

SUBJECT 1: THE HOLIDAY SEASON

DATE: 22.12.78 JOURNAL: JERUSALEM POST (ENGLISH A.M. INDEPENDENT) NEWS ARTICLE
 HEADING: "BETHLEHEM'S MAYOR HOPES FOR PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS"

BYLINE : Jerusalem Post Reporter

QUOTE : Mayor Elias Freij of Bethlehem yesterday extended his best wishes to people of every faith who are visiting his town for the holiday season.... "Speaking as an Arab," the mayor said, "both Christians and Moslems consider Christmas a holy occasion, and I don't think any Arab would do anything to disturb it." Visitors who have complaints or special requests are welcome to call on him, he added. Speaking for Bethlehem's residents, however, the mayor indicated that his Christmas will not be as joyful as he would like. He bemoaned the fact, for instance, that the town's financial condition will prevent him from giving municipal workers a holiday bonus. His constituents are also gloomy, he said, because of the break in Israeli-Egyptian peace talks, and because of the push to increase Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip....

Commenting on the army's sequestration of 1,000 dunams of land in nearby Beit Sahur, he said, that such acts could not benefit and were not in keeping with the spirit of peace negotiations. He recalled that Beit Sahur is also Shepherds Field, where, according to tradition, the angels sang "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST AND ON EARTH GOOD WILL TO MEN."

Finally, Mayor Freij called on the heads of all churches to agree on a single date for the celebration of Christmas. Such unification has been effected in other countries, but here confusion reigns because of three different dates. Most observe Dec. 25, but the Greek Orthodox recognize January 7th, and the Armenian community January 18....

In Haifa Christmas services have already begun, and will continue until mid-January at the Scandanavian Seamen's Church. The special celebrations are for sailors who will be at sea on Dec. 25th, Pastor Per Faye Hansen told THE POST. On Sunday the church will hold services in English and German at 7 p.m. and then in Norwegian at 9. The Ashdod Seamen's Church will hold its Christmas service next Monday at 7.30 pm. Pastor Hansen is distributing gift parcels to sailors who are in Israel for the holiday. A large Christmas tree, provided by the Haifa Municipality, has been set up and decorated in the church. END ARTICLE

DATE: 24.12.78 JOURNAL: JERUSALEM POST NEWS ARTICLE
 HEADING: "PILGRIMS CROWD TO BETHLEHEM FOR CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATIONS"

BYLINE : Haim Shapiro, Jerusalem Post Reporter

QUOTE : Thousands of Christian pilgrims will crowd into Bethlehem's Manger Square tonight to mark Christmas Eve, with security forces doing their best to insure that no incidents mar the festivities. The holiday is the first of three Christmases observed yearly in the Holy Land.... The Roman Catholic and Protestant celebration will begin today at 12.30 when Latin Patriarch Giacomo Beltritti leaves Jerusalem for Bethlehem--at the Mar Elias Monastery--he will be greeted by the mayor of Bethlehem, accompanied by mayors of nearby largely Christian towns of Beit Sahur and Beit Jala. At 1.30 the Patriarch is scheduled to enter Manger Square accompanied by notables, police and military officials and hundreds of Christian boy and girl scouts. Later at 4.30 the Protestants begin their festivities with a service in Shepherds Field in Beit Sahur. But the major celebration will be tonite in Manger Square in front of the Basilica of the Nativity, the church over the spot on which according to Christian tradition Jesus was born almost 2,000 years ago. Those lucky enough to have received tickets will attend the Midnight Mass in St. Catherine's Church adjoining the basilica. Others will watch the service on a giant closed-circuit TV screen in the square. But there will be no live TV broadcast of the mass. Instead it will be shown from 6.30 to 7.30 on Monday evening during Israel TV's Arabic transmission. Israel Radio will however broadcast the mass live on medium wave beginning at 11.45 tonight. Before the mass, from about 8.30 seven choirs from abroad will sing in the square from a special platform erected for the occasion. Following the midnight service, masses will be said throughout the night in the Grotto of the Nativity inside the basilica.

As in the past years, entrance to Bethlehem will be restricted to those holding special passes issued by the Govt Tourist Office (for tourists) or the Interior Ministry (for local residents). In theory, the passes are issued only to Christians, but in fact hundreds of Jewish Israelis turn up in Bethlehem to view the Christmas celebrations every year.... In view of the present deadlock in the Israel-Egyptian peace talks, the security forces are expected to be even more vigilant than usual in their efforts to prevent any terrorist incident.

YOEL DAR ADDS: In NAZARETH Christmas Eve will be marked by a special municipal reception at the Nazara Cinema. Hundreds of clergymen, notables and officials are invited. The city is specially decorated, music in the main street. The traditional mass will be held at 9 pm in ten Nazareth churches.... (END ARTICLE)

MORE

DATE: 25.12.78 JOURNAL: JERUSALEM POST NEWS ARTICLE (PHOTO INSET CAPTIONED:

Francis Rizk grimly watches an unidentified Lebanese citizen as he emotionally describes the agony of Christian Lebanon at a Christmas prayer-for-peace gathering outside David's Tower in Jerusalem yesterday.

NOTE: THIS WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CORRECTED: SEE FOLLOWING ITEM BELOW)

BYLINE: Haim Shapiro, Jerusalem Post Reporter.

QUOTE: For hundreds of local Christians and visiting pilgrims the Christmas festivities began on a sombre note with a prayer of solidarity for the Christians at Lebanon. Gathering at the Citadel near David's Tower in Jerusalem, under the auspices of the Christians Concerned for Lebanon, the assembled heard Francis Rizk, political adviser to the Christian forces in South Lebanon; express his prayers for peace--for Israel and Lebanon. Accompanying him were some 150 Lebanese Christians who came to Jerusalem for the service in trucks, buses and cars. The Lebanese were mainly elderly women dressed in black and old men, with only a few young men among them. The Singers of Praise, an interdenominational Christian chorus, sang the HALLELUJAH Chorus. Fr. Joseph, spiritual leader of the Maronite community of Jerusalem, brought greetings.

In sharp contrast to the simple Jerusalem service, the holiday was ushered in with pomp and ceremony in Bethlehem as the Latin patriarch entered the town earlier in the day. Thousands of local residents and visitors stood in bright, chilly sunshine to see the spectacle....(see previous day's similar comments on p.1 describing ^{traditional} celebrations.)

Today Christmas services are scheduled for Catholic and Protestant churches throughout the country, and many hotels are featuring special dinners for Christian guests. Some 400 Christmas visitors from Greece and Cyprus, including some UN personnel serving in Cyprus, arrived in Haifa on the Greek liner M/S Arion (former Israeli flagship NILLI) for a 2-day visit. Today 1200 English high school pupils are due for a day-long visit in the S/S Uganda.

Israel TV was last night unable for the first time to broadcast the traditional Christmas Eve midnight mass from Bethlehem because of its continuing wage dispute with technicians. A private film company, however, provided live transmissions of the service to TV stations abroad....

Nazareth looked very hospitable and exceptionally clean last night, with the main streets illuminated and dotted with Christmas trees. But tourists were few, and some even left to attend Christmas services in Bethlehem. "We expect those who were in Bethlehem for Christmas Eve to come to us for Christmas Day," tourism officials said. Several dozen UNIFIL soldiers had asked for admission to the midnight mass (always held at 9 pm out of consideration for out-of-town guests), but had not picked up their permits by early yesterday evening. According to newspaper reports their leave had been cancelled because of tension in South Lebanon. Most of the tourists were young Christian volunteers from kibbutzim in the North, plus some 400 men and women from the U.S., Canada, and Britain who are attending a 2-month course in transcendental meditation in Safad. Nearly half of them are Christians who asked to take communion. END ARTICLE

DATE: 26.12.78 JOURNAL: JERUSALEM POST NEWS ARTICLE

HEADING: "BETHLEHEM SECURITY TIGHT FOR CHRISTMAS EVENTS"

BYLINE : Haim Shapiro, Jerusalem Post Reporter.

QUOTE : Christmas passed without incident in Bethlehem yesterday despite fears by security forces that the break in the Israel-Egypt talks or local opposition to Israel's autonomy plan for the West Bank, might encourage terrorism. (This resulted in some delays while entering and leaving Manger Square on Christmas Eve and morning. Some local shopkeepers grumbled over the precautions, claiming they had kept away visitors. But Judean police commander Sgan-Nitzav Avraham Sastiel, last night told the POST he was sure that most pilgrims understood the need for the security checks. Sastiel also said there were more cases of tourists getting drunk than on previous Christmas Eves. If the drunks did not make any trouble, the police left them alone, he said. But drunks interfering with others, or sprawled out in an unsightly manner, were taken into the police station until they sobered up. He said the police did not have any medication for the drunks or coffee. "We were not expecting this problem and we had other things to worry about," he said.

NOTE: The "UNIDENTIFIED MAN" in a photo in yesterday's POST pleading for the cause of Lebanese Christians on Christmas Eve was GRANT LIVINGSTONE, a Canadian Evangelist active on behalf of Christians in South Lebanon. END ARTICLE.

DATE: 29,12,78 JOURNAL: YERUSHALTON (JERUSALEM HEBREW WEEKLY) FEATURE ARTICLE

HEADING: "CHRISTMAS IN BETHLEHEM"

BYLINE: Abshalom Ashar

EXCERPTS: During the rest of the year Bethlehem-Judah is deep in the slumber of a small town in the suburbs of Jerusalem, with a background of disturbances and political demonstrations in the West Bank towns, the Christian population taking a relatively moderate position. But once a year the world remembers Bethlehem and she rouses herself from her slumber on the birthday of Jesus, according to the inexact chronology of the Church. As Christmas approaches pilgrims gather here in the wake of the Star in the East, which had once been seen by the stargazing magi over the skies of the city by means of their astrological wisdom. The astrological developments which preceded his birth are documented in the New Testament: "WHEN HEROD CALLED THE MAGI SECRETLY AND INQUIRED DILIGENTLY OF THE TIME WHEN THE STAR HAD BEEN SEEN," (Matthew 2:8) With idolatrous materialization of oil lamps and golden balls to illuminated Christmas trees, a baby doll with its parents Miriam and Joseph are already lying linked to a donkey for the flight into Egypt,

During the course of a few hours there will take place in the square a confrontation between cultures, encounters between people over a city which was a place name in the Holy Scriptures is laid out before them in its nakedness as a tourist site. In a taxi on route to Bethlehem X-mas 78, the cabdriver expresses surprise about his fares, what are they looking for here? He finds it difficult understanding why Jerusalemites like us who are not pickpockets or similar marginal characters, dragging ourselves down to Bethlehem on such a cold night. His wife, he says, is Christian, but even she finds it sufficient to watch TV. (There follows a description of the arrival in Bethlehem and the quasi-carnival atmosphere in the town until midnight.) At 12 the square is quickly emptied. A bishop in holiday robes who until now was occupied with ceremonial preparations invites from the (closed circuit TV) screen those remaining to partake of the holy communion in the courtyard of the church. In the square only a few groups are scattered about moving among the devout Christians. A couple looking like Lawrence of Arabia and his girlfriend try to organize something with a monotonous guitar, and all the poor in spirit are gathered there for their life in the kingdom of heaven.

When we returned home the Polish Pope was still delivering his sermon in Latin in colour to the people that dwell in Jordan. And just as he was beginning to offer his hearers the Holy Communion, the Jordanian national anthem broke through like a TV commercial, and closed the matter. END

DATE: 25,12,78 JOURNAL: JERUSALEM POST FEATURE ARTICLE

HEADING: "A FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL"

BYLINE: Yitzhak Goldfield

EXCERPTS: The fundamental issues of Hanuka are still very much with us. Hanuka reminds us of the clash between the universalist and particularist schools of thought. Hellenism saw itself as the great collective human culture, open to all. It dismissed the tradition and uniqueness of the Jews. It demanded that Jews give up their distinctiveness for the sake of the betterment of mankind. In our time, too, many universal cultures--Marxism, certain forms of liberalism and radicalism, fascism, and even monolithic nationalism--have all demanded that Jews dissolve and become part of "mankind." The same attack is found in Christian spiritualism which denies the need for a people, Israel, or for a State of ... Israel. The UN antizionist resolutions essentially make the same claim... But Hanuka also warns us of the limits of fundamentalism. It shows the importance of uniting all Jews, and warns us not to dismiss assimilating Jews as "lost." END EXCERPTS.

VARIOUS ITEMS:

DATE: 13,12,78 JOURNAL: SHEARIM (POALEI AGUDAT YISRAEL A.M. HEBREW) NEWS ARTICLE

HEADING: "CHIEF RABBI O. YOSHEF WARNS AGAINST RENEWAL OF ACTIVITY BY MISSION SECTS IN ISRAEL"

NOTE: (See SELECTIONS No. 47, p.1, first item, to which this is identical.)

DATE: 28,12,78 JOURNAL: AL HAMISHMAR (HEB AM NAPAM) NEWS ARTICLE

HEADING: "WHY DID KOLLEK NOT DINE WITH THE GRANDSON OF THE KAISER?"

BYLINE: Gabriel Stern

SUMMARY: The correspondent investigates the absence of Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek from a festive celebration at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in the Old City on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of its dedication by the Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany in the presence of distinguished international and religious guests and the grandson of the Kaiser. The real reason was not pre-election engagements but Kollek's displeasure at the invitations reading "THE EVANGELICAL-LUTHERAN CHURCH IN JORDAN." The writer points out that, apart from the Anglicans, no other Protestant church has obtained official community status in Israel.

END TRANSCRIPTION 29,12,78/mb