

CAMPAIGN AGAINST "GALTRONICS" IN TIBERTIAS, A U.S. CHRISTIAN FIRM: The Workers Council of Tiberias yesterday decided to strike the electronic factory GALTRONICS in Tiberias in protest against its owners' non-recognition of the Histadrut labour union. Involved in the plant are American Christians who engage in missionary activity and compel their Jewish workers to pray each morning to Jesus. There are 45 Jewish and Gentile workers in the plant. (AL HAMISHMAR 14.4.86) The GALTRONICS workers have gone on strike in protest against missionary activity, and prevented the Gentile owners from entering the factory. The workers also claim that they are poorly paid. The owners said that they are considering returning to the U.S., which they left four years ago. (HAMODIYA 15.4.86)

The Galtronics Company, which manufactures radio antennae, is threatening to close down if "unfair outside harassment" does not stop, manager Danny Yahav said yesterday after workers from other factories tried to stage a sit-in at the company, but were removed by the police. Yahav said his life was threatened when the company laid off several workers. YAD L'AHIM, the anti-mission society, charges that employees were subject to missionary lectures during working hours. The Histadrut also claims that the company will not permit unionization of its workers, but the management claims that most of its employees are not interested. (J'LEM POST 17.4.86)

On Monday six dismissed workers, accompanied by members of the local Labour Council, struck the plant. A Christian Arab from Nazareth related that one of them spat upon a cross he keeps on his table and called him "a dirty Arab." At a press conference they later claimed they were compelled to pray each morning and one worker alleged that he was asked to convert to Christianity. Daniel Yahav, the 27-year-old manager of the plant, denied that anyone was ever pressured to convert or to pray. An Israeli Army officer, Yahav identifies himself as a Messianic Jew who believes that Jesus is Israel's Messiah. Owner Ken Crowell is an American Christian living in Tiberias with his family. Most of his workers support the company stand against unionization, and they claim that the stories about missionary activity are "vindictive." The production manager admitted that the workday commences with a ten-minute prayer service in the manager's office which is open to anyone who wishes to join. Two of the Jewish employees take part, but an Orthodox-Jewish employee (photograph included) has never joined in, and insists that she has never felt discriminated against because of her belief. The manager declares that, as far as it depends on them, the family have no intention of leaving Israel. (Photo of K. Crowell erroneously captioned Dan Yahav) (HADASHOT 17.4.86)

The Tiberias police dispersed a crowd of dozens of industrial workers from the area who had blocked the entrance to Galtronics, and tried to prevent factory workers from entering the plant because of non-recognition of the Histadrut labour union. (DAVAR 17.4.86) The plant owner Ken Crowell, a devout Christian, has accused the Histadrut, the municipality and religious circles of subverting his factory. The manager, Danny Yahav, a "Messianic Jew," produced a document signed by half of the workers who request that the Histadrut not intervene in their behalf. He denied that there was any truth in the accusation that workers were obliged to participate in morning prayers, but admitted that workers were given at holiday time, among their other gifts, copies of the New Testament, and that there was an "open library" on the premises containing Christian literature. (MAARIV 17.4.86) The publicity about missionary activity in the plant

provided by several dismissed workers has stirred up the Orthodox community in Tiberias who have set up a committee for bringing this activity to a halt or causing the removal of the factory from Tiberias. (HAMODIYA 17.4.86)

YAD L'AHIM: Vehicles belonging to activists of the Tiberias branch of this anti-mission society were damaged while parked near their local office. Windows were smashed and tires slashed, according to their spokesman, Y. Kornfeld. (MAARIV 9 Apr 86)

MESSIANIC "PENITENTS": Tsahi, a 30-year-old graduate of the Hebrew Academy in Jerusalem, a veteran of the Israel Defence Forces, left Israel three years ago to search for the truth in America. There he met a Christian woman who introduced him to the New Testament. Later on he met U.S. Messianics and was swept into the Messianic faith. His mother claims that he cut off all contact with her and only visited briefly, 1 1/2 years ago and several months ago, at which time he was interviewed by Miriam Yehezkiel.

He states that, after writing a script about a Christian girl having an encounter with an Israeli soldier, his interest in religion and spiritual questions was aroused, and subsequently in the movement of the Messianic Jews in North America. A reading of the Acts of the Apostles and other literature had a strong impact on him. Asked what brought him to belief in Jesus, he replied: "Jesus was a Jew. When I read the New Testament and about the Jewish apostles, I recognized it as something good. Jesus is the missing link in Judaism. I was like Jonah who couldn't escape from him. Don't think I enjoy carrying this burden (of being a minority among Jews): it's difficult. Let me tell you of an Israeli girl of Yemenite background who at first refused to work with a publisher of the New Testament, but when she agreed she was astonished at the Jewishness of it. When she asked herself whether Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the angel Gabriel appeared to her and showed her Jesus on the cross. That is the new birth. . ."

Professor Zvi Verblowsky (Comparative Religion) has investigated the Messianic phenomenon and declares: "There is no rational basis for it. Even the Christians are in a quandary about how to explain Jesus as Messiah. Every Christian with a particle of sincerity will admit that this is a problem, and these foolish Jews come along saying we should believe in Jesus!" According to him, their Christian faith is amazingly primitive in contrast to Christian theology, and is based on texts that missionaries have removed from their context. "It is the height of idiocy, they want to Judaize as it were their Christianity. It is clear to every knowledgeable person that the Hebrew Bible doesn't truly point to Jesus. . . How can a Jew speak about Christianity without being aware of what Christianity has done to Judaism? This is a witness to the state of Jewish education, that a pathological social phenomenon like this is at all possible. What causes such alienation that young Jews go so far as to identify with matters related to social psychology which are psychotic?" He terms missionary Messianic literature "nonsense."

YAD L'AHIM claims that the Messianics profess to be better Jews, and there are some 3,000 in Israel, mostly Israelis. Their slogan is: Be a better Jew with Jesus. This is a war of survival of the last days, and as the year 2,000 approaches the missionary assault will intensify, they claim. (HAARETZ 15.4.86)

There was a super-abundance of bigotry in the article about Messianic Jews. It would appear from it that, merely on the basis of birth, it is forbidden for a Jew, as a Jew, to arrive at theological and faith conclusions of his own free will which lead to a positive attitude

towards Jesus and the New Testament. The attempt by the article to portray the faith of the Messianic Jews as something "primitive," "pathological," "foolish," and by other defamatory remarks, with the aid of a scholar who professes to encourage tolerance in Israel, reflects rather the level of "liberalism" of the writer. (Menahem Benhayim, Israel Sec'y Int'l Messianic Jewish Alliance, J'lm, 21.4.86)

**ANTI-MISSION TROOPERS:** The YAD L'AHIM anti-mission society has begun to operate a "Patrol in the War against the Mission" in Haifa this week. Orthodox Jewish seminarians and high school youths will patrol the city streets and drive away activists from the Messianic congregation who are distributing tracts in town. The patrol is the result of a missionary assault which has lately intensified in Haifa, according to YAD L'AHIM. They intend to appear in those places where the missionaries are found and to shout and whistle at them and their supporters.

At the same time a special phone line has been opened for citizens troubled by the Mission to contact them. It was noted that thousands of tracts have been distributed in central areas of Haifa announcing that Messiah has arrived. The "Gospel spreaders" are members of the Messianic sect. They have also distributed some 200 cassettes in Russian to Soviet Jewish immigrants, according to the organization. (MAARIV, 3 Apr 86; DAVAR/HAMODIYA 4.4.86)

YEDIOT AKHRONOT (8 Apr 86) published a feature story on the "Ultra-Orthodox Commandos," with a photo of Aharon Kornfeld, YAD L'AHIM spokesman and "patrol" director speaking into his "walkie-talkie." In addition to communication equipment, the "patrols" have at their disposal vehicles and volunteers (some 30 secular and religious) available at all hours of the day.

"The missionaries worked secretly until now," says Kornfeld, "but suddenly they became courageous and came out onto the streets." The peak period was during Purim when dozens of young people nattily dressed, of impeccable appearance, stood on street corners in downtown Haifa and distributed tracts about Jesus. They spoke quietly and responded coolly to the queries and shouts of passersby. The streets were littered with tracts, and the "patrolers" of YAD L'AHIM quickly gathered up all the tracts and threw them into the dustbin so that no one might see what was written on them. "Behind all this stands the Messianic sect," Kornfeld claims.

At the Haifa congregation "Beit Hasdai" they are aware of the patrols and are following them with concern. They are not willing to be interviewed or to respond, and someone answering the phone - quite impudently - refused to identify himself, saying: "We're not looking for publicity, nor do we have to respond to the press, and especially not to your newspaper."

**"MISSIONARIES":** According to the (5 Mar 86) letter of the Mayor of Givatayim to the Chairman of the town Religious Council, he describes the Orthodox Jewish penitents who have opened a seminary for penitents in his city with antisemitic labels. He defines the leaders of the seminary as "missionaries" who seek to "convert young men and women by casting them into the net of the penitents." Did the voters who elected Mayor Yitzhak Yaron consecrate him to take care of such "missionaries" . . . when he insolently promises the Chairman of the Religious Council that "we shall do everything in our power to catch this trash, these poisoners of wells, and drive them out of our area"? (Letter in KAWL HA'IR, Jerusalem)

JERUSALEM: Passersby near the Jerusalem municipality this weekend were surprised by three old women who were distributing a well-illustrated pamphlet with an invitation to visit an address listed thereon. A young seminarian who chanced to be in the area was shocked to discover that the pamphlet contained missionary material. He stirred up a commotion and warned the people with loud cries of the dangerous missionary material being distributed. The old ladies quickly disappeared to the shouts and warnings of the seminarian not to return. (YETAID NEEMAN 8 Apr 86)

"HARD-CORE MISSIONARY ACTIVITY:" Orthodox guest lecturers should not be admitted to State secular schools without the approval of the principal and the written consent of the pupils' parents. This was one of the recommendations made by the Knesset Education Committee. Daniel Tropper, head of Geshet, an organization dedicated to bridging the gap between the Orthodox and secular populations, called the Committee recommendations "fair and balanced," noting that they "are trying to prevent hard-core Orthodox missionary activity" (for secular Jews to adopt Orthodox Judaism in the so-called "penitents" movement). (JERUSALEM POST 7 Apr 86)

MEDIA EVANGELISM: Two letters (MAARIV 13.4.86: KAWL HA'IR) write of alleged missionizing, the first on Middle East TV, "STAR OF HOPE," with a program for Holy Week concerning the crucifixion, the second referring to a song on the VOICE OF ISRAEL ("Dominique") with a Christian message. (The second letter sarcastically refers to the "ayatollahs of YAD LA'AHIM" who waste their time with vain demonstrations against the Mormon university on Mt. Scopus while "they are being outflanked by the good news of Yeshua on the Voice of Israel.")

#### DIASPORA NEWS

U.K.: Reform leaders sponsored a seminar on Judaism for 120 Gentile theological students at the Leo Baeck College. Among issues discussed was the grief caused Jews by Christian missionary activity. (CHRONICLE 6 Dec 85) Geoffrey Wigoder, Israel representative of the Int'l Jewish Committee for Religious Consultations (IJCIC) clarified the reason for the cancelation of a conference of Anglicans and Jews due to have been held in England in May. The reason was the objection of some Orthodox Jewish participants to the proposed agenda which suggested to them "theological dialogue." (16.3.86 JERUSALEM POST)

U.S.A.: Russian-speaking missionaries of Baptist persuasion have been visiting the homes of recent Soviet-Jewish immigrants, offering their children opportunities to take part in seminars at nominal fees, and grants and loans to the needy among them. At least nine children have allegedly been baptized, according to a New York Hebrew-language paper. (SHEARIM 26.3.; HAMODIYA 28.3.) The Director-General of the organization fighting the missions in the U.S., P. Abramowitz, has warned Long Island residents about a Passover Seder planned by JEWS FOR JESUS under the guise of a traditional Seder. (SHEARIM 2 Apr 86) A bitter attack on the Massachusetts Board of Rabbis for issuing a statement in support of the construction of the Mormon centre in Jerusalem was published in the New York JEWISH PRESS (28.3.86), by a reader.

#### CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

JEWS AND CATHOLICS: Various articles, news items and letters to the editor have appeared in the Hebrew and English-language press in Israel concerning changes in Roman Catholic attitudes towards Judaism and Jews. Interest in the subject was heightened by commemorations of the 20th anniversary of the "schema" or Jewish document adopted by the Second Vatican Council, by the recent visit of the Pope to a Roman synagogue, and the publication of the book The Vatican, the Holy Land

and Zionism between 1895 & 1925, by Yitzhak Minervi. The author views the issue as a theological conflict between Judaism and the Jewish people in confrontation with the Church which regards itself as "the true Israel." This is said to be the reason behind Vatican non-recognition of Israel and coolness towards Zionism.

**COPTS AND ISRAEL:** After postponements and delays over a period of eight years, the Minister of Interior this week signed authorizations for the construction of the Coptic College at Beit Hanina. Relations between the Copts and the State will not improve "as long as the structures that Israel permitted the Ethiopian monks to steal from us are not returned to us," says the Coptic archbishop Anba Basilius. Israel Lippel, formerly Director-General of the Min. of Religious Affairs, a specialist in Christian communities, stated: "The government of Israel made a serious error when it mixed foreign affairs and politics with the most sensitive religious questions in the Christian world." Because of the good relations with Haile Selassie's Ethiopia at the time and the state of war existing between Israel and Egypt, Israel did nothing to deter the Ethiopian clergy in Jerusalem from allegedly encroaching on Egyptian Coptic rights and privileges at the "Holy Sepulchre" in 1970. (KAWL HA'IR 11.4.86) See also SELECTIONS No. 138, bottom p. 7.

**WOMEN CLERGY:** A lengthy article was published in the JERUSALEM POST (6 Apr 86) headed "UNHOLY ORDERS: As with the Jewish religious establishment, the Church is hesitant to appoint women to powerful clerical positions." It described the struggle in the world-wide Anglican Church (including the U.S. Episcopal sister churches) over the issue of women clergy, including the possibility of a U.S. female bishop. There was also a quote from a letter to TIME Magazine: "Pope John Paul is against women priests because there were no women among Christ's apostles. If there were also no Poles, ordination (should be) restricted to those who (like the apostles) are Jewish males born in Israel. . ."

**CRUCIFIXION:** The JERUSALEM POST carried several feature articles about new findings relating to the practice of crucifixion in Jerusalem during the first century A.D. Based upon a renewed study of the remains of a victim identified as Yehohanan Ben Hagakol, discovered in Jerusalem in 1968, it confirmed some of the facts of crucifixion known from the New Testament and Talmud, altered some traditions about the way crucifixion victims were portrayed in Christian art, and left "the exact manner of Jesus' crucifixion a mystery." (12 Oct 85; 22 Nov 85)

**KEEN SABBATARIANS:** A basically friendly feature article about Seventh Day Adventists who represent 90% (2,712) of the population of Keene, Texas; written by David Horovitz of the JERUSALEM POST (12 Nov 85)

**CHRISTIAN READER:** Greetings from the Philippine Islands. I am a faithful reader of TORAH TODAY (Rabbi Pinhas Pelli's commentary on the weekly Tora reading in the Synagogue). I am a Christian missionary of the Christian and Missionary Alliance working among the Moslems in the central portion of Mindanao. . . A. Abrams, Cotabato City. (JERUSALEM POST 2.2.86)

**BAPTIST BOOK SHOP:** The refusal by the Baptist Book Store in East Jerusalem to pay commissions to tour guides is resulting in a 50-75% loss of business, according to Rev. David Dupriest, a member of the Baptist Foreign Mission. The management has complained to the Ministry of Tourism, and was reportedly told that if proof was furnished against specific guides, their licences would be withdrawn. (J'LM POST 2 Apr 86)

SCOTTISH CONNECTION: A feature article by Michelle Maazel of the J'LM POST, focusing on St. Andrew's church and hostel, sketches the Scottish connection to Jerusalem: Scottish regiments and fallen soldiers who fought to liberate Jerusalem from the Turks, Scottish Christians linked to the Holy Land, like Lord Balfour, Orde Wingate, King Robert Bruce who willed his heart for burial in Jerusalem. The hostel was recently renovated and the new pastor, John Miller Scott, plans to convert the church library into a study centre for scholars. (28.2.86)

"BIBLE BELTS"

"BIBLELAND": At Neve Ilan in West Jerusalem, Israeli movie mogul Menachem Golan is building a 24-million-dollar studio aimed to turn Jerusalem into the film capital of the world, which he calls "Bibleland." "With the coming of peace, Jerusalem will be the centre of attraction for all the world's religions," he explains, and religion-oriented films are "a huge industry, so why not do it here where the Bible happened?" He admits that some clergy are upset ("they attack me as though I were going to crucify the Bible"), but he intends to set up a committee of rabbis and Christian clergy to advise him. "Bibleland," he claims, will help religion by "getting people enthusiastic about the Bible." (J'LM POST 17.10.85)

EXODUS AND REVOLUTION: A review of the book by Michael Walzer (Basic Books, New York, 1985) relating the biblical story of the Exodus to political and religious upheavals (the Reformation, the Puritan Revolution, American civil rights movement, Marxism), and how these movements have adapted elements of the Exodus to their own situation and ideology. (J'LM POST 27.12.85)

\*\*\*\* END TRANSCRIPT/1 May 86/mb \*\*\*\*

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