

OUR MAN IN HAIFA

CARL ALPERT



The Spy Who Wasn't Cold

HAIFA -- Israel has had its share of spy stories since establishment of the State. Not easily forgotten is the case of Israel Beer, confidant of Ben Gurion, and official historian of the armed forces, with access to inner military circles, who was found guilty of furnishing classified information to foreign agents and was sent to jail, where he eventually died. There was also Aharon Cohen, a left wing political leader, who maintained highly irregular and suspicious contacts with diplomats from Eastern Europe, and paid for his indiscretions with a period in prison. And there was Kurt Sitte, the Technion professor of physics, whose relations with agents from the Communist bloc apparently went beyond the innocently scientific. His jail term was cut short and he was expelled from the country.

But the principals in the newest spy tale in Israel are not Israelis at all. Rhona Ritchie, First Secretary of the British Embassy in Tel Aviv, tall, pretty, single, 29, was one of the popular figures in the diplomatic social world. Early in March she was asked to return to London for a few days, presumably to make final arrangements for the forthcoming visit of Lord Carrington to Israel. But when she descended from the plane at Heathrow she was formally charged with passing secrets to unauthorized personnel, and taken into custody. She is due to stand trial these very days.

Rhona has admitted that she knew Rifa'at Al-Ansary, First Secretary of the Egyptian Embassy in Tel Aviv. She is said to have confessed that she loved him, and some reports had it that she wanted to bear the child she had conceived by him, but was persuaded by him to abort it. Her defense is that she revealed no secrets about Britain or about the British Embassy -- only information which had crossed her desk about Israel, and hence had done no harm to Britain. Anything she may have done which could contribute to the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank, she is said to have maintained, is after all part of Britain's own official policy.

Al-Ansary had apparently met Rhona in London, where he had been a staff member of the Egyptian Embassy. Scotland Yard had been impressed then with his amorous activities, usually with vulnerable women who had access to information that a foreign government would be interested in. When Egypt opened its Embassy in Tel Aviv, he was transferred there, and soon afterward Rhona Ritchie was assigned to the British Embassy in the same city.

The pretty British diplomat took her job seriously. She enrolled at the Ulpan of Kibbutz Maayan Zvi, and is said to have acquired an

excellent command of Hebrew. She took a small apartment, away from the diplomat colony, and neighbors, who liked her, told that the Egyptian was a very frequent caller. Some said that "he practically lived there."

The news of the arrest in London came as a shock even to her colleagues at the British Embassy, but knowing of Scotland Yard's thoroughness, and conservative policies in such matters, it was generally agreed that there undoubtedly was very solid evidence against her. In the meantime, Al-Ansary continues life as usual. He fulfills his duties at the Egyptian Embassy, even attends parties and the usual social functions, where he is eyed curiously. Obviously if he were to be recalled to Cairo at this time it would be a tacit admission that something was wrong. Until more details are available, he is guilty of nothing.

Political and diplomatic circles in Israel are keeping mum. None of the principals involved is Israeli, though this country certainly is interested in what is alleged to have been going on. If the trial is held in camera, little more will be known, except that the diplomatic career of the romantic British girl will have been ended.

CARTER WAS FEARFUL OF SADAT'S LIFE

NEW YORK (WNS) -- Former President Carter, providing a preview into his soon to be published memoirs during an address to a convention of American booksellers, described how he had ordered increased security precautions one evening during the Camp David peace talks for former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat because he feared the Egyptian leader might be "in danger from the Egyptian delegation."

Elaborating on his remarks to the American Booksellers convention meeting in Anaheim, California, the former president said at a later news conference, "I thought Sadat was in physical danger. I called Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski (Carter's former National Security Advisor) to come to my cabin about 3 o'clock

in the morning and I called the head of the Secret Service detail to come to my cabin and I told them I wanted to tighten the guard around Sadat's cabin without letting him know and not let anybody go into it.

"And the next morning about 8 o'clock I was waiting by the window and was relieved to see Sadat come out of his cabin and go for his morning four kilometer walk. And then a few days later, looking back on that time, I thought how foolish I was to be concerned about Sadat. Of course, even later, with the tragedy that resulted in Sadat's death, I'm not so sure that was foolish."

The Carter Memoir's "Keeping Faith," are scheduled for release in November.

RANDY BENNETT

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UJA PLANS "LIFTOFF '83"

The American Jewish community has been called on once again to demonstrate its unswerving support for worldwide Jewry. This particular time it will not be to sign petitions or protest arms sales to Arab states. It is a call from the United Jewish Appeal to help provide for humanitarian needs of Jews in Israel and around the globe during its scheduled 1983 fund raising drive. The plan, unveiled in Washington, will begin in September.

The campaign promises to be the most ambitious and intensive campaign in the 44 years of UJA fund raising. The plan is built around what has been dubbed, "Liftoff '83," an intensive series of major gift events in the United States, Europe and Israel, to establish an early level of increased giving far beyond all prior achievements.

Beginning with "Hineni I," a major gift meeting in New York, the "Liftoff" program also includes a "Campaign Fly-In" by teams of prominent Israelis, national Jewish leaders and public personalities to sweep major Jewish communities in a concentrated fund raising effort; a "Campaign Leadership Gathering" of a projected 1,500 community leaders in Israel, including pre - Gathering missions in Europe and North Africa and special pre - and - post Gathering programming in Israel; the Ninth Annual International Leadership Meeting to be held this year in Geneva, Switzerland, and "Inside Washington," a special post - election mission in Washington, D.C.

Furthermore, the plan calls for stepped up efforts to improve the cash flow from U.S. communities to linked Project Renewal neighborhoods in Israel and also a comprehensive strategy to eliminate the Jewish Agency's indebtedness by the end of the decade. It was pointed out that insufficient funds had been raised in the past to adequately provide for Jewish Agency programs and services for the massive waves of immigrants to Israel in the 1950s.

Subsequently, a decline in allocations to UJA from community campaigns and an erratic and inadequate flow of cash from communities resulted in heavy borrowing by the Agency and sharp cuts in personnel, programs and services. According to newly installed National Chairman Robert Loup of Denver, who unveiled the Campaign at the UJA Leadership Conference in Washington, the plan is an ambitious one far beyond all prior achievements. But it is within the grasp of the UJA's goals and the American Jewish community's ability to give. "We have the capacity to double -- or more than double -- the total we raise to meet the need in Israel and the world over," Loup said. "The goal for '83 is to begin to turn our capacity into life-giving reality."

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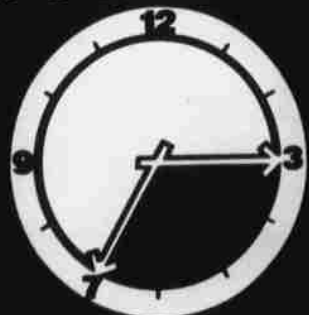
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