

NEW MESSIANIC JEWISH COURT CASE: The Israeli High Court of Justice has issued an order nisi (injunction) barring the Interior Ministry from deporting a family of six who arrived in Israel eight months ago from the U.S. with the intention of being new immigrants. Justice Shulamit Wallerstein also instructed the Ministry to grant the family a tourist visa until the conclusion of hearings on their petition.

Richard and Ricky Kendall claim that they have been refused new immigrant certificates under the Law of Return, or permanent residence, on the grounds that Richard Kendall is "a Messianic Jew who believes in Jesus the Messiah... and in their national and religious link to the Land, the people and the State." In the petition submitted on their behalf by attorney Yosef Ben-Menashe, the family claim that they left their home in Pennsylvania following a wave of antisemitism they experienced at the hands of some of their fellow-townpeople, even though Mrs. Kendall is a non-Jewish Protestant.

Although Richard Kendall was born to Jewish parents, in the course of time he accepted the belief which sees Jesus as the Messiah, and he has become a "Messianic Jew." They argue that the ministry's refusal to grant them immigrant rights because of their belief is "damaging to born-Jews living in the U.S." The petition will be heard before a panel of three justices. (HAARETS/YEDIOT AKHRONOT/HADASHOT 10 NOV 88)

"JAFFA JEW ADVERTISES FOR JESUS": A Jaffa Jew, allegedly backed by U.S. churches, has placed full-page advertisements in Israeli papers calling on Jews to "accept Jesus as the Messiah." The anti-mission group YAD L'AHIM claims that the advertiser, Yaacov Damkani, has run his "Jesus campaign" for a decade. "We are keeping our eye on Damkani," said Judy Perlman of the anti-mission group.

The ad first appeared in YEDIOT AKHRONOT on 15 SEPT under the heading "WHO IS THE VICTIM?" and a similar one in HAARETS a week later, and also in the tabloid HADASHOT, owned by HAARETS. Elon Shalev, assistant to YEDIOT editor Yudkovsky, told the POST: "We showed it to a number of religious Jews and they did not object." The paper received about NIS 10,000 for publishing it. There were several complaints from readers; and he later learnt that in other papers the same ad explicitly mentioned Jesus. "Since it is clearly meant to convert Jews, YEDIOT will not accept this ad again," he said.

Amos Shocken, general manager of HAARETS, stated that his paper accepts any ad that does not violate the law, except such that preach racial hatred. (JLM POST 5 OCT 88) A reader of HAARETS for 50 years complained of the full-page missionary ad without any indication that it was a paid ad, and not a feature article. The editor replied that it was indeed a paid notice. (HAARETS 12 OCT 88) SEE SELECTIONS No. 167, pages 1-2 "WHO IS THE SACRIFICE?"

MORE ADS: YEDIOT AKHRONOT & MAARIV (11 NOV 88) carried identical ads by Yaacov Damkani in their weekend editions, addressed "TO THE SECULAR AND THE RELIGIOUS, TO THE LIKUD & THE LABOUR ALIGNMENT; PEACE, HOPE AND SALVATION IN THE MESSIAH RISEN FROM THE DEAD. Isaiah 53, Daniel 9, Zechariah 12, Jeremiah 31. Happy are they who read and understand, who walk in love, justice, grace and truth, to the honour and glory of God. We will be happy to send literature to all who are interested. Yaakov Damkani, POB 8355 Jaffa 61082, PHONE 03-823377.

The Jerusalem weekly KAWL HA'IR on the same date carried an ad relating to the recent Israeli elections, with wordplays based on the

ballot code and party slogans and names: "The choice that follows... which TRULY changes things, the FAITH that brings REVIVAL to Israel, whereby our sins are FORGIVEN and SALVATION comes to our people. A JUDAISM OF FAITH AND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE MESSIAH YESHUA. See Jeremiah 31 and Isaiah 53. For additional details, literature and group meetings, contact Leor Elan, POB 32120 JERUSALEM 91320, Phone: 02-243877.

"THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST" (CONTINUED) SEE SELECTIONS No. 167 Pages 2-4: Since the previous issue of SELECTIONS, an additional 70 clippings have been received relating to the film as of 13 NOV 88. A summary follows:

OVERSEAS VIOLENCE: (France) As a result of a wave of unprecedented violence, Catholic zealots have succeeded in preventing the screening of THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST in most of France. Fire bombs, tear gas and other means have been used to intimidate cinemas, and one was completely destroyed by fire, while in most of the provinces angry townspeople, right-wing priests and laity have harassed cinemas and viewers. The Archbishop of Paris Lustiger denounced the campaign of violence, but linked it to strong Catholic feelings of outrage provoked by the film.

In Greece a crowd rampaged through central Athens protesting the screening of the film, and police used tear gas to quell a 2,000-strong crowd led by a Greek Orthodox priest which slashed the screen of one cinema. Two of seven cinemas scheduled to show the film cancelled performances following the protest.

MORE READERS' RESPONSES: John Welch of Providence, Rhode Island, complimented Peirre Sauvage's review of the film (SELECTIONS 167, page 3 "A JEWISH VIEW") as "sensible". (17 OCT 88 JLM POST). Two other readers responded critically to Professor Flusser's attack on the film (SELECTIONS 167, page 4, 25 SEP 88). S.L. Wies of Tel-Aviv asked why Prof. Flusser expects a film which is not a documentary to be anything but "a distortion." Scorsese did not claim his movie was the Gospel, but it is his own interpretation of a book (not The Book). If people feel threatened by a film, they should take a close look at their convictions, he concludes. (4 OCT 88) Prof. Quastel of Omer cannot see how one can express an opinion without seeing the film, and even if one agrees with Prof. Flusser about the negative aspects of the film, there is no way in which the film can harm the Jewish people or "contribute to hatred against Jews in their land," as Flusser claims. Maybe the film will stimulate someone to make a better film about the period. (13 OCT 88)

Rabbi David Rosen, director of the Bnai Brith Israel office, in an article in the new English-language paper, THE NATION (14 OCT 88), analyzes Prof. Flusser's arguments and finds them faulty. Flusser overlooked the fact that neither the novel on which the film was based, the scriptwriter, the director, nor any major actors, were Jewish, with only one Jew who chaired a subsidiary of a film company involved; and the whole affair is made out to be "a Jewish initiative, if not conspiracy!" Those who wish to protest the film should do so, but it should not be banned in Israel, any more than it has in other open and democratic societies.

FTLM BANNED IN ISRAEL: On 18 OCT 88 all the major newspapers in Israel announced the decision of the Interior Ministry's film and theatre censorship board to ban the screening in Israel of the controversial "TEMPTATION" film. "The film touches on the very tenets of the Christian faith, violates censorship regulations and Article 149 of the criminal code, which forbids offending religious beliefs," board chairman Joshua Justman stated, noting that the vote was "overwhelming" (16 to 3 with 2 abstaining) to ban. He cited the precedent

of the film THE PASSOVER PLOT, which was also banned in Israel because it alleged that the resurrection of Jesus was faked. "Freedom of expression is indeed a value, but it is not absolute," he added, and the fact of a large community of Christians in Israel who would be offended by the screening of the film must also be considered.

It was reported that strong protests against the film were received from leading local clergymen as well as Christians from abroad. Although there are no Christians on the censorship board, two officials of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem were invited to the special screening before the vote. "I thought it was blasphemous, ICEJ spokesman van der Hoven commented afterward. "If it had been allowed to be shown in the Holy Land, I think it would have soured the relationship many Christians have with Israel," he added.

One of the three board members who voted in favour of screening the film in Israel commented: "Jesus is portrayed as a human being instead of as God: that's all there is to it," adding: "I don't see why the board has to worry about the film being disliked by the Pope, who has yet to recognize the State of Israel." Levy Barak, director of the film's Israeli distributors, Golan-Globus studios, announced that the company would appeal the decision. "The film has been permitted even in Italy, where the Pope sits; but in Israel it was banned," he protested.

RESPONSE TO THE BAN: About three dozen articles, editorials, and sundry comments were published in the Israeli press following the banning of the film. A selection of excerpts follow:

The Board has apparently turned more Catholic than the Pope, writes the editor of HAARETZ. The time has come for the next Knesset to act to repeal the archaic censorship law, he concludes. (19 OCT 88) In a similar vein, MAARIV, the same date, expresses the hope that the board's verdict will spur repeal of the censorship law. In an interview published in MAARIV with Haim Cohen, former Israeli High Court Justice, Cohen stated that the board acted within its authority in banning the film, but he felt the censorship board was unnecessary since there were laws against offending religious sensitivities which could have been invoked without employing censors.

Israel Lippel, former director-general of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, welcomed the board's decision. "I am no less a democrat than others, but I don't think we have to offend millions of people in the world. As a religious Jew myself, I respect the religions of others as I would want others to respect my religion... and we don't have to provide more reasons for antisemitism." Tel-Aviv chief rabbi Israel Lau likewise appealed for sensitivity to the religious feelings of others as we desired others would show for our faith.

Mukhram Hourri Mahul, a "secular" Arab Christian journalist, commented: "Jesus would doubtless tell his 'followers' who oppose the screening of the film to love their enemies if they think those who show the film are enemies. Whoever thinks his faith will be undermined by seeing the film is signaling that his faith is not strong enough. If the line of not offending Christian feelings is the guide to the decision, it would be preferable to be concerned about more essential matters, such as turning Christian citizens in our country into citizens with equal rights."

Tamar Galbatz of HADASHOT claims that the novel on which the film was based was televised some 17 years ago in a six-part series on British TV, starring an Israeli who played Jesus, and there was no uproar. (20 OCT 88) Danny Veret, film critic of the leftwing AL HANISHMAR, found the film "profoundly religious and likely to strengthen the faith of believing Christians", directed by a man who for years has included

Christian motifs in his films. (21 OCT 88) Several articles cited the remarks by Michaél Morris, a Dominican priest-art scholar who reviewed the film. While the film was said to depart from several major Christian traditions, its emphasis on the humanity of Jesus remains within Christian dogma, which in AD 451 ruled that Christ was true God and true man. (HA'IR TELAVIV 21 OCT 88)

Yael Yisrael, in a mixed review of the film, is puzzled by the decision to ban it; she finds it too long and often tedious, not to mention historically inaccurate. (AL HAMISHMAR 23 OCT 88) Irit Shamgar of MAARIV (23 OCT 88) mocks the hypocrisy of the censorship board which has approved films of violence and hard porn, but as if to justify its existence picks on the Jesus film to demonstrate its feigned sensitivity to the Holy See and the Christian minority in Israel. Rahel Gordin of HAARETZ (23 OCT 88) was unimpressed by the content of the film, although visually "it was very beautiful... but it has nothing to say." She concludes: "To exploit a story of spiritual significance like the New Testament in order to say a few flat and insignificant things is simply a pity. At the same time, it isn't clear to me why the religious sensitivities of someone should be hurt by it."

A local movie magazine justified censorship on religious grounds, although Israeli movie critics by and large sharply criticized the decision to ban the film. "The Jewish State is especially sensitive to the fact that the Holy Land is the centre of three great religions," the writer noted. It is doubtful that the film would have enjoyed a long run, anyway, had it been permitted for screening here; it's too long and boring.

In a two-page feature article by Edna Feinro in Venice (HADASHOT 27 OCT 88), Scorsese is reported to have said that a revolution of history required its victim, Jesus. Yigal Tomarkin in HAARETZ (28 OCT 88) is reminded by the furore over the "Temptation" film of a pioneer Hebrew novel by A.A. Kabak about Jesus entitled THE NARROW PATH ("MISHOLE HATSAR") The Hebrew author also tried to capture the humanity of Jesus, a person who has inspired theology, literature, music and art, and "there is no Jew who can remain indifferent to Jesus, whether despising or admiring him." Yigal Mashiakh of the Labour weekly DAVAR HASHAVUA (11 NOV 88) found the film "vulgar, stammering, unbalanced between earthiness and sanctity... and lacking in good taste."

RELIGIOUS JEWISH & CHRISTIAN REACTIONS TO FILM BAN: The responses to the affair of three Orthodox Jewish papers leaning to ultra-orthodoxy were ambivalent, reflecting uneasiness at the heavy publicity given to the subject. The censorship board was sensitive to Christian feelings, but where is its sensitivity to Orthodox Jewish feelings constantly outraged by films and plays which deride the basic values of traditional Judaism?, they ask, "It is permitted to offend Jewish sensitivities, but in Israel forbidden to offend the sensitivities of Christian citizens," complained HAMODIYA (21 OCT 88), Nevertheless, an unnamed person connected to the film industry was cited as favouring the showing of the film in the framework of the war against "the mission" so that fewer Jews would join the new sect of "Jews for Jesus".

Prof. Marcel Dubois, the Dominican professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, supported the ban as a credit to Israel for its sensitivity to the feelings of its Christian minority. He would not, however, object to a screening before a select audience, such as at the university, to be followed by a full-orbed discussion. (HOTAM 28 OCT 88) Warm congratulations to Israel for the ban were published in several papers by Christians from Jerusalem, England and New Zealand.

FIRST APPEAL AGAINST BAN UPHOLD: The film and theatre censorship board voted 13 to 4 to reject the appeal against the banning of "TEMPTATION". Additional legal arguments submitted by the distributors, as well as a willingness to cut objectionable portions, failed to convince the board to reverse its earlier decision. The distributors announced they would now appeal to Israel's High Court for a reversal of the ban. (9 NOV 88 VARIOUS PAPERS)

"PEACE THROUGH BELIEF": The way to bring peace to the Middle East, according to a panel of four Arab and Jewish "believers" at the annual Christmas. Dudu Tel-Zur, an Israeli living in Ma'aleh Adumim, agreed to accept Jesus as Messiah. "Only through love of Jesus do we have true unity," said Jerusalemite Esther Dorflinger, a member of the panel billed as "Arab & Jewish believers in dialogue." As an example, Dorflinger told how she and her two sons were living atop the Mount of Olives, the only Jews in the area, during the height of the Arab riots in December; nevertheless, 40 Arabs came and helped them to celebrate Christmas. Dudu Tel-Zur, an Israeli living in Ma'aleh Adumim, agreed that peace will only come when "all believe in the Prince of Peace," and no territorial concessions will work; also that Jewish believers in Jesus should come to live in Israel.

Jan Willem van der Hoven, I.C.E.J. spokesman, offered a prayer, asking for money to enable Tel-Zur and "fifty other Jewish believers" to start a kibbutz across the Green Line. He said "Jewish believers are the best Jews, the best Zionists." There are 80,000 worldwide, and they should settle in Israel, he stated. Yosef Odeh, an Arab pastor in a village near Acre, said: "My work is to love both Jew and Arab," and get them back to Jesus. Mary Shaheen, an Arab believer in Jesus, lives in Nahariya, with sons serving in the Israel Defence Force. She told the audience that the only future for the Arabs was with the Jewish people. (Herb Keinon, IN JERUSALEM 30 SEP 88)

"CHRISTIANS IN JEWISH GUISE": "There is no way a person could be both Jewish and a follower of Jesus. Such people aren't Jews; they are former Jews. It was a major disappointment to read that Jan Willem van der Hoven said, that these are "the best Jews", and urged Messianic Jews of the world to come to Israel. To try to convert the Jews? His support of Messianic Jews, who actually are Christians, is contrary to Israel's purpose and interest." (Rahel Vardi, Katamon, J'Im 21 OCT 88 "IN JERUSALEM")

"THORNS": Horeb, a columnist in "Hayarden" (24 AUG 88), attacked columnists Meir Shalev and Amos Ayalon for their denunciations of pro-Israel Christian fundamentalists like Jimmy Swaggart and the Japanese Makuya sect. They are no doubt much more pleased with critics like the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the like, who "slander, revile, smear and blacken Israel," while pro-Israel Christians are thorns in their sides.

THE MISSION

COUNTER - MISSION COMMANDOS: Notices posted around Jerusalem over the weekend, especially in secular neighbourhoods, called for belief in Jesus, and aroused the anger of "SHAS" the ultra-orthodox Sephardi party. A rabbi who read the notices appealed to the Jerusalem branch of the party, which hastily organized a night-time "commando" raid of two groups to remove what they consider an "abomination". Rabbi Nissim Ze'ev, who instigated the "action", is "SHAS" party leader in Jerusalem, and has submitted a demand to the local authorities to find the culprits and fine them for unlicensed posting of notices. (INDEX 1 SEP 88; YATAD NE'EMAN 28 AUG 88)

A missionary notice by the "Messianic Jews" was approved by the Tel-Aviv municipality for publication on municipal billboards. The multi-colored notice offered a special greeting to the people of

Israel at the Hebrew New Year alongside biblical quotations, and was signed "THE MESSIANIC JEWS." As required by the municipal ordinance, the sponsor's address was given as a postbox in Jaffa. The notice stirred up a furore among Orthodox Jews in the Tel-Aviv-Jaffa area, and it is reported that Orthodox representatives in the municipality will submit a question on the subject in the near future. "Has Mayor Lahat decided to fight against the Torah in every way possible?" Orthodox Jews are asking. (HATSOFEH 18 SEP; YATAD HANEV'EMAN 23 SEP)

THE MESSIANIC MENACE: Vigorous "Messianic" missionary activity is going on in Israel and in the Jewish world. "Messianic" activists called "Messianic Jews" or "Jews for Yeshua" are being supported by huge Christian finances which comes from Christian organizations abroad. On the basis of the New Testament they threaten in sermons those who reject their faith with the fire of hell, and thus they desire to save Jews. According to the New Testament, the Torah has been annulled and the partition between Jews and non-Jews who enter into this covenant has fallen. This is also the reason for intermarriage among them. The Jewish people must reject the agents of Christianity who wrap themselves in a Jewish covering. YOSEF ATZMON, Ramat Gan. (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 27 AUG 88)

Much missionary material was distributed during the week of Passover in central areas of Tel-Aviv. Mission activists thrust into the hands of passersby tricky literature praising "That Man" (Jesus) and calling on people to join the sect of the "Messianic Jews." (SHEARIM 6 SEP 88)

ETHIOPIAN IMMIGRANTS: The missionary organizations do not neglect any possible means to hunt Jewish souls. Recently, Ethiopian Jewish immigrants in financial distress have been a target. Evidence of this has been found in the home of the Hananya family, the first Ethiopians in Yavne. A Christian by name of Bobbie Dominique, who is a member of "COMFORT FOR ISRAEL", a Christian organization based in the Caribbean islands, represents himself as one interested to help Ethiopian Jews because they are blacks who have suffered much. They send a flow of money to Israel for absorption of Ethiopian immigrants, and have made contact with the Rosh Pina society, one of whose aims is to help new immigrants. This has been arranged through Israel Feldman, a clinical psychologist who is chairman of the society. Through Mr. Dominique arrangements were made to bring Rahamim Hananya to Martinique in the Caribbeans, where he was interviewed on TV and asked whether he had encountered racism in Israel. (EREV SHABAT 9 SEP 88)

NEW TESTAMENT STUDY: V. Dotan of Tel-Aviv inquired of the Tel-Aviv weekly "HA'IR" where he could deepen his knowledge of the New Testament, and was referred to short courses available in Jerusalem at the Ratisbonne monastery, at Santa Anna on the Via Dolorosa, at Isaiah House, at the Anglican college of St. George and at the Hope seminar in Ain Carem. (26 AUG 88)

END TRANSCRIPT

15 NOV 88/mb

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