

HEBREW STUDENT PRESS

The year: 1952. The place: the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The problem: textbooks, or rather, lack of them.

In the years following the independence of Israel, the student body at the university had doubled, even tripled, in size. It was difficult enough to house all these students, for the university had lost its home on Mount Scopus, let alone to provide them with books in Hebrew, the language of the new state.

The staff were harrassed, but the students took the problem more philosophically. To them the answer seemed obvious: "If we need books," they said, "we'll print them ourselves."

Armed only with their own confidence and the backing of the faculty, they collected one hundred dollars — a fabulous sum for the time — commandeered two battered typewriters and a mimeographing machine, and hung the sign "Mif'al Hashichpul" on the door of a tiny office. The Hebrew University Students' Printing and Publishing House was born.

The main problem in the first year was inexperience:

"We learned in the hardest school of all, by our own mistakes," the students recall ruefully. But what they lacked in experience, they made up in keenness. By the end of that first year of operation the Student Press had produced 2,500 pamphlets on 15 different subjects with a turnover of 3,000 Israeli pounds. Today, booklets on more than 250 subjects are printed annually with a turnover of 180,000,000 Israeli pounds (more than \$8,300).

Mif'al Hashichpul is an entirely student-run organization. Policy is controlled by an Executive Committee of nine members appointed by the Student Union, who take all decisions regarding activities, methods of operation, budget, staff, etc.

The actual operation of the Student Press is as complex as that of any commercial publisher. Printing machines must be inked and operated. Stencils must be cut, rolled off and filed. A production chart must be maintained so that a daily work schedule can be planned. Accounts must be kept and correspondence attended to. The mate-

rial must be sold, cashbooks tallied. And, of course, texts must be edited, designed and proofread.

The press employs over 70 students who work as machinists, typists, sales clerks and in a variety of other jobs. This has the double advantage of offering a means of livelihood to students who are self-supporting — opportunities for employment in Jerusalem are limited — and providing experience which frequently proves a valuable asset in later life. In addition, the press employs a small staff of full-time professionals, and the professors at the Hebrew University contribute both their time and services by editing manuscripts, lending their own textbooks for reproduction, indicating sources and even proofreading.

It is a far cry from those early days when Mif'al Hashichpul could boast only two ancient typewriters and a duplicating machine crammed into one small room. Today its equipment, which would impress any professional businessman, includes typewriters (with typefaces in 8 different languages), offset printing machines, xerographic equipment, a lithographic stone printing machine, etc. And this is only a beginning, for the press has more ambi-

tious plans in view. Some of this equipment has been provided with the aid of WUS — the World University Service.

Housing conditions are still far from perfect — the sales centre is located on the University campus, while the printing and administrative services are in town — but plans are under way for the building of a Student Centre in Jerusalem and Mif'al Hashichpul is to have permanent quarters there.

Student communities in other parts of the world share problems similar to those of the Hebrew University. Lack of student employment and of adequate textbooks, and inexperience are common issues on many campuses. During its nine years of existence Mif'al Hashichpul has gone a long way towards solving these problems and has acquired considerable know-how and experience.

The Israeli students consider it their privilege to share this knowledge with students in other lands, and through the World University Service and COSEC, a Technical Assistance programme has been prepared. WUS of Israel will contribute two scholarships and the National Union of Israeli Students an additional two, so that four
(Continued on page 90)

you cannot have one without the other.) In brief, what is secular involves the connotation of a departure from something, and this is the religious view that flourished luxuriantly in Europe during the medieval ages.

The medieval ages adhered to the theological conception of man. The earth was the center of the universe, and man, the creature of God, was placed in it to glorify his Creator. The Augustinian distinction between the earthly city and the city of God and the prescription to actualize the latter as a duty of all Christians were principles permeating the medieval outlook. A neat theory of the universe expressive of the medieval desire for order, was nowhere better presented than by Thomas Aquinas. To Aquinas, creation followed a well organized plan — the eternal law. The movements of the planets, the laws of science, the imperatives of moral behaviour, the end of man, etc., all found their respective niches within this eternal law. That aspect or portion of the eternal law applicable to the moral prescriptions of man and discoverable by his reason was called natural law. Now, man's collective experience led him to produce human law, which,

on account of Original sin and limitations of his intellect, was not perfect. Consequently, natural law was posited as a corrective to human law. Yet in the Divine Plan, there was something else in store for man. On account of the need for salvation and since reason had its limitations, Revelation was necessary. This was Divine law, a law supplementing human law. Divine law made possible what Christians call "grace" and eternal bliss. All these, in a nutshell, was the medieval conception of law. Every thing had its proper place and relations within the general scheme of things. This view could certainly serve to give man some security and answers to his "big" questions.

(To be concluded)

HEBREW . . .

(Continued from page 69)

students from interested countries can follow a month's training course in Jerusalem, on every aspect of the student press from typing to budget control and equipment supervision. Already a Greek student, Theodosius Kontopoulos, from Salonika, received training at the press early in 1961 after having obtained a travel grant from WUS. (UNESCO)