

Israel Still Best

By Judy Carr

I was sitting with a friend flipping through the pages of an international publication. We read of the malaise afflicting Europe and America, the unemployment, the hopelessness of the youth, the spiritual confusion. As we turned the last page my friend said to me with a smile... "Well, where is the best place to be?"

What - you exclaim. You mean Israel! With the threat of war, the constant acts of terrorism, with inflation galloping without restraint. Yes - I do mean Israel!

In Israel our youth are looking toward a future. They are not hopeless. They are getting married and established in jobs and flats, although the threat of war casts a shadow. They are not ground under by a system too big for them.

I hear of young people in England who have taken degrees and diplomas and are rejected by employers because they are not members of a union or are unable to serve an apprenticeship. A mammoth set of rules and regulations strangles their future.

"Life is unbelievably drab," writes a friend from England.

Drab is a word that can never be applied to Israel. Our housewives are marching with guns; mothers are guarding the schools; even kindergartens are protected by an armed guard. Yet loquacious Israelis bubble over with chatter, vivacity - and often downright rudeness. The rudeness of Israelis is decried, harshly commented on, but surely it is better than passivity.

In Israel there is none of the spiritual malaise, the doubt and uncertainty, that has become the essence of western life. Israelis know where they are going. They know that if they want their country they must fight for it. They can no longer, after the recent votes of the UN, kid themselves about the world's goodwill. At last -- we know where we are. The courage to face the truth will serve to recharge our spiritual batteries...if previously they were run down.

A psychologist once said to a tormented girl,

"It is not the persecution of others that does damage to the personality as much as the things you do to yourself."

That is what hurts...when you know YOU are to blame. Israel need not blame herself for the many wars forced on her by the Arabs. In spite of them she, a fledgling State, has built a thriving agriculture and industry, absorbed immigrants and even extended help to other developing nations. We still have our integrity. With the votes of three quarters of the world against us, we can hold our heads high.

This would seem to be the best propaganda for aliya ... simply, the Truth. Tell the Jews abroad to come to a country that believes in its future, that is feeding its citizens, encouraging investors, and, as yet, has only a margin of unemployment.

RABIN THREATENS TO RESIGN OVER SETTLERS

JERUSALEM (WNS)

-- The Labor Party has been warned by Premier Yitzhak Rabin that he might resign if the party does not support him on the compromise reached with the Gush Emunim settlers near Sebastia.

The warning came during a stormy meeting of the Labor Alignment's Knesset faction at which Foreign Minister Yigal Allon attacked Defense Minister Shimon Peres for having failed to order the army to stop the settlers from taking over the illegal encampment in Samaria. Allon, who opposed the compromise un-

der which 30 families were given permission to remain in Samaria under army protection, told the meeting, "I have sinned too much, perhaps, by keeping silent too long."

Earlier, Health Minister Victor Shemtov of Mapam, an Alignment member, who severely criticized the compromise, had been told by Rabin that the Gush Emunim settlers were given no commitment that they would be allowed to settle in Samaria in the future. Shemtov said that many Labor Alignment members considered the compromise a sell-out that severely compromised the government's authority.

However, political observers said that Rabin is enjoying a wide popularity with the public for preventing a violent clash between the settlers and the army.

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The Jews abroad need the message. A shaliach recently returned from England said that previously the Jews there would not come on aliya because they had it so good. Now that the going is not so good, they made that the excuse.

No one can make out that aliya is without its problems. But a healthy immigrant can be absorbed on a Kibbutz and have assured employment and a certain future. He can go to a Negev town and still feel a pioneering spirit. If he does not like the system, he can challenge it. Many Jews from the West are making it their business to change the Israeli system.

Israelis do plenty of moaning -- Nothing gets done here, we grumble. It's the land of non-opportunity, we cry. Yet with all our breast-beating we still have no dole and are doing well enough without it.

Israelis have no need to cry.

JDC BUDGET OF \$33,335,000 TO AID 435,000

NEW YORK (WNS)

-- A 1976 budget of \$33,335,000, an increase of \$1,700,000 over 1975, was adopted by the more than 600 Jewish community leaders in the United States and Canada at the 61st annual meeting of the Joint Distribution Committee.

The budget covers the cost of a broad range of health, welfare and rehabilitation projects aiding more than 435,000 needy Jews in 25 countries.

Jack D. Weiler, who was re-elected JDC chairman, said that inflation and increasing cost especially for transmigrants, mostly Russian Jews enroute to countries other than Israel; health and welfare needs in Rumania and programs for Jews in Eastern Europe, accounted for the increase. Samuel L. Haber, who was elected honorary

vice - chairman after having served as executive vice-chairman since 1967, reported that by the end of this year JDC will have helped 430,000 Jews in 25 countries overseas at a cost of \$31,603,000. Robert L. Goldman, formerly associate director of the JDC's Malban program in Israel, was elected vice - chairman to succeed Haber.

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