

LEBANON

"CHRISTIANS ON ISRAEL'S SIDE: Under this heading the Histadrut daily DAVAR (26.7.82), described the deterioration in support for Israel in Norway among various sectors of the population, adding: "There were also manifestations of resistance to the (anti-Israel) pressure. For example, the president of the Trade Unions, Thor Halverson, rejected the pressures of radical unions to exploit the occasion of the negative public reaction to the Israeli attack in order to break off the traditionally friendly ties of the unions with the Israeli Histadrut Labour Federation. Meanwhile, in South Norway, stronghold of Fundamentalist Christian sects, some 7,000 persons participated in a Christian conference for Israel in which the Israeli ambassador Gad Alron and a representative of the Fundamentalist "Christian Embassy" in Jerusalem also took part. The Christian People's Party, which supports the government but does not have membership in it, remains on the friendliest terms with Israel in Norway. The party supports the autonomy plan for the West Bank and Gaza on the basis of the Camp David agreement and rejects the plan for establishing an independent Palestinian state, which the Norwegian Social Democrats are calling for." (S. SHLOMO)

"CHRISTIANS CONCERNED": "The armour-carriers, loaded with a vast tonnage of ammunition and Russian T-34 tanks from World War II, take centre-stage, pushing my rented Renault into the dust of the coastal road. My lead car, containing the escort officer, is driven by the Reverend Grant Booth Livingston of "CHRISTIANS CONCERNED FOR LEBANON." He is dispensing Bibles in Arabic, bound in heavenly-blue plastic, to passing motorists and kerbside urchins, mainly Shi'ite (79% of whom are illiterate). His car is tail-heavy with the Message. In the heavy traffic jams the reverend has his work cut out for him, and the escort officer lends a hand." (WIM VAN LEER, JERUSALEM POST, WEEKEND EDITION 7/82)

"CHRISTIAN GRATITUDE:" "As a Christian, I wish to express my unbounded gratitude to Israel for the liberation of Lebanon, a task all countries shirked..." (From a letter of support for Israel in the JERUSALEM POST 2.7.82, Yoma Munting, J'lm)

"CHRISTIAN EMBASSY": "Even in these days of sweeping voluntarism, there is something unusual and special about the proposal of Mrs. Joan McWhirter of the Public Relations Section of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem. She has volunteered to contribute from her own skin for the purpose of skin transplants for IDF wounded. Mrs. McWhirter offered her suggestion upon hearing on the radio that ultra-orthodox Jews were making problems with this medical procedure. The entire Embassy (which moved to Jerusalem demonstratively when the other embassies abandoned the city) has expressed solidarity with the State of Israel in this war as well. They have now joined other groups who are members of the committee of "Jerusalemites for the Lebanese," which collects funds and various goods and food for the needy Lebanese." (HA'ARETZ: 1.7.82)

In two articles about supporters of the "Operation Peace for Galilee," the Jerusalem Post reported the participation of representatives of the International Christian Embassy. They "carried placards (alongside some 600 demonstrators in front of the Knesset) reading: "ISRAEL, YOU ARE NOT ALONE," and "ISRAEL, WE PRAY FOR YOU." Also Grant Livingston of the "CHRISTIANS CONCERNED FOR LEBANON" lashed out strongly at the international media for "lying for the PLO." (POST: 30.6.82)

Christian Lebanese leaders told a group of world Christian media representatives during a tour organized by the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem that Israel must "finish the job," but without their aid, Haim Shapiro of the JERUSALEM POST reported (2.7.82). Camille Chamoun, a Lebanese Christian leader, told the group that "Israel has been fighting its own war, but it has saved Lebanon." Another leader, Bashir Jemayel, told the group: "They (Israel) are not fighting for me, but this was the only way out for both Christians and Muslims in Lebanon." Pierre Jemayel, former Lebanese president, remarked that "we are thankful to the Israelis for coming," but the other two avoided expressing any gratitude to Israel.

In a follow-up news article about the Christian media tour of Lebanon, Shapiro reported (4.7.82) that authors, journalists, TV and radio personalities (mainly from the U.S.) were taking part, most of them Evangelicals with a strong theological commitment to Israel. They were introduced to anti-PLO Lebanese, some of whom expressed warm support for Israel. One "doubter", Greek Orthodox (MORE)

priest, Fr. Steven Burnam, who had visited Lebanon in the spring on a PLO-sponsored tour, after speaking to Lebanese leaders, people and to two schoolboys in Sidon, declared: "Now I can go home and be pro-Israeli with a clear conscience."

"THE GOSPEL FROM BEIRUT TO THE WORLD! GOD LOVES YOU." Under a photo captioned: Arthur Blessit and his son bearing crosses in Beirut from whence they proclaim the Gospel of love, MAARIV (5.7.82) headed its news story as above. The reporter was Yaacov Erez, the paper's military correspondent. "From the first roadblock on the road which connects West Beirut with the eastern sectors of the city, two young IDF soldiers and two Falangist fighters were stationed. About 150 meters away there was a second Falangist roadblock, and beyond it the roadblock of the Syrians. There was almost no traffic on the road connecting the divided city, AND except for uniformed soldiers there was no one standing between them."

"Suddenly a tall man appeared on the sidewalk, his teen-age son (about 14) at his side. On their backs the two bore giant wooden crosses. They crossed the full breadth of the road. For greater security, pieces of white cloth were attached to the wooden crosses in order that none of the parties to the conflict should be surprised by the unusual sight and open fire. The tall man is a curious American, a resident of Hollywood in Los Angeles, whose name is Arthur Blessit, who has been carrying his cross since 1974. He has been crossing countries and continents, seeking to proclaim to the world a new message: "God loves you."

"The man has already been in Israel and in the Arab countries. Now he has reached Beirut. Yesterday he came to the barrier set up by the IDF soldiers between the eastern part of the city and the western neighbourhood of Ashrefiya. There he set up the giant cross, distributed tags to the few passersby, took "cover" in the entrance of one of the houses and waited. Why? 'In order to try to bring here the quiet and calm that everyone is so longing for.'" (END ITEM)

"MENAHEM BEGIN AND THE CRUCIFIED ONE FROM NAZARETH: THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO HAS OF LATE REFUSED TO BE INTERVIEWED ON NORTH AMERICAN TV NETWORKS, GRANTED AN INTERVIEW TO A FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIAN STATION." In a lengthy feature article appearing in HA'ARETZ (19.7.82), filed by Israeli correspondent Yoram Mizrahi in Canada, the writer provides a caustic description of the program, excerpts of which follow. After noting how he had switched by chance to "One Hundred Huntley Street," on which "one David Mains, a handsome man in a cream-coloured suit and brown tie with misty eyes" appeared, he continues: "He was praying with devotion for the well-being of 'the Israeli soldiers fighting or standing guard over the cease-fire in Lebanon.' The program is produced by the local Fundamentalist church, which is apparently headed by misty-eyed David, and which is apparently connected to the big broadcasting network of the American preacher Pat Robertson, who also operates the Haddad television station. In the pleasant-looking studio several dozens of contented believers, as obedient as innocent sheep, sat while the Christian telecaster spoke alternately to them and dealt with the war in Lebanon. On the screen freshly-filmed testimonies of David Mains' recent Mideast jaunt were shown, while again and again he appealed to viewers 'to believe in Jesus the Saviour' or 'to pray in order to prevail in every affliction.' While David was appealing to the Messiah and urging viewers and believers to pray, the Christian camera penetrated into the office of Israel's Prime Minister Menahem Begin...who looked like one deep in meditation or in thought about penitence and pardon. With him was the telecaster and another young fellow introduced as Robertson's son."

"The Prime Minister, occupied with matters of war and therefore unwilling to be interviewed recently by the TV networks of North America, nevertheless hosted at some unspecified date this couple of Christian (lit. "meshihiim") preachers, who at the conclusion of a strange interview full of flattery and praise, asked his permission to pray together. The super-ministerial permission granted, Mr. Begin's two guests bowed their heads, closed their eyes, and began a loud prayer which included mention of Begin, Carter, Sadat, the Camp David achievements, good will, tranquility, peace, and also the soldiers of the IDF 'fighting and maintaining the cease-fire,' the Lebanese 'who have been hard hit,' and also an explicit request of Heaven that 'we shall all have a true picture of what is happening in the Middle East, because You, O God, see and know the truth!' The two closed with a very Hebraic Amen. But the Prime Minister now radiant as if he had finally discovered the Shekina glory, took hold of the microphone, saying: 'I want to conclude by saying "AYMEN", the meaning of which is "AHMEN"---TRUTH---AYMEN AND AYMEN TRUTHFULLY!' (MORE)

Thus closed the sacred stance. Had it taken place, so I thought, in the time of the governments of Golda Meir, May her memory be blessed, and Yitzhak Rabin, may he live a long life, it would have liquidated the secular-religious coalition and caused the government to fall. The excited telecaster now showed pictures of South Lebanon, long files of Israeli tanks, ruin and destruction on both sides of the border, smiling Israeli soldiers and theatrical terrorists, a real holy war.

"Now came the turn for questions...but before that, red-eyed David explained that 'I also prayed with Palestinians, and I have a personal announcement to make: Next month my daughter Ellen Jane Mains is to marry a Palestinian Arab, Nasser Shahin of Kefar Kana in the Galilee, and the wedding will take place there...' One of the questions raised during this strange program dealt with the personality of Major Haddad. 'They say that he is a criminal, wild, barbaric, but this is simply untrue. Haddad is a sensitive patriot and a true believer,' David enthused. In order to reinforce this point he described how the terrorists had despoiled Lebanon, and especially the southern enclave.

"An old woman with a Slavic accent planning to visit Israel inquires: 'Is it safe here? What is the distance between Israel and Lebanon?' David smiles understandingly and relates how he slept in an Israeli hotel in the north while outside there were 'katyushan rockets' falling. 'My wife and I looked out the window, seeing the explosions, and we knelt in prayer, and afterward lay down to sleep. If we have to die, what would be better than to die in the Holy Land?'

"From this the telecaster passes over to the Beaufort stronghold... The naive description also includes the basic facts about the Christian TV station emanating from Haddad's kingdom... David's voice chokes with emotion, and an aide running about in the studio brings the microphone over to an old man who, frozen-faced and in complete seriousness, asks: 'When you visited Mr. Begin, did he agree to accept Jesus the Messiah as his only Saviour?' David replies: 'No, but I gave him a suitable book. He knows all about it. It was not the proper moment. I would need the proper moment, but at that moment God called us to show abundant love!' Nevertheless, David does not despair. 'One Israeli rabbi, a very important rabbi, said to me that when the Messiah comes, it may very well be that he will be Jesus the Nazarene. Yes, yes, in Israel there is much readiness to wait for Jesus.' I was relieved. Mr. Begin is, therefore, not ready to recognize the kingdom of the Crucified one of Nazareth. I turned off the set and with a feeling of perplexity I climbed into bed.

"The following morning in the studio of CTV I heard how a prestigious morning TV program has been trying to present a balanced Mideast picture and vainly seeking an interview with Mr. Begin. We spoke about '100 Hyntley Street' and someone commented angrily: 'If this is the public opinion that the government of Israel is aiming for, let them revel in it!' The morning telecast of course showed films of Lebanon...from Beirut: thick heavy smoke rising. In an Israeli paper I read that Mr. Begin is to meet with 'an important delegation of Christian broadcasters from North America.' No mention was made of prayers. Meanwhile, Mr. Begin refuses to change his religion and acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth. Perhaps he is still reading the important book of David Mains?" (END EXCERPTS)

BAPTISTS & JEWS: The Baptist Convention in Israel in cooperation with the women of the "BRIDGE" movement (a movement of Jewish and Arab mothers founded by Ruth Lis, a bereaved Israeli mother who was the first Israeli woman to correspond with Jihan Sadat) will attend to Lebanese civilians hospitalized in the north of Israel. A team of volunteer women will operate in each of the hospitals. (MAARIV HAIFA:29.6)

W.C.C. Dr. Mordecai Avitzur, senior official of Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs in charge of co-ordinating the work of international relief organizations in Lebanon, is consulting with four organizations working in Lebanon. He said that the W.C.C. and Oxfam had inquired about aid projects but had not made specific proposals. (JLM POST: 29.6.82) In Geneva the WCC accused Israel of "needlessly obstructing relief operations in Lebanon and infringing the spirit of the Geneva Conventions," Reuters reported. (JLM POST: 7.7.82) In a feature article by Odd Sverre Hove, a Lutheran minister and dean of Yire Sogn Deanery of the Church of Norway, the writer attacked the WCC for its condemnation of Israel and its silence "about PLO aggression which provided the spark for Israel's operation." Hove termed it "overloaded with immorality" and related it to the "ideas common to all antisemitism-- (MORE)

religious or ideological," and concluded that "one would have to look very hard to find the difference between the old Christian antisemitism and the new immoral logic on which the WCC is now basing its condemnation of Israel." (JLM POST: 8.7.82)

CHRISTIANS PRO-ISRAEL (GENERAL ITEMS)

EYE SURGERY DEVICE: An implement for performing complicated optical surgery, worth over \$30,000, has been donated to the Safed hospital by a group of Protestants from France. The device (donated before the outbreak of hostilities in the north) has saved the sight of wounded soldiers. It was donated as a token of appreciation for the devoted care provided by the hospital to the Lebanese reaching it through the "Good Fence" on the Israeli-Lebanese border. (HA'TOOFEH, AL HAMISHMAR, YEDIOT AKHRONOT: 23.7.82)

NES AMIM: A short feature article about the "Miracle of Nes Amim," in a local journal (TSAFON-1-AKKO) on 4.6.82 describes the basic principles of the settlement, the initial resistance to it because of its allegedly missionary intentions, and its complete rejection of all missionary activity or even "a hint of religious persuasion. Every candidate must sign a document obligating him not to engage in any religious preachments." A would-be Jewish candidate for membership in the settlement who wanted to convert beforehand was advised to see a rabbi or friend who would help him handle his problems. Mrs. Pilon, widow of the founder, Johan Pilon, remarked that her husband believed that it was Christian theology which created the mental approach which enabled the Holocaust to develop. "There were always instances of a proper attitude towards Jews on the part of Christians," she says, "but they were so few that we need not take them into account." The group now numbers some 150 persons, 70% of them Dutch, and they all observe the seventh day as Sabbath, although coming from various denominational backgrounds.

"PROJECT KIBBUTZ": A feature article in the SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH TIMES (JO'BURG: 5.2.82) under the heading ART CARLSON: A CHRISTIAN AMBASSADOR FOR THE CAUSE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE," describes the work, motivation and personal and family background of Carlson, founder-leader of the Christian volunteer PROJECT KIBBUTZ. The Carlsons live in Israel with their family of five and completely identify with the Jewish people and Zionism, the article reports. They also give "the Israeli an opportunity to see another side of Christianity seldom expressed over the past 2,000 years," Art remarked to the South African journalist interviewing him while a guest of South Africa's "CHRISTIAN ACTION FOR ISRAEL."

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS: In a political commentary published in THE WISCONSIN JEWISH CHRONICLE (Milwaukee, 26.2.82), Israeli correspondent Wolf Blitzer analyzes Jewish and Israeli links with the Evangelical community in the USA, focusing on the National Prayer Breakfast in Honour of Israel. It was attended by some 300 Evangelicals, headed by Ed McAteer, president of the Round Table, an influential Evangelical group, Israeli Embassy Information Minister Harry Hurwitz, Rev. Baily Smith, Southern Baptist Convention president, and other prominent evangelicals active in politics and communications; also several Jewish leaders interested in stronger ties with the Evangelical community.

CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS

AFRICANS: HA'ARETZ (12.7.82) reported the first visit ever of a black African religious leader from South Africa. Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane, head of the four-million strong black African Zion Christian Church, was received by Israeli President Yitzhak Navon following a tour of the holy places. Navon was told that many of the church members are very interested in the Holy Land. He was also received by the Minister of Tourism. (HAARETZ: 12.7; 20.7; JLM POST: 19.7) A group of 29 Nigerian Christian pilgrims, led by Chief Ovkovo, head of a large Christian community in Nigeria, completed a two-weeks tour to Israel. "When we return to our country, we shall gather the members of our community and tell them about our visit to the Christian holy sites. Beginning next month, additional groups of pilgrims will be coming from Nigeria to Israel," he stated upon departure from Israel. (HAARETZ: 21.6.82)

TOURISTS: There must be more to draw the U.S. visitor to Israel. In some cases it is Israel's role as the Holy Land, the birthplace of Judaism & Christianity (where) every footprint evokes spiritual memories. For others it may be the drama of the new-born Jewish State....Nor can we forget the ever-growing number of (MORE)

American Christians who see in the flourishing of the State of Israel a confirmation of their own religious faith. Not only are they among the most firm supporters of Israel, they also come for regular visits...(JLM POST, H.SHAPIRO, 4.7.82)

SECTARIANS

"FINGER OF GOD": Twenty members of the religious sect "Finger of God" living in Magdiel were arrested by the police following a search of their possessions which elicited a quantity of the drug marijuana and plants in their yard from which they apparently produced the drug. Nine of the adults (over 18) will probably be brought before a judge for remanding while four of the minors (age 16 to 17) were brought before the juvenile court in Kfar Sava where they were committed to the care of the probationer. Marijuana is used by the cultists for their nocturnal rites, which include a mixture of Jewish prayers and Hare Krishna. They engage in art work, from which they make their livelihood, and live a naturalist lifestyle abstaining from meat, wine and sex except for procreation. Observers have the impression that the sect is growing and absorbing young people. (HAARETZ: 8.7.82) Ram Zeiperlinger, a 26-year-old German leader of the cult, arrested with 19 other cultists, was ordered held for five days while his status in Israel was being investigated. It was learned that his visa had expired since Feb. 1980, and he will probably be deported. (HAARETZ, JERUSALEM POST: 9.7.82)

CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

PASSOVER: The re-creation of a Passover observance typical of early Christian times was one of the highlights of a recently-concluded course sponsored by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for about 20 participants, including graduate students, nuns, priests, from the University of St. Michael's College in Toronto, Canada. The program consisted of two courses; Judaism & Christianity and Archaeology & Biblical History in Israel (JLM POST: 2.7.82)

PHILO-SEMITISM: A book review of Tel-Aviv University's lecturer and historian David S. Katz's work "PHILO-SEMITISM AND THE RE-ADMISSION OF THE JEWS TO ENGLAND (1603-1655)" published by Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1982, 200 pages. The book deals with the philosemitism which began in Cromwellian England and with the millenarians of that and later periods; also the search for the earliest form of human speech (Hebrew being the major candidate), and the impact of the Bible in English translation as well as Hebraic studies. The book is described by the reviewer as "brimming with amusing and astonishing anecdotes and consistently readable in style." (HAARETZ: 9.7.82)

ANTISEMITISM: A three-column feature headed "ANTISEMITISM AND CHRISTIANITY," by Amos Ben-Vered (HAARETZ: 6.7.82) dealt with the discussions of the theme of "JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM 1919-1945" during a 3-day symposium sponsored by the Israel Historical Society and held at the Jerusalem Hebrew University. Researchers from around the world, including a faculty member of the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland, took part in the investigation of the roots of antisemitism and the relationship of the church to the subject.

The question before the symposium was whether present-day researchers are sufficiently aware of the links between antisemitism and Christianity and the part the churches played or failed to play in confronting it. A German professor claimed that insufficient work has been done in this field, especially in view of the large-scale open cooperation of churches and ministers in Nazi Germany with the Hitler regime. The Christian lecturers, according to the correspondent, tended to emphasize the personal and emotional side of the issues whereas the Israeli lecturers presented a thesis that antisemitism preceded Christianity and was only exploited by the churches in order to emphasize the distinction between Jews and Christians, and also in order to win pagans to the new faith. In the Middle Ages Christendom developed the thesis that those Jews who refused to acknowledge Jesus as King Messiah were to be maintained in a degraded and separate state as a witness to the truth of Christianity. As a result, the social and cultural gaps between Jews and Christians widened, and Jewish life was impaired and alienated from surrounding society. It was the desire of modern Jews to take advantage of liberal teachings of equality which "converted the religious stable antisemitism into the cultural-social anti-semitism of the 19th century," nourished by the centuries-old prejudices existing among Christians.

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During the 20th century the German Catholics, for example, had an ambivalent attitude towards Jews, on the one hand supporting equality before the law for Jews, on the other having a lukewarm attitude towards social equality. The Catholic party lost many votes because of its defence of Jewish legal rights. The Protestant German churches in their great majority identified with the so-called "German Christians" who cooperated with the Nazi regime, and only a small party led by Bishop Wurm and Pastor Gruber withstood the mainstream. Internal Nazi documents demonstrated that the populace was more agitated over the removal of crosses from public buildings by the Nazis than by the deportation of the Jews, which elicited almost no response from the general population.

One question thrown out was why were not the antisemitic elements which led to the Holocaust found in all places of Christian population, but were so concentrated in Germany? Might there not be other elements which led to the Holocaust apart from antisemitism, and can they be isolated and identified? The writer concludes with the remark that this question needs answering; there is a need for additional tools such as offered by social psychology to deal with the boundaries between the sane and the insane society. "It may be that this dimension was lacking in the symposium, without which there was no common denominator, but everyone was speaking from his own private perspective as he observed history." (END SUMMARY)

"ISRAEL: AMERICA'S KEY TO SURVIVAL": A book review by Joan McWhirter in the JERUSALEM POST (23.7) of the book by Mike Evans, published by Logos International Plainfield, N.J. The reviewer concludes that the book is a "must" for "those Christians who profess their love of Israel."

CULTURAL SUNDRIES

"PARADISE LOST": A lengthy analysis of the new translation of John Milton's work into Hebrew by Reuven Avinoam. (SEE "SELECTIONS #103, bot. page 5) The literary critic Yoram Bronovsky makes a significant appeal on behalf of Salkinson, "the gifted convert (to Christianity) to whom Hebrew is indebted for exemplary works of translation, such as two Shakespearan tragedies and the New Testament" (also a fragmentary version of PARADISE LOST "which is a thousand times better" than the recent translation). "Why is the old strange and glorious translation not republished? Why are not the rest of the translations of that neglected translating genius Salkinson not republished?" Bronovsky asks. (HAARETZ: 9.7.82)

"REPENTANCE": A brief book review of a work by Adin Steinsaltz about returning to traditional Judaism. "This is not exactly a missionary book appealing for penitence and the like, but it is directed to the one who has already begun to search for God. And were it not the saying of a Christian sage, we would quote the remark that he who has begun to search for God has found him."

MARONITES

New Israeli Maronite community, numbering some 20,000 souls, seek to be active partners, as Israeli citizens, in Israel's just war in Lebanon, Mr. Samir Samara, a Maronite who formerly served as an officer in the Israel Police Dept, has stated. He has noted that members of his community see themselves as an inseparable part of the State and feel that what the IDF has done in Lebanon is not only for Israel's benefit but for the benefit of tens of thousands of his co-religionists in Lebanon. "The Lebanese people and the entire world will one day recognize the justice of Israel's war for the freedom and liberation of the Lebanese," Samir Samara stated. He also criticized opponents of the Lebanese campaign for their lack of knowledge about Lebanese realities. He reported that he had sent a telegram to the Prime Minister in support of the continued operation to liberate Lebanon from foreign forces. (MAARIV HAIFA: 30.6.82)

(END TRANSCRIPTION 2.8.82/mb)
