

114 Ruskin Drive
Altoona, Pennsylvania 16602
March 18, 1964.

Shalom!

Arthur and I returned a few days ago from our best vacation to date - two weeks in Israel and three days in Paris. Counting travel time, plus one day in New York, we were away from home exactly three weeks. Wish it had been longer - there's so much to see we barely scratched the surface. This gives us a good reason to plan a return trip, before too many years go by, we hope.

We left New York Sunday, February 23, arriving in Lod Airport the following day. El Al is, undoubtedly, the only airline in the world that gives its passengers lox and bagels for breakfast! We walked around Tel Aviv for a couple of hours that first evening getting the "feel" of this cosmopolitan city.

Tuesday we took a bus tour to Rehovot and the Weizmann Institute, which is beautiful and most inspiring. Here, doing research, are scientists from all over the world. On the way to Rehovot we stopped at Richon-le-Zion to tour the Carmel winery. On the return to Tel Aviv we stopped for tea at one of the oldest kibbutzim, Givat Brenner. Thirty-three hardy souls made a struggling start here on barren land in 1928. Now there are 1600 people on 1900 prosperous acres, with a cannery, a furniture factory (which provides furniture for most of the country's institutions and public buildings), a factory making irrigation equipment, and a fourth which makes machinery needed in the other three factories! An attractive guest house like a country hotel completes the affluent picture. As we toured the country and saw the new kibbutzim and their hard-working pioneers, who are painstakingly turning the barren wastes into fertile fields, we couldn't help sharing the optimism that these too will one day be the same type of prosperous town.

We went to the ballet at the Opera House that night, which was interesting and fun. Unfortunately, there were no concerts the evenings we were in Tel Aviv.

On Wednesday we toured Tel Aviv, Jaffa, and the surrounding district. Jaffa is the old historical town, much of which will be rebuilt, and Tel Aviv the new. Much of the construction, which had to be done so hurriedly to keep up with the tremendous influx of immigrants, will have to be redone, but a great deal of the recent building, including the Mann Auditorium, is beautiful. We visited some of the modern suburbs, like Bat Yam, with its new apartment buildings and shopping centers, which look very suburban USA.

Later that afternoon our friend David Magnes came in from Nathanya to meet us. It was wonderful to see him again. We'd met David, and Judge Alfred Bach (of Haifa) at the Rotary International Convention in Lucerne in 1957, and became fast friends in a very short time. For seven years they've both written "when are you coming to visit?" and both went all-out to make our stay a memorable one. With friends we were able to see first-hand the warmth and friendliness of this country, and the calm and stubborn assumption of its good-humored people that there are no insoluble problems to hamper its fantastic growth and development.

We strolled to Dizengoff Square with David and had coffee at an outdoor cafe. We might have thought ourselves in any large European city had the square not been crowded already with children beginning their Purim celebration. They were so attractive in their colorful costumes, this gay crowd - you saw every type of face from the very fair nordic type to the darker north African. This country is a real melting pot, so like our own in many ways. We went back to the square after dinner - it was like Mardi Gras with its gay parade. We milled around for hours with the merry throng singing and dancing in the street.

Thursday morning we flew to Eilat, on the Red Sea, via Arkia Inland Airlines. It was a short but memorable flight, the first part over gleaming Mediterranean beaches, then inland over Beersheba and through the Negev - a unique lunar-like landscape from the air - fantastic in its desolation, but extremely beautiful. We had a little time to relax on the beach (where Art enjoyed the Bikini view) before taking a bus trip through the developing town and then an interesting ride in a glass-bottomed boat. The marine bottom is not quite as colorful as the Caribbean, but we found it extremely interesting. We had a hemmed-in feeling standing on the beach. A few miles to our right we could see Egypt, while on the left only a sandy field and a date grove

separated our hotel from Jordan. The Israelis don't seem to worry, though; they feel strong with their alert army of sturdy youth - and they are a sturdy bunch, these hardy self-assured Sabras.

Eilat was in a very gay mood. The town was celebrating not only Purim but the 15th anniversary of its capture by Israel in the war of liberation. We visited a factory where jewelry is made from copper ore from King Solomon's mines. In the evening we packed in like sardines into the "End of the World" club (it looked like it) to hear some terrific folk singers.

Friday we came back through the Negev by bus, stopping at Timna (King Solomon's mines), Ramon Crater, Avdat (an excavated and partially restored Nabatean city) and Beersheba. We saw many Bedouins with their goats and camels as we traveled along. The desert is dotted with little kibbutzim, making patches of green in the sandy wastes.

David Magnes picked us up in Tel Aviv to take us to Nathanya for the week-end. We drove through a tremendous downpour, the type of flash flood we get in these Pennsylvania mountains and don't expect to find in the Middle East. That evening we went to a Purim party at the home of his friends, Arie and Emma Salomon, which was very gay and a great deal of fun. The costumes were marvelous. David was dressed like a bride, and we've never seen anything funnier than his bulky 6'3" in white satin, trying to cover his black mustache with a lipsticked bandaid! Emma, a fabulous cook, gave us our first "gourmet" meal in Israel.

Saturday David and Norah (his wife - charming and just as easy to know) toured us around the area, skirting the Jordanian border. Nathanya is a lovely seaside town. Its beautiful beaches and coves were ideal for the illegal "immigration" that went on in the later years of the British mandate. We heard some fascinating tales about those days. We went into the Arab village of Taibeh, where there's a new Rotary club - all Arab. It's probably the only 100% Arab club in the State of Israel, though most of their clubs have Arab Rotarians. There are many Arabs living in the country, and they live very well indeed. We spent the rest of that pleasant day relaxing with the Magnes' in their attractive little villa overlooking the sea.

Sunday, March first, we went from Nathanya to Haifa by train, which was quite an experience. Train travel is very cheap so the trains are mobbed, but we sure did get to talk to a variety of people in a conglomeration of English, French, German and Yiddish! After we got settled in our hotel we went out to Kiriat Bialik to have tea with the Bachs. She's as warm and friendly as he, and we felt so very welcome. Hans de Haas, president of the Kishon Rotary Club, a hospitable combination of Dutch and Israeli, came and took all of us touring. Along the way, we picked up his brother Gershon (who was quite a hero during the war), a phys ed instructor who works with the government tourist department. At the moment he's busy setting up camping areas very much like those in our state and national parks in the U.S. He made an admirable guide. We went through Acre and Naharya and up to the Lebanese border, which we were told is the only boundary on which there's no trouble. Most Israelis drive very compact cars, since large vehicles are expensive and too troublesome to park in congested cities. The six of us were packed in very chummily indeed. After our trip we had supper and spent a very pleasant evening at the Bachs'. Alfred, as the judge who remanded Eichmann, has a pile of letters and clippings from all over the world.

Since Alfred had to be in court on Monday morning, he arranged for one of his friends, Fritz Loewy, incoming president of Haifa Rotary, to take us about. Fritz, too, was all friendliness and charm, a former Viennese, who has lived in Israel for 30 years. He took us first to the Leo Baeck School, in which we are very interested, since it is supported by our Reform movement in the U.S. It is a very fine and progressive school, but terribly crowded. Think that if all our UAHC members could see the outstanding job being done with a limited budget and cramped quarters, we'd go out and raise a couple of million dollars to build a big new school! We met the six American youngsters there on the NFFY exchange program, who are enjoying their experience, but are having a rough time taking their high school subjects in Hebrew. After a drive through the beautiful mountaintop area of the city, we visited the Technion, an excellent engineering school with a magnificent campus. Fritz took us through several of the buildings, including one of the beautiful new dorms, which was wonderful because when we were touring with a guide later in the week we couldn't meander about so freely.

Fritz' delightful wife, Edith, met us for lunch, while Arthur went to the Kishon club with Alfred Bach. Later in the afternoon we strolled through the older part of Haifa, wandering through the narrow streets with their ancient

dwellings. Now there's a modern new market place, but we chanced upon the old one and enjoyed examining the colorful wares and delicious-looking fish, fruits and vegetables. A visit to the art museum proved fascinating. The current display is a collection of ancient maps of the area. After dinner the Bachs and DeHaas took us to see the sights of Haifa by starlight - breathtaking. This is a truly gorgeous city. It has been described as the world's most beautiful port, and it's easy to see why. In many ways it reminded us of San Francisco.

The group with whom we were to complete the tour arrived in Haifa late Monday in a large limousine. We'd met all of them already on the plane or in Tel Aviv - a congenial bunch, nine with us. Our driver-guide, Carmel Navon, was a gem - a former teacher of bible and history, intelligent, witty and infinitely patient.

Tuesday we toured the Upper Galilee - started from Haifa through the valley of Zebulun. On the way to Safad we saw under construction roads and villages which will take care of many new settlers. Safad is an ancient and interesting old town on a mountaintop; once the center of Jewish mysticism, it is now a well-known artists' colony. We visited the old synagogue named after Rabbi Arie Luria, the "Lion of Safad", then proceeded around the artists' colony - interesting and colorful. We found the abstracts just as abstract in this part of the world!

The rich farmlands of the Huleh Valley were a thrilling sight. In the south we saw reclaimed desert - here we saw former swampland under cultivation. The water drained from this area into the Sea of Galilee more than compensates for any that will be removed through the Jordan-Negev project, now almost complete.

On the way back to Haifa we stopped in Acre to see the fortress of Richard Coeur de Lion and the Mosque of Jazzar the Butcher.

On Wednesday our itinerary was the lower Galilee. We went through the Valley of Jezreel, the breadbasket of Israel. We stopped in the Balfour Forest to plant a tree in memory of Arthur's parents. We've sent money to plant trees in the past, but the feeling isn't the same as when you plant one with your own hands - it's quite an emotional experience.

After visiting Nazareth, the Church of the Annunciation and the Church of St. Joseph (built over the grotto of the Holy Family), we proceeded to Tiberias, a beautiful town on the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias), which is 600 feet below sea level. The hills just across the lake are Syrian - this small land is really surrounded. We saw the Mount of Beatitudes on the way to Capernaum (Kafar Nahum). There we visited an old monastery and the ancient synagogue (excavated before the first world war by a team of German archeologists, who lined everything up with compulsive exactness) where Jesus is thought to have preached. After lunching in Tiberias we proceeded to Dagania, an older kibbutz, which shows the same picture of contented prosperity we saw at Givat Brenner. This kibbutz, in fact, has created so many jobs that help is imported from the surrounding towns. On the way back to Haifa we passed Meggido, King Solomon's city, which was partially excavated by archeologists from the University of Chicago.

Wednesday evening, our last in Haifa, the Bachs met us for dinner at our hotel, after which Fritz Loewy brought us to his home to meet his daughter and her husband, a charming couple with youngsters the same age as ours. It was interesting to compare notes on the sameness and difference of teen-agers' activities in the two countries. The one marked difference is the fact that our high school senior is heading for college in the fall, while theirs has a two-year army stint before she can think of furthering her education.

Saying good-bye to the Bachs we felt the same pangs we did in leaving David and Morah Magnes - hope it won't be another seven years before we see all of them again.

Thursday morning we meandered around the Haifa dock area and saw ships from all parts of the world being unloaded, then reloaded with citrus fruit, plywood and other products Israel exports. This is such a busy port - we counted about 35 ships out in the water waiting to dock, a real traffic jam! Then we drove along the Carmel Range and the Plain of Sharon, through the lovely Judean hills and the Corridor to Jerusalem. This corridor is rimmed with vehicles destroyed during the war of liberation. Here the Israelis were really perfect targets for the Arab snipers in the hills.

After getting us settled in our hotel, Carmel drove us around the city to

see a few things (we were to start our city tour the next morning). We went through Mea Shearim, the ultra-orthodox area - seemed funny to see a ghetto in the heart of a Jewish city - to the Mandelbaum Gate. Sad to see this lovely city so divided. You can proceed only so far in your touring before you're stopped by barbed wire. It is inspiring to visit Jerusalem - there's so much that's holy to the world's great religions, yet all that's new and developing makes it very exciting. The whole country is very exciting for the same reason.

Friday morning our tour included Mount Zion, where we saw King David's tomb, and a memorial to the six million lost in Hitler's Europe. We visited the Hebrew University and saw the Dead Sea Scrolls. It's a beautiful campus, though the buildings would seem too starkly modern were it not for the interesting use of lovely stone from the Judean Hills. We visited Theodore Herzl's tomb and the museum dedicated to his life and times. Our afternoon walking tour of some of the old synagogues proved fascinating.

Saturday morning we attended services in the chapel of the Hebrew Union College's School of Archeology. To us they seemed more traditional than Reform, and being conducted in the language of the country, were completely in Sephardic Hebrew, including 20 minute sermon!

David Magnes' mother wanted to meet us so we called on her late that afternoon and had a delightful time. Though frail of body, she has not let her lively spirit be confined by her wheelchair. Her lovely face mirrors her intelligence and charm, and her tremendous sense of humor. She came to Palestine in 1922 when Dr. Magnes started the Hebrew University. Those early days can't have been easy but she seems to have enjoyed them immensely. She really should write a book. Her other visitor that afternoon, Mrs. Salomons, an Englishwoman now living in Switzerland, was completely delightful too. From the two of them, amid much laughter, we were regaled with stories about the early days and the great personalities of those days who shaped the land and its modern history. The afternoon became evening before we finally tore ourselves away.

Sunday morning we toured some of the Hadassah-sponsored institutions. It is gratifying to see our contributions being put to such wonderfully constructive use. We visited the Anna Seligsburg Vocational High School for girls, where the curriculum is divided between the practical and the academic, and the students really are trained for useful and productive lives. We were even more impressed with the Brandeis Educational Center for boys. In this vocational high school the students are trained to be the foremen for Israel's present and future industry. We saw precision instruments, made by the boys, which are being shipped to pre-medical and agricultural schools all over the world. Their fully-equipped printing department turns out beautifully professional work.

In Kiriat Yovel we inspected the community-family health center, which is a pioneer research project in preventive medicine. Then on to Ein Keron (birthplace of John the Baptist) and the Hadassah Medical Organization's tremendous hospital. Here, too, the Hebrew University is building its medical school. The hospital is so impressive. It's wonderfully laid out and employs the latest equipment and treatment methods. They are set up to be completely self-sufficient for six weeks, should they be cut off in an emergency, quite an accomplishment. In the lovely little chapel we saw the famous Chagall windows, which are beautiful.

Sunday afternoon found us at one of our favorite pastimes - just wandering about looking at things and talking to people. It's the best way to get the "flavor" of a city. We headed for bed early Sunday night because we had to be up at the crack of dawn the next morning to depart at 7 for Lod Airport. It was a pleasant four-hour flight to Paris. It was clear, for the most part, and we had a good look at Europe as we flew over. The Alps had less snow than we left in Pennsylvania!

We enjoyed those three days in Paris. We had a luxurious room at the Grand Hotel, with a view of the Opera from our little balcony. Since we'd done all the "must" sightseeing in '57, we just relaxed and enjoyed strolling in the sun at our leisure, and had some memorable meals. In the middle of one night we meandered about the food stalls of Les Halles - colorful and everything looked good enough to eat! We were pleased to see Jaffa oranges everywhere.

Our flight back to New York, via Air France, on Thursday, March 12, was uneventful till we were ready to land. It was so foggy that we circled the field for over an hour. Then came the announcement that if the pilot was unable to land on the next try he'd head for Montreal. We thought this would

be fun, since we weren't due home till Saturday, and the several Montrealers on the plane were real happy about the whole thing, but the fog opened enough for a perfect landing. Not even a bounce, so we bounced through customs and into New York. In the city for a day, we saw the Ben Pollocks and our friends the Jack Herlands, and sleepily snoozed through a play.

Oh, the wonders of jet travel; it took us only an hour less to get from New York to Altoona on the Pennsy than it did to jet from Paris to NY. Found the boys fine. They'd been skiing like mad every spare moment while we were gone, just as they do when we're here! Edna Rife, who cleans for us, stayed the first two weeks, and Rose Pollock came over from Pittsburgh to take over the third week, so they managed just fine.

Our house is a busy place this week. As vice-president of the Youth Group, Steve is up to his ears in plans for the regional conclave to be held here over the week-end. He's been burning the midnight oil cutting stencils, Mom was pressed into mimeograph service, and a whole crew came over to assemble material, a forecast of the crew that will be billeted here. Speaking of Steve, he received word last month that he was accepted in electrical engineering at Drexel Institute of Technology, his first choice. He's real happy about it, as are we all. Dave entered a city-wide essay contest while we were away and won himself an honorable mention, which made us very proud.

It's tough getting back to the old routine, but we can start dreaming now about the next trip.

Love from the four of us,

Arthur & Judy

Thanks for the coins. Dave said he wrote while we were away that they'd received the last batch.

Talked to Beatrice while we were in N.Y. — She's exhausted ~~and~~ about to leave on a week's cruise to try to rest up. Sue was helping in the office. Bea's father had a stroke & she was helping take care of him. Now he's doing ok they are getting him settled in a senior citizen's center. Don't imagine she's had any time to worry about pictures.