

ISRAEL SELECTIONS
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SELECTIONS NO. 142
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REPORT ON MISSION ACTIVITY: A report by the anti-missionary society "Yad L'Ahim" on missionary activity in Israel has been forwarded to the Israeli Prime Minister, the Deputy P.M. and Foreign Minister, and members of the special parliamentary committee studying the Mormon University project in Jerusalem. It alleges that there are some ten institutions available to the missionaries including offices, camp sites, hostels, clinics, book stores, etc. About a thousand active missionaries engage in "spreading the Gospel," and some 3,000 Jewish apostates live in Israel, most of them members of Messianic congregations; the balance belong to Christian churches.

The report also attacked so-called "friendship missions," such as the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, the Middle East TV station in South Lebanon, and Christian volunteers at Hebrew-language seminaries. It also named 23 "mystical sects" currently said to be operating in Israel. In a letter accompanying the report, the demand was made to ban all "conversionist preaching." (HATSOFEH/HAMODIYA 11 July 86)

ALLEGED GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR ANTI-MISSIONERS QUERIED: In the wake of a parliamentary query by Ultra-orthodox M.K. Porush about alleged missionary activity in the Galilean settlement Yavniel (See Selections No. 141, Page 2, bottom), Interior Minister Rabbi Peretz replied that the matter was within the jurisdiction of the police if there were complaints of illegal acts involving bribery to induce conversion.

M.K. Virshovsky (Shinui Centrist party) also inquired about press reports that the Interior Minister was intending to grant the anti-mission society "Yad L'Ahim" official status, and asked about the funds his department was giving the organization. The Interior Minister replied that his ministry did not fund any organization, but in special cases allocated funds to municipalities for the use of organizations operating within their localities. He also denied any knowledge of an approach to his office by "Yad L'Ahim" for official status. "I am not responsible for every report appearing in the press," he said. (THE ULTRA-ORTHODOX CAMP 15 July 86)

CHRISTIAN PREACHING ON I.D.F. RADIO: "The Popular University" broadcasts lectures on the Israel Defence Force radio station in cooperation with Tel-Aviv University. The Chief Education Officer of the I.D.F. has banned all preaching related to the "penitents" movement (return to Orthodox Judaism), but listeners to a lecture of Dr. Moshe Shoham were astonished to hear so-called "scientific" material about the Christian sects which included no small measure of admiration for the figure of Jesus. (HAMODIYA 25 July 86)

TIBERIAS — FUNDRAISING ARTICLE VOIDS PERMIT: The Urban Infrastructure committee attached to the Tiberias municipality has rejected the application for enlarging the flat of local resident Shaul Zualla, known as the head of the Messianic sect in the town. The leaders of "Yad L'Ahim" presented an article before the committee which had appeared in a German-Christian monthly in which the Tiberias sectarians noted that a few years ago there were only four members in the sect but now they have 100 members.

Among other matters, the article stated that the "persecuted Messianics are seeking to enlarge their centre, they have raised half the amount and ask for the other half from faithful readers because they have been refused the rental or sale of property in Tiberias." The article adds a statement that "over the years we have been persecuted by a fanatical group trying to stigmatize us as traitors."

These quotations were photocopied from the article and passed on to the committee by the "Yad L'Ahim" organization, along with the photographs of Zualla and Dan Yahav, General Manager of Galtronics, which accompanied the article. (VARIOUS PAPERS 28-30 July 86)

YAVNIEL — MISSIONARY RAID: The missionary "raid" on Yavniel, exposed in an article in EREV SHABAT two months ago (See SELECTIONS No. 141, page 2, bottom), continues. Three additional dunams, it has become known to "Yad L'Ahim," have been purchased by the missionary manager of Galtronics in Tiberias, Daniel Yahav, from Sima and David Bachor, through the intermediary Abraham Maimon. "We are now checking whether U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering, who intervened in the work dispute at Galtronics, has also given his blessing to this deal," Joseph Mimran of Yad L'Ahim in the north told us. (EREV SHABAT 25 July 86)

MISSIONARY CENTRE IN HAZOR? Yaakov Levy, former Council Head of the Galilean town of Hazor, is about to close a deal with a missionary sect which intends to build "an educational centre for the children of Galilee." The deal involves the Gil cinema at the centre of town, which has been closed for three years. Levy has tried to sell it to various groups and individuals but claims he has been offered "pennies," the highest offer being \$50,000 for the 800 metre unit. When the sect of the Messianic Jews heard of the property, and was interested in beginning missionary activity in Upper Galilee, a representative contacted Levy and accepted immediately his asking price of \$120,000. "Judging from their enthusiasm, they would have paid \$150,000 if that had been my asking price," he says.

Levy nevertheless has mental reservations about the deal. "I myself am a traditional Jew with religious parents. I have decided not to conceal the matter of the deal so that no one will say afterwards that had he known of it he would have thwarted it, so with much heartache I am forced to turn the cinema over to the Mission," he says. According to him, the Messianics belittle the threats of anti-mission activists that they will prevent the property from being used as a mission centre. Meanwhile, feverish efforts are being made to prevent the deal from being consummated. (VARIOUS PAPERS 28-30 July 86. One paper claims the property will be used for a nursing home.)

ROSH PINA — MEDITATORS: A group of missionaries in the guise of preachers of meditation tried a few days ago to organize a public meeting for preaching idolatry. The sectarians arranged a lecture in the Hotel Mitzpeh Hayamim in Rosh Pina, which was attended by more than 20 families. After energetic steps were taken by the Chief Rabbi of Rosh Pina, Avraham Davidovitz, the plot to lead Jews astray was completely foiled, as was the attempted penetration of Rosh Pina by the sect. (YATAID NEEMAN 4 July 86)

HAIFA: Unknown persons scrawled defamatory remarks on the walls of missionary institutions in Haifa, among them the book shop "Hagefen" and the chapel of the Messianic congregation "Bethesda." (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 31 July 86)

TEL AVIV — BOOK FAIR: A booth for the dissemination of Christian literature and missionary propaganda has been set up in the heart of the book fair held during Hebrew Book Week at the Kings of Israel Plaza in Tel-Aviv. Christian literature and propaganda is given free of charge from the booth to all who are interested to receive it. The booth is attractively decorated, with a young boy and girl standing by and a guitarist playing to draw the public. (HAMODIYA 25 June 86)

"FLYING CHURCH": "Lord's Airlines," the company set up by American Harry Marshall for flying pilgrims to Israel, has been under attack by "Yad L'Ahim" for its alleged missionary aims. The Assistant to the Minister of Transport, in a letter to the anti-missionary society, has

written that "we cannot prevent the company from flying to Israel on the basis of the existing flight agreements between Israel and the U.S.A.; and neither does the Minister have legal authority to lay down conditions in the field of 'fighting the mission.'" Meanwhile, the anti-missionaries are gathering information about the company in the U.S.A. (MAARIV 21 July 86. Also see SELECTIONS No. 141 "Flying Churches")

CHRISTIANS IN ISRAEL:

"MERV AND MERLA": Merv and Merla Watson regularly appear in concerts of Israeli songs and Christian religious music expressing a love of Israel to their mostly Christian evangelical following. After an accident which crushed Merla's hand, they had to cancel a tour abroad. They have been in Israel for ten years, for many years working with the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, but for the past two years on their own. It was their deep religious faith that brought them to Israel from their native Canada. (HAIM SHAPIRO "IN JERUSALEM" 11 July 86)

ROUMANIAN COUPLE FIGHT DEPORTATION: Victor and Olivia Judiano, Roumanian Christians, have appealed to the Israel High Court for a stay of the Interior Ministry order of deportation and for permission to remain permanently in Israel. Their request for permanent status was denied by the Ministry, but they refused to leave Israel and were arrested. The High Court has agreed to hear their petition. (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 18 July 86)

RELIGIOUS NEIGHBOURS OBJECT: Two Portuguese Christian families whose children attend a mission school and openly desecrate the Jewish Sabbath have aroused the ire of their Orthodox Jewish neighbours. "They have music playing all through the Sabbath, and do all kinds of work on the Sabbath openly," the neighbours complain. "Kiryat Shmuel is a religious neighbourhood with streets closed to Sabbath traffic; let them move to another neighbourhood," they say.

The "Yad L'Ahim" organization has refused to intervene in the matter, and it is reported that the Kahane people have been asked to intervene. "If he steps in, it could be a catastrophe," someone interjected; "it should be explained to them that they should live in another neighbourhood." (HAID HAKIRYOT 20 June 86)

"FATHER JACOB," THE JEWISH CARMELITE: Miri Cohen-Avihi of the Haifa weekly KOL-BO (11 July 86) interviewed Fr. Elias (Jacob) Friedman, a South African Jewish doctor who converted to Roman Catholicism during World War II. He later joined the Carmelite Order, and was posted to its centre on Mount Carmel. Jacob Elias Friedman insisted on speaking only about his literary work. He has translated the works of the Hebrew national poet, Haim N. Bialik, whom he considers a prophet and mystic, into English, and has also done translations from Hebrew into Swedish and Italian. He has collaborated with Israeli writers on a history of Acre and on prehistoric man in the Carmel. He also published a work on "Jewish Identity" in which he gives his views on the State of Israel, Judaism and religion, influenced by the works of Bialik and Ahad Haam.

In 1979 he was awarded the Jerusalem Medallion for his 20-year service to pilgrims and tourists at the Carmelite centre, and has also been honoured for his research on the Carmelites and on the archaeology of Mt. Carmel.

He refuses to elaborate on his views and links to Jews and Judaism, and to explain what led him to convert. The interviewer confesses to an ambivalent attitude towards her subject, admiring his intellectual gifts and achievements but feeling "deterred" by his conversion, his lifestyle, his separation from the Jewish people.

RAMALLAH CHURCH VANDALIZED: The Ramallah Baptist Church was repeatedly vandalized during the Muslim fast of Ramadan. Muslim extremists or anti-American elements in this largely Christian Arab town are thought to be behind the attacks. The congregation has about 50-60 people, a youth club and women's group. (CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ISRAEL, No. 20, Summer 86)

CHRISTIAN TOURISM: The International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem has called on its 29 national organizations worldwide to encourage pilgrimage to Israel in order to counter terrorist threats. (CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ISRAEL)

DIASPORA NEWS:

OHIO: The Cleveland Jewish News (4 Oct 85) carried two articles dealing with JEWS FOR JESUS and a man once "deeply involved" with the Messianic Jewish movement, 32-year-old Jerry Greenberg. The latter took part in a vocal protest by 250 Jews against a JFJ concert in a Cleveland Heights Church. Greenberg was reconverted to Judaism by Rabbi Motty Berger who talked to him about the Jewish side of the New Testament story. "It wasn't a matter of renunciation," he said. Rabbi Berger is now in Israel.

EVANGELICAL RADIO: Two Jewish papers carried a feature article by writer Edwin Black concerning the "substantial number of the most powerful and successful commercial radio stations" which are owned by committed Jews. They sell radio time to many evangelical sponsors, including those oriented to the conversion of Jews to Christianity or Messianic Judaism. Diverse opinions were expressed by Jewish rabbis and leaders about the ethics of cooperating with evangelism, but the Jewish station owners interviewed denied any conflict of ethics. (JEWISH WORLD, Albany, NY 19 Dec 85; BNAI BRITH MESSENGER, L.A. California 13 Dec 85)

CANADA: JEWS FOR JESUS has withdrawn its application to become a member of York University's interfaith council of 15 on-campus religious organizations in the face of vocal opposition of the 5,000-member Jewish Students Federation. The Federation accused JFJ of proselytizing Jews and engaging in "anti-Jewish diatribes."

During a stormy three-hour debate, Steve Cohen of JFJ stated, "We do not deny that we are Christians, but being Christians, we do not deny that we are Jews. There are Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians," he insisted. It is expected that JFJ will again apply for membership in the interfaith council. (WESTERN JEWISH NEWS, WINNIPEG)

LONDON: The Church's Ministry among the Jews has launched a "high-profile evangelism project" in London, with trained volunteers "broadsideing on the streets," according to Rev. Derek Ryder, home director of CMJ. In an interview with the JEWISH CHRONICLE Mr. Ryder at first denied that Jewish areas were targets, but later admitted that "the Christian faith is a missionary religion, but there is no form of undue pressure." A CMJ document claims that some volunteers will be Jewish, among "the steadily increasing number of Jewish people coming to faith in Messiah." "The free offer of Christ's gospel means the freedom to reject, and we scrupulously observe that," Ryder stated.

Missionaries and ultra-orthodox Jews mingled in a synagogue in Edgware in what was described as a meeting with "a surrealistic quality" while Rabbi David Smith lectured on "How to Combat the Missionaries." People from the London Messianic Fellowship, which included Richard Harvey, sat on one side of the room. At one point the missionaries were asked to identify themselves. The rabbi urged the establishment of a Torah Centre in Edgware. One member of the London Messianic Fellowship, asked why missionaries didn't leave Jews alone,

declared that it was her duty to tell them about Jesus. (CHRONICLE 11 July 86)

U.S.A. (NEW YORK): Julius Berman, chairman of the N.Y. Jewish Community Relations Council's Task Force on Missionaries and Cults, says that thousands of Jews are joining Hebrew-Christian and other messianic groups. "It is the task force's belief that these groups are misrepresenting both Judaism and Christianity," he said.

Missionary activity will be investigated to alert the Christian and Jewish communities to "the deceptive tactics" employed by missionaries; but there was no intention "to deny personal rights or freedom of religion, or even the right to proselytize." Until the Hebrew-Christian movement and others act forthrightly, he added, his organization will respond in "a strong yet positive and scrupulously fair fashion." (JERUSALEM POST 5 Aug 86)

The Task Force is launching a street campaign to counter the deceptive "BroadSides" of the Jews for Jesus — on their own turf, in order to inform the public of the deceitful nature of missionary organization and Hebrew Christianity. Other Jewish religious groups are co-sponsors. (JEWISH PRESS NYC 27 June 86)

Rep. Charles E. Schumer, a Brooklyn congressman, has requested that the American Board of Missions to the Jews be removed from a checklist of charities sent annually to federal employees. He charged that the ABMJ "targets a segment of society (Jews) for abuse and harassment" by means of door-to-door conversion drives. (JEWISH WEEK NYC 27 Dec 85)

LOS ANGELES: Rabbi Dr. Immanuel Schochet will lecture at an anti-missionary training seminar developed by the Chabad counteraction program, which will be chaired by Dr. Steve Bailey of Chabad mental health programs. (HERITAGE, LA 8 Nov 85)

JEWS FOR JESUS: Quotations from JFJ staff session being circulated by its opponents in the Jewish community have been taken out of context, according to Moishe Rosen, JFJ founder and leader. Lawrence Levey, who wrote an article with these quotes published in several Jewish weeklies, based it on materials supplied by "JEWS FOR JUDAISM" an anti-mission group based in Baltimore. The article cites an allegedly "Confidential Report" of "JEWS FOR JESUS" describing it as "evangelical fundamentalists, and an arm of the local church." Some of the quotes alleged: "We have waited too long to teach that Judaism is a false religion. . . We are not practicing any form of Judaism. We are practicing Christianity." Rabbi Benzion Kravitz, West Coast Director of "JEWS FOR JUDAISM," stated in response: "JEWS FOR JESUS are an enemy force, seeking our spiritual destruction. The phony missionary mask has at last been stripped off."

Moishe Rosen told Religious News Service that the statements had been taken out of context. "Biblical Christianity is the authentic expression of what in Bible times would be called Judaism," he said. He makes a distinction between Jewishness and Judaism, the latter being a religion of the rabbis which most Jews don't practice. "We maintain that Jewishness and Christianity are not mutually exclusive," he states. He said he was not planning a response to the article, because "it's no good when something appears in a Jewish newspaper to make a denial." (RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE, Darrell Turner, 22 Apr 86. CHRISTIAN NEWS 10 May 86)

SUNDRIES:

NAME CHANGES: The mystical sects in Israel are changing their names, according to "Yad L'Ahim" chairman Rabbi S. B. Lifschutz. The Emin sect now call themselves "Dimension for Advanced Knowledge," EST calls itself "Israeli Forum," and Scientology has changed to "Centre for

Dianetics." An additional 20 sects operating in Israel are seeking name changes in order to escape the negative effects expected following the publication of an expose of their activities. (YATAID NEEMAN/HAMODIYA 3 July 86)

ANCIENT ZION GATE: The remnants of a stone structure at the southern foot of the Temple Mount have been tentatively re-identified as a Jerusalem city gate of the First Temple Period. It is not yet clear whether this gateway led directly to the Temple Mount or to some intermediate area. According to Scripture, there were 12 gates to Jerusalem in that era. (CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ISRAEL Summer 86)

ANGUISH OF THE JEWS: A revised and updated edition of the history of antisemitism written by the Jesuit priest Edward H. Flannery includes new material covering the past 25 years. Christian antisemitism persists, Flannery charges, and it is "a denial of Christian faith, a failure of Christian hope and a malady of Christian love." (C.L.I.I.)

ECUMENICAL STREET: A Jerusalem neighbourhood periodical (NAHALAOT-REHAVYA July 86) devoted several friendly paragraphs in a feature article about "the ecumenical ("Narkis") street" in Rehavya which hosts Western and Eastern Orthodox synagogues, modern Reform and Conservative synagogues, property belonging to a Roman Catholic Order founded by Jewish converts (the Ratisbonnes), and a Southern Baptist chapel. The writer also noted the "anti-ecumenical" attack on the chapel in 1982 when it was torched, but "many Jews in synagogue attire demonstrated solidarity with the Baptists" following the attack.

The writer describes the "joyful pleasant melodies of the Gentiles worshipping the Creator as it flows over into the street," and noted that even some of the synagogue worshippers stop for a moment to enjoy the sound "without fear of being caught by the missionary danger or of enjoying forbidden idolatrous pleasures!"

SECULAR YMCA: The West Jerusalem YMCA Director Bill MacAfee, a Bostonian, was interviewed for the IN JERUSALEM supplement of the JERUSALEM POST (11 July). He noted that the branch is "about 97% Jewish" and that "a great many YMCA directors in the U.S. are Jewish. While the "Y" is Christian in motivation and spirit, its program is mostly secular, focusing on community services as opposed to religious content." He also noted that "East Jerusalem Arabs don't want to be identified with us," and there is no official relationship between YMCA-East and YMCA-West.

"DANGEROUS VISIT": The ultra-orthodox weekly "Yetaid Neeman" carried a lead article discussing the possible visit of the Pope to Israel. The writer acknowledges that, should the visit be finalized, there is nothing that can be done to prevent it, especially since the Israeli government has desired such a visit for a long time. The "curse" of the Mission is widespread in Israel, and is especially reaping a harvest among secular Jews unfortified by Torah observance.

The writer was witness to the "enormous" effect on secularist Jews of a papal visit to a Latin American country he visited. A visit by the Pope to Israel would only accelerate the scope of the missionary enterprise. "Perhaps it is necessary to prepare the groundwork for an information campaign against the Mission to highlight the falsehood in the Christian religion, the threat to Jewish existence, which all lie behind the innocent and smiling front of the congenial missionaries," the writer concludes. (4 Aug 86)

END TRANSCRIPT 8 August 86/mb

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