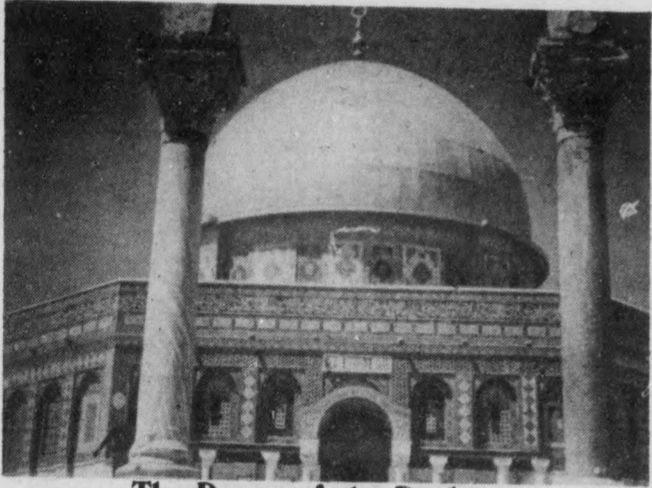
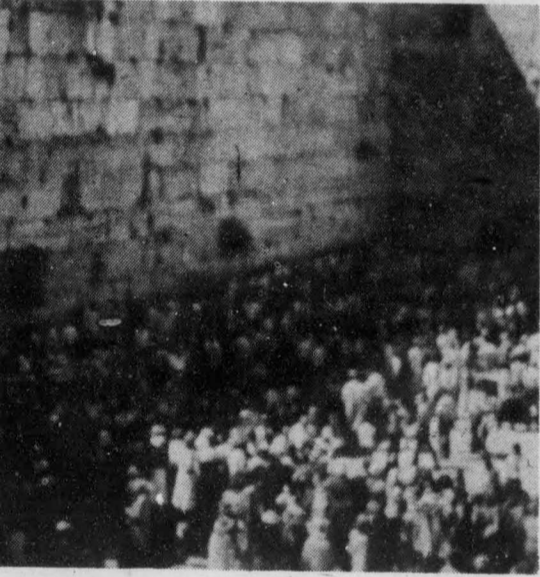


# R A E L



The Dome of the Rock,  
Jerusalem



The Western Wall, Jerusalem



An Israeli friend(left) and Arab passerby  
who was good enough to let the author  
shoot this picture

The men make up the fighting units in the army, navy and airforce; while the girls perform a variety of duties from medic to secretary to morale-booster (the most coveted job). Some of the youth enter the service as groups who together establish pseudo-kibbutzim on the borders, farming the land and working as a community while protecting their country. The attitude of the younger kibbutzniks, with whom I spoke, to their duty in the army was one of loyalty to their country. Many would prefer to be able to enter university or travel immediately after highschool, however they believe that their service is indispensable to their county's well-being. It is a matter of pride which plays a constructive role in Israeli society; there is no question that Israel owes its survival to the dedication of its young people.

One of the things that surprises North Americans the most is the existence of many Israeli Arabs. These people account for approximately ten percent of Israel's population, living pocketed together in their own villages and towns. Nazareth and Bethlehem are prime examples of this. The old city of Jerusalem is also the home of many Arabs, both Moslem and Christian. As well as the Israeli Arab, possessing full citizenship, there are many uprooted Arabs living in Israel. The relationship between the Jews and the Arabs is on the whole a positive one. In many locations the two races exist together in cooperation and understanding Arab fields are scattered amidst those of the Jews while other Arabs are hired by the kibbutzim or simply pick their fields (with permission) after the kibbutzniks have finished their harvesting. The two races also intermingle in the Arab market. Those Arabs with citizenship are better off economically than their neighbours in Arab countries, yet most are somewhat disturbed at being a minority in a Jewish state. Nonetheless the ability of the Arab and the Jew to live side by side in Israel should give impetus to the current drive for peaceful coexistence. Development of the land of the Middle East poses quite a challenge. The Arab and the Jew cannot afford to be torn by war, they must work together for the growth of their nations to be successful.

Israel is a mosaic of many diverse regions, the flavour of each influencing that of the whole. Some of the more interesting areas deserve description as each is fascinating in its own right.

The Golan Heights, acquired by Israel in 1967, is a chain of mountains bordering Lebanon on one side and Syria on the other. These hills dominate the fertile Huleh valley of Israel that spread below it. It is easy to see how the acquisition of the Golan Heights was of extreme importance as the kibbutzim in the valley were at the mercy of the Arab soldiers poised in the mountains above them. Driving through the Golan today, it is difficult to imagine fighting ever occurring there. One seems to be almost in the heavens, divorced from the world which lies so many feet below. It is not as peaceful as it seems however. One is not free to wander at will as the presence of mines in the grass is not rare. The countryside is studded with monuments to past battles and even today raids occur often. The Golan Heights is, however, the site of the 'Good Fence', located along the border of Lebanon and Israel. Here Lebanese civilians flock into Israel for medical help and drinking water, a gesture of good will between the two countries.

The Golan Heights are evidence of the mixture of cultures that have made up this area throughout its history. The Druze, a peaceful people living in cooperation with the Israelis, live here in many small isolated communities. Ruined Roman fortresses also dominate the countryside.

As one moves south to the Sea of Galilee, the birthplace of Christianity, evidence of the former domination by the Ottomans is present in the form of ruined aqueducts.

This land of the Galilee is truly one of the most beautiful in the country. Kinneret Lake, the Hebrew name for the Sea of Galilee, and the Jordan River are the only bodies of fresh water in Israel. This is an area of bounty. The waters are heavy with fish and the fields surrounding them are the most fertile in the country. It is to this region that the term "land of milk and honey" truly applies. An aura of peacefulness hangs over the shores and again ones loses all feeling of reality. Time stands still. It is not difficult to imagine the early scenes of Christianity unfolding here as the same scenes still occur today. People are still baptized in the brown waters of the Jordan and Galilean fishermen pull in their nets overflowing with fish. Past, present and future are all rolled into one, for the Jordan valley, cradle of civilization, will always be the source of life in Palestine.

More than one half of Israel's land is made up of desert: the Negev and to the south of it the mighty Sinai which is territory occupied by Israel since 1967. These deserts, presently so barren, are Israel's hope for the future. It is believed that by dedicated labour and massive irrigation this land may someday be productive, a dream hard to believe when one has felt the scorching sun. The impossible has been achieved before in Israel's past and the rapid growth of towns in recent years has already begun to push the desert south.

The Sinai is a land of contrast - the intense dryness of the land and air, next to the beautiful turquoise of the Red Sea - the ultra-modern Israeli communities next to the bleak villages of the Bedouin Arabs, both arising suddenly out of the desert in areas where, it seems, no a drop of water could be found. These contrasts add to the intriguing flavour of the area which inexplicably attracts and fascinates the stranger. A subtle form of beauty can be found here which, is all the more enjoyable as it is so elusive. If one is observant enough hues of red, purple, green and blue can be detected in the rock formations. Snorkeling and scuba diving reveal a world of colour and form unimagined from above; the variety of corals and tropical fish in the Red Sea is one of the best in the world.

The Negev desert, is the site of Mount Masada and the Dead Sea. Mt. Masada is a well known symbol of stamina and courage. It bears today the ruins of the fortress where a small community of Jews held out against superior Roman forces. When it became clear, after many months that there was no hope of victory, the besieged Jews committed mass suicide rather than lower themselves to become slaves of the Romans. Throughout history the Jews' instinct for freedom in their homeland has been very strong. It was this feeling that made possible the creation of the state of Israel, but perhaps contributes to some of the obstacles to peace today.

The Dead Sea, so named because of its inability to support life, lies at the lowest level of the earth's crust. Although the Jordan river empties into it, all fresh water evaporates immediately in the extreme heat. Swimming (floating) in (on) the Dead Sea is an unforgettable experience. Due to the extreme saltiness of the water one can literally sit on its surface. Woe to any person who dared to enter the water with the slightest scratch, however. The Dead Sea also has a rich history. It was here that the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered by a shepherd boy, playing. These documents, include nearly all the books of the old testament and provide a detailed description of the society into which Christ was born.

(con't overleaf)