

RABBINIC BAN ON MESSIANIC PRESS: A missionary plant in the Industrial Area of Jerusalem, which has facilities for offset printing and the publication of missionary literature, has recently installed expensive modern equipment on a scale which is almost unequaled in Jerusalem. As a result of competitive prices offered for its services, the plant has secured Ultra-orthodox Jewish clientele for large-scale orders. The quantity of sacred literature printed in Jerusalem is extremely large. As a result, the missionary printers have entered the competition for work orders, investing large amounts of capital in the import of the most expensive equipment. (HAMODIYA 17.9.86)

Rabbinic sages are about to issue a ban on the use of sacred books printed by the missionary publishers "YANETZ" in Jerusalem. This has been reported by the anti-mission activists "Yad L'Ahim." As noted in our newspaper previously, this missionary printer has installed the most up-to-date modern equipment, and various publishers are taking advantage of the easy credit terms offered by the firm in order to print holy books; thus they are strengthening the hand of the missionary printers. It appears that the rabbinic ban will include all other services offered by the plant besides actual publication. The company is considered one of the leaders in the field of "spreading the Gospel" in Israel. (HAMODIYA 29 Sept 86)

50% DROP IN TIBERIAS MISSIONARY ACTIVITY: Missionary activity in Tiberias has been restricted about 50%, and many of the missionaries have left for the centre of Israel. The "Yad L'Ahim" activists in Tiberias believe this is the result of their extensive work. They relate that 12 missionary offices out of 23 active last year remain in town. They hope to see the removal of the balance, even though they have not left Israel. (HATSOFEH/HAMODIYA/YETAID NEEMAN: 2 Oct 86)

APOSTATES IN BEERSHEVA: It has recently been disclosed that four Jewish families in Beersheva have apostasized, and have been helped with emigration papers to Brazil by the missionaries. The religious functionaries conducting the anti-mission campaign in Israel have noted that the missionaries work almost unhindered, and dozens of Jewish families are influenced by them. . . with their unlimited funds. How long will it be before the government enacts legislation against this frightful activity? (THE ULTRA-ORTHODOX CAMP, Jerusalem, 30 Sept 86 YIDDISH)

ALL-DAY SEMINAR ON MISSIONS: "Missionary youth hostels in Europe are absorbing young Israelis free of charge for extended periods of time. The youths are in bondage to them and turn into active missionaries." This is an excerpt from a report of a seminar conducted for "Yad L'Ahim" anti-mission activists, who are constantly tracking down missionary activity and the mystical sects. A report on the links between Israeli and overseas missions was given. In several instances the "Committee of Messianic Congregations" activated foreign embassies to make appeals to the former Attorney General Yitzhak Zamir about missionary complaints which were "not handled properly," and these were given priority by the police.

During the seminar a report was given on the missionary penetration of the health system involving doctors and nurses in public health services, clinics which provide services free of charge or at nominal rates, and homes for the aged and the disabled. Even those unfortunates who are cared for in Christian institutions which are not engaged openly in missionary activity have a crucifix placed upon them when they expire. Thus, those who care for them have the "privilege" of bringing another Jewish soul into the shadow of their faith.

A lecturer on the activities of the "Jehovah Witnesses" Sect quoted the yearbook of the sect which reported over 300,000 hours of work in "spreading the Gospel" in Israel. At the same time a significant increase of activity among other sects - TM, the Emin, Scientology and other mystical sects - was reported.

It was decided at the seminar to intensify the information campaign among the wider public in order to expedite the government decision "to examine the mission law with a view to expanding it." While this decision was made over a month ago in connection with the Mormons, nothing has been done to date to implement it. (HAMODIYA 25 Sept 86)

EXPOSE' BY ULTRA-ORTHODOX: An "investigative" piece by the ultra-orthodox weekly EREV SHABAT (19 Sept 86), with bylines B. Z. Eshel and Yaakov Gal, dealt mainly with welfare institutions allegedly run by missionaries, openly or covertly. The first institution exposed is the nursing home "Beit Ebenezer" in Haifa, where an elderly resident named Clara was reassured by a nurse that she will not be affected by threatened nursing strikes. "A wide smile covered the face of the nurse as she declared: 'Here there are no strikes.'" Notwithstanding the fact that this home was licensed to receive Christians only, anti-mission activists discovered aged Jews baptised into Christianity in residence. Since the exposure of these facts, they have been careful not to admit the likes of these.

Just a short distance from the nursing home is the Messianic congregation "Bethesda," and beside it a clinic managed by Dr. Brian Pokroy, a Jewish apostate residing near the Druze village of Usfiya, who is also on the staff of the Haifa Rothschild hospital. The apostate doctor receives only a nominal fee for his visits; and in addition to his careful attention to patients, he provides another "service," the spread of "the Gospel."

Last year a card file of some 5,000 names was exposed above the Messianic book shop "HaGefen" in Haifa on Hechalutz Street. These were people who had been treated during the course of five years at a missionary clinic, which was eventually closed down because of visa problems with "volunteer" missionary nurses.

Along the Haifa seashore in the Bat Galim area there is another "medical institution," the well-known Maon Peniel, which has been exposed on the pages of this newspaper. The spirit behind it is Dr. Gisela Finger, a Christian preacher who was inspired by Emma Berger of Zicron Yaakov. She conducts dieting courses (for the soul and body), but we were told by a young woman named Michal in residence that Dr. Finger would return after the holidays when she would resume the courses. She has removed to a hotel in Herzliya, the Eshel, in the wake of Yad L'Ahim exposure, and it is hoped she will be removed soon from her new location.

Over the years there have been many medical missionary institutions set up in Israel and it is no new method for contacting the target population. There are Christian institutions specializing in aid to the incurable, such as the Italian hospital in Haifa and the French Hospital in Jerusalem. Jews are hospitalized in the shadow of the cross even though one cannot say that they engage in open missionary activity, says Bezalel Ben-Pinhas of Yad L'Ahim.

Is there a situation wherein a believing Jew can enjoy the services of a Christian medical institution without fear of being preached to or influenced? A visit to the rest home of Beit El in Shavei Zion near Nahariya was designed to answer this query. It was established 25 years ago by German Lutherans to provide a resting place for Holocaust survivors, and is maintained by contributions and volunteer Christian workers. The facilities are excellent, and the maintenance a model,

under the care of the Beier family who have raised their family in Israel.

"We have never had any missionary activity here," Mrs. Beier states categorically in a mixture of halting Hebrew, a bit of German, Yiddish and much movement of the hands. Provision is made for Orthodox Jews to worship in the library which we visited. Among other books that we noticed was a book about Jabotinsky and . . . (what else? . . .) several copies of the "New Testament."

The kitchen is kept strictly kosher and admirably clean. Those who want to take advantage of the place must register more than three years ahead of time. Nevertheless, "Yad L'Ahim" links the place to active missionary organizations. Several years ago they planned a messianic conference and an under cover agent of the Yad L'Ahim was due to be baptized there, but the conference was cancelled in the wake of pressures by the Nahariya rabbi Dr. Aharon Keller.

POSTSCRIPT: The religiously observant public is energetic and decisive in fighting Sabbath desecration, missionary institutions and certain types of poster photographs. This is absolutely in order, but insufficient. I have yet to hear of any ultra-orthodox institution ranged against the delivery of portions of the Land of Israel to the Gentiles. The Land of Israel is not an invention of the secular Zionists. (Letter in SHEARIM 10 Sept 86)

NES AMIM: Two articles were published in August about this Galilee settlement near Nahariya founded a quarter-century ago by a group of Christians. They were seeking to "atone" for the sufferings of Jews at the hands of Gentile Christians, especially during the Holocaust, and to establish a new relationship between Jews and Christians. The first article featured an interview with Petra Helt, the female chaplain of the settlement. This 34-year-old German clergywoman is married to Malcolm Lowe, a Welsh Protestant scholar living in Israel 15 years who speaks 12 languages. In addition to the usual duties of a pastor, she also leads seminars on Jewish history, Old and New Testaments, rabbinics, and Christian-Jewish relations. (YEDIOT AKHRONOT 6 Aug 86; Byline: Avital Nitzan)

Bob Block, age 42, father of 7, eight years in Israel, is in charge of public relations for NES AMIM. He is in touch with tourists, pilgrims, clergy, Israeli and foreign students and everyone interested in what the settlement is about. It was the Holocaust and the age-old history of Christian persecution of Jews which brought him to Israel. "I began to search our tradition (he will never use the word religion or faith) in order to get to the root of this negative Christian approach to Judaism," he recalls. "A negative approach always boomerangs, especially since Christianity is directly linked to Judaism . . . the founder of Christianity was a Jew!"

There are now some 200 settlers in NES AMIM, which functions much like a "kibbutz" (commune). The wife of one of the founders, Christina Pilon of Holland, relates the history of the settlement, and the understandable suspicions of Jews, especially the Orthodox, about its establishment. They could not imagine Christians relating to them other than as missionaries.

The Pilon came to the conclusion after the Holocaust that there was a direct link between the 2,000 year old Christian-Jewish conflict and the Holocaust. "Suddenly there appeared a group of people with a different idea, and it was difficult for them to accept the fact that we were a Christian body whose purpose was neither to cause apostasy nor mission," Mrs. Pilon states. (TSOMET HASHARON, HERZLIYA, 22.8.86 Byline: Tali Netiv-Ironi)

THE SECTS

MORMONS: Nothing can be done to halt the completion of the Mormon Brigham Young University in Jerusalem, according to a report which will be presented this week to the ministerial committee looking into the matter. Religious Affairs Minister Yosef Burg, the committee's co-ordinator, told the JERUSALEM POST last week that a legal opinion submitted by Deputy Attorney-General Yoram Bar-Sela said that the Mormons had secured all required construction and development permits, which left no alternative but to allow them to continue. Burg also said that the Israel Lands Authority would be asked to prohibit certain activities, including missionary work, in the Mormon's lease, and that a "watchdog" committee from both sides oversee university activities. (9 Aug 86)

EMIN SECT: Extensive missionary activity by the Emin sect has been taking place for several months in the Dan neighbourhood of Tel-Aviv, with several hundred residents joining in, many of them high school students, according to the local rabbi. (YETAID NEEMAN 5 Sept 86)

ANNDA MARGA: A human interest tale about an Israeli young woman trapped in a mystical cult. Unsatisfied with Orthodox Judaism, she began to seek elsewhere and eventually encountered young Israelis and foreigners involved with this sect whose origin is said to be in India. She has left her family and is believed to be in Greece.

In a recent letter to her sister she complained about the crass materialism and lack of idealism she finds in the workaday world. "There are not many idealists, people who live for an exalted purpose. . . . Now I feel that I can fulfil my dreams," she wrote. Her mother thinks she is a genius with a very sensitive nature easily affected by her surroundings. "Only let them not hide her away from me," she pleads tearfully. (KOL-BO HAIFA 4 Jul 86)

KIBBUTZ SECTARIANS: The National Religious Party (NRP) organ "HATSOFEH" (29 Aug 86) published a feature article by Haim Pikersht headlined, "MISSIONARIES STICK THEIR CLAWS INTO THE KIBBUTZIM." The article dealt (with only passing comment on Christians) with the "mystical sects" which, according to a recent survey, attracted 139 young members or children of kibbutzim and an equal number of "penitents" (secularist converts to ultra-orthodox Judaism).

In the view of Dr. Kaufman, a member of Kibbutz Ramat Menasseh and director of the secular kibbutz movement's Family Service, there is no difference between those who lead secular Jews into ultra-orthodox Judaism and those who lead them into the mystical sects. They both engage in "persuasion and enticement"; but a kibbutz social worker who has been personally involved in the campaign against the mystical sects stated: "In the event that some of these fellows want to escape the reality of kibbutz life, I would prefer that they do so in the framework of the Ultra-orthodox movement." Nevertheless, the kibbutz Family Service treats both cases in the same manner.

The influence of female volunteers, some of whom formally convert to Judaism in order to get married, should also not be discounted. Eventually they renounce Judaism and Israel and lead their spouses into Christianity, the article claims. The kibbutzim have begun to restrict the number of non-Jewish volunteers as a result, the writer claims.

T.M.: As a result of pressure from Ultra-orthodox circles in the Safed municipality, a lecture on Transcendental Meditation scheduled by the Community Affairs division of the local Labour Council was cancelled. When news of the lecture, which was widely advertised in Safed, came to the attention of Ultra-orthodox members of the City Council, they pressured the Labour Council secretary, Barry Zimmer, to cancel it on

the grounds that it represented a missionary sect. They also threatened to disturb the lecture, should it take place. Signs were then posted notifying the public of the cancellation. Safed Mayor Zeev Perl also promised to act to prevent any future penetration of "missionary sects" into the city. (DAVAR/AL HAMISHMAR/YETAID NEEMAN 15 Sept 86)

SUBSTITUTE "BLOOD": While the Ministry of Health ignores "supplementary" missionary clinics, it has accommodated itself to the strange missionary sect "Jehovah Witnesses." These sectarians carry on their persons a card which requests the use of a salt solution in place of blood infusion should the need arise. Professor Dan Michaeli of the Health Department disclosed to "Yad L'Ahim" that the hospitals have stocked a supply of blood substitutes for use in treating hospitalized sectarians. (EREV SHIABAT 19 Sept 86)

DIASPORA NEWS

NEW YORK: For the past several months the N.Y. Jewish Community Relations Council's Task Force on Missionaries and Cults has conducted a landmark investigation into the activities of Hebrew-Christian groups in the U.S. and Israel. The extent of these groups' activities is much broader and far-reaching than expected. The most alarming evidence has been disclosed that thousands of misguided Jews have been persuaded to join these groups under what we believe are false pretenses.

The study entails a three-pronged inquiry into the Hebrew-Christian movement: (a) misuse of Jewish symbols, claiming that Jewish symbols and Christianity are compatible; (b) investigating financial and organizational links with some Fundamentalist Evangelical groups; (c) uncovering the growing number of mainline Evangelical groups who incorporate the deceptive proselytizing tactics of the Hebrew-Christian movement.

At the annual conference of the Young Messianic Jewish Alliance held at Messiah College in Grantham, PA, the task force sent a team of eight counter-cult workers. The findings were disheartening. About 1,500 young Jews from around the world were attending, many wearing yarmulkes (religious skullcaps). After initial contact with those interested in learning about true Jewish roots, the team was escorted off the campus as "a destructive influence."

A report on other involvements was also given: (a) Interfaith Coalition of Concern about Cults (ICCC) representing major U.S. faith streams; (b) A 27-page document issued by the Vatican entitled: Sects and New Religious Movements: A Pastoral Challenge; (c) Satanism; (d) Campus Cults; (e) JEWS FOR JESUS street corner literature campaign in New York, with counteraction by the Task Force at points of distribution; (f) Seventh Day Adventists and its new magazine Shabbat Shalom being distributed to rabbis and synagogues. (JERUSALEM TIMES/JEWISH PRESS, JERUSALEM AND NEW YORK 26 Sept 86: UPDATE ON CURRENT ACTIVITIES by Julius Berman, Chairman, Task Force on Missionaries and Cults.)

LONDON: Anglo-Jewry has lost 60,000 souls in the last few years, says Rabbi David Smith, chairman of the Jewish Seminar Movement at the first of a planned series of seminars aimed at spreading Torah in the Edgware area of Northwest London. He spoke of intermarriage, missionary activities and assimilation as the reasons, and pointed out that an Edgware vicar acknowledges that half his parish are Jews, and he does door-to-door evangelism. He urged immediate and strong action to save young Jews before it is too late. (JEWISH TRIBUNE 17 Jul 86)

Rabbi Shmuel Arkush is out to get JEWS FOR JESUS — and they know it. In their strangely-named Growth Book for Jewish Believers, a chapter

on "The Jewish Believer in Opposition" warns that "all believers can expect some opposition to their faith, but for those of us who are Jewish, it is important to be aware of certain groups which selectively seek us out."

The first group mentioned is the Lubavitch, and Rabbi Arkush is director of the Lubavitch Centre in Birmingham. He is also spearheading "OPERATION JUDAISM," the community's counter-attack on the burgeoning missionary campaign in Britain. The operation is a joint initiative of Lubavitch, the Chief Rabbi's Office, and the Jewish Board of Deputies. The counter-attack concentrates mainly — though not exclusively — on the university campus, with two main vehicles: a professionally-made 20-minute colour Video and an attractively designed folder. With less than three months to run, OPERATION JUDAISM may not continue because of lack of funding. Rabbi Arkush has collected over 400 missionary publications, mostly professionally produced and subtly directed. (JEWISH CHRONICLE, 12 Sept 86)

SUNDRIES

ST. JOHN'S PASSION: The great work of Bach, St. John's Passion, will be performed in the framework of the Israel Festival of 1986 at the Dormition Abbey on Mt. Zion by two German groups in two versions. A "Passion" is a work for singers, choir, and orchestra in the form of an oratorio, which describes the sufferings of Jesus according to one of the Gospels — in this instance, the Gospel according to St. John. The work was first performed at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig in 1723. . . . The narrative is related in several scenes — the trial before the High Priest and before Pontius Pilate.

The questions engaging Bach's attention when he wrote this work were musical questions and not theological. He reportedly asked himself how to describe musically the scorn and levity of the mercenaries directed against Jesus, how to express dramatic tension in the singing of the choir as expressed by the frantic mob against Jesus. At the centre of the work stands the concept of glory and suffering side by side.

This is the first time that one of Bach's Passions is being performed within the framework of the Israel Festival. "I do remember my sin this day": I have never feared that in the wake of a performance of one of the "Passions," multitudes of Jewish listeners would march out into the nearest church and baptize themselves into Christianity. Neither have I feared the impact of the text, a part of which is clearly antisemitic. In any case, it is not only the St. John passion which suffers from antisemitic overtones. We can also add other works of literature. (KAWL HA'IR JERUSALEM WEEKLY: 9 May 86)

"BECAUSE OF A BOOK": "I represent those secularists who are not hollow. Judaism troubles us. We are in the Land of Israel because of a Book. If you have read every book but not this Book, you have read nothing. This Book is our place in the sun. A Frenchman doesn't live in France because of a Book, neither does an American, but we are here only because of this Book, and we're always messing things up. My obsession is: Shall I say yes to Israel or no? Who are we? Do we have a role to play in the modern world?" (Excerpt from interview with Israeli artist MICHAEL SEGEN-COHEN; YEDIOT AKHRONOT 25 Oct 85)

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