

THE GALILEE- A LONG WAY FROM RUSSIA

BY JOAN SILBERSTEIN

In the Tefen area of northwestern Galilee is a one-year old miztpeh called Tal El. It has not yet learned to walk, meaning it is not self-supporting. Here 15 families live in a lonely mountain top watchpost. A mile from them live 10,000 Moslem Arabs in the market town of Jidah.

At 9:00 in the morning the settlement has been emptied of its men who work in Haifa and have to commute. The dirt access road built by the Jewish National Fund is still unpaved, but a lone figure on a bright yellow tractor is clearing land for new housing sites. The driver does not live here, but the JNF pays his salary.

The houses are asbestos pre-fabs, assembled in Israel. They are to be replaced eventually by stone or concrete permanent structures, when the money becomes available. There is nothing else beside the houses and a recreation hall, used by 16 children and 30 adults. Just one dirt street with homes on both sides of it. The raw mountains are all around. The air is silent. Women and children have only each other for company.

Zina Balin is at home, a woman of 36, with two children, Alex, 12 and Tally 5. A three-month-old boxer pupper named Brut is out front, mangling a soup bone nearly as big as he is. "At first," says Zina, "a lot of us hesitated to come here. We were afraid 15 families would not give us enough people to know or that we would fight among ourselves because there was no one else. I lived in Riga in Russia until I was 26. That's a city of three million people. But now that we are here, I see that it is all right. We live like one family. And we will grow. There are 70 more people already on the waiting list to join us.

For my hnd, Aaron, coming here is like being born again. He is a textile engineer and when we lived in Haifa, he would come home from work, read the newspaper and watch TV, eat supper, and go to bed. We never went out, it was no life. All of a sudden, at Tal El, he gets meritz, energy. My Aaron, who all his life never knew what land was, who never saw earth, only asphalt, now that he has land around his house, he falls in love with it.

In the nakedness of Tal El, what is obvious is the work of Aaron and the other husbands. Brilliant flowers sprout from backyards growing their first flowers in centuries. Each garden is different, and each fence around it. Aaron's is delicate, almost Japanese, fashioned from dead wood, pulled from trees in a nearby forest planted by the Jewish National Fund. He has also built some of the furnitre in his home, book-cases and tables, though he had never done any

woodworking before. On top of work and gardening and building, Aaron has taken upon himself responsibility for serving as Secretary of the whole settlement, a time-consuming and demanding job.

What these sophisticated, college-educated professionals hope to build here is an industrial moshav, specializing in electronics. Keren Kayemeth has provided land for 200 families to live on, and there is no shortage of volunteers, only of money. That has to come from the gifts of world Jewry until the settlement can become self-supporting.

One small business is already underway in the moshav, developed single-handedly by one woman who turned a hobby into what may become the foundation of a tourist industry. Esther Levin, whose husband is a professor of metallurgy, loves to cook. Moscow-born and raised, she found she missed Russian food -- and so did everyone else in her little community at Tal El. She began inviting couples and their children over for meals. Her reputation spread by word of mouth, reaching far out around the country, via members of the Jewish National Fund and government who frequently visited while the moshav was under development. Esther Levin's homemade borscht, lamb with rice and chicken Kiev grew in demand. Today she receives up to 50 paying guests at a time and one imagines that from her loving work will one day come a fine restaurant for the tourists who are sure to visit when Tal El can feed and accommodate them.

The Israelis in Tal El and throughout the other 32 miztchim (outposts) in the north have put their lives and their future on the line. But they depend on our help to grow, to become economically independent, to enlarge their communities, to establish a strong Jewish presence in the Galilee. It is not possible to live without the land. And without the efforts of the JNF to make that rock-ravaged northern sector habitable, there will be no north. That leave the way wide open to the Arabs to move down from Lebanon and Syria, from the north of Israel itself, and to tighten the noose around Haifa, Safad, Tiberias. We cant afford to let that happen.

MILITANT ISRAELIS CLASH

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- Eight members of the movement to stop the withdrawal from Sinai were arrested in Yamit in an afternoon clash with Israeli soldiers and police who tried to prevent them from landing from a flotilla of pleasure boats rented from a Tel Aviv marina. The five boats, carrying an estimated 40 militants withdrew after the landing party was subdued. But the skirmish on the beach foreshadowed more serious confrontations when Israeli troops began to remove an estimated 3,000 illegal squatters, mainly Orthodox Jews from outside the region, who have vowed never to leave Sinai voluntarily. The final evacuation operation remains imminent. Midnight, the begin-

ning of the month, was the deadline for all Israeli citizens to be out of Sinai.

TIMBERLINE RETURNS TO MAXIM



TIMBERLINE RETURNS....THE TALENTED GROUP, TIMBERLINE, RETURNED TO THE MAXIM'S CLOUD NINE LOUNGE THIS WEEK FOR A MONTH'S ENGAGEMENT, PERFORMING FROM 7 P.M. TO MIDNIGHT, SHARING THE STAGE WITH TIMBERLINE IS THE POPULAR TRIO "RISE" WHO APPEAR FROM 2 P.M. UNTIL 7 P.M.

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Poland's Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowsky and Religious Affairs Minister Jerzy Kubersky have pledged their government's efforts to combat any outbreaks of anti-Semitism in their country, it was reported here by American Joint Distribution Committee president Henry Taub and JDC executive vice president Ralph Goldman. They said the two Polish officials told them during their recent visit to Poland that "the welfare of the Jewish community is our concern and that of all Polish citizens."

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