The ADL Defends Israeli Consul General Colette Avital — And Rabbi Abraham Hecht Replies

Rabbi Abraham Hecht
President
Rabbinal Alliance of America
3 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011
Dear Rabbi Hecht,

I am troubled by recent public statements you have made against Israeli Consul General Colette Avital.

Ambassador Avital was chosen by the Israeli government to represent the State of Israel in our city and our community. Furthermore, she is an individual who has dedicated her life to protecting the interests of the Jewish people. The Jewish Consul General deserves our personal and communal respect and support.

As American Jewish leaders, we set a standard for our community. Public criticism of this kind is both unwise, and a dangerous precedent. Surely there are ways for you to express your opinion in a more constructive and responsible manner.

I look forward to your response.

Abraham H. Foxman
National Director
Anti-Defamation League

Dear Mr. Foxman,

I am in receipt of your letter of June 16th and I hasten to reply.

The reason for our public criticism of Avital is simple. She has on numerous occasions expressed her disdain for Orthodox Jews and saved her venom for rabbis who do not agree with the policy of appeasement that is pursued by the Israeli government. She gets involved in issues which have nothing to do with her office and is known to be a vindictive, mean person.

She has alienated scores of people in leadership in the Jewish Community and has acted irresponsibly in the "infamous" Alon-Avital confrontation.

She has made accusations without having any one to support her contention of physical contact between Mr. Jack Avital and Shalomi Alon — and has caused shame to the Israeli authorities in Israel who depend on her for truth and fairness in reporting what is happening in the Jewish community.

We shall continue our fight for removal and call for replacement worthy of such an important position.

I regret to say that I cannot accept your criticism as it smacks of anti-Semitism to the Israeli government. Thank G-d we in America do not live in a police state which Israel is now becoming: administrative detention, house arrest, wire tapping, jail for those who have had the privilege of expressing their negative views of official Israeli policy regarding the settlements, the Golan Heights, and a host of other problems.

As one who understands the value of public opinion, you too should join all of the disillusioned leaders who recommend a replacement for Colette Avital as soon as possible. The State of Israel needs true friends and that is why we join a Council General who is sensitive, fair-minded and not prejudiced against any group of Jews will be sent to represent Israel.

Thank you for your letter.

Sincerely yours,
Rabbi Abraham B. Hecht
Congregation Shaare Zion
Brooklyn, N.Y.

The Status Of Jerusalem — But First...

I think we should discuss the status of Jerusalem. Before we do so, several things must be considered...

1) We should give Palmyra, NY, Fayette, and the State of Utah to the Jews.
2) We should give the Black Smith, the founder of the Mormons, grew up in Utah.
3) We should give the Mormons, built its first congregation in Fayette, and the Mormon Church is headquartered in the State of Utah.

But we should require Saudi Arabia to give joint jurisdiction to the city of Mecca.

Ellen J. Singer
Hartley, N.Y.

The Organizer Of Hashomer Hadati

This is in reference to the article by Rabbi Dr. Moshe Weiss, which is dedicated to the 65th anniversary of Hashomer Hadati and the 60th anniversary of the Sorek Akiva movement. In that article, Rabbi Weiss states that he and Rabbi Meyer Golombok operated the Hashevi Amizrahi movement in this country with all due respect. Hashomer Hadati was organized in this country by myself, Rabbi Aaron Bin-nun. He traveled to this country from Israel several times during the year 1934 and 1935 as an unpaid emissary of Hashomer Hadati in Israel for the purpose of organizing Hashomer Hadati in America. In fact, Rabbi Golombok and Weiss were recruited by my father, and they assisted him in his work.

Thanks for your effort.

Atara Jacob

Simply Against anti-Semitic Students

I commend THE JEWISH PRESS for taking a stand up front against the despicable anti-Jewish actions of students at Norman Thomas High School, including calling on Chancellor Cortines to mete out the harshest possible punishment.

I extend a special thank you to Mayor Giuliani for immediately taking a strong stand. Apparently, Mr. Giuliani was right in his criticism of the chancellor on the school security issue.

Many of my fellow elected officials, as well as Amiicis with Jewish organizations, came forward immediately after Mr. Cortines announced his unfortunate and unilateral decision to allow the guilty students to participate in their graduation ceremony.

We are attorneys: Dov Hikind, City Council Speaker Peter Vallone, Council Members Stephen Di Biase, and Herbert Berman, Kenneth Fisher, June Eiseland, Stanley M. Liebowitz, Mr. Hikind, Agudath Israel of America, the Council of Jewish Organizations of Plattsburg, and Orthodox Children's Home & Family Services.

With Board of Education President Carol Grorsen forcing the issue, we joined in a united effort to finally prevail on Mr. Cortines to be consistent in punishing these public school students for their blatant and cowardly anti-Semitic acts. If Connecticut can go all the way and not allow its racist students to graduate until they have been educated about the society around them, so can New York.

Donach Creditman, Councilman, 48th District

An Open Letter To Dr. Norman Lamm From The Faculty Of RIETS

Dear Rabbi Lamm:

The controversy over the gay-lebian groups in some of the graduate and professional schools of Yeshiva University has bemirched the name of our yeshiva and caused us untold embarrassment in addition to offending our most basic moral values as believing Jews. We have refrained from public comment herefore because we hoped some way might be found to avoid further desecration of the good name of the yeshiva in these matters, but unfortunately that has not happened.

In an article you were commissioned to do for the Encylopedia Judaica Yearbook, "The Holocaust, Judiasm and the Modern Attitude to Homosexuality," you wrote: "Judaism does not accept the kind of thoroughgoing relativism used to justify the gay life as merely an alienating lifestyle... Under no circumstances can Judaism accept the idea that homosexuality should become respectable... Clearly, while Judaism needs no defense or apology in regard to the fundamentals of neibhorly love and compassion for the individual sufferer, it cannot stand by, watching a wholesale dismissal of its most basic moral precepts... The facts and the grounds that those subject to its judgments find them reprehensible... In remaining true to the sources of our religious tradition, Jews are commanded to avoid the madness that seizes every generation again and again in times and in many forms, while yet retaining a moral composite and psychological equilibrum sufficient to exercise that combination of discipline and charity that is the hallmark of Judaism."

We subscribe to these sentences today, and we do so as you did then, and we are certain, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that you do too. We are pleased to know that you reconfirm all you have written in the above article and that these remain your opinions today as well.

While we appreciate that legal restraints, and the attendant social repercussions that may flow from any actions you may wish to take to rectify this situation, impel you to refrain from any formal action, we feel compelled by our conscience and by our role as teachers of Torah to make our feelings and opinion known publicly at large and we ask you to explore every possible avenue to obviate this blashemy.

Notwithstanding the fact that these gay-lebian organizations attract very few students on campus and that the university gives them neither support nor recognition, we regard their very existence as distinct groups an offense against all that we and the institution stand for. We urge you, therefore, to unabashedly unambiguously publicly, gather people to proclaim their defiance of the Torah's injunction against homosexuality, part of the divine moral code that has guided Western society forever and a half millennia. What Judaism tells us is an abomination should find no welcome in our institution and, in fact, in any academic institution which retains even a minimum commitment to morality.

We wish to be known, therefore, by our students and by the community at large, that we deplore and condemn the existence of these gay-lebian groups at some of the graduate and professional schools of Yeshiva University. We bear no animus towards any individual as such, but we firmly reject the notion that responsible moral people should "organize" around an immoral process, which is built on illusions, has been a terrible mistake. Neither has that led to Arab Palesti- nians nor phsued trans- on the body of Israel by its leadership will diffuse religious hatred and the Arab goal of eliminat- ing Jewish sovereignty is impossible for Israel with enemies who have a history of not honoring formal agreements.

Signed by 24 Members Of The Faculty of RIETS

Democracy Takes A Holiday — Under Rabin

Under Prime Minister Charles de Gaulle always sought the approval of the French people without which he could take no action on a matter of vital importance to his nation. Mr. Rabin, on March 7, ignoring opposition from a large majority of Israelis to the continuation of his peace process, stated, "What is most im- portant is what the majority of people want. What is im- portant is what is needed for the peace."

The people of the Gaza Strip have voted to reject the "infamous" Alon-Avital confrontation.

It is time for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to put country before politics and power and — however much he may wish to do otherwise — admit that his peace process, which is built on illusions, has been a terrible mistake. Neither has that led to Arab Pale- stinians nor phsued trans- on the body of Israel by its leadership will diffuse religious hatred and the Arab goal of eliminat- ing Jewish sovereignty is impossible for Israel with enemies who have a history of not honoring formal agreements.

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