

LETTERS

Dear Editor:

Rabbi Phineas A. Weberman, congregation Chev Shalom, Miami Beach, Fla., in a recent Friday night sermon said:

"Crime in Israel for the last five years jumped 35%. Violent crimes 200%. Prostitution is rampant. 60% of the girls involved are under 17 years of age. The whereabouts of about 20,000 Israeli youth are unknown."

Indeed a tragic and alarming situation, and the Rabbi blames it all on the secularists in power in Israel and the lack of religious education for their youth.

First, I would like to remind the Rabbi that 95% of the Jews in Israel are secularist. If the Rabbi would do a little researching of the facts and tell them as they are, he would find that it was the secular and socialist youth from Russia and Poland, sick of their pogroms in the 1880s, with the help of some funds from Baron De Kirach, settled in Palestine on some land in cooperative communes, the present socialist kibutzim. The Rabbi will also find that if it wasn't for the founding fathers, beginning with

Dr. Theodore Hertzl, Dr. Haim Weitsman, and ending with Ben Gurion and Golda Meir, all secularists and socialists, the Rabbi would still have to wait for his Messiah and a few miracles to have his Jewish homeland in Israel. And what is the Rabbi doing in Florida when there was such a lack of religion in Israel?

And with a little more researching the Rabbi would find that crime and prostitution is a by-product of unemployment and misery. That some 800,000 Oriental Jews from North Africa and Arab countries were invited "to come home", were settled in the worst slums of Israel, and without education, without trades, without jobs, without income, crime and prostitution is a natural. And when they see \$15,000 and \$25,000 religious ceremonies around the corner, which I did at Bar Mitzvahs and weddings, what does the Rabbi expect them to do, pray in the synagogues? Living on \$40 a month.

Don't be naive, Rabbi Weberman. (Read Newsweek 4/19/71).

In our own nation we spend more on religious preaching and teaching, than the rest of the world combined. Stock investments alone of our religious institutions runs into the hundreds of billions of dollars. (Wall Street Journal, 5/1967).

In our own state of Florida we have more churches and synagogues, we do more religious preaching and teaching, we raise more funds for religious preaching and teaching, percentage wise, than any other state in the U. S.

As per Rabbi Weberman's logic Florida should be free from crime and prostitution, or at least at the bottom of F.B.I.'s annual report on crime and prostitution. If the Rabbi would blame our crime and prostitution, and they are on the top of the list of any state, on the lack of religious education, he will be as wrong as he is when he blames them in Israel on the lack of religious education.

There is one sector in Israel life that is completely free from these two man-made evils. They are the Kibutzim organized on a secular and socialist basis. They have been so successful, from the beginning on, that today they are 100% automated with the best machinery money can buy. I saw the first cotton-picking machine in my life in Israel. Their children, the second

generation of the Kibutzim are the only ones who could afford a higher education, which is still not free in Israel.

Since the land does not need them any longer, they, the youth are today graduate doctors, engineers, scientists, agronomist, architects, builders. They are branching out in every field of industrial manufacturing. Their present is pleasant, their future guaranteed. In this type of soil crime and prostitution cannot thrive.

/s/ Herman H. Sohn,
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BAR-ILAN MARKS EIGHTEENTH YEAR;
ENGLISH PARLIAMENTARIAN ADDRESSES
FOUNDERS CELEBRATION IN NEW YORK



Bar-Ilan University launched its eighteenth anniversary celebrations by honoring more than 125 of its Founders at a recent dinner in New York. Bar-Ilan, Israel's religious university, has more than 6,000 students and is fully chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York.

Among those in attendance were — seated (left to right) Michael M. Fidler, English Parliamentarian and president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and Albert Parker, chairman of the University's Board of Overseers. Standing (left to right) Ludwig Jesselson, chairman of Bar-Ilan's Board of Trustees, and Dr. Joseph H. Lookstein, University Chancellor.

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