

This story made the headlines in Romanian newspapers about eight months ago.

Taken from "Ha'aretz", Wednesday, December 26, 2001:

Rishon couple charged in Romanian adoption scam

By Ran Resnick

A couple from Rishon Lezion were arrested yesterday on suspicion of usury and fraud in connection with the adoption of babies from Romania.

The suspects are said to have charge each couple NIS 20,000.

Police believe that Moshe and Leah Meirson, who have dual Romanian and Israeli citizenship, used fraudulent means to get tens of thousands of shekels from Israeli couples wishing to adopt babies. They were released on bail by the Ramle Magistrate's Court.

The Meirsons arranged the adoption of some 80 babies from Romania by Israeli couples over a few years. However, police say, the Romanian authorities canceled their license about 18 months ago. Nevertheless, the couple allegedly continued to get funds from Israelis wishing to adopt a baby.

The authorities in Romania and Israel are also investigating whether some of the babies previously adopted were brought here with falsified documents.

Other Israelis are believed to have been involved in the scam.

Because of the suspicions against the Meirsons, the Romanians have held up the adoption of 14 babies, for the past year-and-a-half, despite the fact that the Israeli parents-to-be paid for the process and saw the babies.

The Romanian government only last week decided to allow the 14 stalled adoptions to go forward and they are now awaiting legal authorization.

At yesterday's court hearings, the defense counsel denied the charges and said the allegations stemmed from a civil dispute and not a criminal offense.

The magistrate yesterday issued an order forbidding the couple from leaving the country, told them to leave their passports with the police and forbade them from meeting any of those involved in the case.