

# Numbers Connected with Operation Mercy

by Kai Kjær-Hansen



Gershon Nerel's article on Operation Mercy in this issue has been written under time pressure.<sup>1</sup> The article attracts attention, but also contradiction. In my next article, I will try to identify the organizers behind Operation Mercy and to understand what motivated them. The picture I get is quite a different one from Nerel's. In the present article, I am going to deal with Nerel's opinion of the number of Hebrew Christians who remained in the Land and the number of those who left.

But Nerel is challenging on other points, which in a different context could be interesting to discuss, namely the significance Poljak and the group around him have had for the Messianic movement today in terms of theology, missiology, and eschatology.

In another context, Nerel expressed his reservations about the group around Poljak, a criticism which I welcome.<sup>2</sup> In Israel, the Poljak group virtually killed itself – although it consisted of *pacifists!* – and died away in the 1980s. The difference between what the Poljak group stood for in 1948 and what the majority of the Messianic movement stands for *today* is very big. Poljak's greatest affinity is presumably with the Beth-El Community, often called the Emma Berger sect, which today has no contact with the Messianic movement in Israel.<sup>3</sup>

- 1 The arrangement that Gershon Nerel should provide an article for this issue of *Mishkan* was made with him in Yad Hashmona, Israel, as late as August 23 this year. We had learned that he had just had a major article on Operation Mercy published in Hebrew (cf. note 1 in his article). Due to the time pressure, Nerel has chosen to include just a few notes, for which he should not be criticized. In my interaction with him, I have made sure that practically all my critical points are directed toward opinions which also appear in his article in *Iggud*. If Gershon Nerel should wish to respond to the criticism in general, space for this will be reserved in the next issue of *Mishkan*.
- 2 See Gershon Nerel, "A 'Messianic Jewish Church' in Eretz-Israel?" *Mishkan* 29 (1998): 54–56. A few corrections are necessary. Nerel writes in this article that Poljak left Israel "in the mid-1950's." He did so in December 1950 (see below). It is also not correct when Nerel says that Poljak had no children. He had a son, Leo, who sometimes published articles in *Die Judenchristliche Gemeinde*, e.g. 136 (1948): 5–8. Poljak's wife, Elisabeth, lived in Switzerland and worked in the movement's office and publishing house; 139 (1948): 22.
- 3 See Kai Kjær-Hansen and Bodil F. Skjøtt, "Facts & Myths About the Messianic Congregations in Israel," *Mishkan* 30–31 (1999): 296–98.

But now to the number of Hebrew Christians/Messianic Jews who remained in Israel in mid-May 1948.

### Counting, Consistence, and Inconsistence

Who should be counted as belonging to the Messianic movement in Israel in 1948? And how many of the leaders enumerated by Nerel who remained in the Land in 1948 also died in the Land later on? The individuals that I focus on have been singled out by Nerel, and they make up a small key group of leaders who remained in Israel and play a significant role in Nerel's conception of history (see below).

They are:

*Haim Joseph and Rachel Haimoff (Bar-David)* and their three children, who were "evacuated" to the Christian and Missionary Alliance's compound in Prophets Street in Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> Other Hebrew Christians – I do not know the exact number – and non-Messianic Jewish neighbors found shelter in the basement there.<sup>5</sup>

*Solomon and Regina Ostrovsky* lived in Jaffa but, according to Nerel, sent their "two sons abroad."<sup>6</sup> I wonder if there were people from Ostrovsky's congregation who were evacuated and, if so, what he thought about it?<sup>7</sup>

*Moshe and Batya Ben-Meir*.<sup>8</sup> Moshe Ben-Meir worked as a postman in Haifa in 1948, and took an active part in building "fortifications on

- 4 Concerning Haimoff, see Gershon Nerel, "Haim (Haimoff) Bar-David: Apostolic Authority among Jewish Yeshua-Believers," *Mishkan* 37 (2002): 59–78; cf. Kjær-Hansen and Skjøtt, 242–45. I have no clear picture of whether and how Haimoff may have been active in the struggle for the establishment of the State of Israel during the siege of Jerusalem.
- 5 So even if Mrs. Bernice C. Gibson was the only C&MA missionary to remain in Palestine – the others were "evacuated" to other places already in January 1948 – the C&MA building was used to protect lives, including the lives of non-Messianic Jews during the troubles in Jerusalem in 1948. Cf. *The Alliance Weekly* (1948): 41–42, 456.
- 6 Concerning Ostrovsky, see Gershon Nerel, "Solomon Ostrovsky: A Pioneer and 'Watchman' in Eretz-Israel," *The Messianic Jew and Hebrew Christian* 1 (1996): 5–8; cf. Kjær-Hansen and Skjøtt, 237–39.
- 7 Nerel writes in his article that among those who were evacuated on May 13 there was a group of thirty-two Hebrew Christians from Jaffa, "most of them from a Brethren background." Quite apart from the question of when they departed and whether the mentioned Brethren all belonged to the Jaffa congregation (see below), it is reasonable to assume, from Nerel's statement, that some of these Brethren belonged to Ostrovsky's congregation in Jaffa; therefore, it would be interesting to find out what Ostrovsky's attitude to this was. Solomon and Regina Ostrovsky themselves left Israel "in the late 1980's to emigrate from Israel to Toronto, Canada, mainly to join their children and grandchildren who were already there" (Nerel, "Solomon Ostrovsky," 5).
- 8 Concerning Ben-Meir, see his *From Jerusalem to Jerusalem: Autobiographical Sketches by Moshe Imanuel Ben-Meir* (1977; repr. Jerusalem: Netivya Bible Instruction Ministry: n.d. [2007]). See also my interaction with Ben-Meir and Poljak in this issue of *Mishkan*.

the borders.”<sup>9</sup> Shortly after his first wife died in April 1946, he married Batya, who promised “to mother my three children.”<sup>10</sup> These, however, were “evacuated” to three different children’s homes as the marriage to Batya, according to Ben-Meir’s own words, was “a failure,” since she was not a believer. “Yet I lived in that hell for twenty-three years, and two daughters were born to us.”<sup>11</sup>

And finally, there are four leaders in the group around Poljak, whom Neryl claims were in Palestine when the Mandate period expired:

*Abram Poljak* is in Haifa.<sup>12</sup> Together with Ben-Meir he sets up a congregation in Haifa.<sup>13</sup> He is of the opinion that God has “evacuated” him to a monastery on Mount Carmel.<sup>14</sup>

*Pauline Rose* is in the Land in 1948.<sup>15</sup> She wrote a book about the

- 9 Ben-Meir, 117; “When the Post Office changed hands, I was called to build fortifications on the borders.”
- 10 Ibid., 107. According to Ben-Meir, a Christian (!) is partly to blame for this “failure.” “When at M.B.I. [Moody Bible Institute] in Chicago [1927–1929], I was determined to avoid a non-Jewish wife, and then, while mourning the passing away of my wife [Rachel Rose] a non-Jewish female was after me. To block her way, I married the first Jewish female who agreed and promised to mother my three children. The marriage was a failure, and home was not home.” But there seems to be little existential consistence in Ben-Meir concerning marriage, for although he was strongly against a Jewish believer marrying a non-Jewish believer, he himself married a Finnish Christian woman in 1977; *ibid.*, 2.
- 11 Ibid., 107. According to his own words, Ben-Meir had yet another “hell” to live in (p. 105). In 1935, Fritz Plotke had been appointed secretary for the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Palestine, a post that Ben-Meir had been rejected for (p. 115). When Ben-Meir chose to have his first son circumcised, Plotke had been much against it and had criticized him (p. 105). According to Ben-Meir, Plotke Germanized and de-Judaized the Messianic movement and did not mind if Hebrew Christians who had come to Palestine as refugees returned to Germany. “The tragedy was that most of these refugees did not plan to settle in Palestine. Those who did not die left as soon as they were able, and like a dog returns to its vomit, a good number returned to Germany. Hitler taught them nothing” (p. 115–16).
- 12 Poljak had been in Palestine in 1935, and had taken part in the third annual conference of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Palestine; cf. Abram Poljak, *The Cross in the Star of David* ([London]: The Jewish Christian Community Press: 1938), 35–40. Before the establishment of the State of Israel, he was in Palestine from April 7 to September 18, 1947; cf. *Die Judenchristliche Gemeinde* 125 (1947): 1; 132 (1947): 1. He arrived back in Palestine on February 10, 1948; 136 (1948): 1. He left Israel on December 13, 1950; 171 (1950): 2. Before his death in 1963, he paid short visits to Israel in order to attend to the congregation, but had no intention of settling there.
- 13 When the congregation was established in February 1948 by Ben-Meir and Poljak, there were nine persons present; *Die Judenchristliche Gemeinde* 137 (1948): 1.
- 14 Poljak believed that in 1948, God had let him live in peace and quiet in a monastery on Mount Carmel so that he might have an opportunity to reflect on topical events in a biblical light; *Die Judenchristliche Gemeinde* 144 (1949): 9.
- 15 Pauline Rose visited Palestine for about three months in 1946, and went back to England in June; cf. *Die Judenchristliche Gemeinde* 118 (1946): 4–7. She was back in February 1948, and left Israel in August 1949; 157 (1949): 2. She visited



events she had taken part in from 1946 to 1949.<sup>16</sup> If you did not already know it, you could not deduce from the book that she was a Christian. The name of "Jesus" is not mentioned once in the book.

*Agnes Waldstein*, the third individual mentioned by Nerel, was *not* in Palestine at the establishment of the State of Israel.<sup>17</sup>

*Albert Springer*, the fourth individual mentioned by Nerel, was also *not*.<sup>18</sup>

As is apparent from this example, it is difficult to determine how many from this small group should be included as members of the Messianic movement in Israel in mid-May 1948. Certain details which I have mentioned affect the result. Without knowledge of this, a different number would have resulted.

Of the leaders mentioned, it is only Ben-Meir who makes a living through ordinary work in society.

And finally, if you look at these individual leaders as a *group* – and leave out the fact that Waldstein and Springer were not in Palestine in May 1948 – it appears that *five* (maybe six) leave the Land and are buried abroad, and only *three* (maybe four) die and are buried in Israel. The reason for the "maybe" is that I do not know when and where Pauline Rose died, and I have no information about Springer's wife's life or death, so she does not count here. It is not a problem for me that so many leaders left the country. It is more problematic that this is not included in the discussion and evaluation of those who stayed behind in the Land in the middle of May 1948, and who were critical of Operation Mercy.

## Numbers of Those Who Remained in Israel

Gershon Nerel maintains in his article in this *Mishkan*: "After the organized evacuation of the majority of Hebrew Christians to England, only a small remnant of about two dozen remained; they strongly believed that Zion-

Israel a few times to fulfill a special mission, but it is not until 1959 that she immigrated to Israel; *Jerusalem* 162/163 (1960): 20.

16 Pauline Rose, *The Siege of Jerusalem* (London: Patmos Publishers, n.d. [Introduction notes June, 1949; repr. Jerusalem: Old City Press, 1972]). The closest Pauline Rose came to the New Testament is to identify Ein Karem as "the birthplace of John the Baptist" (p. 98). Not with one word does she reveal to her readers that the imprisonment and interrogation which she and others were subjected to in August 1948 have anything to do with their Christian faith; see the article on Sitt Elsie and Gerius Hishmeh in this issue of *Mishkan*, note 3. But in the movement's magazine, Poljak told how Pauline Rose, "eine Frau!" unlike the mission's "men who fled from Jerusalem and the Holy Land" raised "die Fahne Christi" ["Christ's standard"] and suffered together with Jews in the besieged Jerusalem; cf. *Die Judenchristliche Gemeinde* 140/141 (1948): 7.

17 Agnes Waldstein came to Israel as an immigrant in May 1949; *Die Judenchristliche Gemeinde* 157 (1949): 2.

18 Albert Springer came to Israel for a short visit in April 1949; *ibid.*; he returned in May 1950 to take over the leadership of the work, 163 (1950): 8–9.

ism was a tool in God's plan towards Israel's spiritual redemption."<sup>19</sup>

This surprisingly small number of Hebrew Christians who, according to Nerel, remained in Israel in 1948 is not the result of new facts that have come to light. The same view can be found in Nerel's writings up through the 1990s<sup>20</sup> and is maintained in 2009.<sup>21</sup> It is essential for his conception of history and his theology.

The importance of these few Messianic Jews in 1948 appears from the term Nerel uses about them – “the remnant” – with all the biblical connotations of this term. The coupling between “the remnant” then and the Messianic movement today is clearly expressed in an article written in 1998 in connection with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel. Nerel writes, to begin with:

We “guesstimate” the overall number of Messianic Jews (Yehudim Meshihiim) in Israel to be about 5,000, scattered in cities, villages and kibbutzim, from Eilat in the south to Naharia in the north. Numbers have especially risen during the last decade, when Israel absorbed about a million new immigrants (olim) – among them were several hundred Russian and Amharic (Ethiopian) speaking Messianic Jews. Altogether there are about fifty groups of Jewish believers in Israel today.<sup>22</sup>

In his conclusion to the article, he writes:

In 1948 there were only about 20 Messianic Jews in the State of Israel, whereas today we speak of a dynamic and growing Messianic movement of thousands.<sup>23</sup>

In other words, the large Messianic movement in Israel today had its beginning in “the remnant,” “about 20 Messianic Jews,” who remained in Israel in 1948.

In “Facts & Myths” from 1999, I expressed a different view concerning the number of Jesus-believing Jews in Israel in 1948. I wrote: “The present survey bases itself on an estimate of some 100 persons (adults and children) at the time of the foundation of the State of Israel in May 1948.”<sup>24</sup> I admitted then that it was “an estimate.” I can now see that Nerel has not been challenged by my “estimate.”

The crucial question is now: Does Nerel's assertion of “about two dozen”

19 Gershon Nerel, “Operation Mercy on the Eve of the Establishment of the State of Israel: The ‘Exodus’ of Jewish Disciples of Yeshua from the Land of Israel in 1948,” *Mishkan* 61 (2009): 28.

20 See Kjær-Hansen and Skjøtt, 62–63, where Nerel's slightly different figures are summed up.

21 Cf. Nerel's recently published article in *Iggud*; see note 1 in his article in this issue of *Mishkan*.

22 Gershon Nerel, “Messianic Jews in the Land,” *Shalom Magazine* 1 (1998): 10.

23 *Ibid.*, 11.

24 Kjær-Hansen and Skjøtt, 63.



hold good?

*Searching for Hebrew Christians/Messianic Jews Who Remained in Israel in May 1948*

For several years, I have been doubtful of Nerel's repeated assertion of this small number. Therefore, I started my search about a year ago for Hebrew Christians/Messianic Jews who remained in Israel in 1948. My objective was to ascertain if there were only "about two dozen." If Nerel is right, I shall have to adapt and make the necessary corrections in my research.

At that time I also started looking for Protestant missionaries and other Christians who remained in the Land and were connected with the Messianic cause at that time. A survey like this would also make it possible for us to compare the Messianic movement in 1948 with the Messianic movement today – composed of Messianic Jews and people from the nations – as was done in "Facts & Myths" in 1999.

I had hoped that I would be able to present the result of this survey in this issue of *Mishkan*. I cannot do that; other urgent tasks and lack of time have prevented me. I can, however, say that so far I have found "about four dozen" – twice as many as Nerel says. And I have sources that I have not yet analyzed, but which will doubtless provide more names. Add to this number individuals whose presence in the Land may be deduced from notes of *participation* in services *before, during, and after* May 15, etc., and I would not be surprised if the end result were double the "four dozen" whom I have already identified.

Some of those identified left Israel already in 1948, for example, Pauline Rose; others left Israel later, for example, Abram Poljak in December 1950 (cf. above). They were "replaced" by new Jesus-believing Jews who immigrated to Israel. Among those were some who became attached to the missions – a matter that we cannot pursue here.

### **The Number of Evacuees**

Gershon Nerel's enumeration of evacuees in connection with Operation Mercy is:

April	20
May 7	42 (the <i>Georgic</i> )
May 13	32 (the <i>Empress of Australia</i> )
Total	94

Nerel claims that he has found "the exact numbers connected to Operation Mercy." In such matters it is bold to use the word "exact." When you compare the different pieces of information about the individuals involved – and not least when you compare the different passenger lists – it becomes clear that these do not completely match. Sometimes children are included in the number, sometimes they are not – and "infants" constitute a group of their own. In addition, there are examples of individuals who were not

on board the ships that transported *large* groups of Hebrew Christians to England, but who should nevertheless be included. The question of *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* for the operation depends on a choice. I do not mind including evacuees beginning in April, but when do we end? As late as October 1948, there is an example of the evacuation of persons to England based on the same criteria as those who applied in April and May (see the example of the Martin family below).

But first we have to find out when the *Empress of Australia* left Palestine.

### **The *Empress of Australia* – Departure May 13 or 18, 1948?**

According to Poljak, the *Empress of Australia* left Haifa on May 18, 1948 – a date I have followed till now.<sup>25</sup> Gershon Nerel maintains that the ship departed on May 13, 1948. Many readers may think that I am now being too pedantic. Is this question really important? I now have to show that determining the *exact* date is important for the matter we are dealing with. Before the completion of this article, Nerel and I attempted, unsuccessfully, to reach an agreement about the date.<sup>26</sup>

For quite some time, I have had a feeling that there was something wrong with the jigsaw puzzle. I have been puzzled by a remark in Poljak's description. He writes that in May 1948, "mehrere Gruppen" left for England.<sup>27</sup> It would be unnatural to use the word "mehrere" ("several") if there were only two departures. I have also been puzzled by a remark in the description given by W. H. Stewart, the Anglican bishop in Jerusalem. He writes under the date of May 27, 1948, that they have been able "to extricate some hundred of these courageous unfortunates and get them away before or very shortly after the end of the Mandate."<sup>28</sup> So I had to go through the sources once more.

Canon C. Witton-Davies, who followed events at close quarters in Jerusalem, made a list of people from Jerusalem who were to depart on the *Georgic* on May 7. At last he writes:

These are all from Jerusalem. In addition on the same ship, I believe, will be Rev. Scott Morrison and two Hollanders and two Geliebters

25 Abram Poljak, "Der Lastwagen," *Die Judenchristliche Gemeinde* 140/141 (1948): 5. The article ends on page 9, and is Poljak's eyewitness account of what happened at the *Empress of Australia's* departure, which is given as May 18, 1948.

26 On October 8, 2009, I mailed Gershon Nerel referring to Poljak's date (May 18), and asked if we could agree on the *Empress of Australia* departing on either May 13 or 18, since "there are other items that are more important" to discuss. Nerel insisted in a mail on October 12, 2009, on his date – May 13, 1948 – and suggested a footnote saying "that there is a mistake in the date provided in Poljak's article (probably in the ms. 13 looked like 18, or during the printing 13 became 18)." To this I replied, "I am not convinced, but have difficulties explaining it."

27 Poljak, "Der Lastwagen," 5.

28 What does "or very shortly after the end of the Mandate" mean?



from Jaffa. The rest of the Jaffa folk (15 or 20), and the Haifa people (another 15 or 20) will come on a ship leaving Haifa on May 13th or 16th. I will try to let you know more exactly later.<sup>29</sup>

As this note speaks about a departure on May 13, it would seem to support Nerel's date, and the ship could be the *Empress of Australia*.

Before I had concentrated on dates of *departure* from Palestine/Israel, but this did not produce any clarity. Now I went through the sources once more in an attempt to find the dates of *arrival* at Liverpool. As to the *Georgic*, there is no problem: The ship left on May 7, with an expected arrival on May 17–18.<sup>30</sup> The fact that a ship like this needed about ten days for the voyage from Haifa to Liverpool, inclusive of calling at ports in Cyprus and Malta, is a significant piece of information.<sup>31</sup>

The investigation produced this result:

On May 23, Nahum Levison writes: "The Palestinian brethren are still coming in, today 34 more are arriving."<sup>32</sup> The port of arrival is Liverpool. They could be on board the *Empress of Australia*. If the ship made the voyage in ten days, it would have left Haifa on May 13.

But is it the *Empress of Australia*? I have my doubts, for if this is the case, it becomes difficult to explain what Levison writes on June 2: "Another lot of Hebrew Christians arrived from Palestine last Friday. The majority of them were taken to London, seven and a baby came here, and we have cared for them."<sup>33</sup> When is last Friday? That is May 28. Subtract ten days, and the ship must have left Haifa on May 18, the very date that Poljak says that the *Empress of Australia* left with "the Jewish Quislings."

Under all circumstances, we have to reckon with at least *three* shipments of *three* major groups – not just the two that Nerel counts. Based on Levison's information, I assume that the departures were as follows: May 7, the *Georgic*; May 13, a ship whose name we do not (yet) know; and May 18, 1948, the *Empress of Australia*.

What implications does this have for Nerel's enumeration? And how many traveled on the *three* major shipments? My estimate is roughly the same number as Nerel mentions (ninety-four, i.e. "about" one hundred),

29 Canon C. Witton-Davies to R. Clephane Macanna, May 3, 1948, The Jerusalem and the East Mission Archives 72/5, Middle East Centre, Oxford. Hereafter abbreviated to MEC J&EM.

30 Cf. R. Clephane Macanna to Harcourt Samuel, May 12, 1948, MEC J&EM 72/5: "As the 'Georgic' sailed on the 7th, it should probably arrive at Liverpool on the 17th or 18th of this month."

31 A search on the Internet shows that the *Empress of Australia* used to call at Cyprus and Malta in 1948; therefore, twelve-year-old "Master" John P. Loebel, who was on board the *Georgic*, was able to send a letter to his parents in Jerusalem from Malta; cf. Jones to Gill, "Events from Wednesday, May 12th [1948], onwards," dep. CMJ c .219, Bodleian Library, Oxford. References in the notes below to CMJ's archive omit "Bodleian Library, Oxford."

32 Nahum Levison to Birger Pernow, May 23, 1948, E 56: 2, Church of Sweden Archives, Uppsala.

33 Nahum Levison to Birger Pernow, June 2, 1948, E 56: 2, Church of Sweden Archives, Uppsala.



but then Nerel includes twenty persons from April who were not on board any of the three departures. In other words, I say "about," Nerel says "exactly":

The *Georgic*, May 7: about forty-two; cf. Nerel's statement.

Ship X, May 13: about thirty-four; cf. Levison's statement.

The *Empress of Australia*, May 18: so far the number is unknown, but the way Poljak describes the situation, it is quite a big group so it is not a problem for me to arrive at the ninety-four which Nerel has mentioned. Added to this may be people from other shipments of which we have no knowledge.

But what then about the twenty persons that Nerel claims were evacuated in April? They must naturally be included in a total estimate of Hebrew Christians who left Palestine in the spring of 1948. And I believe that there were more than twenty. It depends on how you define the criteria for being an evacuee during Operation Mercy. In the total sum should also be included some individuals who left in May and later. It is noteworthy what R. Clephane Macanne writes on May 24: "We are now responsible for something of a hundred who have been brought to Britain."<sup>34</sup> If Macanne's figure is approximately exact, and if I am right when saying that the *Empress of Australia* did not arrive at Liverpool until May 28, you end with a number that could be rather larger.

I dare not give an exact number of those evacuated. Personally, I consider it probable that the number is bigger than the one Nerel mentions. This is a matter for further research to confirm or disprove.

And lastly, two case studies about two families from Jerusalem.

### Case Studies: About Lists Vis-à-vis Other Information

#### *Mr. and Mrs. Lazar Fermo*

Under the date March 26, 1948, the Chief Secretary's Office in Jerusalem draws up a list of passengers to travel on board the *Franconia* from Haifa on April 2.<sup>35</sup> The list is sent to, among others, St. George's in Jerusalem. But scheduled departure is not the same as actual departure. The ship did not leave until April 4, which appears from a handwritten note on the paper.

The passenger list mentions "Mr. L. Fermo & wife," who were Hebrew Christians and members of Christ Church in Jerusalem. Under the heading "Department" is stated "Social Welfare." This indicates that the couple do not travel on a visa issued in connection with Operation Mercy, although they should be included in the number of those who left Palestine in April. Another source announces that they leave before "Operation Mercy visas" are given to people in Jerusalem.<sup>36</sup>

Being entered on a list of departures proves nothing in itself; a list of ar-

34 R. Clephane Macanna to Birger Pernow, May 24, 1948, E VIIa: 2, Church of Sweden Archives, Uppsala.

35 Chief Secretary's Office, Jerusalem, March 26, 1948: "List of passengers embarking in S/S Franconia Haifa on the 2nd April, 1948," MEC J&EM 70/4.

36 Jones to Gill, October 22, 1948, dep. CMJ c. 219.



rivals or letters by or about the people in question does. In the case of the Fermos, there is no doubt. In CMJ's magazine, there is even an obituary of him in 1958.<sup>37</sup>

In the same passenger list appears one "Miss E. Marston." Who is she? If I had not known anything about her beforehand and had only had a pristine list at my disposal, I would have presumed that she came on board. But on the list in my possession the name has been crossed out. Why? Hannah Hurnard has an explanation (although she refers to Miss E. Marston as *Mildred* Marston). Miss Marston had been a teacher at the Jerusalem Girls' College. When it was closed down due to the troubles, she had decided to return to England on her British passport. On her way to a service in St. George's on Easter Day, March 28, she was shot and killed, and was buried the next day. As Hannah Hurnard so beautifully writes: "Amid this sorrow there was comfort in the thought that she began Easter Day in the earthly Jerusalem and finished it in the heavenly one."<sup>38</sup> When the *Franconia* sailed, Miss Marston did not lie down to rest in a cabin. Her earthly remains were in a grave in the Protestant cemetery on Mount Zion.

#### *The Martin Family*<sup>39</sup>

The family consisted of *Joseph*, husband/father, a Hebrew Christian, and *Elisabeth C.*, wife/mother; I have been unable to determine whether she is a Hebrew Christian. (There is a hint that among those who were evacuated during Operation Mercy, there might be [a few] spouses who were not Hebrew Christians.) There were two sons, *Leslie John* and *George*, and a daughter, *Magdelene Ruth*. All the family took an active part in church life in Christ Church; Joseph had been one of the managers of CMJ's Industrial Home, which in 1948 did not function any more.

None of them are on the list which Witton-Davies drew up on *May 3* (cf. above). Joseph and Leslie John, the eldest son, are also not on Witton-Davies' list of *May 7*, even though he wrote the letter immediately after the Operation Mercy people left Jerusalem.<sup>40</sup> But father and son do appear on a later list, which accounts for those who were on the *Georgic*.<sup>41</sup>

We know for a fact that they came to England, which is confirmed by letters about and from them, and it is probable that they came on board the *Georgic*. But what about the wife and daughter? Only with the help of other sources is it possible to reconstruct the course of events.

When the financial account was later to be settled, it appears from a note

37 *Jewish Missionary News* (1958): 60.

38 Hannah Hurnard, *Watchmen on the Walls* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 56–57.

39 Information about the family can be found in the following letters: E. Mill to H. W. L. Martin, July 20, 1948; Martin to Mill, July 22; Witton-Davies to Mill, October 27, 1948; all in MEC J&EM 72/5.

40 A letter dated May 7, 1948, probably sent to various individuals/organizations, gives the names of the Jerusalem party, "which has just left us"; MEC J&EM 72/5.

41 Sponsored civilians who embarked on the *S. S. Georgic* at Haifa, May 7, 1948.

that father and son stayed at Christ Church's Hostel on the days May 1–6.<sup>42</sup> On May 7, father and son may very well, without danger, have walked through the Old City and joined those who had been brought to St. George's Close on May 1.<sup>43</sup> Others may also have done so, which would explain the discrepancy between the number of persons who came to St. George's on May 1 and the larger number that left St. George's on May 7.

So the wife and daughter were left behind in Jerusalem for some unknown reason. Here, they stayed at Christ Church's Hostel from May until September, which appears from the above mentioned note about accounts. On October 27, 1948, they leave for England in order to join Joseph and Lesley John; the Hebrew Christian Alliance pays the fare.

Finally, what about the son George? He managed to go to Cyprus (I do not know when), where he was at the end of July and found some temporary work, hoping his visa would be extended. It is fair to assume that George Martin was not the only one who managed to go to Cyprus. I suppose George must also be included in the number of evacuees during Operation Mercy.

### Concluding Remarks

Whichever way you look at things in connection with Operation Mercy – and I pass no judgment on either the evacuees' or the evacuators' attitude to God – it is beyond doubt that a considerable number of individuals attached to the Hebrew Christian/Messianic movement in Palestine/Israel at that time left the Land. How big a percentage cannot be stated until it has been established how many Hebrew Christians/Messianic Jews remained in the Land – a survey that has not yet been conducted.

In the next article, I will try to show who was responsible for Operation Mercy, and also what their motives were.

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42 Jones to Gill, October 22, 1948; dep. CMJ c. 219.

43 Cf. the description of the first stage in Jerusalem of Operation Mercy in Jones' letter of June 4, 1948, printed as the first article in this issue of *Mishkan*.