

**DRAMATIC VISIT**

I have just returned from a dramatic week-long visit to Israel which I'm compelled to write about. It began quietly enough with a visit to southern Lebanon and Beirut and ended with the unfortunate recall of Egypt's ambassador to Israel. Sandwiched in between were Bashir

Jemayel's untimely death, Arafat's visit with the Pope, the Israeli move back into Beirut, the killings in Palestinian towns, Rosh Hoshannah demonstrations outside Begin's home, and the little noticed closing down of El Al, Israel's national airline.

No one in our western press has stopped to calculate the psycho-

logical toll of these events on the Israeli people, as once again their country has been placed under the microscopic eye of world opinion. Perhaps we have been dulled by the events of the past year. Israelis have not. They remember vividly Sadat's assassination, the Golan annex, the emotional return of the Sinai, the shooting of diplomats and citizens

abroad, and the beginning of the Lebanon campaign. All have had a tremendous emotional impact on the Israeli populace. And yet the events of the past week seem to blot our memories of how this country struggles to survive in the hostile Middle East.

I believe history will mark the death of Jemayel just a few days before his inauguration as yet another watershed mark in Middle Eastern politics. The Lebanon and Beirut I viewed just hours before his death appeared to be finally returning to calm after so many years of violence and unrest. Tyre and Sidon, former PLO strongholds were bustling and one could sense an air of optimism which had begun to take hold. Lebanon officials were for the first time in quite awhile expressing hope in their country's future. These positive feelings will no doubt continue to grow, despite the setbacks of the past week.

Israel, for its part, seemed on the verge of pulling the entire venture off in just three months, a movement toward a free, united Lebanon, free from terrorism and at peace with Israel. Unfortunately, as our bus moved down the coastal road back toward Israel, the bomb blast

killing Jemayel set off a new chain of depressing events. However, the opportunity that the Israeli army has given the Lebanese people still remains. Let us all hope it is not overlooked.

As for Israel, what its people need most of all from our government and North Americans (Jew and non-Jew alike), is an expression of our support. The more we turn against Israel in our rhetoric and speech, the harder it becomes for Israelis and Begin in particular to be flexible. They deserve a boost in morale and confidence in the wake of the events of the past year.

No other country in the Middle East shares our democratic ideals, institutions, and freedom of expression. (There are no demonstrations to film for our T.V. news in other Middle Eastern countries because they simply are not allowed.) Further, it has always seemed ironic how numerous Arab states have often called for autonomy and sovereignty for Palestinians when neither Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, or Egypt have any type of autonomy for their own people. We have never had to bribe the Israeli governments with promise of arm sales as we've done with several Arab countries. In the aftermath of the Lebanon invasion we seem to have lost sight of who the underdog really is.

Israel has learned a very sad lesson in Beirut. They no doubt will survive the barrage of world criticism and denouncement. Rather than continue to berate our true friend and ally, let's remember that they almost pulled off the impossible without an incident.

Israel needs our support in bad times as well as good.

Sincerely,  
A.J. Robinson

**I WANT YORKMAN**

Cartoonist Ens is certainly one of York's more gifted and sensitive student artists. As well he has been blessed with a unique and special sense of humor that makes 'Yorkman' both dry yet warmly personal at the same time. Over the last year I've grown to look forward to my weekly dose of 'Yorkman' and I will be sincerely disappointed if it fails to re-appear in future issues of *Excalibur*  
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