

Duplicate

SECTS

SECT LEADER BARRED: Raymond Arman, founder and leader of the Emin Sect, was deported from Israel on 25 Jan 89 after being detained at the Ben-Gurion airport overnight. A 65-year-old British citizen, Arman (whose sect name is "Leo") came to Israel for a short series of lectures in Maale Zvia in Galilee, where many of the sect members are located.

A local sect leader, Rafi Ayal, reported that attempts were made by their lawyers to overturn the deportation order and a court hearing was already scheduled the following day, but Arman decided to fly back to London because of the negative attitude toward him in the airport. The official reason for barring him was an alleged illegal overstay in Israel in 1987 (which his supporters claim is not true), but Interior Ministry officials reportedly admitted that government policy is to bar entry to sectarians who wish to visit Israel.

Meanwhile, C.R.M. political leader Shulamit Aloni, to whom sect members appealed, has formally protested the deportation order to the Minister of Justice and to the Attorney-General. She asked the Justice Minister to instruct the new Interior Minister and his subordinates of the discretionary powers they have under the law and their limits. She pointed to another recent incident in which two "sectarians" were barred (members of the "Messianic Jewish" sect), but following legal pressure were admitted for one month. (see Selections No. 170, page 1) "One can imagine the reaction if members of the Hassidic Sect "Habad", who are far more missionary than the Emin, were barred entry to a Christian country because of their beliefs," she remarked. (Yediot Akhronit/Hadashot, 26-1-89; 29-1-89).

Several days after the deportation of "Leo", a group of Israeli Emin sectarians demonstrated quietly against the incident in the Knesset Plaza, giving personal testimonies and affirming their commitment to law and morality, and denying their opponents' claims that they are a "dangerous mystical sect," as stated in the Taasa-Glaser parliamentary report on sects. In a feature column by Haim Bar-Am headed "Warning Signal", while expressing contempt for mystical sects, Jewish and otherwise, the writer expressed alarm over religious or ideological criteria being used to grant entry to visitors from abroad. (Kawl Ha'ir 3 Feb 89.)

The Ultra-Orthodox weekly Erev Shabbat (10 FEB 89) published a full-page expose about sects "in the wake of the deportation of the Emin sect leader", calling the sect "racist", "elitist", leading to "economic bondage by sect members to its leaders." Only Yad L'ahim, "the scourge of the Mission in the past and of the sects in the present", is active in the war against the sects.

HARE KRISHNA: Two H.K. Israeli sect leaders, Natan Cohen (35) and Shlomo Rahazitz (45), who were arrested on suspicion of possessing heroin powder and stolen property, were released following police investigation which disproved the allegations. It is believed that opponents of the sect, anxious to thwart the sect's activities in Tel-Aviv, misled the police. (8 Feb 89; 14 Feb 89; Hadashot)

THE MISSION

CONVENT CHILDREN: A three-page feature article in the Ultra-Orthodox weekly Yetaid Ne'eman (12 JAN 89) headed, "Strange child in convent", continued the attack on convents which care for Jewish children, although "mountains of words have already been spilled" about the subject. The unnamed reporter, disguised as an expert in special

education, toured a convent which maintains 80 severely retarded Jewish children. One of the Christians nurses, in reply to a question about their motivation for this work, allegedly stated that "we are helping the Jews because we want to bring them closer to our Christian faith. Later, confronting Jewish authorities he interviewed, he was told by most of them that there were no comparable Jewish institutions capable of handling the severely retarded. If Orthodox Jews are upset by the situation, he was told, let them establish institutions that can handle such cases. Meanwhile, all appeals and efforts to do so have failed for lack of funds or commitment, and even the children of ultra orthodox Jews are sent to Christian institutions with rabbinic consent. The article accuses the government of indifference to the problem. (See also Selections No. 169 page 5)

JAFFA MISSION: In Jaffa there are a number of bodies and individuals dedicated to converting as many Jews as possible to Christianity, Heaven forbid! Among these, the Emanuel House church is outstanding. It operates a study centre with the aid of professional missionaries and no small number of Jewish apostates. One of them, Yaakov Damkani, recently published in the general Israeli press full-page notices. In addition, he published large quantities of tracts and explanatory literature which are distributed by a well-oiled machine. He and his group labour earnestly and systematically among Jews, and physically appear at many homes to offer enrollment in the learning programs and lectures given at Emanuel House and in the home of the apostate Damkani, all masked as Bible study and "repentance". There are very tangible results to their work. At every missionary national conference which has taken place in recent years, there is a large increase felt of the representation of Jewish apostates sent from Jaffa. In the annual Jerusalem March organized by the Jerusalem municipality, which enables the Christian Embassy and its satellites to take part, last year some 70 well-known Jewish apostates participated while this year the number reached 210, and the chief organizer of the Jewish apostates who come from all over the country, is Yaakov Damkani. Activity, which to the ordinary secular Jew appears to be purely Jewish Bible study, swiftly turns into massive study of Christianity, accompanied by burning hatred for the only community which still "dares" oppose their vile activity, the religious public. "There is certainly inadequate counter activity," says the anti-mission co-ordinator of activities of YAD L'AHIM, "because we don't have enough volunteers to stem the missionary tide which is flooding the Jewish population of Jaffa." (Hamodiya 27.1.89)

THE MISSIONARY FROM ARMON HANATZIV (Jerusalem): Last week I wrote about the missionary notice published in several papers, but now "Haaretz" has paid a dividend to the advertiser in the form of a full-page interview - free of charge. He perfected his Christian faith in New Jersey in the USA, and "promises" that whoever doesn't walk in his way will go to hell; and the writer relates to this drivell nonchalantly; after all, Kalisher is only a Christian missionary and not a Jewish rabbi seeking to return Jews to Judaism. (Yom Shishi, 20.1.89 Hayim Silberstein) See also Selections 170 P.1 "Eternal Covenant")

"EVANGELISTS THREATEN": A study produced by the Youth Aliya division of the Zionist movement warns that missionaries and Christian evangelists are likely to exploit the vacuum in the area of Jewish identity of young Soviet-Jewish "dropouts" in the U.S.A "These young people have no educational or political ideals, nor any interest in Judaism, religion or in their roots; and it is no wonder that in certain instances the danger of Christian missionary influence, especially of Christian evangelists, exists...with the danger of assimilation". These conclusions are part of a worrisome forecast found in the study by G. Kaminsky, headed "Soviet Jewish dropouts: An evaluation and recommendations for activity among the dropouts",

published in the Youth emigration periodical Alim. (Yom HaShishi 10 Feb 89)

MISSIONARY FAILURE: Missionaries are not succeeding in Israel. A Catholic press service in Denmark published a report that the number of Christians converting to Judaism in Israel is one hundred times the number of Jews converting to Christianity, some 5-10 Jews annually as against 500-1,000 Christian converts to Judaism. The Jerusalem correspondent also estimates there are 2,000 Messianic Jews in Israel, who are "persecuted" by representatives of Ultra-Orthodox Judaism. It was also noted that the Moslem population has been pressuring Christian Arabs to convert to Islam, or to sell their property and emigrate from Israel. The report noted the difficulties facing German missionaries because of "historic" reasons, and they therefore support the Danish mission, which enjoys an "open doors" policy in Israel because of the great respect Israelis have for the Danish people. (Eliyahu Zahavi, Ha'Aretz, 30.1.89)

CONVERSION DELAY: A 19-year-old Israeli woman soldier who learned only a half-year ago that her mother was a non-Jewish Christian has complained to army authorities over delays in converting her to Judaism, and of being shunted about from place to place. Her family settled in Israel in 1974 and always regarded themselves as Jewish, but when an older sister went to the rabbinate to be married, she was told she would have to convert to Judaism because her mother was a Christian. The IDF spokesman said the matter is being looked into. (Hadashot 18.1.89)

ULTRA-ORTHODOX MISSIONARY: In a letter to Hadashot (24.1.89), Shoshana Cohen of Tel-Aviv charged that the new M.K Moshe Gafni is one of the leading "Ultra-Orthodox missionaries" undermining the IDF by his preachments for the "penitents" movement (the conversion of secular Jews to Ultra-Orthodoxy), and should not be permitted to lecture to servicemen, since the movement promotes "desertion" from military service.

CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ISRAEL: Issue No. 28 (Winter 88-89) of C.L.I.I. published by the Israel Interfaith Association in Jerusalem reported a number of items of interest to Evangelical Christians, as follows:

(1) The Narkis Street Baptist congregation in West Jerusalem, after receiving approval for a revised building plan, has begun construction on a new enlarged sanctuary to replace the one destroyed by arson in 1982.

(2) Noam Federman, 19-year-old activist in the extremist Kach movement, was sentenced to 20 months in prison for setting fire to the doors of the St.Paul's Anglican church in Jerusalem.

(3) An obituary about Georgina Young, widow of the late Dr.Douglas Young, founder of the Institute of Holy Land Studies on Mt. Zion, and long-time evangelical supporters of Israel.

(4) A feature article on the Baptist Convention in Israel and interview with Ray Hicks, its administrator. The Baptists arrived in the Middle East in 1923. The combined Baptist population in Israel (including expatriates) is about 1,500.

(5) A response by the General Secretary of the Norwegian Mission to Israel to a negative critique of their statement on evangelism to Jews. The editor of C.L.I.I. responded that the statement is "anything but a contribution to the ongoing dialogue between Judaism and Christianity". He also described "messianic Jews" as being "as much a marginal phenomenon of the Jewish community today as they probably were in the first centuries of the Church".

"MERRY CHRISTMAS": Under this heading, Hadashot (26.12.88) carried a photo story of midnight Mass in Bethlehem with a photograph of a priest kissing a doll representing the Christ child.

NEVE SHALOM: Two members of the Swedish parliament have proposed Bruno Hussar (78), founder of the Jewish-Arab settlement of Neve Shalom, as a candidate for the Nobel peace prize. Hussar is a born Jew who converted to Catholicism, and founded the settlement in 1976, which now has 80 residents. (Hadashot 3 Feb 89)

REPORTS ON CHRISTIAN WORLD IN ISRAELI PRESS:

(1) The Jerusalem Post (20.11.88) reprinted an article from the New York Times about two conferences and research dealing with "fundamentalism" in Christianity and Islam.

(2) Yediot Akhronot (20.11.88) carried a report by Yaron London of a lecture by David Katz at Tel-Aviv university on the history and theology of the Fundamentalist movement in the U.S.A , which gained momentum after World War II. At present it is the most important religious movement in the West and is an enthusiastic supporter of Israel.

(3) The Vatican has produced new computer diskettes of the entire Bible and 150,000 annotations and comments in the spirit of the Christian faith, which are now obtainable by IBM computer owners at a price of about \$350 per package. (Hadashot 12.12.88)

(4) The first critical voices have been raised in Japan against the new emperor and the imperial institution. Kazuki Noga, spokesman for a Protestant organization representing 1,700 churches in Japan, warned against attempts to void the postwar constitution which removed the Emperor from active involvement in government. He said that his organization, in cooperation with Buddhist groups, would conduct an anti-imperial assembly at the time of the funeral of Emperor Hirohito. (Hadashot 10 Jan 89)

(5) The Evangelist preacher Jimmy Swaggart has again been accused of intimate relations with another woman, according to a Penthouse magazine story. The evangelist and his wife both vigorously denied the accusation. (Hadashot 31.1.89)

(6) "THE LAST TEMPTATION": NBC TV, in a program about Israeli censorship, referred to the controversial film, and noted that, although regarded as sacrilege in the Christian world, it was "only banned in the Jewish state". (Al HaMishmar 6 Feb 89)

SUNDRIES

MESSIAH SEEKER: "I've come to Israel to look for the Messiah", a passenger arriving from Copenhagen told airport police. Her manner and dress were quite strange, and she was detained for investigation. She wore large copper-plated numbers 5 and 6 around her neck and said that when she found number one, "I will know it is the Messiah". She carried a \$47,000 bank check on her and another \$1000 in travelers checks. After consulting with the Minister of Interior, it was decided to send her out on the first flight to Denmark. (HADASHOT 21.3.88)

"YESHU"?...or "YESHUA"?: "The name of Jesus the Nazarene for 2,000 years in the Talmud and all of Hebrew literature, including the monumental work of Joseph Klausner, Jesus the Nazarene, and the Hebrew Encyclopedia, is 'YESHU'. Only Salkinson, in his translation of the New Testament, for missionary reasons, used the name 'YESHUA'," wrote Dr. Reuven Sivan in a letter to publisher Uri Avneri. "I regret that I cannot accept this", Avneri replied. "The only reason for the spelling of Jesus' name 'Yeshu' was the fierce hatred for the father of Christianity. He was a Jew from Nazareth whose name was 'YESHUA'. The spelling 'Yeshu' (which represents the Hebrew initials for the

imprecation "May his name and memory be blotted out") was purposeful and propagandistic, and it is time to be rid of it in our days". (OLAM HAZEH 14.12.83)

ST. LUKE'S PASSION: The production of the Passion according to St. Luke by the Polish composer Panderetzki at the Jerusalem Theatre was the closing event of the annual Liturgica festival. Perhaps it wasn't as profound as Bach, but it was very Christian and folksy, and very communicative. When one hears such music, one understands how Christianity can use art to recruit believers to its faith. It was a musical adventure. (Shosh Avigal, Hadashot 8 Jan 89)

In the ongoing competition among the monotheistic faiths, Christianity undisputedly takes first place when it comes to the use of music and the arts. It is well-known that the Church was the nursery, the hothouse and the flag-bearer of Western music from its beginnings as well as the nurturer of the greatest composers and most exalted styles. Judaism, on the other hand, takes a very distant (if at all) second place, and has produced nothing like the giants of the Renaissance...even if many explanations may be offered for this phenomenon...(Kawl Ha'ir Jlm 16.12.88)

CHARISMA: "Charismatic" is a word that has become increasingly debased since it was first minted in 17th century England from the Greek term "charisma" (meaning "gift" or "favor") and referring in the New Testament to the grace of God dwelling in an apostle or believer. Well into the present century, one was unlikely to encounter the word outside works of Christian theology. It was the mighty political figures of the post-World War One era who first deflected the word downward...until it could be applied to just about everybody. (The Nation Magazine 2 Sep 88 "On Language")

"ONE GREAT JEW": All that we ask is what every person in the enlightened world enjoys, life in a normal state, a state where all its citizens are equal before the law, without regard to whether they are Jews or not, religious or secular, black or white. As one great Jew said nearly 2,000 years ago: "Before God there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither circumcised nor uncircumcised." (From an article by Boaz Evron in Yediot Akhronot about the "Who is a Jew"? controversy, 25.11.88)

DIASPORA NEWS

U.S.A.: A New York state court has upheld the right of the Jewish community to fight missionary activity as an exercise of free speech. Judge David Edwards dismissed a longstanding lawsuit brought by JEWS FOR JESUS against the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of New York for distributing pamphlets urging rabbis to appeal to Christian colleagues to refuse their facilities to JFJ for Hebrew-Christian Passover services. (Various Papers FEB 1989) The first international conference against missionary activity among Jews was held at the Sheraton hotel in Baltimore, Maryland, organized by "JEWS FOR JUDAISM". Some 60 delegates, including rabbis, educators and psychologists, from 35 states, Canada and Israel, took part in the three-day conference. Lectures were heard about responses and counteractions to the Jerusalem "Shavuot" conference of 1,500 Messianic Jews (Rabbi Benzion Kravitz); "reconversion" projects for Messianic Jews (Rabbi Michael Twersky); about the moral decline in the U.S. Jewish community and the religious project "Discovery" (Rabbi Mordecai Berger); and about "the 12,000 Jews sacrificed on the altar of the Christian mission because of Jewish community neglect and apathy." (Lawrence Levy) New sophisticated missionary methods and anti-mission counter-measures were discussed. (HaModiya 13.12.88)

Under the guise of promoting Jewish immigration to Israel, a missionary network called "Aliya Center" is operating in Florida headed by John Stenbridge among Soviet Jewish dropouts in the U.S.A.,

and within the USSR itself. Stembridge claims to represent Christians "who believe in the Torah" who are strong supporters of Israel. (HaModiya 20.12.88; Algemeine Journal 16.12.88)

The Detroit Jewish News (16.12.88) carried a seven-column debate between several Jewish leaders on the question of Evangelical support for Israel. Mark Pelavin and Ron Lebovits of the American Jewish Congress argued for wariness in dealing with the U.S. religious right, "recognizing the shallowness of (their) support and the true agenda of those organizations," which are usually different from the U.S. Jewish agenda in matters such as religious pluralism, minority rights, etc. Joseph Puder, director of "Americans for a Safe Israel," argued for the Evangelical commitment to Israel based on their strong religious commitment, as against the unreliability of Liberal Christendom. "The Jewish State needs Christian Zionist support to survive," concludes Puder.

U.K.: Between October 1988 and February 1989, news articles and readers letters were published in the Jewish Chronicle of London concerning "the missionary menace," the Church Ministry to the Jews (CMJ), the Archbishop of Canterbury (who has been asked to disavow Jewish evangelism, especially as practiced by CMJ, whose patron he is), warnings about intensified mission work in London's Jewish neighbourhoods, full-page Christmas advertisements in national and local papers emphasizing the Jewishness of Jesus, and calls for Jews to mount counter-campaigns as well as "to make the Jewish way of life more attractive...so that fewer young Jews will wish to opt out." (Rabbi Douglas S. Charing, Jewish Education Bureau, Leeds - 3 Feb 89). A report was also carried about attempts to cancel an invitation of the Messianic Jew Richard Harvey of CMJ to speak at Cambridge University under the auspices of Christian students, and an offer to the Jewish opponents of Harvey to provide a non-Messianic Jew to debate the issues with him was refused, as "it would give Harvey too much legitimacy." (HaModiya 7 Feb 89)

Responses to Jewish concern over missionary activity were reflected in a series of news items reported in the Anglican Church Times and in several Jewish Chronicle reports during January 1989. The Archbishop of Canterbury refused to withdraw his patronage from CMJ; while expressing disapproval of "covert missionary activity," there was no evidence that CMJ engages in such "covert" activity. "Christianity is a missionary religion while Judaism is not," a spokesman explained, brushing aside charges that missionary activities were "antisemitic," and citing biblical principles concerning the Jewishness of Jesus and the Gospel, and the necessity for evangelism. Meanwhile, spokesmen for Christian Witness to Israel (CWI) denied charges leveled against them of targeting Jewish children and of offensive advertising. In a hard-hitting article in the CWN Series (20.1.89) headed ADS FOR JESUS ("the sort of exercise you give to budding executives: Devise a campaign to sell Jesus to the Jews."), Steve Parish expressed reservations about the style of JEWS FOR JESUS, but hit out at the Bishop of Oxford for calling on the Church to discourage Jews from abandoning their historic faith in order to turn to Christianity. "It seems very strange for a Christian bishop to discourage anyone from becoming a Christian."

*** END TRANSCRIPT ***
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