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**FIRE IN ACRE CHURCH:** Anger and unrest spread among the Arab community in Old Acre this week in the wake of a fire at the local Baptist church last Saturday evening. The Galilee District police tried to conceal the fact from the public, and it only became known when Acre Deputy Mayor Hilmi Shifi denounced the arsonists and asked the police to do everything possible to apprehend them. Arab residents blame "racist elements," such as Meir Kahane's "Kach" movement, for the attack. Several chairs and sacred books were burned in the fire, and the church organ was slightly damaged. Graffiti were scrawled on the church walls calling for the expulsion of Arabs and Christians, death to missionaries and the Pope, and proclaiming that "Kahane is the Messiah."

Local Christians have appealed to Jerusalem Protestant Leader Samir Kaffiti, and believe that the matter will have international repercussions. "This is an attack on the entire Christian community, the burning of a church," they declared. Another interpreted the arson as "a direct attack on the Christian religion and Jewish-Arab co-existence."

Meanwhile, representatives of Acre Protestants have invited civic and religious leaders of all faiths to attend a meeting at the church next Tuesday to discuss the incident and ways for further improving relations between the communities. (VARIOUS PAPERS 16 & 17 APR 1987)

**VANUNU & THE CHURCH:** The Australian Anglican vicar, John McKnight, a good friend of Mordecai Vanunu, the Israeli accused of revealing classified information about Israel's nuclear potential, has asked the Anglican vicar Riah Abu-el-Asal of Nazareth to visit Vanunu and minister to his spiritual needs. The Nazareth vicar, active in the "Progressive Movement for Peace" party, now intends to approach the security services for permission to visit Vanunu on a regular basis. It will be noted that the former Interior Minister Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz once issued an order barring the Nazareth cleric from leaving the country on the grounds that he constituted a security risk to Israel. (DAVAR 15 APR 87, YEDIOT HAGALIL 17 APR 87)

A letter from Vanunu to a friend was published in AL HAMISHMAR, the leftwing Hebrew daily. Among the subjects it dealt with is his attitude towards Christianity, which is here quoted: "One may say many things about Christianity, but I see, and I choose to see, the humanistic side. In contrast to the Jewish religion and the Jewish people, in Christianity there is no 'chosen people,' and the commandments and precepts have no value in themselves. In Christianity there is 'love your neighbor' and don't hate your enemy, but try to make peace with everyone. And don't think, 'What will happen to me if I help you,' but 'What will happen to you if I do NOT help you.' In my opinion, many Jews here have to convert to Christianity in the sense I mean - to become more humanistic - and as a first stage, they have to begin to hear a lot of classical music and organ music ..." (21 APR. Also excerpts translated into Yiddish in YIDDISHER ZEITUNG 30 APR 87)

**"MESSIANIC JEWS":** A couple who define themselves as "yehudim meshihiim" ("Messianic Jews") yesterday petitioned the Israeli High Court against the Interior Ministry for its refusal to grant them a New Immigrants certificate. Jerry and Shirley Beresford claim that they are Jews, the children and grandchildren of Jews, who have lived in Zimbabwe prior to their emigration.

Through their attorney, Yosef Ben-Menashe, they claim that about a half-year ago they approached the Jewish Agency in South Africa for emigrating to Israel. They believe in Jesus the Nazarene as Messiah

and so informed the Jewish Agency; neither have they converted to another religion, nor do they see any contradiction between their belief in Jesus as Messiah and Judaism. They further claim that Messianic Judaism is an ancient movement within Judaism.

In their petition they charge that the Jewish Agency refused to handle their emigration to Israel, so they came on their own initiative. Upon approaching the Ministry of Interior in Israel for a New Immigrants certificate under "the Law of Return," they were informed that there was concern about their being members of another faith, and therefore the law did not apply to them. Their attorney claims, in his petition on their behalf, that they are entitled to immigrant status as Jews, and that their belief in Jesus as Messiah makes no difference at all. (Various Papers 22 APR 87)

**JEWISH CATHOLIC SAINT:** The decision of Pope John Paul II to lead a ceremony of beatification in Cologne, Germany on the 1st of May for the Jewish Catholic Edith Stein, has provoked controversy in Jewish and Christian circles. Edith Stein was a nun murdered by the Nazis along with her sister at the Nazi extermination camp of Auschwitz on August 9, 1942, because of their "non-Aryan" origin. Upon his arrival in Germany for the ceremony, the Pope remarked that "as a Jewess and as a Catholic nun, Stein had demonstrated solidarity with the the Jewish people and participated in the suffering and martyrdom of its people." He termed her "an outstanding daughter of Israel."

Criticism of the papal visit was voiced by Hans Kueng, a radical Catholic theologian, who urged German bishops to "admit guilt" for their silence during the Third Reich. "No German bishop dared to speak publicly in defence of the Jews during all the years of the Nazi rule," he said in a radio interview. The German periodical Der Spiegel published an article accusing the Vatican of distorting the facts about Roman Catholic attitudes and actions during the Nazi period, and charging that Edith Stein and other Jews and Jewish converts were betrayed by the Church.

Rabbi David Rosen, director of interfaith activities in Jerusalem for the Anti-defamation League of B'nai Brith, and a former chief rabbi of Ireland, commented: "I suppose there are those who feel we should be grateful that Stein is to be beatified;" but he noted that the Sisters of Zion, an order of nuns who are "genuine lovers of Israel," had cautioned against beatification because of Jewish feelings about converts.

MAARIV (5 MAY 87 and 8 MAY 87) published two feature articles by editorial writers Shmuel Schnitzer and Shalom Rosenfeld alleging that the beatification was a "coverup" for the Church's bad conscience about its failure to resist Nazism. Both stressed that Edith Stein died as a Jewish martyr to "Christian" wickedness along with the six million Holocaust martyrs. Rosenfeld was somewhat sympathetic to Stein's expressions of Jewish identity during her lifetime.

The beatification ceremony was attended by some 30 of Edith Stein's relatives, but her aged Israeli niece Annie Meir could not attend. A German soldier who saw her on her way to Auschwitz reported seeing a "special light" in her eyes. Annie Meir recalls that she never saw eyes like those of Edith Stein. (Compiled from 17 news clippings 3 APR - 8 MAY)

**"YAD HASHMONAH":** A feature article by Ron Kislev entitled "ENCOUNTER IN THE JUDEAN HILLS" (HAARETZ 8 MAY 87) described the "strange" encounter between Finns and Israelis, Christians and Jews (Messianic Jews). In 1962 a group of Finnish Christian volunteers at Kibbutz Anavim in the Judean Hills were seized by the dream of setting up a Finnish Christian kibbutz (commune), but it was only in 1971 that they

cleared bureaucratic, economic and land hurdles to establish "Yad Hashmonah." The settlement was named after eight Finnish Jews who were turned over to the Nazis for deportation to Auschwitz by a Finnish Nazi sympathizer.

In 1979 the settlement began to "indigenize," welcoming Israeli members. At present there are 46 persons, including 18 children, living on the grounds in nine family units, plus ten singles, equally divided between Finns and Israelis, including three Finnish-Israeli couples. All the Israelis belong to the Messianic Jewish sect, but they themselves reject the tag "sect" and think of themselves as "believers" in Yeshua as the Messiah. There are three categories among them: those who have grown up in Messianic Jewish families, those who came as secularists and gradually accepted the beliefs of the members, and those whose adherence to the messianic faith and to the moshav were interconnected. The Finns don't emphasize their Protestant church background but stress their beliefs which are linked to the Tenach (Hebrew Scriptures), Yeshua and Israel, while the Israelis have drawn near to Christianity; and the two groups meet midway in the hill country of Judea. They all celebrate only the Jewish festivals and the Sabbath day, and pray together, but neither in the manner of Jews or Christians, but according to the customs they have fashioned.

They subsist on a limited agriculture for internal consumption, are now experimenting in flower production for export, tourism (mainly from Finland) in their guest house, and furniture making. They have no luxuries, no outstanding commercial or government debts, and in the fiscal year 1985-6 showed a net profit of some 40,000 new shekels, which they invested in development. A strange settlement, this YAD HASHMONAH, without debts, without crises like other moshavim, and they are even satisfied!

**DORMITION ABBEY VANDALIZED:** Ten windows in the living quarters of the Dormition Abbey on Mt. Zion were shattered by three drunken former students of the Diaspora Yeshiva shortly after midnight of 27th April 1987, as they hurled insults at the monks in residence and slashed tires of three cars belonging to the abbey. One of the monks succeeded in photographing and taping the vandals, American tourists, which led to their apprehension. A similar incident occurred six months ago involving the Diaspora Yeshiva, whose director, Rabbi Mordecai Goldstein, expressed regret for the incidents. At a meeting between the two sides the church administrators were told that "we (the yeshiva) disagree with what was done, and will pass that message on to the students."

Meanwhile, the three tourist-seminarians were sentenced to 15 and 10 day prison sentences, fines ranging between NIS 500 and 1,000, and costs for damage done. (Compiled from 10 clippings between 1-8 MAY)

**EX-KAHANIST:** "He called me a Nazi," Rabbi Meir Kahane complained to police on 5th May against Yosef Zarfati, a former coordinator of his "Kach" movement in Haifa. Zarfati appeared at a Kahane demonstration in Haifa on the side of those protesting against Kahane, and claims that he was attacked by the rabbi's followers, for which he filed a complaint with police. This was followed by Kahane's counterclaim. Zarfati proposed that Kahane submit to a lie-detector test with him. (HADASHOT 8 MAY. See SELECTIONS NO. 127, "The Mission: Haifa" page 3)

**MISSIONARY PETITIONERS:** A new system for obtaining addresses by the missionary members of Congregation Asaf in Netanya was foiled by YAD L'AHIM activists in town. The members of the congregation set up a stall in Netanya's Zion Square in order to have passersby sign a petition against abortions. They were well-furnished with suitable literature for distribution to signers of the petition. Very soon it became clear what the identity of the petitioners was, and public

pressure forced them to remove the stall and move off. (HAMODIYA 7 APR 87)

**GENTILE ANTI-MISSIONERS RECRUITED:** Gentiles who detest missionary activity will attend Passover seders in the company of Jewish apostates who are members of messianic congregations throughout Israel, on the initiative of the anti-mission society YAD L'AHIM. Activists will also take part in the Passover conference of the messianic congregations taking place at Baptist Village near Petah Tikva with some 200 Jewish apostates.

Anti-mission research indicates that community Passover observances will be held at the Jerusalem Baptist church under the leadership of the Christian, David Bivin, with some 70 participants expected. Bethesda in Haifa and Emanuel House in Jaffa are also conducting Seder services for members and guests. The Jerusalem congregation "Shalhevetya" will hold a "delayed" seder to be led by the apostate Amikam Tavor, the author of the well-known messianic "haggada." In the "Grace & Truth" congregation of Rehovot, "Maoz" of Ramat Hasharon, "The Tent" of Eilat, and "Netivya" of Jerusalem, there will be seder services in private homes which have been declared as "closed events." (EREV SHABAT, 10 APR 87)

**ANTI-CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY:** Shmuel Golding is a Jewish thinker who was once a Christian missionary who has now turned all his efforts to combatting missionary activity ... "I regard myself as a free-thinker, not like those diehard 'newly-religious' fanatics," he says. To prove the point, he showed me the picture he carries of a portrait of Thomas Paine, one of the founding fathers of America, and in his time a notoriously radical thinker. Shmuel Golding runs his anti-missionary organization, the Jerusalem School of Biblical Polemics, from a 4th-story apartment in downtown Jerusalem. Apart from regular counselors' courses, attended by as many secular as religious Jews who are interested in refuting New Testament teachings, he holds "disputation and dialogue" sessions, when the floor is open to any missionary or convert to Christianity who wishes to question a panel.

Shmuel Golding was born to an Orthodox Jewish family in the Ukraine shortly before World War II. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union, his parents, whom he does not remember, sent him to Britain via Turkey, to escape the Holocaust. He was brought up under the name of Frank Waddington ... Golding has written a very condensed version of his fascinating life story in a book called Odyssey of a Jewish Soul. He has sired legitimate and illegitimate offspring in at least three of the world's continents. (Gordon Shifman. Excerpts from an article which appeared simultaneously in English, French and German in ISRAEL REVIEW on 3 APR 87.)

**ANTI-MISSION LAW:** The cabinet committee for investigating the Mormon University in Jerusalem, under Religious Affairs Minister Hammer, met today. The ministry staff was instructed to prepare a detailed formulation of the procedures for dealing with the establishment of future foreign religious institutions, and also to come up with proposals relating to the mission law in the light of recent developments. (HATSOFEH 29 APR 87. See also SELECTIONS No. 150, page 1: "NEW ANTI-MISSION LAW TABLED").

**MISSION HAIFA:** The International Flower Show in Haifa during Passover was not only an attraction to 200,000 visitors from around Israel, but to mission activists as well. Representatives of the "Messianic Jewish" movement stood at the entrances to the show and near the box offices distributing tracts to visitors entitled "THE FLOWERS THAT WILL BLOSSOM AGAIN." There were quotations from the Bible about death and resurrection, and only towards the end of the tract could one notice that it was a missionary pamphlet. The name of Yaakov Damkane,

well-known as a missionary activist, appeared on it. The basic message was that, although flowers die and plants wither, those who continue to flourish are the Messianic Jews. Complaints were filed about the tract distribution by visitors, and by an Orthodox Jewish member of the Haifa municipality, but no action was taken. (A photograph of the front page of the tract was reproduced by KOL HAIFA, YEDIOT AKHRONOT SUPPLEMENT; also a news item in EREV SHABAT, both on 24 APR 87)

**MISSION TEL-AVIV:** Missionary activists flooded downtown Tel Aviv with missionary propaganda which caused a commotion among local residents, who in turn appealed to the authorities. The missionary material was signed by the apostate missionary Yaakov Damkane. The Religious Council called on the police to halt this practice which leads to disturbance of the peace. The municipal spokesman stated that they had no knowledge of such activity, but citizens have the right to appeal to the municipal inspectors since literature distribution without a license is forbidden because it leads to littering. The name and address of violators should be ascertained. Meanwhile the anti-mission society YAD L'AHIM has set up a special patrol of experienced young people to frustrate missionary plans on the spot. In view of missionary attacks, rabbinic circles are again stressing the need to enact legislation with teeth against all forms of mission. (HAMODIYA 29 APR 87)

**MISSION HERZLIYA:** Massive pressure has been exerted by the Ultra-Orthodox society YAD L'AHIM to cancel a concert in Herzliya because of the appearance of the baritone soloist David Loden, who they claim is an active missionary. While the local chamber orchestra was prepared to forego Loden's services, Herzliya Mayor Eli Landau has announced that he will cancel the entire concert if Loden is dropped. "Herzliya will not lend a hand to religious persecution," he stated.

Rabbis Moshe Lachover and Eliezer Sorotskin, YAD L'AHIM chiefs in Netanya, claim that they have proofs that Loden is a missionary, and have written excited letters to the orchestra stating that Loden is a leader of the "Beit Asaf" congregation "which labours to promote Christianity." The anti-missioners have also threatened to conduct stormy demonstrations, and have submitted complaints against Loden on the basis of alleged violations of the mission law. "They call themselves Messianic Jews, but this is a successful bluff of Christianity," Rabbi Lachover states. They also named Lisa Loden and Evan Thomas as congregational leaders.

The singer refused to elaborate on the charges against him, but confirmed that he leads the congregation of Messianic Jews; this has no connection with his work as a singer. Concerning the charges of missionary activity, he said: "These people are hounding me; maybe in a week, after the performance, I'll talk." (HADASHOT 7 MAY 87)

**MISSION TIBERIAS:** As a result of pressure from YAD L'AHIM, performances suspected of being "missionary" were canceled in Tiberias last week. The J.T.A. correspondent reports that a puppet show scheduled for a hall in Tiberias was canceled when YAD L'AHIM activists stood outside the hall and appealed to the public not to enter. Another performance scheduled for the River Jordan Hotel with a group called "Singers of Praise" was also canceled following intervention of Tiberian rabbis. They explained to the hotel management that it would be a missionary event, showing them the text of the songs that would be sung by the choir. (HAMODIYA 7 MAY; YETAID 10 MAY 87)

**ACT TWO: ISRAELI YOUTH DANCE IN BRITAIN:** The furore over the Shalhevet dance group from Herzliya continued, with the refusal of Israeli sponsors to bow to Orthodox pressure in Britain and Israel to re-arrange the tour under entirely Jewish sponsorship. The visit provoked

strong protest from the Jewish Board of Deputies in Britain for its link to "PRAYER FOR ISRAEL," which it believes is "a missionary group." The Council of Christians & Jews in Britain described PFI as "evangelical Christians very supportive of Israel." Founder and director Ken Burnett insisted that the group came on a "goodwill visit," the second in three years. "If there had been any problems with us, surely they wouldn't have come back," he remarked, adding that PFI "does not employ missionaries." Some of the Israeli participants scored "the fuss about the missionaries, which in Israel is virtually nil." (LONDON JEWISH CHRONICLE 10 APR 87) The dance group flew home to Israel in time for the Passover, convinced they had not been unwitting participants in a missionary exercise, and denying they had performed on the Sabbath. Leaders of the group were sharply critical of the Jewish Board of Deputies, and one remarked, "Thousands of people saluted Israel by coming to our performances. We were missionaries for Israel." (JEWISH CHRONICLE 17 APR 87)

**ANTI-MISSION:** The no-confidence motion of M.K. Verdiger was reprinted in the party organ SHEARIM on 1 APR 87. It was based on the alleged impotence of the government to deal with the mystical and missionary sects, but focused largely on the failure of the government to halt the construction on Mt. Scopus of the Mormon-sponsored extension to Brigham Young University. Verdiger charged secularist leaders with indifference to the mission and sectarian threat; but instead, "the secular media are filled with articles expressing concern over the increasing influence of the Ultra-Orthodox, and are fearful over the wonderful 'penitents' movement of thousands of young people fed up with infidelity ..."

**CONVERSION THREATS:** The Ministry of Interior reports nostalgically that the tactic of conversion to Christianity is returning. Deputy Interior Minister Ronnie Milo announced that he would deport from Israel any citizen who returns to this outworn tactic. Last month three families who had not received flats in Ramat Aviv announced that they had decided to convert to Christianity and to convey their children to "the Mission." The announcement was received with surprise at the Interior Ministry.

"This tactic was very widespread in the 1950s and the early '60s," a ministry bulletin noted. "The tactic of threatening to emigrate from Israel never helped any one, and neither will this!" Mr. Milo said that the fact that some half million persons threatened to emigrate and fulfilled their threat doesn't mean that those who are threatening to convert to Christianity will indeed convert. "We will not be deterred by threats," he insisted. (MAARIV 30 APR 87)

**HASSIDIC MUSIC:** An unusual surprise awaits listeners to the VOICE OF HOPE missionary radio program of South Lebanon. The station which is well-received in most parts of Israel coordinates popular music and missionary preaching in English. Recently they have introduced a program of hassidic music alongside Israeli and country music. It isn't clear whether this is a prelude to a new form of missionary broadcasts. (EREV SHABAT 1 MAY 87)

\*\*\*END TRANSCRIPT\*\*\*

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