

Passover Feature

In honor of Passover, which commemorates the anniversary of the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, the Las Vegas Israelite will publish a series of features. This year the Passover Festival is inaugurated at sundown on the evening of Monday, April 4, and ends on Tuesday, April 12.

Miriam and The Cows

by Rose Carlin

During the week of Passover, Israelis go visiting. They visit friends and relatives in distant towns, go on tiulim (tours) all over the country, and spend some time in kibbutzim, either working or resting. And in the kibbutzim, may a hard-working chaver takes his annual vacation the. And what does he or she do? They go visiting other chaverim in other kibbutzim.

I was working in Giv'at Brenner, a large, established kibbutz near Tel Aviv. I was a tourist chaverah without status, volunteering my services on a temporary basis. When Pesach came, and with it the spring of the year, I asked and was granted permission to take the week off, and I too went visiting. I went to places I had not seen before--Mazareth, and then on to Tiberias, Kinneret, with a stop-over at Degania, the very first kvut'ah and the "mother" of them all.

Degania is, of course, closely linked with Joseph and Miriam Baratz, two of its founders, whose personalities and ideals had exerted a powerful influence upon the whole kibbutz movement.

There is something special about Degania. Nestling in the Jordan Valley, on the banks of Lake Kinneret, it lies slumbering in the sun. An air of repose and tranquility envelopes it as though the turmoil of the world outside its borders were of no concern here.

Actually, however, Degania has been in the forefront of every battle since it was founded, in 1911. Israel's toughest leaders and fighters have lived and fought here at one time or another. And some were born here, such as Moshe Dayan, the handsome and daring former Commander-in-Chief of Israel's Army.

I came to Degania on a warm Passover afternoon and, like everyone else, was charmed by its serene beauty. I was lucky Miriam invited me to be her guest and spend the night in her bait (house). Her modest little house consisted of a room and a half, the half, a bed-

room, was just big enough for a bed.

A warm, big-hearted woman, has friends all over the world although she herself had not traveled widely. She had spent her hard-working like right here in Degania. Every day or, rather the early dawn of every day, she had been occupied in the refet (dairy), tending her cows with as much tenderness as though they were not just creatures, but human beings.

Miriam has become an expert on cows and is the acknowledged "queen" of the refet throughout the country.

Late in the afternoon Miriam relaxes. She served me tea and cake and we talked about Degania. At sunset, when the supper gong sounded, we walked together to the communal dining hall. There it was announced that guests were expected from Tel Aviv --two Habimah actors, a man and a woman, who were coming to entertain us.

That's how it is in Israel --the theatre comes to the people.

We ate a hearty, wholesome meal and sat around waiting, talking, getting acquainted. We tasted the home-grown bananas, small but sweet and flavorful, that were piled high in baskets on every table.

It was nearly ten, when the actors and actresses arrived, hot and tired from their long ride. Their bus was late, but without much pause they went into their act -- reading from some of Habimah's well known plays.

There was silence in the dining room, with the chaverim giving the actors their total attention, responding to every nuance of their pre-



FOUR PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE FRIENDLY SENS OF ST. PATRICK (LEFT TO RIGHT) JUDGE JOHN MOWBRAY, THOMAS J. McLAUGHLIN, RANDY McELHONE AND TOMMY CALLAHN PROUDLY CALL ATTENTION TO ST. PATRICK'S DAY AND THE EVER-PRESENT

SHAMROCK. THE ANNUAL BANQUET WAS HELD AT THE STARDUST HOTEL LAST NIGHT THURSDAY, MAR. 17. FEATURED SPEAKER WAS U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE JOHN F. KILKENNY, PORTLAND, OREGON.

sentation with absorbed interest and delight.

This was no ordinary audience. There were cultured knowledgeable, well-informed people with high ideals -- the farmer-intellectuals of Israel, a segment rarely found in other countries.

When the performance ended, tea and cake was served and the chaverim clustered around the actors discussing the plays, expressing opinions, offering their suggestions. Although long past the bedtime hour, everybody was fully awake, excited, stimulated and loath to leave. When the party finally did break up, it was

past midnight.

I walked with Miriam on the still, moonlit road to her cabin. We entered and she sat down on her bed with some hesitation. "B'vadai," she suddenly decided, "Sure. It's too late to go to bed. Almost dawn."

Quickly she removed her Sabbath dress, got into her rough, heavy work pants and went to her cows in the refet. "Meile," (so be it) she remarked, "I'll sleep tomorrow."

Miriam's dedication sweetened my sleep as I kept on thinking that Israel's guardians neither sleep nor slumber.

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