

UCCI NEWS CLIPPINGS

SELECTIONS No. 13 (to 2.3.78)

SUBJECT 1: MISSION LAW

DATE: 17.2.78 JOURNAL: THE JEWISH CHRONICLE (LONDON) NEWS ARTICLE

HEADING: "CHRISTIAN LOBBY SET UP"

QUOTE: "AN ARAB CHRISTIAN CLERGYMAN, A NORWEGIAN LUTHERAN PASTOR, AND A ROMAN CATHOLIC LAYMAN OF JEWISH EXTRACTION ARRIVE IN LONDON NEXT WEEK TO LOBBY AGAINST THE RECENT PASSAGE BY THE KNESSET OF A BILL FORBIDDING THE OFFER OF MATERIAL INDUCEMENTS TO CANDIDATES FOR CONVERSION. THE DELEGATION FROM THE UCCI OF JERUSALEM WILL MEET CHURCH LEADERS AND WRITERS ON RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS TO INFORM THEM OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER A THREAT TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINORITY IN ISRAEL. THEY WILL BRING WITH THEM THE NEWS THAT ULTRA-ORTHODOX ELEMENTS IN THE KNESSET ARE PREPARING ANOTHER MEASURE DESIGNED TO PREVENT THE CIRCULATION OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY TRACTS AND THE HOLDING OF PUBLIC MEETINGS IN ORDER TO PROMOTE CHRISTIANITY. A MEMBER OF THE UCCI TOLD THE JEWISH CHRONICLE THIS WEEK THAT IT WAS NOT THEIR PURPOSE TO HAVE THEIR "INFORMATION CAMPAIGN" TURNED INTO A PROPAGANDA EXERCISE AGAINST ISRAEL. HOWEVER, THEY FELT THAT THEY HAD TO INFORM CHRISTIANS IN THIS COUNTRY AND IN OTHER COUNTRIES OF WHAT THEY CLEARLY REGARDED AS AN AFFRONT. THE LEADER OF THE DELEGATION LIVED IN BET SHEAN UNTIL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL WHEN, IT IS CLAIMED, HE AND HIS FAMILY WERE FORCED OUT." (MISSION BILL "ATTACKED IN ISRAEL, BACK PAGE.) NOTE: THIS CLIPPING WAS NOT INCLUDED.

DATE: 24.2.78 JOURNAL: AL HAMISHMAR (HEB A.M. MAPAM) NEWS ARTICLE

HEADING: "VATICAN CONCERNED ABOUT LAW AGAINST MISSION ACTIVITIES: "LIABLE TO HARM INTERRELIGIOUS CO-EXISTENCE IN ISRAEL"

BYLINE: ARNON YAFFA, AL HAMISHMAR CORRESPONDENT IN FRANCE

QUOTE: "PARIS.- THE LAW WHICH WAS PASSED IN THE KNESSET AGAINST CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN ISRAEL "IS CAUSING GREAT CONCERN" IN THE VATICAN. THIS WAS REPORTED BY THE CORRESPONDENT OF "LE MONDE", AND BASED ON KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES IN ROME. CHURCH LEADERS ARE WEIGHING THE MATTER OF EXPRESSING THIS CONCERN TO THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS AND TO THE INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMUNITY AT A SOON-CONVENING SESSION OF THE CATHOLIC-JEWISH CONFERENCE IN MADRID. LE MONDE REPORTS THAT A DELEGATION OF THE UCCI HAS JUST VISITED THE VATICAN. IT CONSISTS OF AN ANGLICAN PRIEST, A LUTHERAN PRIEST AND A CATHOLIC PRIEST, AND VISITED THE VATICAN PRIOR TO ATTENDING A MEETING OF THE WCC IN GENEVA. THE DELEGATION PRESENTED FOUR ARGUMENTS: (1) INASMUCH AS THE LAW IS VAGUE, IT IS LIABLE TO VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS, INCLUDING VERY HOSTILE INTERPRETATIONS. (2) THE LAW IS LIABLE TO ENCOURAGE EXTREMIST CIRCLES TO LAY TRAPS FOR CHRISTIANS AND TO ACCUSE THEM AFTERWARDS OF CORRUPTION. (3) THE LAW AGAINST MISSION ACTIVITY IS NOTHING BUT AN INTRODUCTION TO FURTHER CONCESSIONS WHICH THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT WILL EFFECT ON BEHALF OF THE RELIGIOUS PARTIES. (4) THE LAW WAS PASSED IN THE KNESSET IN AN ANTICHRISTIAN SPIRIT. IN THE VATICAN IT IS FEARED THAT THIS LAW WILL IMPAIR THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND WILL VOID THEIR COEXISTENCE IN ISRAEL AS WELL AS THE STATUS OF JERUSALEM AND THE HOLY PLACES."

SUBJECT 2: MISSIONARY MATERIAL DISTRIBUTED IN BNEI BRAK

DATE: 26.2.78 JOURNAL: AL HAMISHMAR (HEB AM MAPAM) NEWS ARTICLE

HEADING: "COMPLAINTS IN BNEI BRAK OF DISTRIBUTION OF MISSIONARY MATERIAL IN TOWN"

BYLINE: A. KITSIS, OUR CORRESPONDENT IN GUSH DAN

QUOTE: "AN INVESTIGATION IS NOW BEING CONDUCTED BY THE OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS OF THE POLICE FORCE IN THE DAN REGION CONCERNING THE DISTRIBUTION OF MISSIONARY MATERIAL IN A NUMBER OF NEIGHBOURHOODS IN BNEI BRAK. THIS IS IN THE WAKE OF A COMPLAINT BY THE MAYOR, Y. GOTTLIEB, WHO HAS CHARGED THAT IN THE PARDES KATZ AND KIRYAT HERZOG NEIGHBOURHOODS ENVELOPES ARE BEING DISTRIBUTED WITH THE NOTATION "A LETTER FOR YOU", CONTAINING QUOTATIONS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT ABOUT JESUS AND CHRISTIANITY. GOTTLIEB ALSO CHARGES THAT THESE ENVELOPES ARE BEING DISTRIBUTED IN MAILBOXES AND THEY ALSO CONTAIN OFFERS OF PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SENDERS IN ORDER TO ARRANGE FOR LECTURES, MEETINGS, AND MORE."

SUBJECT 3: VANDALISM AGAINST "JEHOVAH WITNESSES"

DATE: 28.2.78 JOURNAL: HAARETZ (HEB A.M. IND.) NEWS ARTICLE

HEADING: "HOUSE OF WORSHIP OF JEHOVAH WITNESSES" AGAINST . BROKEN INTO AND VANDALIZED"

BYLINE: CORRESPONDENT OF HAARETZ

QUOTE: "FOR THE THIRD TIME THE HOUSE OF WORSHIP OF THE "JEHOVAH WITNESSES" ON LEVANDA STREET IN TELAVIV WAS BROKEN INTO AND VANDALIZED WITHOUT ANYTHING BEING STOLEN FROM IT. LAST THURSDAY THE VANDALS, WHO COME FROM RELIGIOUS CIRCLES, LEFT TRACES OF THEIR PRESENCE WHEN THEY WROTE "SHARMUTOT" AND "DOGS" ON THE BLACKBOARD OF THE HOUSE OF WORSHIP. "JEHOVAH WITNESSES" IS A SMALL SECT NUMBERING IN ISRAEL ABOUT 260 ADHERENTS, OF WHICH THERE ARE 130 IN TELAVIV. FOR FIFTEEN YEARS THEY DID NOT TROUBLE ANYONE NOR WERE THEY TROUBLED. BUT AFTER THE KNESSET ELECTIONS YOUNG PEOPLE BEGAN TO COME WITH THREATS THAT THEY WOULD HURT THE MEMBERS OF THE MOVEMENT IN THEIR HOUSE OF WORSHIP. THE FIRST INSTANCE OF VANDALISM OCCURRED LAST YEAR ON THE 19TH NOVEMBER, AND A COMPLAINT WAS REGISTERED WITH THE POLICE OF THE YARKON REGION OVER IT. ABOUT THREE WEEKS AFTER THE PLACE WAS REFURBISHED THE SECOND INSTANCE OF VANDALISM OCCURRED. AND A SECOND COMPLAINT WAS REGISTERED WITH THE POLICE. IN REPLY TO A QUERY BY THE CORRESPONDENT OF HAARETZ (SEE "HOLY WAR AGAINST JEHOVAH WITNESSES" 15.1.78), OFFICER BAR-HAYIM, COMMANDER OF THE YARKON DISTRICT, AT THAT TIME STATED THAT "THE POLICE WILL DEVOTE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE SUBJECT IN THE WAKE OF PRESSURE FROM PUBLIC FIGURES." AS FOR THE INVESTIGATION ITSELF, BARHAYIM STATED THAT THE POLICE WERE AT THE STAGE OF GATHERING INFORMATION. MEMBERS OF THE MOVEMENT STOOD GUARD AT THE HOUSE OF WORSHIP UNTIL THE LATE HOURS OF THE NIGHT. LAST THURSDAY THERE WERE GUARDS STANDING UNTIL TEN AT NIGHT. THE FOLLOWING MORNING THEY DISCOVERED THAT THE HEAVY STEEL DOOR THEY HAD INSTALLED IN THE PLACE AFTER THE FIRST BREAK-IN HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM ITS HINGES AND CAST INTO THE BUILDING. THE VANDALS SMASHED THE ELECTRIC SYSTEM AND THE CLOCKS AND BROKE THE AIR CONDITIONERS. ALL THE NEW FURNITURE WAS SMASHED AND ALL THE BOOKS TORN. A THIRD COMPLAINT WAS REGISTERED WITH THE POLICE. "WE ARE SIMPLY HELPLESS," JOSEPH LEVY, A MEMBER OF THE MOVEMENT SAID. INASMUCH AS THEY ARE A SMALL RELIGIOUS AND PACIFIST MINORITY, "JEHOVAH WITNESSES" SEEK PROTECTION BUT THEY FEAR THAT ALL THE PRESSURES UPON THE POLICE TO WHICH OFFICER BARHAYIM ALLUDED ARE ACTUALLY BEING EXERTED TO HALT THE INVESTIGATION AND TO QUASH THE MATTER. "THIS IS A SYNAGOGUE OF A COMMUNITY WHICH IS A THORN IN THE SIDE OF SOME KIND OF (JEWISH) RELIGIOUS GROUP, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEIR HAND IS BEHIND IT," Shimon Carmi, SPOKESMAN FOR THE TELAVIV REGION POLICE STATED. ACCORDING TO HIM, THE POLICE ALSO SUSPECT THAT THE AIM OF THE BREAK-INS AND VANDALISM IS TO FORCE THESE PEOPLE OUT OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD. THE POLICE INVESTIGATION HAS MET WITH DIFFICULTIES, ACCORDING TO HIM, BECAUSE "WE ARE DEALING HERE WITH A CLOSED GROUP WHOSE CHARACTER IS KNOWN." NEVERTHELESS, HE IS CONFIDENT THAT THE POLICE REGARDED THESE ACTS MOST SERIOUSLY AND WOULD DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO LOCATE THE CULPRITS AND BRING THEM TO COURT."

DATE: 27.2.78 JOURNAL: MAARIV (HEB. P.M. IND.) NEWS ARTICLE

HEADING: "HOODLUMS DAMAGE MEETING HALL OF "JEHOVAH WITNESS" SECT IN TELAVIV

BYLINE: AVI RAZ

QUOTE: "THE PRAYER HALL OF THE RELIGIOUS SECT OF "JEHOVAH WITNESSES" ON 36 LEVANDA ST. IN TELAVIV WAS DAMAGED LAST WEEKEND WITH HEAVY DAMAGES CAUSED TO THE PLACE. THIS IS THE THIRD TIME WITHIN THREE MONTHS THAT UNKNOWN PERSONS HAVE BROKEN INTO THE PRAYER HALL AND DAMAGED ITS FURNISHINGS. THEY SUSPECT THAT THE ATTACKS ARE THE WORK OF EXTREMIST ORTHODOX CIRCLES, OR OF HOODLUMS SENT BY THE EXTREMISTS. THE PRAYER HALL EXISTS FOR ELEVEN YEARS ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF AN INDUSTRIAL BUILDING IN A COMMERCIAL AREA NEAR THE CENTRAL BUS STATION. THE HOODLUMS BROKE IN AFTER REMOVING THE ENTRANCE DOOR FROM ITS HINGES (WHICH DOOR IS MADE OF IRON AND WAS INSTALLED AFTER THE SECOND BREAK-IN, CAUSING DAMAGE TO THE WALL. THE HOODLUMS WRECKED THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM. THEY DESTROYED THE TWO AIRCONDITIONERS, TWISTED THE WINGS OF THE VENTILATOR WHICH DESCENDS FROM THE CEILING, SPILLED OUT THE CONTENTS OF A CAN OF PAINT, SCATTERED LITERATURE OVER THE FLOOR OF THE HALL, AND DAMAGED THE FURNITURE."

SUBJECT 4: ETHIOPIAN CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM

DATE: 23 Sept. 77 JOURNAL: JEWISH NEWS (DETROIT, MICH.) NEWS ARTICLE

HEADING: "BRIGHT FUTURE SEEN FOR JERUSALEM'S CHRISTIANS"

EXTRACTS: "JERUSALEM.- BY THE END OF THIS YEAR A NEW CHRISTIAN STUDY CENTRE WILL BE ADDED TO THE OTHER 24 ALREADY IN EXISTENCE IN JERUSALEM. IT COULD BE A PORTENT OF BETTER THINGS TO COME FOR A COMMUNITY WHICH HAS HAD MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF TROUBLES DURING 1600 YEARS HERE. ACCORDING TO ROBT D KAPLAN IN ISRAEL DIGEST, THE PROPOSED INSTITUTE WILL OFFER GRADUATE LEVEL COURSES EMPHASIZING THE STUDY OF GE'EZ, AN ANCIENT AFRICAN TONGUE AND A LINGUISTIC VEHICLE WHICH PROMISES TO SHED LIGHT ON EARLY ETHIOPIAN JEWRY AND THE INTERACTION BETWEEN CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH THOUGHT IN ANTIQUITY.....THERE ARE PRESENTLY SIXTY RELIGIOUS COPTIC CHRISTIANS FROM ETHIOPIA IN JERUSALEM, ALL EITHER PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY RESIDENTS. A THIRD OF THEM INHABIT DEIR-ES-SULTAN, A MUD HUT VILLAGE ON THE ROOF OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE AND THE CENTRE OF A LEGAL CONTROVERSY WHICH BEGAN IN OTTOMAN TIMES AND IS YET TO BE SOLVED, WITH FURTHER COURT ACTION EXPECTED SOON..." (THERE FOLLOWS SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE LITIGATION.) MEANWHILE, OFFICIALS DISCLOSED THERE IS A CRITICAL NEED FOR REPAIRS AT DEIR ES SULTAN. SINCE MAKING REPAIRS SIGNIFIES OWNERSHIP, IN THE ABSENCE OF A DECISION, THE GOV'T IS MAKING THE REPAIRS RATHER THAN EITHER OF THE TWO PARTIES IN DISPUTE. SINCE ADDITIONS WOULD VIOLATE THE STATUS QUO, OFFICIALS ASSERTED THAT REPAIRS MEANS "REPLACING" EXISTING MATERIALS WITH NEW ONES WITHOUT ANY ALTERATIONS. THE MIN. OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS COMMISSIONS THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPT FOR ROUGHLY IL10,000 IN REPAIRS ANNUALLY OFFICIALS REPORTED. PRESENTLY, THE ISRAELI GOVT IS CONTEMPLATING CHANGING THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM AT DEIR ES SULTAN WHICH IS IN A CRITICAL STATE. DEIR ES SULTAN IS THE ONLY ONE OF FIVE HOLY PLACES CONTROLLED BY THE ETHIOPIANS IN THE TURKISH TIMES WHICH THEY STILL CONTROL. THE LOST ONES INCLUDED THE GROTTO OF DAVID ON MT ZION AND AN ALTAR IN THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY IN BETHLEHEM. ABBA BERHANE, WHO HAS LIVED IN DEIR ES SULTAN FOR TWO DECADES, SAID: "WE WERE HERE BEFORE THE CALIPH OMAR. WE WERE THE LIGHT OF THE CHURCH, BUT NOW, NOTHING." A NUMBER OF OTHER SITES HAVE BEEN ACQUIRED--THE MONASTERY IN THE NEW CITY ON ETHIOPIA ST., THE ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE IN THE OLD CITY, A MONASTERY BY THE JORDAN RIVER, A CONVENT IN JERICHO AND ANOTHER MONASTERY IN BETHANY. THE ETHIOPIANS INHABITING THESE PLACES INCLUDE NINE NUNS. OF THE SIXTY PERSONS, ONE NUN AND THREE MONKS ARE HERMITS. ...COMMENTING ON THE COMMUNITY'S FORTUNES SINCE THE REUNIFICATION OF JERUSALEM, SISTER E. KRESTOS SAMBA SAID: "UP UNTIL NOW THINGS HAVE BEEN GOOD, VERYGOOD. " THE COMMUNITY IN ISRAEL SUBSISTS MAINLY ON INCOME RECEIVED FROM RENTING OUT A FEW HOUSES IT OWNS NEAR ETHIOPIA STREET. ALSO THE MONKS AND NUNS MAKE IKONS WHICH ARE SOLD FOR IL100 AND IL200 EACH."

*****END TRANSCRIPTION: 2 Mar 78.