

"THE MISSION"

Several brief articles were published in ultra-orthodox journals During August and September about the mission threat to Soviet Jewish "dropouts" in Vienna.

"Z'rakor" (Jerusalem) claims aid given to them includes U.S. passport arrangements in exchange for conversion, as well as employment and housing. An appeal by one Rabbi Yitzhak Silber, a Soviet-Jewish immigrant, to European rabbis is reported - "to lend a hand to the spiritual rescue of their brethren." "Mahane Ha'haredi" of Jerusalem claims that "tens of Christian organizations are beginning to operate... a network of activists to link up with Soviet emigrés in Vienna and to offer their assistance in replacing the assistance rendered by Israeli representatives or Jewish organizations" (under the new arrangement whereby only immigrants with first-degree relatives in the USA are to be aided). "This decision has caused great shock among the Jews and joy among the missionaries," the ultra-orthodox/declared in Vienna. Missionary literature in various languages is allegedly being distributed among the dropouts "with great success among European Russian Jews" as opposed to the hostile reaction of the Asiatic Russian Jews. "HAMODIYA", on 27.9.81 charges that the Baptists are working among the dropouts very "delicately" by teaching English without any apparent effort at conversion, and "there are many instances in which they have succeeded in bring about conversions."

"HAMODIYA" (18.8.81) reports that "The Mission has recently intensified its activity in the Ramot section of Jerusalem, according to the management of "Peilim, U.S.A.", with some of the missionaries renting or buying up flats, in one of which they conduct worship services, persuading neighbouring families to take part in them. The "Peilim" appeal to the public "to beware of every effort of the Mission to act in that area."

A lengthy Yiddish article appeared in "IETZIE NAYIS" (Tel-Aviv) on 17.9.81 under the heading: "Missionaries in Israel again trapping Jewish souls." Based on the activities of "Yad L'Ahim", the anti-mission society, it purports to describe various missionary tactics in the quest to trap Jewish souls... by picking up I.D.F. hitchhikers, by offering assistance to an invalid soldier who in despair approached them, "but they didn't help him; they only promised him 'eternal bliss';" promises of housing/aid in exchange for sending the children to a mission school in Jaffa. The Krishna sect is also very active of late in Netanya, although not connected with the missionaries, and the "Yad L'Ahim" is active against them also. "But to return to the missionaries, thousands of Jews are receiving conversion literature... in the guise of spreading culture."

"People ~~write~~ ^{come} with complaints that the Yad L'Ahim members are interfering in their private lives," the writer notes, "and that they are persecuting believers of other faiths. For some time now a discussion is going on amongst us as to whether missionary work is legal or not. Actually there are no laws in Israel forbidding the conversion of Jews, and the missionaries know this, and take advantage of this fact spreading their propaganda. Some time ago the Yad L'Ahim discovered a printing plant in Jerusalem which has published books, various journals, and even children's stories. Who could imagine that in a brochure dealing with the life of Moses or of King David missionary intentions would be smuggled into the stories? In one story, for instance, a certain John goes every Sunday to pray in church, and thereby fulfills a great commandment..." Yad L'Ahim charges that this literature, printed in Hebrew, is contrary to Judaism and the faith of Israel, and must be combatted.

CULTS IN ISRAEL

- (A) A full 1½-page feature article on the Mormons in Israel ("Sons of Joseph in the House of Judah") appeared in the weekend supplement (18.9.81) of "HAARETZ", based on interviews with Dan Rona, President of the Jerusalem Community, and David Galbraith, the President of the Israel Community, as well as with several Israelis who have had contact with the Mormons here or abroad. The reporter, Eli Cohen, describes a "kiddush" (with bread and water) in the home of Dan Rona, in the Gilo section of Jerusalem; a worship service in the Hotel Diplomat on the Sabbath; student presence (some hundred Brigham Young University undergraduates taking a half-year course in Israel) at the Ramat Rahel Kibbutz.

"Israel and Jerusalem have a very deep significance in the Mormon religion," the reporter notes, and recapitulates Mormon history as seen by Dan Rona. "The origin of Mormonism is in Judaism. We are the sons of the tribe of Joseph and the Jews of the tribe of Judah," Rona claims. This is said to explain their longstanding attachment to the belief in the return of the Jews to Zion. "They conduct missionary work the world over (Rona admits), but in Israel absolutely not." About two years ago their Utah leaders proclaimed

that "Joseph must pour water over the hands of Judah." Prof. David Flusser of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, a specialist in religions, explains this to mean that the Mormons are to work for the conversion of the Jews in Israel to Mormonism. "The Mormons here do not engage in open Mission like other Christian sects, but they must engage in Mission, since this is one of their most important commandments," Flusser explains. "They work in a delicate manner, but are careful not to sell their goods with a loud voice," he adds. "They begged me to lecture about them before a Jewish audience," he relates, "but they met with a polite refusal."

David Galbraith, ^{Mormon} community leader in Israel, does not deny the ^{total} decision in Salt Lake City but tries to explain it: "If we engage in missionary activities here, they will reject us, oppose us, and misunderstand us. In recent years there have been instructions to us from the Utah leaders to explain and detail the essence of the Mormon religion in Israel. If someone should be convinced and desires to be a Mormon, we will accept him with love, but without ceremony or sacrament, because this is forbidden to us here, unlike every other area in the world where we engage in intensive mission activity."

Dr. Jonathan Shunari of the Hebrew University is in the last stages of his translation of the Book of Mormon into Hebrew, which he also worked on when he was at Brigham Young University. Shunari was impressed by the warm and hearty attitude of the Mormons and adds with a broad smile that they were somewhat disappointed that he did not become a "Jewish Mormon," as they term it. Nevertheless, they were very drawn to him as an Israeli and to his knowledgeableness of things Israeli, of which they have a limited range of knowledge.

The Mormons have now decided to build a religious study centre as an extension of Brigham Young University, and they have applied for permits. "In the first stage only our students will study there," Galbraith states, "but afterwards, we shall be happy to open the gates to anyone desiring to know more about us."

Israeli officials abroad are very well-treated by the Mormons, some responding positively, others "enduring" it in the line of duty. Dr. Moshe Yegar, formerly Israeli Consul in L.A., California, had a very warm relationship and was allowed to enter their huge genealogical centre in Salt Lake City. They also tried to work with "Yad L'Shem" for compiling genealogies of the Holocaust victims, but were met with a refusal. The Mormons in Israel are well-integrated into Israeli life, the writer notes, with some 140 in Jerusalem, 40 in Tel-Aviv, 20 in Tiberias, but the figure for Jerusalem includes about 100 students taking the half-year courses. (END)

(B) A letter of Netanel Blasbalg from Haifa of the "Concerned Parents Against Cults" announces its formation "along the lines of similar organizations in the U.S. with which we are in touch (for) the purpose of supplying information to parents of cult members on how to behave towards their children. It also supplies information on cults to governmental bodies and is in touch with those who are setting up anti-cult programs." (The cults mentioned in the letter are: Hare Krishna, T.M., etc.) JERUSALEM POST 16.10.81. A news item dated 26.10.81 in the POST reports further on the organization and its above leader, a Haifa engineer, who claims that more than 10,000 young Israelis have left home to join the 5 or 6 cults now operating here. Some 60 families have joined the organization formed five months ago. Address: POB 1806 Haifa. It intends to appeal to the Knesset to pass laws to restrict the cults' freedom to operate. In an item in the POST dated 30.10.81, under the heading: "Gov't Panel to investigate foreign cults," the Deputy Education Minister, Miriam Glazer-Ta'asa is reported to have "declared war" against imported religious cults, including TM movement of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, deeming them a grave danger to the youngsters joining them. She told the POST that the Maharishi's teachings 'and those of other sects' are 'idolatrous' amount to worship-ping false gods.'" She claimed there were "thousands" of Maharishi followers in Israel, and the : "problem arose when a number of worried parents approached me and said that something has to be done." Education Ministry Director-General Shmueli stated that he saw no need to have teachers and headmasters discuss the problem with all their pupils, but he suggested that the ministry "identify" cult followers and then send them "for individual handling by the school psychologist."

"INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CELEBRATION DURING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES"

Some three dozen clippings were gathered from the Israeli Hebrew and foreign language (English, Yiddish) press concerning the Christian celebration of Succot. Most were brief news items and photo stories of various aspects of the celebration under headings such as "Three thousand Christians from some 35 countries celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem," and linking the story to the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, with brief background material. ("MAARIV" JERUSALEM POST, HAARETZ, AL HAMISHMAR, DAVAR, "METZIE NAYIS" (Yiddish) HAMODIYA, HATSOFEH, YEDIOT AKH-RONOT, YIDDISHE TSEITUNG). Jan van der Hoeven's statement at a press conference was featured in a number of news stories to the effect that "the Christians operate from the premise of their faith that the Land of Israel is the land promised to the Jewish people by virtue of the Bible and history!"

The opening-night ceremonies at Binyanei Ha'Uma in Jerusalem and the Prime Minister's address to the cheering participants was also covered in news stories.

"MAARIV" noted a uniformed skullcapped male who tried to disturb the assembly by cries of "HEAR O ISRAEL..." from the gallery, but he was swiftly removed by security personnel. The Prime Minister expressed astonishment at the jubilation in certain Arab capitals over the assassination of Pres. Sadat, "a man of peace," adding that these same fanatics are sworn enemies of Israel. He called on his listeners to stand together "for our common interest" for peace and freedom, spoke about the autonomy plan, normalization of relations with Egypt.

The visit of a delegation of 30 from around the world to the President of Israel was reported upon, and the warm exchanges between various members and Pres. Navon who expressed the hope that all the prophecies of solace would be realized.

The participation of the Christians in the annual Jerusalem March was also noted and photographed, with "MAARIV" headlining that the "Christian Supporters of Israel Conquered the March." The subsequent dedication of the new headquarters of the "Embassy" on Rehov Brenner, 10, Jerusalem (at the former headquarters of the Chilean Embassy) was briefly noted as was the attempt by a young religious zealot, "which only slightly clouded the happy spontaneity of the occasion" when he cried out to the assemblage: "Missionaries Out!", but he was taken into custody by the police," "Maariv" reported. Teddy Kollek addressed the assemblage. "You indeed represent a great number of citizens in your countries, but to our regret you do not represent your governments and foreign ministries," he told them. "We thank you from the bottom of our hearts; you are not taking on an easy job" in maintaining the International Christian Embassy. Several photo briefs about the Qumran Dead Sea "happening" towards the close of the Feast were carried in the Hebrew press and in the POST.

A letter by Jan Willem van der Hoeven for the International Christian Embassy was published in the JERUSALEM POST on 16.10.81 discussing the AWACS sale to Saudi-Arabia and U.S. Govt confidence in Saudi-Arabia. "We believe that caution concerning help to this highly unstable Saudi regime is to be commended rather than criticized," the writer concludes.

VARIOUS PRO-ISRAEL CHRISTIAN GROUPS VISIT THE COUNTRY:

Some 5,000 Norwegian readers of a weekly journal there have contributed funds for the planting of 10,000 trees in Mt. Devora near Upper Nazareth as a sign of solidarity with the State of Israel, HAARETZ reports, and a delegation has arrived in Israel. (19.10) A group of 88 Christians from the First International Church in Denver, Colorado, USA, also comprising a dance ensemble, were warmly received in Rishon LeZion as well as in an IDF rest camp in Ashkelon, HAARETZ & MAARIV report. They come often to Israel to express their enthusiastic support for the country, a local contact told the press. And why do they love Israel so much, they were asked: "Because it is written on every page of the Torah," they say.

The Beth Shalom conference, attended by some 350 members of the movement in Jerusalem during October, participated in the dedication of a new clinic for mother and child in Gilo, Jerusalem, set up through their contributions. They have also undertaken to fund the planting of a forest of 50,000 trees, but meanwhile during their conference planted with their own hands some 3000 trees. (This latter figure seems to refer to the participants at the Tabernacles celebration since it is linked with the Christian Embassy.)

"STAR OF HOPE" TV:

The Hebrew press ("HAARETZ", 12.10 & 14.10, "DAVAR", 14-15.10 & "MAARIV", 14.10) carried news articles of varying length about the opening of the new TV station in South Lebanon of "the Christian sect "High Adventure" of the USA." The telecasts were received in most of the northern settlements of Israel, and consisted of Bible films, family and documentary films, news without comment. One of the films was characterized by the "DAVAR" reporter as "clearly Christian religious" in its message, concerning an American hospital. In a dedicatory prayer, George Otis, the U.S. Christian entrepreneur behind the station, said: "O come, Messiah, come quickly and bring peace to the world. Our hearts rejoice for we know your coming is near." On 15.10 the DAVAR reporter noted that American backers of the new station had stressed that notwithstanding rumours, the station does not engage in the spread of Christianity but preaches peace, love, brotherhood and understanding among peoples.

GUIDELINES FOR JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE:

"OIKOUMENIKOS" (Christian Comment) in the JERUSALEM POST (9.10.81) presents a summary of the new Guidelines for Jewish Christian Dialogue now being circulated by the Committee on the Church and the Jewish People of the WCC in Geneva, finalized at a Consultation the Church and the Jewish People in England, which included three delegates from Israel (Ake Skoog, Ibrahim Sim'an & Na'im Ateek). The document touches on past relationships between Jews/Judaism and Christians, New Testament exegesis in this area, mission and witness, antisemitism, the return to Zion, Israel and Palestinianism; and the document is now being submitted to WCC's 320 member bodies worldwide.

SWEDISH THEOLOGIAN LECTURES AT PRIME MINISTER'S RESIDENCE:

"HATSOREH" (N.R.P.) reports briefly (15.10.81) the lecture given by Dr. Goren Larsen, Director of the Swedish Theological Seminary in Jerusalem, on the substance of his research in the subject of the Day of Atonement according to the High Priestly rite, underlining the threefold sanctity of the rite (time, place, person). Dr. Larssen, speaking in fluent Hebrew for about an hour, spoke before the P.M.'s Bible circle.

MAGEN DAVID ADOM:

"JERUSALEM POST" (4.10.81) reports that a number of Christian leaders and organizations around the world have come out in favour of the campaign for recognition of Magen David Adom by the International Red Cross, among them the archbishop of Ghana, the World Lutheran Fellowship, the NCC of India, World Federation of Christian Women and the U.S. Conference of Bishops of the Catholic Church.

BRITISH NCC DELEGATION MEETS ISRAELI PRESIDENT:

Following a tour of Lebanon and Jordan, where they met with King Hussein, a British delegation of the N.C.C. of Britain met with President Yitzhak Navon, who told them to pay heed to what Arab leaders tell their own peoples, and that the peace treaty with Egypt has opened the way for acceptance by the Arab Muslim world of the Jewish State. "I believe that it is impossible to turn the wheel back," the President told the delegation.

YOUTH DELEGATION FROM GERMANY HERE:

A delegation from the Evangelical Church in the city of Weisbaden, Germany, numbering 21 young people between 18 and 21 years old have come to Israel. (DAVAR, 16.10.81)

CHRISTIAN "KIBBUTZIM":

"HAARETZ" (28.9.81) features the story of the American Colony in Jerusalem (founded 1881) under the heading "THE FIRST KIBBUTZNIKIM", against the background of the celebration of the centennial of its founding by the Stafford family from Chicago. Pres. Navon, Mayor Kollek, the diplomatic corps came to honour the endeavour of the family, of whom only two remain in the Holy Land. The article recounts the history of the Colony, its religious vision, its connection with Swedish Christian farmers in Jerusalem (about whom the Swedish novelist wrote in her novel, JERUSALEM), their ministry to the poor and sick during the last days of the Turkish rule, the liberation by the Allied forces in World War One, the medical work among Arab children, the clinic now in operation in the Old City, Anna Grace Lind's impressions of the conflict. "The Israelis have done good for the Palestinians in Jerusalem and the territories, but their honour has been offended, and therefore you cannot find a solution (to the conflict)," she said.

"HAARETZ" (28.9.81) also features a story of "modern crusaders in the Holy Land", summarizing Christian settlements (both communal and otherwise) of Christian groups during the past century, and among them, "there is no doubt that the success of the German settlements established in the Land was not a small incentive, and at any rate an encouraging

example to the founders of the first Jewish settlements here." Several early settlements of Christians are described and several more recent ones, among them a New England Protestant group headed by George Adams in 1866 who preached the imminence of the Kingdom of God in the Land of Israel. (His work was greatly hindered by Arab marauders who despoiled their crops, stole their farming equipment, and attacked them bodily.) In his travel book "INNOCENTS ABROAD", Mark Twain described their tragic lot, and they eventually abandoned their effort and left the country, and were succeeded by the German Templars, a movement founded in Wirttemberg in 1848 on a religious basis, and in 1868 they arrived in Acre in Galilee, which proved extremely successful. During the British Mandate they became identified with the Third Reich and were deported to Australia as enemy aliens with the outbreak of World War 2.

The founding of the Baptist Village in 1956 during the life of the State of Israel is also noted, and the activity of an ^{unpaired} German Christian sect in the surroundings of Zicron Yaacov (presumably led by Emma Berger). A one-paragraph reference is also made to the American Colony in Jerusalem and their Swedish co-religionists who lived a kind of "urban kibbutz life", and whose import of agricultural implements from the U.S.A. "proved useful to the new Jewish farmers in the Land of Israel."

"KAWL HA'IR" (the Jerusalem weekly published by "HAARETZ") on 23.10.81 published an article about the activities of interest to Christians, notice of which is furnished by the Christian Information Centre ^{no. 91} Jaffa Gate. The last item deals with Fr. Isaac Jacob, who "is organizing a Catholic nucleus for a Christian commune (kibbutz) at Tel-Gamaliel. Only a few places remain open for volunteers. After hard work in the field, they will read from the Gospels in Hebrew, be fed, housed, and receive a modest allowance of pocket money. The organizers intend to live according to the system of St. Benedictine."

The same journal carried on 2.10.81 an article on "Beit Isaiah" in Jerusalem and its Hebraic connection (prayers, artwork, liturgy); also a sidebar about Fr. Bruno, the Hebrew Catholic monk who founded it, who was also active in preparation of the documents of Vatican Two in their revision of traditional anti-Jewish attitudes in the Church, and in the establishment of Neveh Sharon, a Jewish-Arab village "designed to demonstrate and promote the idea of cooperation and fraternity among Jews and Arabs while preserving the distinctiveness of each group." Fr. Marcel Dubois is also briefly referred to.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE QUIZ IN JERUSALEM:

A full-page write-up of the International Bible Quiz is provided by "Israel Nachrichten" (Tel-Aviv, 4.9.81) by Schalom Ben-Chorin.

DELAYED BURIAL:

A 50-year-old Roumanian Protestant from Ashkelon, married to a Jewish woman and the father of two children, was buried in the Protestant cemetery of the German Colony in Jerusalem following a ^{complicated} five-day search for his final resting place. Having emigrated to the country eleven years ago with his Jewish wife, Duwardani Francisco was treated as a new immigrant and worked in a carpentry shop when he was taken ill and died. The Jewish religious authorities would not bury him because he was non-Jewish, while other church authorities to whom the family and friends appealed refused burial on the grounds that he was not identified with their sect. The matter was the subject of media appeals, as well as appeals to the Government, and with the aid of Rev. James Smith, a Baptist minister from Ashkelon, burial was arranged for in Jerusalem, as noted. ("HAARETZ", 27.9.81, "YEDIOT" 27.9-28.9, JERUSALEM POST 28.9, DAVAR & AL HANISHMAR 28.9)

GERMAN MINISTER MURDERED IN EAST JERUSALEM:

The Jerusalem police have opened an investigation of the circumstances surrounding the murder of the German tourist, age 54, Rev. Dr. Klaus Wilhelm Kirst of Dusseldorf, Germany, whose body was found near the Lions Gate in E. J'lm. At present it is believed he was a victim of armed robbery, and he had been stabbed with a knife. It should be noted that of late the attacks on tourists in East J'lm have increased. ^{Two}/month ago another German tourist was murdered, and a few weeks ago a group of Italian pilgrims touring the Old City were set upon with two killed and ten wounded. ("MAARIV" 16.10.81)

CHURCH CONCERTS:

A review of the concerts being offered at the Lutheran "Church of the Redeemer" in Jerusalem consisting of Bach and liturgical music, which draw a cosmopolitan audience of Jews and Christians and various ^{JERUSALEM} ethnic groups in a very cultured atmosphere which seems to "embody ^{nearly} the forgotten vision of the cosmopolitan." ("KAWL HA'IR" 16.10.81) MORE

A report on a tenth-anniversary concert at the "Church of the Redeemer" in J'lm since the installation of the organ by a music reviewer. ("HAARETZ" 21.11.81)

"THE GADARENE SWINE":

A visit to a new park on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee commemorating the site of the driving out of the demons into the Gadarene swine. The POST's Helga Dudman reviews (23.10.81) the Gospel accounts, Israeli information about it, and the memories of "a controversy between Huxley & Gladstone over the New Testament" in 1890-1891.

BIBLICAL GEOLOGIST:

Andrew C. Soralle, Jr., an Evangelical Christian from Texas, an oil man (co-owner of Energy Exploration Inc. of Houston, Texas) is convinced he is on the track of a big oil discovery in Israel based on biblical and geological premises. A two-page feature article in the JERUSALEM POST (11.9.81) gives his testimony of personal faith from his life as a fighter pilot during World War Two to his recent ties with Israel.

TRANSPORT FOR LEBANESE WOUNDED:

A plan purchased by the Christian Adventist Church in the USA has reached Israel and will serve the citizens of South Lebanon for the transport of the wounded in South Lebanon to hospitals in the north of Israel and also to serve radio and TV stations in South Lebanon. ("HAARETZ" 13.9.81)

NUN TESTIFIES ON BEHALF OF KIBBUTZ BURGLAR:

A Dutch nun, a professional social worker as well, has come to Israel specially in order to testify in the trial of "The Kibbutz Burglar", Naaman Diler. She has in the past tried to help rehabilitate him while he was in Holland. ("MAARIV" 15.9.81)

"BOOK OF GENESIS" RESEARCH:

A team of scholars from the Haifa Technion have concluded after five years of computer studies of the Book of Genesis that it was "almost certainly written by one author" and not by three as claimed by modern Bible criticism, confirming the traditionalist view of a single author as opposed to the critical view of multiple authorship. However, in an analysis of "Judges" & "Isaiah", they confirmed the critical view of multiple authorship. For each book, a team member stated at a press conference in Haifa. (J'LM POST 28.10.81)

ISRAEL A CHRISTIAN "PRIORITY":

An article by F. Stephen McArthur from the Near East Report, reprinted by "Buffalo Jewish Review," Buffalo, NY (29.5.81) detailing U.S. Christian support for Israel.

"CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL" CONGRESS OPENS IN WASHINGTON:

Dozens of Christian religious leaders will take part for two days in a congress of Christian leaders for Israel taking place in Washington, and including clergy from all Christian denominations who have organized to express support for Israel and to work in its behalf in the U.S.A. ("MAARIV" 14.10.81)

DEBATE OVER "MORAL MAJORITY":

A debate between Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, National Interreligious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee and co-secretary of the Joint Vatican Internat'l Jewish Consultative Committee and contributor to "Evangelicals & Jews in Conversation" (advocating a search for common ground between Jews and the "Christian right") and Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, past president of the American Jewish Congress (who argues that any apparent common ground with Falwell's group is illusory). HADASSAH MAGAZINE, N.Y. Apr.81.

EVANGELICAL POLITICS DANGEROUS TO AMERICAN JEWS:

Former Senator Franch Church, at a rally at the N.Y. Society of Ethical Culture, warned against the dangers of the Moral Majority movement to all Americans and to the Jewish community. (Long Island Jewish World, B'klyn N.Y., 12.3.81)

PALESTINIAN ROLE IN PEACE PROCESS:

A 7-man delegation representing the British Council of Churches, returned from a ^{Mideast} tour, has stated that "it is essential that representatives of the Palestinian people" be included in the peace negotiations. (JEWISH CHRONICLE, 9.10.81)