Visit to Israel, together with Rev. Colin Morton of St. Andrew's church in Jerusalem, visited Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek at City Hall. (JLM POST 3 Oct 90)

CHRISTIAN TOURISM: A report on Christian tourism/pilgrimage to Israel and efforts by the Ministry of Tourism to promote it was carried in the journal SHAAR (2 Oct 90). Initiators (clergy, pilgrimage agencies, media personnel) have been invited at the ministry's expense to survey the situation. Several groups have arrived from India, Scandinavia, and groups were expected from around the globe under the auspices of the Christian Embassy and Christian Friends of Israel.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES: Some 3,000 Christians participated in the annual Christian Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles sponsored by the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, also joining 30,000 marchers in the annual Jerusalem March during the holiday. The ICEJ hosted several thousand Soviet new immigrants at a concert in Jerusalem during the Feast, donated close to \$1 million to pay for 12 plane loads of new immigrants and heard well-known Soviet Jewish activist Natan Scharansky address them. He lauded the work of the ICEJ and reminisced about his friendship with Christian activists in prison. "Prison was one of the few places where Jews and Christians could hold free and frank discussions on Israel, religion and shared values," he said. Also present at the Feast were Christians from East Europe. (VARIOUS PAPERS 2-16 Oct 90)

FULL GOSPEL CHRISTIANS: The Erickson family of 15 are "full gospel" Christians who observe the Jewish dietary laws and festivals, have lived in Israel for 17 years and after battling the bureaucracy received permanent residence. They are anti-missionary and pro-Israel. (JLM POST 28.10.90)

CHRISTIAN FLYERS : The Lester Sumrall Evangelistic Association (LeSEA) from South Bend, Indiana, has a C-130 Hercules plane which it is willing to use to fly Soviet immigrants to Israel free of charge except for fuel costs. Sumrall has been to Israel more than 50 times since 1950 and in November led a group of 100 U.S. and Swedish pilgrims. (JLM POST 14.11; 20.11.90)

<sup>-6-</sup> CHRISTIAN EMBASSY AND "THE MISSION": Under a cynical heading ("HERZL WOULD HAVE CERTAINLY GOTTEN ALONG WITH THEM"), the ultra-orthodox weekly YATAID NE'EMAN (23.11.90) continued its series of exposés of Christian missionary groups, this time focusing on the Christian Embassy, linking it to the Lausanne evangelization movement, the journal of evangelism published in Jerusalem, "MISHKAN", and back to the founder of modern Zionism, Theodore Herzl (who had once proposed mass conversion to Christianity in order to solve "the Jewish problem" before his own conversion to Zionism). (S. Kaufman)

CHRISTIAN EXODUS : The weekly JERUSALEM REPORT (15.11.90) carried a feature article about Christian emigration from Jerusalem and the West Bank. Although Christians started emigrating in the 19th century, the pace increased after the Six Days War, and even more so since the outbreak of the intifada. Some are intermarrying with Muslims here and are lost to the Church. The Jews are blamed, although Muslim fundamentalism is also a cause for despair.

#### SECTS & SUNDRIES

EMMA BERGER HOLDINGS: Since the death of the founder of the Zicron Yaakov German group, Emma Berger, little has been heard about them. Recently they returned to media focus with their offer to assist in the absorption of Soviet Jewish immigrants by building flats on their property. At present they own some 200 dunams of farmland, with some eight families living there, but about 100 temporary residents come for month-long work visits. The Zicron council head claims that they are a positive element, pay their taxes and are good neighbours. Even the ultra-orthodox council member admits that they do not engage in missionary activity and are no longer a "threat." (EMTZA HADERA 3 Oct 90) Yishai Weiner of the ultra-orthodox weekly YOM HASHISHI (19.10.90) does not share this view of their non-threatening nature. He reported that the Orthodox community will oppose the offer all the way, that the Mayor has turned the matter over to the Israel Lands Authority "because of its sensitive nature" (although he personally opposes taking up the offer). Meanwhile, negotiations with the Lands Authority are going on.

THE "WITNESSES" IN TIBERIAS: The anti-mission activist Rabbi Yossi Mimran reports increased activity of the door-to-door "Witness" missionaries in Tiberias, which has won several fisherman families to the sect. Rabbi Mimran is leading an educational campaign against the missionaries and offers a prize of \$10,000 to any Messianic Jew who can disprove his evidences of contradictions in their New Testament. "Most Christians don't know how to read Hebrew, which enables the missionaries and the church leaders to distort at liberty the words of the Hebrew scriptures," he declares. (HAMODIYA 16.10.90)

"BRINGING THE MESSIAH" : In a feature article for a Hebrew New Year release by the World Zionist Press Service, Dvora Waysman writes about traditional Jewish Messianic beliefs and of messianic pretenders in the past (David Reuveni, Shabtai Zvi, Jacob Frank). She writes, among other things: "For the Christians, the Messiah has already arrived in the form of Jesus Christ. For the Jews, of course, he has not and there have been many predictions about when he (or possibly she) will come..." (No. 90/8/1/1774 Rosh Hashana 1990)

CHRISTIAN STATUE IN JEWISH SETTLEMENT? Indignation and disgust were expressed by Orthodox Jewish residents of Maalot following the decision of Shlomo Bukhbot, the council head, to place a sculpture by Yigal Tomarkin in the town containing a figure of "that Man" (Jesus) with outstretched hands. The local rabbi Yitzhak Vaknin appealed to the council head to remove the statue, but Bukhbot denied that the statue related to Jesus, saying "it's only a work of art." The rabbi stated that, if the statue is not removed, he will appeal to the chief rabbinate, and if that body will not act, "then I will resign my position and act sharply against the local council and the chief rabbinate of Israel." (EREV SHABAT 16.11.90)

CRISIS BIBLE FEVER: American booksellers report that sales of  
es and prophecy books have surged since the Gulf crisis began, as  
istian fundamentalists seek spiritual answers to the conflict.  
popular interest in biblical prophecy is rising also with the close of  
the century and millennium. In the U.S. 40% of the people are regular  
weekly worshippers. (JERUSALEM POST 28.11.90)

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BY M. Benhayim

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