

Boy, I never thought this issue would be so onesided, but unpredictable is:

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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The Trip

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Long time readers of this zine know that I stick pretty much just to Diplomacy here at DD, since I don't think you'd find my personal life all that interesting. But this will be one of those exceptions. Mona and I were recently two weeks in Israel, one in Egypt. What follows is not a traditional travelogue. Much that we saw will not be mentioned. Instead, this will be a mixture of description and my own commentary and reactions to what I saw, general philosophizing, and just plain wandering off the point. That you guys should be used to.

This was an unusual trip for us in several ways. Our first to Asia of Africa. The first without one of more of my siblings. But most important, the first organized tour. Previously we had always traveled with backpacks and cheap hotels. This was to be our big splurge.

Before getting into Israel, its vital that you know a little about the history of the Jews, for without it, a great deal of what you see simply does not make sense. By tradition, the first Jew was Abraham, a bedouin, who beleived in a single, non-corporeal omnipitant God. He bough_t some land near Hebron as burial plots for himself and his wife. Several generations later, his clan was forced by famine to Egypt, where at first they prospered. But then the old dynasty (probably the Hyksos) were replaced by new Pharos, who enslaved the Hebrews. Of course, its possible all this is just myth. It seems unlikely, tho, that anyone would invent such a degrading story --- growing into nationhood as slaves, in a foreigh land, no less. Anyhow, under the leadership of Moses, they left, meandering inthe Sinai and Negev for 40 years, during which the ethical and religious priciples were codified, which to this day are the conerstone of Judáism. After initially getting clobbered by the Amelekites, there arose the most sucessful military leader in Jewish History: Joshua. Jericho, possibly the oldest city in t the world, was burnt to the ground, Ai was destroyed, there were other victories, including against a federation of Amorite kings and later some northern kings. It was a classic war of conquest, and when they were done, the Jew^{ish} tribes devided up the territory, set up religious hedquarters at Nablus, and settled down for a period of internal quarrels, fendng off invaders. Some time later King David took charge, extending the borders deep into what is now Iraq, Syria, Jordan and even Egypt. Most importantly, he seized Jerusalem, and set it up as the Religious and administrative capital. Altho the capital was later moved, Jerusalem became from that day till now the emotional heart of the Jews. All this is about 1000 BCE. 300 years later, tho they were attacked by armies much stronger than themselves, and the 10 "lost" tribes were torn off. Then, in 586^{BC} a catastrophe: King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple of Solomon, destroyed Jeruslaem, and exiled the Jews to Babylonia. Several decades later them began their

return, and began rebuilding the Temple shortly afterward. But in the ensuing centuries their grip was not strong enough. Artaxerxes III, Alexander the Great, Ptolemy I, Antiochus IV and the Romans all took turns capturing the Holy Land. A series of rebellions gave only short respite. The last of these began in 66 AD, and culminated in the Destruction of the second temple in 70 AD. The importance of this event cannot be underestimated. To this day, observant Jews believe that no celebration can be perfect. A glass will be broken, a place setting will be missing a fork, etc --- to remind those of the fall of the second temple.

This ushered in a 1900 year diaspora. Some Jews held on in Palestine, but the bulk of Jewish activity was elsewhere. This is a very mixed history, with ups and downs. Nearly all of the (post-biblical) important Jewish writing dates from this period and one long period of cooperation with Islam is sometimes referred to as the "Golden Age". Most of the time, tho, the best they could hope for was to be left alone. The rules were set by others. For example, during most of the middle ages in Europe, Jews were not permitted to own land or to enter most of the professional guilds, forcing Jews to become traders. More often, the rule was Exile. You have perhaps heard of the expression "Wandering Jew." Just to give some examples, they were expelled from the Frankish Kingdom in 628, from Mainz in 1012, from France in 1189, then recalled in 1198, re-expelled in 1306, recalled in 1315, expelled again in 1322, recalled in 1359 and expelled in 1394 --- all this in France. The late 15th century was particularly bad, 1492 from Castile, Aragon, Sicily, from Mainz in 1473, from Warsaw in 1483, Lithuania in 1495. And lets not forget the Forced conversions. For example, in 1839 the entire community of Meshed in Persia was forced to convert to Islam, and there were huge mass forced conversions in Portugal in 1496-7. Worst of course were the massacres. There were literally hundreds of these, often completely annihilating Jewish communities hundreds of years old. Incidentally, don't get the idea that these were all actions of mobs. Pope Pius VI promulgated a major anti-Jewish edict in 1775. Paul IV ordered that the Jews be confined to ghettos in 1555; Benedict XIII ordered the censorship of the Talmud. Remember the glorious first crusade? They participated in some dreadful massacres of Jews in the Rhineland in 1096.

All too often, Jews were handy scapegoats, or were lumped together with the "outs". During the "Black Death" of 1348 it was noticed that Jewish communities were affected much less. We now know this was due to certain hygienic practices, but at the time it was decided that Jews were poisoning the wells, and there were ghastly massacres in France, Spain, Germany and Austria. Or consider Al Hakim, who in the middle of the 11th century ordered all churches and synagogues destroyed in Palestine. Later in the century the Seljuks swept in from central Asia and persecuted Christians and Jews alike. Then the crusaders, pissed off at what Al Hakim had done, took Jerusalem in 1099, and forbade from living in Jerusalem Moslems and --- you guessed it --- Jews. Anyhow, the details are not so much important as giving you a flavor of the times.

Getting back to our story, in the latter part of the 19th century, the Zionist movement began, encouraging Jews in central and western Europe to emigrate to Palestine and fostering support for the Jewish community already there. The Dreyfus affair and a series of Pogroms in Russia and Poland contribute to a sense of unease and insecurity.

Starting in the mid thirties, the third major catastrophe for the Jews occurs. Backed by the Nazi war machine, Himmler, Hitler and Eichmann set about to completely destroy the European Jewish community. Some were immediately dispatched in special death camps, others were worked to death in slave labor camps, still others were killed in various pseudoscientific experiments. The exact number can never be known, but it is certain that over half of European Jewry perished, more than 1/3 of the world total by some estimates. Anyhow, the end of the war produced many refugees, survivors from camps and those in hiding. Altho the British (who took Palestine from the Turks in 1917) initially tried to stem the flow of illegal immigration to Palestine, they lacked the stomach for the brutal measures needed. The problem was turned over to the UN, which partitioned the country, forming Transjordan for the Moslems, Israel for the

Jews, in somewhat the same manner that India and Pakistan were created. This did not sit well with the Arabs, who wanted no Jewish state at all. The Arab legion attacked from the east, Egypt from the south, the Syrians from the north, and several other armies were involved as well. It was as harrowing a birth as can be imagined. Cease-fire lines were set up in 1949, but an "official" state of war remained with all her neighbors. Wars in 1967 and 1973 resulted in further border changes to give the present state of affairs.

Having been around for close to 4000^{years}, its understandable that some general inferences have been drawn. Two of these are commonly held among Jews and particularly Israeli Jews. Whether or not you agree, its important that you understand them, because without this a lot of what you see and hear won't make much sense.

1. The most serious mistake that the Jews have made has been relying on others for their physical security. Except during parts of the biblical period, this has been the policy and it obviously hasn't worked out very well. Sporadic military efforts generally have been too little too late. For example, the Nazis rounded up thousands of Jews in the Warsaw ghetto. An uprising there had only a short lived success. The revolts against the Romans all eventually ended in complete failure. Israel represents the exact opposite of that type of thinking, a culmination of the idea that ultimately, only Jews can be trusted to put the needs of Jews first, when it comes to physical security.

2. No matter where, somewhere, somebody is persecuting Jews, and they want to get out. But all too often, no one wants them. In the late 30's there were pathetic stories of refugees from Nazi Germany, going from country to country without finding a haven --- some of whom were forced to return. The result is the Law of Return. If you are Jewish, and so desire, you will be granted automatic citizenship the moment you set foot on Israeli soil (there are some exceptions for criminals). Of course, setting yourself up as an automatic haven for Jews shoots the hell out of any church-state separation, but that's the way they want it.

For what it's worth, I think both of those premises are probably true. The Israeli's are very proud, for example, of the raid on Entebbe, which fits squarely into that philosophy of point #1. As for #2, one need only look to the U.S.S.R. as a country overtly discriminating against its Jews, and Israel stands willing to take whomever the authorities will permit to leave (altho in fact, most opt for the U.S.)

Wherever you go in Israel, you see a fascination with their history. This might seem odd in a country only 40-odd years old, but they don't see things in such narrow perspective. Its very nice to walk down a street named after a scholar who lived 1500 years ago than the usual collection of trees. There are monuments everywhere --- they are particularly conscious of their recent history. A bus carrying children was hit by rockets in the 30's; its ruins are fenced off, and your guide is sure to point it out. Or a kibbutz is named "the Hill of the Six" (or some such) after people who were killed there in the War of Independence. Along with the usual ruins, it makes the entire country redolent with history and the people who have made a difference there.

The tour starts in Tel Aviv. This is a modern, bustling, crowded city without much charm. One place we particularly like is the Diaspora museum. This is one of the most interesting and sophisticated museums I have ever seen, and I've seen a lot. Particularly engrossing are the study carrels. Each has a TV set and three sets of ear-phones. There is a catalogue of dozens of films, most 10-30 minutes; you just punch in the number you want, insert a token (about 23¢), and watch as many as you like. Mona and I alternate choices, seeing films on the Dreyfus affair, immigration to NYC, the bizarre case of the black (ethiopian) Jews, and on and on until they kick us out after 7 hours. There is also a splendid collection of models of synagogues showing a wide range of architecture, as seen in different cultures and different centuries, some detailed histories in specific countries of their Jewish communities and how they contributed to the general culture. 3

The bus also takes us on to some of the usual "sights" around Tel Aviv, including Beersheva, where we actually see two oil wells. Also interesting is a visit to a Hassidic kibbutz, where we see hefty slavic women preparing extremely kosher matzoh for Passover. This (the women) is not an unusual sight. The government takes a direct hand in trying to settle immigrants, paying a variety of communities to teach them hebrew and skills. The government will often heavily subsidize their salary for the first year (thus encouraging the employer to hire him, as he'll get part of the salary back from the gov't). After that, its figured they can fend for them selves. At another place we visit, with a large print shop, they specialize in orphans and those coming from very broken homes. We also visit Hebron, a town very important to the Moslems, so there are a lot of soldiers wandering around.

I should comment on this business of travelling on a bus, with a tour group. There are many pluses and minuses to this. The biggest minus to this is of course the considerable cost. Several layers of people will be extracting their profit. It also has a considerable isolating effect. Most of your interactions are with other tourists rather than the natives. Since virtually everything is taken care of for you (at least, it was on our tour) you learn much less about how a country actually works. You get one person's view of the country --- the tour guide's. Since they have a fixed schedule, once you select which tour you want, you are locked in to what they have decided to show you (except for off days). And if you want to stay for an extra hour or two, you're out of luck. We like to poke our noses around corners and behind buildings, so sometimes this was frustrating. On the other hand, you have an almost instant source of answers for your questions. The tour in Israel was extremely well organized, and the timing was often quite precise. This can be quite important, since many places, especially mosques, have only a limited number of timeslots they are open. For example, one visit to the Parliament had been preceded by special exhortations to be on time that morning. When we arrive, there is only about a 10 minute wait to get thru security. When we leave, we see an enormous line, with tourbuses practically double parked waiting to disgorge their passengers. Also, with once exception, the selection of what to see was very well done. With a tour bus, the amount of territory you can cover is tremendous, and there is never the delay of getting lost. Only by renting a car could you hope to cover anywhere near the number of small itmes that we could see this way. Many of the places (such as some of the kibbutzim) are really not set up for isolated visits by individual tourists. Often when we arrived, they would have one of their own give the tour of the grounds and an explanation of how the operation was organized, what their goals and life style was like, etc. Of course, some of the information provided, particularly at historical sights, can come from a good tour book, which we had in Israel, but thats not the same thing.

Next we had two days free, and zipped off to Haifa where my cousin and her family live. This of course changes the tone of the trip completely, as we get a much more personalized view of things, of how people deal with day-to-day problems. Seeing a city leisurely, on foot, changes the mental scale and you see things you can't from a bus. There is an amble thru a shopping area of a Druze villiage (the Druze are somewhat of an oddity, with a hybrid and somewhat secretive religion, but they get along well with the Jews and have elected to send their sons into the army, which in general is not required of non-Jews). We stroll thru the breathtaking Bahai gardens, with some ornate metal sculpture desired to look like flowers, etc. Even tho we were weeks before the full flowering season there, this was most impressive. The shrine itself is small, but has a system of mirrors that gives it a very mysterious design --- you can't be sure whether or not you are seeing a reflection, and you really don't want to examine it closely enough to decipher the trick. Haifa has some spectacular views (the city is sometimes compared in this regard to S.F.) including one from the University, atop the highest hill in town. And from a Marmalite monestary we can see a fair chunk of the country. Its easy to see why the site was chosen, so many centuries ago.

Then its back to the tour, beginning with the Roman ruins at Caeseria. This kind of material doesn't interest me all that much. Akko (Acre) is much more interesting.

This is one of those cities that stretches your mind as you try to visualize the vast periods of time that such a location embraces. Situated on a point at the northernmost end of the lovely bay of Haifa, it was a fortified city, already hundreds of years old when the Hebrews, coming out of Egypt, were unable to take the city. Thousands of years later, Napoleon was similarly unable to take the city (he was crimped by the fact that the British had grabbed his siege guns) a failure that put an end to his bold Middle Eastern campaign. We visit the Knights Hall, which dates back to the Crusaders, and the enormous Crypt, which is now believed to have been a dining area, as judged by some soot in the corner. We are told that excavation nearby is clearing even larger chambers adjacent. In its size and solidity this is extremely impressive; we exit by a narrow tunnel once used as an emergency escape route. On top of all this is the Citadel, built in 1785, which was used by the British during the Palestine mandate period to imprison and hang Jewish resistance fighters (there is a scene in "Exodus" on this). The guides mention this several times. Much of it is now used as a mental hospital; the guides do not mention this at all.

This was the scene of the only major scheduling mistake of the trip. We are rushed off to Rosh Hanikra, where there are some colorful grottos, and a fine view of the coastline from the northernmost point in Israel. But there are huge delays waiting to get onto the cablecars both coming and going. It's nice, but it's not worth such a large block of time. The price we pay is missing most of Akko. I have barely started to see the museum attached to the Citadel when I discover that the tour group has completely vanished (it was the only time I almost lost them). I don't even recall seeing the harbor, and of course we miss such things as the view from the city walls, the Bahai Gardens there, a splendid mosque, etc. Oh well, can't see 'em all.

Next is a drive up the mountains to the town on Safed (Zefat), with a curious history. At the time of the destruction of the second temple, it was fortified by Josephus Flavius, one of the most dreadful turncoats in Jewish history. Later the Crusaders took it, and when the Moslems retook, all the men were decapitated and the women/children sold to slavery. Oddly, when the Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, many came there, and by the 16th century, it became a major center, the major center for Jewish mysticism. All around the hillsides have scattered tombstones, as each had their favorite hill, to be buried upon. Many fine Jewish songs and books came from here. Another thing it's famous for is Earthquakes. Anyhow, now it's cozy synagogues reeking with history, and a vigorous artists colony, most of whom specialize in batiks. It would have been nice to spend a few hours exploring in the caves, but time did not permit. Next stop is the "good fence". What began (supposedly) as a request for medical assistance by a mother for her child led to one of Israel's most open borders, and now to a curious military alliance with the Christians of southern Lebanon. Israel has always sought to make common cause with those who feel threatened by the Palestinians, but this is the only area where they have succeeded. It is a singular form of puppetry. Israel supplies arms and ammunition and salaries to a militia of Christians, led by an unpredictable major, a deserter from the Lebanese army, who now will not permit the regular Lebanese army to operate in the southern area. Unfortunately, he has the habit of occasionally shelling the UN forces in the area, which may prove to be his undoing. The Israeli goal is to use this militia to keep the PLO out of the area, forcing the PLO to fire their rockets at longer, and hence less accurate range, into Israel. Lebanon is thus not a sovereign nation in the ordinary sense of the word. Hadad (the major) leads only one of a number of private armies, any one of which could clobber the Lebanese army should they get bored with their usual warfare. In addition, the Israel Air Force makes regular incursions wherever it chooses, often directly over the capital. And when the timing suits them, they bomb what they decide are PLO military encampments. The bomb has not yet been invented that can distinguish between military and civilian. The third military force is the PLO, an umbrella outfit. And there are private Moslem armies as well. And finally, the Syrians are there with something like 30,000 troops plus armor. It is a terrible complex situation, despite the efforts of the Israelis to present it as just us versus them. Anyhow, the main activity of the day was surfacing an area so that tour buses could better park. As we

go to leave, the distant thump of ...something...is heard, and the next day the paper sez there was a major artillery duel there that afternoon. From there we visit the Golan Heights, glimpse the contested area of Kuneitra, and finally spend the night at a kibbutz in the Galilee. This is an interesting and very pretty place, lush with flowers. It was founded in 1949, with land purchased from an absentee landlord in Damascus (remember Abraham?). The kibbutz prospered, and soon there were more people than the rather poor soil could support. As it was a successful religious kibbutz, a lot of people came to visit, some of whom expressed regret that there was no place to eat. From this followed a public dining room, which naturally created pressures for rooms so that people could stay the night. So they built a dozen hotel-style rooms, more followed, and now tourism, dry farming, and a specialty furniture factory are what supports the operation.

Mention should be made of food. The hotels all serve the famous "Israeli Breakfast", an all-you-can-eat affair, which featured some of the most mouth watering pickled herring and carp I have ever eaten. They also had raw vegetables. This seems peculiar to Americans, but salad is a common breakfast item in Israel. There are also cheeses and flavored yogurts and other items, and was often the biggest meal of the day. Lunch was often haphazard, a small lunch stand near some tourist spot. Usually we brought our own --- for a while, leftovers from airplane fair. Dinner was usually at some rather ethnic restaurant, including a splendid meal at a Persian restaurant, complete with a picture of the Shah. A special treat was falaffel sandwiches. These are made from Pita ("syrian") Bread, and filled with raw vegetables and fried balls of fallafel (ground chickpeas, with small amounts of onion, herbs and other seasoning) This is very filling, particularly since the pita bread there is somewhat thicker than you usually see here) and more than once these made up our dinner. The vegetable choices (and sauces to top it with) are displayed out front, so you can stroll past the stands and stop at the one which looks the most appetizing. It is precisely analogous to the Taco stand in Mexico, and seem to be patronized by everyone --- it provides the same functions as "fast food" here, and is considerably more healthy. They run about 60¢ and you can get it as a half. There appears to be another form as well, where the contents are wrapped in some sort of sturdy but flexible pancake, and is somewhat larger. I think such stands, properly marketed, would do well here.

The day is spent touring the west bank, as we visit Nazerith and Bethlehem. There is also a visit to Meggido, and old city that some cultists think will be the site of the final Good Guys vs Bad Guys conflict (its the origin of the word Armageddon). The well there, the source of life there, is dry, with tourists taking an enormous staircase down and thru it. I wonder if King Solomon, who fortified the area thousands of years ago, would have been able to figure out such a sight.

Next we are in Jerusalem. We saw and did so much there it all starts to merge in my memory. We had two days of tours, two and a half on our own, and a day out of town which I'll get too shortly. The city is wonderous jumble, the religious and the secular, the extremely old and the very new and the still-in-construction, Jew and Moslem, tourist and native, beautiful and ugly. Yes. There are rich vistas and lovely synagogues, flower gardens (Irises very popular) and art and sculpture and stunning murials (often mosiacs), graceful monuments and stately buildings. But there is another side. It has too much traffic, so sometimes it doesn't smell too good, and traffic jams are never attractive. The skyline, celebrated in countless works of art over the centuries is punctured by an increasing number of tall buildings (usually hotels or office bldgs) at seemingly random intervals. The crux of the problem is that everybody wants to live there. Some old landmarks are already gone. But if height restrictions are placed on new housing, then the city will expand relentlessly and monotonously into the Judean hills, or toward Tel Aviv. Perhaps Jerusalem will some day have another wall as it once did --- of intellegently planned high-rises.

One morning we visit the Yad Vashem Memorial, a mseum of the Holocaust. This was difficult to view and impossible to describe adaquately. It begins with the pre-war

activities of the Nazis against the Jews. It is a familiar tale. First the defamations, then modest infringements on civil rights, followed by more drastic measures, then confiscations, dissolution of Jewish organizations, and finally mass deportations. There is a lesson here even today. There are those who would place some limits on the civil rights (e.g. the right to peacefully assemble) on those --- such as the neo-Nazis --- who are adjudged to be racist, indecent, etc. Germany in the '30s teaches us where this leads. Civil Liberties are of whole cloth; a tear can be expected to widen under greater stresses. And these restrictions can spread to additional victims, just as they did in Germany to other types of dissidents. The early restrictions were not resisted by the German Jews. To give you some specifics, On April 1, 1933 there was a massive boycott of Jewish Businesses, wholesale burning of Jewish books on May 10, 1935. The Nuremberg Law of Sept 15, 1935 precisely defined who was a Jew, and stripped Jews of the German citizenship, barred them from marrying non-Jews, hiring "Aryan" maids in their homes, etc. There followed a period of increasing economic pressure on Jewish businesses, and a systematic exclusion of Jews from various professions, starting with lawyers and judges. This culminated in the nationwide registration of all Jewish businesses on April 26, 1938, the forced aryanization and/or liquidation of Jewish retail businesses on 11-12-38, with similar action against industrial enterprises on 12-3-38. Compulsory identification cards were issued on 1-1-39, with "Sara" or "Israel" on all Jewish cards. Public schools were closed to Jewish children on 11-15-38. Once the war began, the deportations were put into effect. This is just Germany. Actions in Vienna by the Nazis were much more brutal; in areas controlled by the Italians, things went much slower, and many were able to escape. I mention these specifics because I do not want you to believe those revisionists who try to say that all this is just an exaggeration.

The rest deals with the slave labor and death camps. The exhibits are mostly photos and copies of official documents, mostly in German. The explanatory text is remarkably restrained, deadpanned really, as the exhibits speak for themselves. At the end is a huge archive, with thousands of eyewitness documents (first hand accounts), an attempt to delineate who went and died where. The entire business is deeply affecting, and indeed, when foreign leaders come to Israel for official visits, a visit to YV is always scheduled, whether they want it or not. Outside the building is a walkway called the Path of the Righteous Gentiles, with trees planted in the memory of individuals, organizations, and even an entire country (Denmark) who helped Jews hide and escape.

We also visit the Military cemetery (all graves are the same in appearance, regardless of rank) Hadassah Hospital (with its awesome Chagall Windows), the Dome of the Rock (one of the most ornately decorated rooms you will ever see) the public areas of the King David Hotel (this was 2 days before Haig's visit; we return the next day to get a final bit of info, and there are security people all over the place) a Bedouin camp (where I try coffee for the first time in my life; it's laced heavily with Cardamon) the old-city bazaar, a variety of churches, a museum of Islamic art and much more. This is a fine city for exploring on foot, for the city is reasonably compact and quite varied in its visual attractions.

Much depends on the quality of the tour guide. At the beginning I was disappointed, as he kept repeating things. This of course means things cannot be explored in as much detail. Later I realized that people were not listening all that carefully, so that the repetition was needed to avoid confusion and delay. With one exception, he did an excellent job, patient & insistent as circumstances required, and always cognizant of the requirements and details of where we were going; the group was understandably pleased with him.

The one exception is a whopper, though, and is nothing personal. I suspect that most if not all guides in Israel were the same in this regard. When there was something that Israel or its people had accomplished, this was always pointed out --- and there was a lot of it. However, when it came to her problems, however, except for the problems with her neighbors, and except for a few comments made literally in the final minutes of the tour, the only mention made was to convert it into a joke. This is tot-

ally unrealistic (all countries have problems) and unbalanced, and certainly not required by circumstances (the Egyptians guides had a different attitude entirely).

For openers, Israel is a surprisingly sexist society. This is all the more shocking, since it has the image of being very liberated in that regard, partly because of the role of women in the army. Example: Instead of taking the cable car down, we ask the tour guide if its alright to walk down the "snake path" (actually, I'm mostly interested in whether or not there's enuf time). The men, he tel's us, there's no problem. Women should not walk down. (I might add there was no objective reason for this evaluation). My cousin and her husband were getting some construction work done. He was away for a few days, and when she told the contractor that she wanted something done in a specific way, he flatly refused. When the husband returned and made the same request, there was no problem. At one kibbutz, which has a lot of women with no children, the rule is that men must work at least 8 hours, but women are to work no more than 7 hours. I'm not completely sure of the origins of this. Partly this is due to the large number of Jews from Arab lands, where there are severe restrictions on women's participation in society. And the very strong control of the Orthodox Rabbinate on many aspects of Israeli life doesn't help, since orthodox judiaism imposes some rather strict sex-roles. There more to it than this, tho, and its a bit jarring when you see it.

Another terrible problem is inflation, which ran at 130% in 1980, the worst in the world. This is partially due to the enormous expenditures on defense. Military expenditures are the most inflationary you can have, a point our President seems to be blissfully unaware of. Money is paid out, but there are no consumer goods generated to sop up the \$\$\$\$. Productivity is severely affected by the fact that males up to age 55 are subject to up to 1 month a year call-up. There is a bewildering variety of compensating mechanisms many things (such as bank accounts) are indexed, and other things such as phones are "tokenized" --- one uses a token, whose price steadily rises. But the entire process means that imported goods are incredibly expensive, and most find it very difficult to save. Some prices of things that tend to stay on the market for a while --- such as the listed price of a condo --- are just listed in dollars, to avoid having to change the price every few weeks.

Of the conflicts internally we are told repeatedly how well the Jews and Druze get along. But never mentioned is the tensions between Jews of European and Arab-country origin. The former are somewhat in the minority, but are better educated, and have completely dominated the political life of the country since its birth. And there is much resentment on the part of Arabs living in Israel, who are still, after all these decades, still not trusted and in some ways treated as second class citizens. Also, Israel is an extremely strike-prone society. The bristling attitude that Israel sometimes takes to the rest of the world is reflected internally, as they seem so often to be unable to work out priorities without strikes, semi-strikes, sanctions, slowdowns and the like. The economy is honeycombed with a variety of special deals which cause dislocations and resentments. Electric workers, for example, get all their electricity free, which means of course that some waste and neighbors notice. When we were there a variety of teacher's strikes existed, and prior to that there had been a "Parents Strike".

All this is not to knock the country. They have done a job in integrating vastly different cultures better than any other country I know (in a short space of time) but to pretend, as the tour guide implicitly does, that the only problems are those caused by the neighbors is just not balanced. There is enuf good to see that presenting some of the flip side to the local success story won't sour the tourist.

On our last day of the tour we drive out to visit Masada, only days before the extravaganza on TV here. To answer the question that I've been asked several times already, yes, you can plainly see the ramp built to afford better access by the seigers. A walk down gives one a much more real feeling about the immensity and isolation of the mountain. We also swim in the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth (on land that is) with waters that are 1/3 salt. This presents a very queer somatic sensation. The water

does feel "heavier", as if one were slightly drugged. Swimming on your stomach is difficult --- you tend to flip over onto your back. Even in water well over your head, it is easy to stand --- you only sink to about armpit level in the water. There is also a sulfur bath, fed by a heated underground stream that feeds into the dead sea. In the long haul, tho, the Dead Sea is, er, dying. So much water from the Jordan has been diverted that the water level has fallen to the point where you can walk across its (former) middle.. The Huge Israeli potash works removes more water, and Jordanians are getting ready to put their own potash factory on stream.

Overhanging the entire trip, tho, is the security problem, the problem with her neighbors, and those who live there. The tour guide makes innumerable references to this. But even without, you cannot help but notice the bomb shelters right alongside children's playgrounds in the northern kibbutzim, and bomb shelters attached to homes. These are not for show or because of an excess of cement. Rockets really do fall with little or no warning. Soldiers in uniform are common sight everywhere, and are particularly common in the north. And there is also a civil guard, a volunteer outfit that patrols various neighborhoods.

The central problems here are two-fold. What to do with the territory seized in 1967, and how to resolve the problem of the Palestinian refugees and their offspring, now in some cases in their third generation. These questions divide not only Israelis, but their overseas allies and could engulf the middle east in nuclear war.

Numerous arguments have been tendered on both sides of the "territories" question, which sort out, in my opinion, to three invalid ones, 1 valid one, and one very hazy one.

The first is that these territories, especially the west bank, are the Judea and Samaria promised by God to Abraham for the Jews. I cringe to even type this, but this argument has been repeatedly made by the Prime Minister, Begin. Considering all the dreadful things that have been done to Jews (and Bahais, Jehova's Witnesses, Baptists, etc) "In the name of God/Allah" it seems to me an abomination that Jews should try the same line: "God told us we could have this."

The second is an economic one. Look, the tourist is told, before 1967 this was a wasteland (or army barracks, etc), and now its wheatfields/palm orchards/ etc. But ultimately, this is the argument of the thief, the squatter: "Sorry pal, but I could use this \$20 better than you can, so hand it over." It is quite true that Israelis extracted oil from the Sinai, and have raised the living standard of many of the Moslems living in the administered territories and all that, but this not justify transfer of ownership, or imposition of political will.

The third is a pseudo-racist argument. If you really push an Israeli hard enuf, he may blurt out: "Yes, but you don't know the Arabs. They're trecherous/dishonest/unreliable/ignorant, etc." Numerous anecdotes, first and second hand can be supplied. There is no end of inflammatory rhetoric and violent acts to draw upon. Positions with similar "validity" can be made for Jews being avaracious, blacks being lazy, Italians being hoods, and many more.

Then there is the security argument, a very hazy one indeed. As any "Risk" player knows, the perception of weakness can lead to the arming of a border which will frighten one's neighbor. But what constitutes secure borders? Let us recall that as of 1966, it was the official policy of Israel that those present borders were fine, and should be agreed to by all. Now in 1981 those self same borders are somehow unacceptable. Hitler used similar doubletalk to expand the borders of Nazi Germany. On the other hand, by any objective standard, the 1966 borders were not secure, as the war plainly showed. Complex, highly artificial borders with no attention to terrain can be said to invite aggression rather than dissuading it. Ultimately, tho the strength of one's borders depends on the willingness of the neighbors to respect them. So long as Israel's neighbors do not sign peace treaties (here I exclude Egypt), can any borders which do not give Israel a clear military edge be considered secure? Anyhow, this is

a difficult question to evaluate, and so much depends on the willingness of Israel's neighbors to sign a peace treaty.

This then leaves a valid argument in favor of retention of some or all of the seized territories. The point is that, unlike our Diplomacy, real war is not a game. When our game is over, the winner boasts, the losers make excuses, and set up the pieces exactly as they were for a fresh game. But a real war generates orphans, destroyed factories, a rise in militaristic thinking and many other horrors. If nation A can attack nation B, and (somehow) lose some of its territory, and then say, "Alright, lets go back to the starting point and set up our peices as before" there where is the disincentive to attack again?

This may seem very academic but it is not. One of the most intractable of man's problems is how to prevent war. And, in my personal opinion, the possibility of nuclear war is the most serious danger that humans as a species face. And big wars start from little wars. I am aware that ever permitting war to alter national boundaries in effect encourages war. But if a country which is poised to attack cannot be sure that battlefield reverses will will not lead to its own land losses, then perhaps it will hesitate. Perhaps not. But the rest of the world is poorly positioned and generally unwilling to apply any penalty to an agressor nation, short of retaliating with an attack of their own, which of course widens the conflict. If the nation being attacked can apply the penalty, then so be it.

This of course leads to the question of who started what wars. The 1948 war was clearly started by the Arabs, who were unwilling to accept the UN partition plan, and attacked in full force. The final armistice lines that resulted from this attack actually gave a larger Israel, as the area around Gaza was considerably reduced, and they lost Acre, Sefad, Tiberias and Beershevah, just to name some cities. And the 1973 war was clearly also an Arab attack. The 1967 war is a more complicated business. Physical Hostilities began with the attack by Israel on the Egyptian Air Force, and action that was decisive in determining the eventual outcome. But prior to that, Egyptian, Jordanian, Saudia Arabian, Iraqui, Algerian and Kuwaiti armed forces were put under a unified command, and the UN buffer force (UNEF) was expelled. This was followed by a blockade by Nasser of the Straits of Tiran, which controls the access to Eilat, Israel's second port. The UN defines a blockade (such as what we did to Cuba) as an act of aggression, and I agree.

At the same time, for Israel to insist on all the territory (aside from Egypt) is just plain suicidal. No nation will sign a peace treaty with Israel under those conditions, and without such peace treaties, the Middle East will never see peace. And absorbing so many moslems will seriously dilute the Jewish character of the country.

The strongest possible case for a change in borders exists with Jerusalem. The original UN partition called for an International Zone there, whatever that means. But in the subsequent fighting in 1948-49, the Arab Legion was able to take over much of the city, including the old Jewish quarter. The city was partitioned. The Jordanian rule was not a civilized one. The Mount Scopus cemetery is the most holy one in all the world for Jews, who have been buried there for thousands of years. The Jordanians ran a huge road thru it, built a hotel in the middle. When this was retaken in the 1967 war, it was discovered that tombstones had been used to build latrines. There had been over 100 synagogues and yeshivas; all were destroyed (one was damaged in the fighting); we visited one that had been used as a stable for horses. But perhaps the most poignant comment was made by the tour guide, as we drove one evening. He pointed to a building, and said (approximately): "See the roof there? Before 1967, I take ((Israelis have little use for tents)) tour groups up there. Then I point --- there, Dome of the Rock; there --- western wall, etc. But we could not visit these places then. Tommorrow, we see them all." This was no melodramatic exaggeration. Prior to the 1967war, barbed wire devided the city. Despite loud protestations by the Jordanians that they were anti-Zionist, not anti-Jewish, Jews were simply not permitted to visit their holy places, including the western/wailing wall, the most sacred location for Jews. For a city so old, so complex, so intertwined as Jerusalem to be devided is

unacceptable, unless there is a compelling reason. And there is not.

So whose should a unified city be? Christians have shown relatively little interest in it since the crusades --- Bethlehem is apparently much more important. As for the Moslems, Both Mecca and Medina outrank Jerusalem, which isn't even mentioned in the Koran. By contrast, its mentioned hundreds of times in the Old Testament. Add to that the fact that there is absolutely zero political support in Israel for giving up Jerusalem, even on the fringes. Indeed, the topic appears not even to be discussed.

This however, is not an endorsement of the status quo. Moslems in East Jerusalem have as much interest in being ruled by the Israelis as Jews would be if circumstances were reversed. Even beyond her borders, this control serves to unite such diverse nations as Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iraq, and this unity is not to Israel's advantage. Eventually, some system of zones will have to be established. In arab zones, there would be local control over such sensitive topics as the education system, religious sites and the like. So long as the Moslems are treated as conquered subjects, to be moved about whenever the powers that be decide that more "urban renewal" is needed, this will be a permanent irritant, Jordan will not even consider signing a peace treaty, and Israel will have no chance of having Jerusalem recognized as the capital, by other nations. Yes of course there is the security issue (Hadassah Hospital is built far enuf away from the city to give ambulance drivers a fit --- for security reasons. Yet in the 1967 war, hostilities began on that border with Jordanian shelling of the hospital. Little is sacred in the middle east). But if Israel can get peace treaties with her neighbors, she does not need the total control over East Jerusalem that she now holds in order to have peace and safety. In my opinion, Jerusalem and Northern Ireland are the most difficult geopolitical problems in the world, and the emotional attitudes born of religious differences exacerbate matters considerably. These problems present the supreme tests for Diplomats. Alas, except for Egypt, none of the countries has been blessed for long with farsighted or courageous leadership.

Er, back to the narrative. One of the anomalies of Israel is the influence of Germany. The Nazis generated the refugees (and guilt) that was the final impetus for the birth of Israel. And yet, reparations payments, both to individual survivors and to Israel itself were vital to Israel's financial health, particularly in the 50's. And now, aside from the diamond industry, tourism is the biggest source of revenue, and now the biggest single source of tourists is --- Germany (that should be West Germany in all cases in the paragraph. East G never paid reparations, saying that the people were not at fault, only the capitalist industries. And tourism ----- forget it!)

But all too soon it was time to go. Odd images still linger in my mind. Hebrew, the language of the bible and Jewish prayer for millenia, is also the language of bathroom graffiti. The negev, a true desert, has huge, incongruous sectors of green where man has decided to have crops and flowers. Right alongside the traditional site of "Abrahams Well" in Beersheva is a Volkswagon Dealership (German cars and trucks sell very well here). And most vividly I recall the sight of two students, studying from a pile of books, with an enormous automatic weapon slung across the desk.

And so, with the sweet aroma of Orange blossoms in the air, we board the plane for Egypt, just as Lady Luck checks out! No sooner are we in our seats than a Cairo sandstorm puts us back for a 4 hour delay. Finally, circling Cairo, we are told it is hopeless, and its back to Tel Aviv. We finally arrive in Egypt 24 hours late, wondering what will become of our scheduld.

Perhpas you are wondering how Egypt can be covered in 1/6 of a page. I think I'll let that part of the trip go undescribed --- I really don't think you're all that keen for another 3-4 pages of this. Let me know if I'm wrong.

On an ther topic, copies of Sharp's book are nearly gone. I have only 2 left, so sales are henceforth restricted to DD subbers. If anyone has tired of their book, I will buy undamaged copies back, paying you \$10.50 on receipt on the book (it will cost you 86¢ postage to mail). As the publisher is out of copies, my choices are either to reprint the book, or write one of my own --- for which I'd probably need help.

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I suspect that some of you voted against Carter because you felt, with some justification that Reagan would give a more consistant foreign policy. But can someone explain this one to me? We refuse to send any wheat to Nicaragua cutting ovff \$7 million worth. This is because they are too closely tied to the USSR, and are a conduit to soviet arms. But we drop the embargo against USSR. Two days later the Russinas announce that they will ship millions of \$\$ worth of grain to that country under extremely favorable terms. Whe those bags are opened by grateful peasants and bakers, do you think they' bags will say "made in USA" or "From your Russian comrads"? If we're growing the grain, why should the Russians get the credit for being the good guys. The whole setup is not exactly designed to wean them away from the Russians. Maybe you can explain it to me!

IF #46 appears by your name, your sub is expired, and its time to renew

All Opinions expressed in this issue are strictly my own.



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