

# OUR MAN IN HAIFA

## CARL ALPERT



### An Open Letter to a Friend

HAIFA - My dear friend: I address this letter to you publicly because, alas, I find the views you have expressed appear to be shared by many other Jews overseas. You wrote me, with an air of excited condemnation, you will recall, that "Israel's name is not what it used to be, and Begin should give back his Nobel Prize." Others have used even stronger language. Some said they were "ashamed to be Jews." I was saddened to note that some Jews took to the public press, via letters to the editor, or even by way of paid advertisements, to join in the blanket condemnation of the State of Israel. Obviously all this was in response to the world-wide publicity given to the tragic massacre of some hundreds of Arabs in Beirut.

May I tell you a short story. Many, many years ago, in the Pale of Jewish settlement in Czarist Russia, when Jewish life was conducted in an environment and atmosphere of poisonous anti-Semitism, a young lad reached the age of 13 and was Bar Mitzvah. He went through all the religious ceremonies and the social festivity which accompanied the event. It was impressed upon him that he was now a man, accepted as member of a Minyan, and counted as a full member of the Jewish people. Upon his shoulders would be all the duties and also all the responsibilities of a Jew. He listen-

ed earnestly. When the excitement of the day had passed, and he found opportunity for a quiet talk with his father, he spoke up: "Daddy, (or maybe he said Tateh or Abba), now that I am an adult member of the congregation, bearing my full responsibility as a Jew, surely I should also know all the innermost secrets of our people. Tell me, frankly, what are the details of our use of the blood of a Christian child at our Pesach Seder!"

My dear friend, like the innocent little boy who had unconsciously been affected by the evil fabrications of our enemies, you and many others have also been influenced by the pernicious repetition of lies and gross exaggerations. You will recall the horror stories which came out of Beirut in the early days of the war, and the awful pictures on the television screens. You know, I assume, that many of these stories have now been revealed to have been false, and the lurid pictures in many cases deliberately misleading. The statistics which had been bandied about in those days have also all been discarded as - shall we charitably say, erroneous?

What happened more recently is that a band of Lebanese Arabs, in the ancient tradition of Arab culture, perpetrated a mass killing of another group of Arabs, in retaliation for a mass killing only a few days earlier, in which the President-elect of the country had also been killed. In numerical terms, the hundreds of people killed in the retaliation was far, far less than the tens of thousands of civilians killed during the bloody civil war in Lebanon which had preceded Israel's entry into the country, killings which were noted by the rest of the world with only a moderate degree of revulsion.

But because Israel troops happened to be in the neighborhood (troops who stepped in and stopped the killings as soon as the truth leaked through) our enemies were only too happy to pin the guilt on Israel, the whipping boy of all those who place Arab oil above the truth.

Israel will soon be out of Lebanon - and I do not believe that any Israeli wishes to remain there one moment longer than is necessary - and the various factions in Lebanon will go on killing each other as they have indeed been doing for several hundred years. Perhaps under those circumstances Israel will be condemned for having abandoned the helpless population.

As you know, an objective, judicial investigation is now being conducted in Israel. No one questions the objectivity of the members of the commission. I do not seek to pre-determine its findings, but even if it should establish that there has been an error in judgment or timing on the part of some Israel factor, this is a far cry from the incendiary news reports which made it appear that Israel was guilty of encouraging

the massacre or worse. You see, my dear friend, you and many others fell victim to the propaganda and the emotionalism, thus playing directly into the hands of all those who besmirch Israel so that in the end it may be destroyed. When the excitement dies down, and you return to your usual scientific appraisal of situations based on verified facts, you may yet be ashamed that you were so easily influenced by the propaganda, and joined in the international lynching party against Israel. Will you be less susceptible when the media of communication blow up the next incident to the proportions of a further character assassination campaign against this country?

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- The first shipment of American coal -- some 87,000 tons from Virginia -- was delivered during the week of November 8 - 12 to the new Hadera Power station. It is the first power station in Israel to burn the solid fuel.

### U.S. BLASTS RUMANIAN TAX

WASH. (WNS) -- An education tax the Rumanian government has imposed on would be emigrants was blasted by the State Department as a "Draconian measure" and warned that it will jeopardize Rumania's Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status with the U.S. "The tax will make it much more difficult for the President to continue to recommend waiver of prohibition on extending trade concessions to a country that restricts emigration," Department spokesman John Hughes warned.

Rumania was granted an extension of MFN status this fall by Congress but with the warning that it will closely watch whether Rumania eliminates prohibitions that are hampering the emigration of Jews and others. Not Rumanian pledges, but Rumanian performance on human rights issues will be part of the decision which the President will base his determination on whether to extend MFN status next spring. But Hughes warned that the education tax

"is not the 'nominal sum' referred to in the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the Foreign Trade Act which links U.S. trade benefits to emigration procedure. Rather, the Rumanian education tax appears to be a burden that will run into the tens of thousands of dollars in hard currency for those Rumanian citizens who have received free education through the secondary, university and graduate levels,"

Hughes said from a prepared statement. "We view the imposition of this tax as contrary to the UN declaration of Human Rights which provides for the right to leave one's country of birth," the State Department spokesman continued. "By imposing this Draconian measure, beyond the average citizen's ability to pay, the Rumanian government appears to be closing the emigration door to most citizens. If that is the case, the Rumanian government has gravely jeopardized its ability to maintain its MFN status."

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