

**OUR MAN
IN HAIFA**



CARL ALPERT

*Israel and
the Falklands*

HAIFA -- Israel looks upon the conflict in the South Atlantic as one in which we have no share or interest, beyond a natural wish to see the dispute settled peacefully. We enjoy normal diplomatic relations with both states involved. Nor does Israel seek to pass judgment on the merits of Argentina's claim to the Falkland Islands which the British seized some 150 years ago.

The situation there provides further illustration of the incapacity of the United Nations to deal with genuine crises. Indeed, the British may yet get a bitter taste of how it feels to have its cause considered in a hostile forum dominated by the Communists, the Arab bloc, the anti-colonialist states, and the so-called non-aligned groups. It will be seen once again who really dominates that less than august body.

Nevertheless, Britain has seen fit to inject an Israel issue into the conflict and to give it nasty prominence.

The Argentine has acquired the major part of its military supplies from outside its own borders. Some has come from Latin American neighbors, like Brazil. A large part of the Argentine navy, including an aircraft carrier, was purchased from Britain. Israel, which has many customers in the world, has been a relatively minor supplier, and this according to long-standing contracts.

It was something of a shock, therefore, when London levelled a finger of accusation against Israel, and gave widespread publicity to its charges that the little country in the Middle East was engaged in hostile acts by shipping war supplies to Buenos Aires. At a time when British sailors were drowning in the icy waters of the South Atlantic, these reckless and not clearly defined charges caused a reaction in British public opinion which might have been expected.

And this from a state which, during the Yom Kippur War, when Israel was desperately in need of supplies in the face of a treacherous attack, refused to allow American transport planes to refuel or even touch down anywhere on British territory or anywhere else where Britain had influence. Furthermore, parts for British tanks, which we had already bought and paid for and some of which were already in transit to us, were called back, and further shipments embargoed.

This from a state which to this very day continues to pour heavy armaments into countries all around us, countries which are openly at war with Israel, and make no secret of their intentions to use the British tanks and planes given the opportunity, to destroy Israel.

Perhaps one could explain that Margaret Thatcher's government acted in a fit of in-

temperate nervousness, given the situation at the Falklands, and therefore lashed out at the country least likely to be able to respond.

Israel did give its reply, with dignity. While there is a state of hostility between Great Britain and Argentina, we shall refrain from making any new arms deals, and we shall treat each side with equal neutrality. But contracts already signed will be honored, perhaps in contrast to mighty powers like Great Britain or France, which find it easy to abrogate agreements whenever they wish. The great states can afford to treat honor so lightly, but to little Israel a word is a word. If the other states of the UN were to treat their obligations with half as much conscientiousness, the world would be a far better place to live in.

And finally, the hypocrisy of Britain's attitude to Israel in this matter hardly helps to promote confidence in the justice of the British cause in the Falklands.

25-YEAR EFFORT

A 25-year effort by a distinguished team of American Jewish biblical scholars was crowned last month with the issuance by the Jewish Publication Society of the third and final volume of its new English translation of the Hebrew Bible.

The publication of Kethubin (The Writings) thus completes the scriptural trilogy -- a climax to the new JPS translation of The Torah (1963) and The Prophets (1978).

This is a truly epochal achievement on several counts.

It marks the first time a group of scholars representing the Jewish community has translated the Bible from Hebrew into the vernacular since the translation into Greek, known as the Septuagint, nearly 2,300 years ago.

It is presented in modern literary English, retaining the imagery of the Hebrew and rendering it in an idiomatic rather than word-by-word translation.

It makes use of the findings of contemporary biblical scholarship, archeology and studies of the language and cultures of the ancient Near East, including the Dead Sea scrolls.

It reflects the participation of learned rabbis of the three major branches of Judaism -- Orthodox, Conservative and Reform.

We congratulate the 94-year-old Jewish Publication Society on this enormous contribution to Jewish life. We salute the scholars, translators and editors who carried out their task with love, dedication and care, and the men and women whose gifts to JPS made this community endeavor possible.

BONN (WNS) -- East Germany, which has conferred embassy status on the PLO in East Berlin, gave a warm welcome to the PLO's ambassador Isam Salam. He was greeted by Erich Honecker, the Communist Party chief and chairman of the State Council.

**MOTION ON KNESSET
DISSOLUTION**

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- The small Shinui faction introduced a bill calling for the dissolution of the 10th Knesset and for elections next November 2. While chances that the bill will actually come up for a vote remain slim, the leftist party regards the measure as a trial balloon to test the intentions of the two major parties rather than a serious move toward early elections.

Shinui submitted the motion following the recent no-confidence vote which resulted in the Likud-lead coalition government of Premier Menachem Begin narrowly retaining its mandate. The vote in the Knesset came following the defection of the Likud MKs Amnon Lin and Yitzhak Peretz. Begin reportedly favors early elections on grounds that Likud would return to office with a decisive ma-

majority. At the moment, however, he is ardently courting the two member Telem faction to replace Lin and Peretz in his coalition.

Meanwhile, the fate of Begin's coalition now seems to ride on Telem, the faction founded by the late Moshe Dayan. The Telem leadership met with Begin recently but reportedly only "asked questions and received several offers." The meeting was not regarded as "real negotiations." At the same time, the National Religious Party reportedly may drop its opposition to early elections. The NRP which lost four Knesset seats in the last elections, has been reluctant to go to the polls again for fear that its mandate may be reduced even more. But it said to feel now that opposing new elections would further damage its image.

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