

City With a Mission

By GENE CURRIVAN

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On the eve of the birth of their new state, citizens of Tel Aviv parade a captured Arab vehicle through the streets.

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Tel Aviv, Israel's temporary capital and gateway of hope for thousands, is a modern metropolis dedicated to a new life.

TEL AVIV (By Wireless).

By GENE CURRIVAN

WHEN, in 1924, Tel Aviv was 15 years old, just emerging into civic maturity, its elders and sages decided that it should have a fitting coat of arms. They chose the Shield of David as a base. Then they superimposed a gateway on the sea with a beacon light casting its beams for the guidance of all Zionists wherever they might be. And as their motto they selected from Jeremiah, "I will build thee and thou shalt be built."

Little did they know then that on the 15th of May in the year 1948 this hope would become a reality. It was on that day that the State of Israel, the first Jewish sovereignty since the days of King Agrippa, came into being and this little city became its provisional capital and gate of entry.

And now, in the first week of their statehood, and with enemies at their threshold, the people of Tel Aviv show a courageous nonchalance even as they go on fighting to protect what they have. The feeling of confidence here is highly contagious and the spirit of the people in the face of overwhelming odds is extremely high. They take great pride in pointing out to anyone who will listen that before

and during the battle of Jaffa some 40,000 Arabs fled from the seaport while not one Jew left Tel Aviv. When you speak of the combined strength of the Arab armies, they chuckle and remind you of "our Haganah."

Haganah defended them against the Turks more than sixty years ago, against the Arabs during the 1936 and 1939 uprisings and it is defending them again now in their hour of strife. Haganah, which was kept underground for so many years, has at last emerged and is now Israel's official militia.

WITH it is operating the dreaded Irgun Zvai Leumi, erstwhile underground commandos who also emerged and have fought openly against the Arabs. Irgun is now virtually an auxiliary unit of Haganah, although operating independently. Its leader, Menahem Beigin, one of the most mysterious, unseen persons of modern times, broadcast a message to the people of Israel the day after the mandate ended and pledged his support to the new state. However, it was provisional support because Irgun still maintains that Hebrew arms will decide what the state's borders shall be.

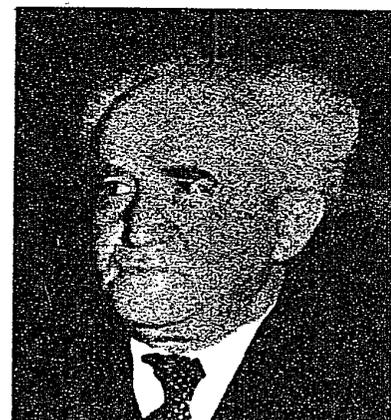
In Tel Aviv you can never forget for a moment that there are Irgun and Haganah any more than you could forget in New York during the war years that there was the United States Army. They are

everywhere. Every young able-bodied man and woman is either now in uniform or has some place in the military scheme of things already carved out.

THERE are other tokens of war. Israel was hardly six hours old when at dawn of May 15 Egyptian planes baptized it with fire and the raids, though relatively small and confined to the city's outskirts, have been on daily basis since then. When the raids occur, streets, balconies and rooftops are filled with people watching planes dive-bomb, strafe and then scurry out to sea in the direction of Egypt. Except for those in the immediate area of the attacks no one gets panicky and all hope against hope that they will see that disastrous stream of black smoke coming from a plane's tail. Some of the more timorous Israelis, especially among the elderly folk who have witnessed mass air raids in other countries, huddle in doorways as the crunching sound of exploding bombs reaches them. Others roam the streets unconcerned until the air-raid wardens warn them.

Your favorite waiter, bartender or messenger may be here today and gone tomorrow. The healthy-looking little chambermaid who cleans your room and loses your laundry suddenly appears and says, "Good-bye, sir. I am going to camp tomorrow."

Like all the others she takes it in her stride and looks forward with deep satisfaction to the opportunity of contributing something to the (Continued on Page 65)



David Ben-Gurion, 61, both Chairman of the Cabinet and Defense Minister of the nation.



Dr. Chaim Weizmann, 73, senior statesman of Zionism, Provisional President of Israel.

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little state which gave her sanctuary when it seemed that the gates of the rest of the world were closed.

Tomorrow with hundreds of others like her she will report for duty to one of the assembly points here and be taken in a military lorry to one of the training camps.

BUT with all the conscription going on, normal life in Tel Aviv appears to be uninterrupted. The shops, cinemas, cafés and hotels all continue to be packed, although there is a noticeable preponderance of khaki. There are many bandaged heads, too, and missing arms and eyes. These sights bring back a remembrance of things past and the realization that, even on a small scale, war is hell.

War or no war, in this city of a quarter of a million Jews the gates are at last open and those who were prevented from coming to the land of their heritage are now freely entering what they can call their own country. They are coming from central Europe, from the Balkans and from temporary but enforced refuge in camps at Cyprus where more than 24,000 await release from bondage.

To most of them Tel Aviv will be a welcome surprise. It is a difficult place to visualize from afar, no matter how much one has read about it or how many photographs one has seen. It is different basically from any other city in the world. There is a certain compactness about it as opposed to the sprawling, ever-changing features of most cities. There is room to move about in but one gets the impression of people huddled together as if protectively.

In due time the administrative functions of the new state will be centered in the Tel Aviv suburb of Sarona just northwest of the city. Tel Aviv itself is too crowded to provide room for the buildings that will be necessary to carry on the national government, while near-by Sarona, which formerly housed interned Germans, has more than enough space. Thirty buildings already have been reconverted for Government offices and there are plans for sixty more over the next five years.

TEL AVIV covers only about 1,500 acres, but almost every bit of space is utilized. The buildings are in the most part of white stucco and of modern design and closely packed together. Anyone who has room for a garden is considered quite fortunate.

Those city planners who laid out the streets apparently thought that the motor car was a passing fancy. Most of the streets are not wide enough for modern traffic and

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the result is constant traffic jams.

The shops are modern, clean and expensive and they offer a variety of goods and food that seems out of keeping with so small a city. Residents of Tel Aviv have a civic pride second to none and they take great delight in locally made products and home-grown foodstuffs. Among the principal sources of these are WIZO, the Women's International Zionist Organization, and TNUVA, which is a clearing house for farm and dairy products from the Jewish settlements.

Allenby Road or Ben Yehuda Street, where sidewalk cafés are popular rendezvous, reminds one of parts of Paris, Brussels or Luxembourg, and,



The Seal of Tel Aviv.

strangely enough, if you talk to the people you will discover that many have come from those cities and have no desire to return. They are a cosmopolitan people who once roamed the face of the earth but now have found the haven they want, where all speak a common language, have common interests and, through their newly established fraternity, are better equipped to face whatever destiny may have in store for them.

TEL AVIV is full of philosophers who never once doubted that a Jewish state would be formed. Threats of Arab invasion, disappointments that came daily from Lake Success and the ever-present feeling that they were alone in the fight never fazed these people. When their dream was realized, they did not suddenly awaken and sing Hallelujahs. They said thanks to God for receiving the gift they felt they richly deserved, but to everyone else their attitude was "I told you so."

There seems to be a very definite social pattern that is followed here each day. It starts late in the morning when the coffee houses, sidewalk cafés and hotel lobbies suddenly blossom forth with great crowds. They drink coffee and eat large quantities of fancy cakes. They read the magazines and the eleven local Hebrew-language newspapers and listen to the radio news reports in English from the

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Palestine Broadcasting System and in Hebrew from Haganah. Then about 1 o'clock they have lunch, either where they are or at home.

At night the cafés with music are favorites and it is difficult to get tables, especially at seafront places.

THE Tel Aviv seafront, with its mile or more of sandy beach, its promenades, terraced gardens and neat little hotels, is one of the pleasantest places on this side of the Mediterranean. Its boundaries are more or less Jaffa, which juts out into the sea on the south, and Tel Aviv's Yarkon River on the north.

The Yarkon, which originates twelve miles away at Ras el Ein, where Jerusalem's water supply starts, is a charming little waterway that somewhat resembles the Jordan at some places. It has a picturesque waterfall in what was recently an Arab district and it flows through a series of orange groves to the sea.

Out in that sea there are ships heading this way loaded with passengers. Many have arrived and unloaded their human cargo into the waiting hands of the WIZO, which will rehabilitate them and make them welcome in the home they have been trying to reach for years.

The historical exodus from Egypt took forty years and although this one from Europe probably seemed that long to many, it was comparatively short for a people who for almost 2,000 years dreamed of returning to the Promised Land. This time the scene is different, too. They do not have to fight their way into Palestine. A beacon light over the gateway is beckoning them in. But once they have arrived, they do have to help the other Israelites defend their homeland—the world's newest sovereign state and the first Jewish state since the time of King Agrippa.