

PART SIX

**MY TEN YEAR ODYSSEY
IN THE JEWISH HOMELAND**

1970–1980

TYPIST PLEASE NOTE:

The part about MOSHE SAFDIE should be changed to read as follows:
Moshe Safdie established an office in Jerusalem later and designed two rabbinical colleges and a Memorial to the children of the Holocaust and some other showcases, but he was never able to have the impact on the Israeli landscape he could and should have had with the full co-operation of the State.

“So in the Libyan Fable it is told
That once an Eagle, stricken by a dart,
Said, when he saw the
fashion of the shaft,
'With our own feathers, not by
other's hands
Are we now smitten.' ”

(Aeschylus)

“We have been faced by
unsurmountable opportunities.”

(Pogo)

“India for me is a difficult country
to write about. It isn't my home
and it cannot be my home; and
yet I cannot reject it; I am at once
too close and too far.”

(V.S. Naipaul, *India a Wounded
Civilization*)

FORWORD.

Dear Reader,

If you are looking for politics in any form or aspect concerning Israel and its role in the Middle East, or for World Jewry, or its raison d'être in general, please look somewhere else. I don't have neither the inclination and more importantly the qualification to discuss this weighty subject which was dissected, belabored and agonized over by any number of writers - or wannabes - often enough to fill a small library.

What follows is a chronicle of a fifty five year old Jew with the background you're by now familiar from the preceding chapters who lived it, saw it, heard it and smelled it and let the felafels fall where they may. "God is in the details".

As in the chapter on the Foreign Legion I'll do my best to be objective in the sense that I'll rely only on my own experiences, my own episodes and my own happenings, but not excluding an occasional quote from somebody else's book whose judgement I trust and more importantly, if it helps me to make my point. I'll definitely not deal in gossip, nor will I rehash old anecdotes about Moishe, Golda et al just because they are "cute".

I'm sure some of the oldtimers of the Legion would have found some of my remarks and impressions out of steps with the legend and the myth, and I've an unesay hunch this will also be the case with the oldtimers (vatic) in Israel. Ma'lassot(toobad).

This is a personal chronicle of my decade in Israel - warts and all.

If you're the attentive reader I hope I'm blessed with, and if you have a memory as retentive as a bear trap, you remember having mentioned previously that drafting is definitely not my favourite occupation. Due to the perverse sense of humour of Fate, by conservative estimate I must have laid out some five thousand wiring and schematic diagrams since I got my first steady job at ITT Nutley in 1958. The reason for this was very simple. Regardless how hard I tried, it turned out that this was the only thing I could do, which paid a decent salary, but the above mentioned activity wasn't accomplished without considerable wear and tear on me. Lately I had days when I felt that the next time one of my favourite juniors visits me with his speciality, a sketch looking like if it would have been made by fingerpainting, which he expects me to metamorphose into a readable working drawing for a technician in the field, according to MIL-SPEC, using a mixture of mindreading & divine inspiration, I'm likely to go around the bend and strangle him with the string of my straight edge.

Having more or less successfully coped with all the vicissitudes of the previous years you read about, ending up at the tender young age of fifty five years at one of the establishments for the criminally insane was not my ambition. Au contraire. My ambition was the same as that of other reasonably capable homo saps, to "make a dent", as mentioned in Erich Fromm's The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness. To ACHIEVE something you can point to, before leaving this Vale of Tears, and say: I did this and it is an improvement over the old system.

Regardless how I look at it, sofar my only achievement was to SURVIVE. Granted, considering the circumstances, this achievement was nothing to sneer at, but still, it is nothing I could point to with pride. After all if you look around you, survival is a rather common accomplishment even in these crazy days of daily mayhem, where you can get killed for a belt buckle, as one of the detectives remarked recently. I had to find something a bit more, lets call it OBVIOUS, I can point to and say : I dood this!

As I've mentioned previously, I spent one year in Israel in 1965 which didnt pan out, but I kept in touch with my old friend Herbert-Ben-Adi who was the Beer-Sheva stringer of the Jerusalem Post for the Negev region. Herbert was one of the original founders of Beer-Sheva, from the days when it was nothing more then a little Beduin village.

By sheer coincidence, in which I dont believe, my present employer BENDIX, announced that due to drastic reorganization they will start laying off some three thousand people in the very near future. As all of you card punching stiffs know this is a very demoralizing, nerve racking time for all employees, when everybody is expecting the ax to fall. BENDIX was as good as its word and soon enough people got called to the supervisors office to reappear with the proverbial pink slip or its modern equivalent.

This kind of situation always triggers in me a reaction which results in a pre-emptive strike. As you know it saved my life in Hungary when I left for the Legion with Tibor, when most of my friends kept dithering and wondering, resulting in

their death in the gas chambers or in the Karpathian mountains as slave labour for the Nazis.

I decided to get in touch with Herbert and find out what the situation is now in Israel jobwise, for somebody with my qualifications. I knew from my negative experience of my first Aliya, that working as operating room technician is not an option. This left of course only drafting, but this would be drafting with a difference. I could contribute something to Israel's budding engineering and arms industry, as an American with some 20 yrs of drafting experience according to American MIL-SPEC. From what I read in the Jerusalem Post's ads it was very unlikely that there were many people - if any - with similar experience. In the same time I also wrote to New York to COMOI (Committee On Manpower Opportunities in Israel) asking them also about the job situation in Israel and the ways and means to go on ALIYA.

I got a letter soon enough from COMOI, signed by Ruth Hillel, suggesting that I get in touch with: Israel Aliyah Center Inc.
515 Park Ave
New York, N.Y. 10022.

I did as suggested and got a short note from Mr. Eliezer Bienenfeld - a good Irish name - assuring me that "We will be more than happy to offer you all available assistance."

The next letter I got was again from COMOI, on the 30th March 1970, signed by Lucy D. Manoff, ^{Director} the relevant part:

Dear Candidate,

Although we have been making referrals on your behalf for some time, we have not yet been successful in finding a position for you in Israel. etc etc

This sounded a little funny to me. I was reading the o'seas edition of the Jerusalem Post and they were full of ads from outfits desperately looking for people just with my kind of qualifications. And there were also several articles bemoaning and criticizing the reluctance of Westerners to go on Aliya to Israel. The two added together gave ^{me} the impression that people with my qualification

should not only be able to find a job in Israel but have several jobs to chose from. A few days before I got a ^{letter} from Herbert in which he was very emphatic that I should not have a problem in finding a job. So I wrote him, saying that COMOI tells me they cant find a job for me. I got a letter by return mail in which Herbert tells me that COMOI and related Organizations have a well deserved reputation in Israel as talented imbeciles, suggesting that if I really want to come on Aliya he will be glad to put an ad in the Jerusalem Post and he is convinced that I will get not one but several offers. I told him to go ahead, which he did.

Sure enough the first time my ad appeared it pulled in two offers. One from Israel Aircraft Industries which was the one I accepted and the other one from ELBIT another electronic outfit. And here again popped up one of those coincidences I dont believe in. As I found out later, my ad caught the eyes of my future supervisor Rafi Rosenbaum, formerly of New York, who was the Art Director at TEUD, which was the Publishing Department of Documentation for Israel Aircraft Industries. (IAI). The General Manager of TEUD was Matt Gordon, formerly of Canada. Mr. Gordon happened to be in New York visiting a so called jobshop (VOLT) which was in those days connected to IAI. Rafi sent a telegram to Mr. Gordon

to interview me and hire me if I look OK. Mr. Gordon sent me a letter to Passaic N.J. where I lived at that time, asking me to call him for an interview, which I did.

Mr. Matt Gordon turned out to be a 6'6" Canadian, impeccably dressed in grey slax and a Black Watch blazer, with neatly trimmed moustache, salt and pepper hair, the very picture of the CEO of a major organization. He greeted me very cordially and turned on the charm, which he could do, if and when it suited him. He related to me how he knew about my ad and made it clear that he definitely want me to work for his outfit if all things works out OK. He asked one of the technicians at VOLT to give me a little quiz, which was ridiculously easy as VOLT of course couldnt have cared less how qualified, or unqualified, I might be. So, for all practical purposes I was as good as hired. Mr. Gordon promised me to send all the official documents and formal contract as soon as he gets back to Israel next week. -

Needless to say I was delighted. As for Mr. Gordon, he was a perfect example of the wisdom of the old saw: Never judge a book by its cover! But more about this later.

Meanwhile back at the BENDIX farm layoffs proceeded at a brisk pace including the drafting department, but so far I and another lucky few were spared from the guillotine. I realized it was a case whether I get laid off first or get my papers and ticket for the trip first. Soon enough all of us survivors were called to the supervisor's office and we expected the worst of course but it turned out we got a reprieve. The boss said that all of us did consistently more and better work above and beyond the call of duty.

and it was decided to keep us on for one month if we're willing to work as pencil pushers for Manpower, but still getting paid as draftsman. They are expecting some work to come in during this month and if it pans out we're back on the board. If not, we're out. Needless to say we all agreed. The work did not materialize so we were out. This was in March 1970. I was entitled to six months of unemployment benefits with a weekly pay of \$69.00 according to my booklet in my files. To be honest I didn't exactly break my back looking for work, knowing that I've a job waiting for me in Israel, and this being the first time am unemployed since I got my first steady job with ITT in 1958. I had no pangs of conscience. As it turned out my unemployment benefits ran out the very day I boarded the SS Queen Anna Maria of the Greek Line. I picked up my last check in the morning and shipped the 24th August afternoon, outward bound for Haifa.

Meanwhile IAI was working on my documents Mr. Gordon promised me to send as soon as he got back. This activity was interrupted by the usual screw ups nothing can get done ^{without} there, causing me some mental anguish needless to say, ^{and} the sending of frantic inquiries about the reasons for the delay, which was answered by assurances that it is just the question of getting the paperwork ready, everything is perfectly OK as agreed.

Now came the era of deja vu which became an almost organic part of my life since time immemorial : PACKING! Oh HOW I HATE packing! And this time with a capital "P" too. After all I'm

going to pack all the worldly goods I accumulated in the last twenty years in the good Ole US of A, leaving behind only some of my furniture as I was advised by Israeli Aliya Center - and my own memory of my first Aliya also - that apartments in Israel are way much smaller then here. On the other hand I was told to stock up on clothes because even poor quality stuff is expensive and good quality is sky high, if you can get it all. So I went shopping specially for "perishables" like underwear, remembering from my first Aliya that Laundromats are unknown in the Jewish Homeland while the commercial laundries seem to have some kind of conspiracy tied in with the stores, to ruin laundry as fast and as completely as possible. Same is true of what passes over there for dry cleaning, only more so. Their favourite trick is to use staplers to attach their ID tags to knit wear, instead of safety pins, which is too much trouble. The staples cut the yarns of course and you have the required size of hole in no times to ruin your pullover or turtleneck.

I laboured like Hercules for weeks making exact lists of everything for every trunk separately, to enable me to put my delicate hands on every item I will need, without having to rummage around for it/them in the wrong trunk. I also kept in mind, or whatever was left of it, not to put all my eggs in the same trunk, so that if some catastrophe would befall one trunk, I would be still able to get by with the contents of the survivors. All these lists were neatly retyped for presentation to the Israeli Custom Authorities which paid off handsomely as we'll see later. If all this gives you, Dear Reader, the impression that I'm a well organized guy, guilty as charged. As a matter of fact I'm the type they call

over there a Yecke, or if you insist on the full name Yecke putz. I'm sure you all know from the Jewish stand up comics what putz means so I'll refrain from being repetitious on this delicate subject. Enough to say that originally Yecke putz meant a German prick, who was very reliable and did everything by the book. Later on the expression Yecke became a generic term for everybody regardless of national origin, who was a good, reliable and efficient worker. For example you could see an ad in The Jerusalem Post: Needed a bookkeeper who is a Yecke. The expression of Yecke conveyed a mixture of admiration and derision and needless to say the Yeckes were the butts of zillions of jokes, making this point perfectly clear. I'll repeat only one to show what I meant. This Yecke went on a train trip and when he came back his wife asked him how was the trip? Ach, just terrible. Why? Well, I bought a numbered ticket in a car with numbered seats so that I don't have to fight with this Gesindl (rabble) for my seat and unfortunately my seat was facing in the opposite direction and as you know I hate that. Did you try to change seats with somebody else? I couldn't do that because I was the only passenger in that car. - This punchline will explain why the admiration is mixed with derision, specially if we keep in mind that an Israeli will do everything s/he can think of to go around every rule and the stricter the better because the challenge makes it that much more fun.

The last thing I want to do is dredge up all the horrors of these days of packing which seemed to be endless. Enough to say that by the time I've finished stowing away all the 60cu ft,

I was a basket case ambulating like a zombie. All this stuff was entombed in two big & two small cabin trunks

and a monster canvas bag 6ft long with 30" diameter, laced together on the longside with a cord strong enough to tether a bull. All these containers were bought from a landsman who had a Army and Navy store in Passaic where I was a frequent poker arounder (sic). I dont know why, but I could never pass up an army surplus store with it's distinct aroma recognizable to the cognescenti from far away, without emerging from same with some kind of treasure, I probably never found use for. My landsman was kind enough to sell me all these above mentioned containers almost at cost because I was going to Israel.

At long last D-Day came around on the 24th of August, as mentioned before. I said "fare thee well" to my son Richard who was going on twenty by then, promising each other to keep in touch, what we did, sort of, Number One Son being better on the phone then on paper as all the younger generation seem to be.

I hired some people recommanded by the Israely Aliyah Ctr. to shlepp all the above mentioned baggage to PIER 97 assigned to all of us Pilgrims, beg pardn I meant wannabe immigrants, going on ALIYA to Israel. I was sitting on one of the big cabin trunks. being a basket case and starving, as I didnt have the patience to eat breakfast with all the mayhem. What popped into my so-called mind was the old Hungarian saw: when a jackass has it too good he goes dancing on the ice! After all I had an easy and modestly comfortable life here and although I was laid off from BENDIX

I'd no doubt . . . that I could have found another job soon enough, with my steady record. Well, too late now old buddy, as Ole Hannibal sayeth trepsing accross the Rubicon: Alea iacta est!

While all this went around in my head I noticed a young lanky guy putting luggage labels on the stuff laying all around the place and scribbling mysterious signes on them. Being starved, I wanted to get all this damn thing over and have b'fast somewhere. We were not supposed to board before afternoon. So I walked over to this guy and asked him very politely whether he could tell me if I've time to eat something before my turn comes for getting my hold luggage fixed. He looked at me with a sly grin and asked me, Would you like to get fixed up? It took me a minute to figure out that there might be a way to short circuit this problem, so I said I sure would like to. So he gave a practiced eyeballing to my stuff and said, looks like you have here some 60cu ft, righth? Righth on the nose. And as you know you've 50cu ft free baggage allowance, Righth? On the nose. That means that you've to pay for ten cu ft, righth? Righth again. So, he grins and says: how 'bout splitting it down the middle? you pay me for five and you're all set! - Done deal!

He took a manifest out of ^{his} bag, filled it out, signed, put all the labels on my baggage, gave a receipt for the 5cu ft. I paid him for and told me that when I get to Haifa I should present the manifest to the Baggage master and get my stuff. You are ^{all} set Sir, and ^{you} can go to have breakfast. Have a nice trip. I thanked him profusely and went to eat. This kind of people I call "honest crooks". Compared to my landsman Boesky & CO. and the scumbag who cheated out an

old biddy of her lifesavings, charging her \$8000 for replacing her toilet bowl in the bathroom, this guy was a prince amongst men, in the Robin Hood tradition. He took from the rich (Greek Line) and gave to the poor: himself and me and the Greek Line didn't go bankrupt either. (The rich was not sailing on the SS QUEEN ANNA MARIA).

Reading this self-serving apologia, concerning this little larceny in my heart, we all supposed to harbour in different degrees and magnitude, the attentive reader might be inclined to ask, isn't this the very same guy who kept making big speeches how grampa and Daddy inoculated him with the importance of being honest? Guilty as charged. But there is a very stark line of demarcation between being honest and being a saint or a fool, to which I never claimed credit before or now or hopefully in the future either. As I found out soon enough, even my own brand of honesty stamped me as a meshugganah more than once in my new country. Israelis developed long ago their own brand of Darwinian adaptation for the survival of the fittest. This included never to give the other guy a fair chance, never miss a trick to get the best deal by hook or crook and never forget the modified Golden Rule: do unto others BEFORE they can do unto YOU! And I say this almost more in admiration than reproach. We must keep in mind that Israel and Israelis could survive this far only by guile and wits. First they had to outsmart the Brits, and after they got rid of the Brits they had to outsmart the Arabs, literally from minute to minute year after year to this very day.

It was a life and a situation where the saw that Nice guys finish last, was and is, true in spades. To put it plainly, in Israel chivalry and the rules of Queensbury get you a reputation of being a schlemiel at best, and get you killed at worst. No Israeli who wants to survive, literally or figuratively, can afford the luxury to forget this for one minute and the newcomer better acquire these skills also, as they say tsick-tsack! (ASAP).

According to the letter I got from the Israeli Aliya Ctr. signed by Mrs. Naomi Gimondo(?) my H.Q. on the SS Queen Anna Maria will be on the Main Deck , Cabin #51, Berth Q, shared, more or less willingly, with three other wannabe Israelis. Being senior in age of my three cabin inmates I was allowed to chose one of the upper bunkbeds. Boarding was accomplished with the usual hustle and bustle de rigueur for similar occasions. As for the Queen Anna etc as ship, all I'll say is that our cabin had private showers and toilet and the ship got us to Haifa on schedule without any major mishap. As my trip was paid by my future employer IAI, the old saw about not inspecting the bodily orifices of a gift chamor (donkey) applies. The reason for substituting chamor for the more broadly approved horse was to start your Heeebrrrooo lesson Dear Reader. If you pay attention, by the time you finished reading this chapter - I almost said megillah, but lets not rush things - I guarantee you to have at least a vocabulary of a dozen words, just as I did at the end of my ten year sejour. I started with chamor because this is one of the most important words you must know in Israel for survival. In case you speak French it is the equivalent of chamot (camel) in colloquial French and used for the same purpose, which is to insult

people and voice your disapproval. If another driver cuts you off, or if being a pedestrian a driver is claiming the right of way at a pedestrian crossing clearly marked as such, by running you over, you are required by the law of the land to shout CHAMOR! as loud as you manage. Likewise if somebody is elbowing you out of a TOR(line) instead of saying SLICHA(excuse me) but I just want to ask a question, you're likewise justified to call him chamor. In certain situations where you feel that CHAMOR doesn't cut the mustard, you shout Chamor BEN Chamor! (a donkey son of a donkey father) but this is LO YAFFE (not nice). While we ^{are} at this popular subject I might just as well warn you to avoid being disappointed later on, that although Heebrooo is a very flowery language it has a tragic and very debilitating deficiency and shortcoming. There are no swear-words in Hebrew. Bemet.(Honestly) I'm sure this was one of the many reasons why I was not motivated to learn to speak Hebrew, and never did. Why learn a new and brutally difficult lingo where even such icebreakers as HOW ARE YOU? has a male and female form, when you can't even swear. I should break my tongue trying to learn such a practically useless language when I know from my first Aliya that I can get by very well with my English, French, German, Hungarian and faked Spanish? MAPITOM?! Great improvisors Israelis became by necessity, they solved the problem of no swear words by adapting some from Arabic and Russian. Two of the most popular ones are KUSS EMMMMMACK, and YOPT VOI MATY. The first relating to your mother's genitalia, the second a suggestion of having carnal knowledge with her.

As you probably noticed I didnt explain the meaning of MAPITOM. The reason was not oversight but the difficulty of doing so. MAPITOM is one of those words belonging in the same category as the universally admired and respected NU, which can have any number of meanings according to the context it is used and more importantly, how it is "sang". Originally MAPITOM was two separate words but due to its frequent use it became one. As follows: ma= what/why, pitom=suddenly. MAPITOM = why suddenly, what is happening suddenly? The meaning as I said, depending on the context, which syllable is emphasized and how it is sang? for instance. Kid in the toy store with mommy. Imaaaaaa(mommy), please buy me this little truck. Mommy: MApitom! (NO!) Employee to supervisor: Yigal I would like to have a day off tomorrow to see off my wife at the airport going to America. Yigal: MAAAApitom? Cant your wife find Lod(the airport) alone? Bemet...(honestly).Actually this is not a good example because NOBODY is asking permission in Israel for a day off, just do it. - Teen age daugther to Aba(Daddy):Abaaaaaa? can I go camping with my chaver(boyfriend) next weekend? Aba: maaaaaaPitooooom?? (you meshuggah? over my dead body...)

We've to interrupt the Heeebrooo lesson and"jump off the boat" in our new country,Israel, at it's main port, Haifa.

We were all assembled in the recreation room of the S.S.Queen etc for a combination of Welcome Home (Baruch ha'Baim) and a breefing of debarcation procedures, where our luggage will be waiting for us, and how we'll be transported by buses to our assigned temporary quarters or more correctly Absorbtion Centers.

This speech was delivered by the representative of the Jewish Agency who sailed with us from New York who also mentioned very proudly that this is the largest groups of Olim (immigrants) since years 440 people.

According to the letter I was sent ^{from} New York by my schaliach (emmissary) of Israel, I was assigned to a little hotel by the name of SHARONIT, rented by the Jewish Agency for this purpose. According to the letter the Sharonit was located in Tel-Aviv taking into consideration that my firm is located in Givatayim an easy bus ride form there. Perhaps I'll be permitted to say a few words about the schaliach (more correctly schlichim in plural) who are in plain words RECRUITERS of new immigrants to Israel. The sad fact is that they acquired thru the years a somewhat unsavory reputation similar to used car salesmen and for the same reason. They are not exactly scrupulous with their facts, to put it very delicately, and again for the same reason as used car salesman. If they would tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but, there would be even less new immigrants then now, which is not exactly a case of beating the proverbial path to the door of Israel from the West. A colleague of mine at my new firm I.A.I. who used to be a schaliach before, Jay Shapiro, wrote a hilarious book by the title From Both Sides Now in which one of the chapters is: The shaliach lied to me!

Meanwhile back on the Queen events proceeded more or less peacefully if somewhat hectically as it behoves at similar occasions and we docked at Haifa, the busiest port of Israel at

ISRAEL ALIYAH CENTER

515 PARK AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022 • PL 2-0600

DATE July 13, 1970

DEAR OLEH:

Please present this letter upon your arrival in Israel to the representative of the Aliyah & Klitah Department at:

- Lod Airport
- Haifa Port

MR./~~MRS./MISS~~ Erwin Fuchs Visa: A-1
Age: 54

SPOUSE _____

CHILDREN _____

The abovementioned, is, (are), proceeding to Israel under the following Jewish Agency authorized Absorption arrangements:

- 1 - Absorption Center: _____ Beginning: _____
- 2 - Ulpan/Hostel: Sharonit, Tel Aviv 2 Beginning: September, 1970
- 3 - Direct Absorption: _____ HERZLIYAH!
- 4 - Interim Arrangements: _____
(give exact address in Israel)

5 - Own Arrangements: (not Jewish Agency) _____
(give exact address in Israel)

The abovementioned will leave on August 24, 70
DATE

Plane: Flight No. _____
 Ship: Anna Maria

E. Bienenfeld
Eliezer Bienenfeld
Signature of Shaliach

Regional Office N.Y.

about 1700 hrs. We went looking, or hunting rather, for our cabin luggage which was supposed to be lined up according to alphabetical order.

After we made our connections with our worldly goods we were herded, pardon me, guided to our respective buses. My dear friend Herbert- Ben-Adi sent me a telegram to the ship: WELCOME HOME! which was a very kind and gracious gesture, sweet guy what he was.

I found my bus with some of the others who went into the same direction or the same little hotel and took off. As by that time it was dark outside, rubbernecking in our new country had to be postponed. At last we got to our hotel and I bailed out from the bus looking for the receptionist. She was friendly enough and asked me if I'd like to eat something but I told her all I would like to do is take a shower and sleep. She took me to my room, which seemed nice enough and I did as I said. Unpacked my toilet kit, showered, went to bed and slept like a log. Next morning I had my first Israeli type breakfast I remembered from my first Aliya, sort of yoghurt called lebenia, mixed salad of chopped up tomatoes, green peppers, onions and cukes with hard boiled eggs and pickled herrings, the last which I steered clear off as usual. I do like pickled herrings occasionally but definitely not for breakfast. Feeling more like my old resilient self and the weather gorgeous and not too hot at this time of the morning in September, I decided to make a little recon patrol and find out where this SHARONIT is, in - Tel Aviv? And soon enough I had the impression that something here is not kosher. This place with all its greenery, quiet and pleasant suburban ambience didnt look, sound or feel like any part

of hustling, bustling, noisy Tel-Aviv at all. I go back and ask the receptionist, this IS the SHARONIT isnt it? Definetely. And where are we? At Herzliyah Pituach. The big building you see over there is the SHARON hotel and this is the annex of the SHARON. Now this was much more like it. I tell her that the schaliach told me in New York that the SHARONIT is in Tel-Aviv, and they assigned me there because I'm supposed to work in Givatayim for a branch of the IAI. You are kidding me. Nope, I went back to my room, got the letter and show it to her. Well, they are meshuggah of course. How can they not know that the Hotel SHARON, which is one of the most popular hotels with tourists is in Herzliyah? Herzliyah was one of the poshest part of Israel, even I knew that much. So tell me please, how do I get to Givatayim from here? Do you have a car? No. Well, I think you are going to have a big problem by bus. Let me find out. She gets on the phone and after a good ten minutes of calling and scribbling numbers of buses and timetables filling a better part of a page on a notepad she hangs up and looks at me with a mixture of resignation and sympathy. Mr.Fuchs I have nothing but bad news. You'll have to take three buses each way. First you have to go from here which is Herzliyah Pituach, to Herzliya. From Herzliya you'll have to take bus number so&so to Ramat Gan. And from Ramat-Gan you will have to take bus number so&so to Givatayim where you say your outfit is located. Sounds like loads of fun, remembering the way buses run and smell from my previous sejour. And can you tell me how long this little safari will take? There is no way to tell you exactly as buses here dont run anywhere on schedule. It will take between one and half to two hours each way depending how lucky you are in making or missing your connections. Sounds great. The old army acronym SNAFU in full swing: situation normal all fucked up!

I just got here and it already starts? I ask the receptionist to call up my outfit as I'm far from being ^{competent} enough yet to face the challenge of Israeli telephones. When she gets thru I ask to speak to my future boss Rafi Rosenbaum and after the preliminary pleasantries are taken care of, I tell him that the idiot shaliach assigned me to the Sharonit in Herzliyah. Rafi makes something of a wailing sound and ask me how on earth will I commute from there to here daily? Good question but I dont have the answer yet, beside having just found out that it will take three buses and up to two hours each way. More wailing and he tells me to take my time and when I'm installed come in and meet my new place.

I go back to the receptionist and ask her if there is a way to get my laundry done which accumulated during the two weeks of boat trip? Yes there is. She gives me some paper and tells me to put my name on the papers and make separate bundles for the dry cleaning, laundry and if I want shirts washed and pressed too. I tell her that I cant write Hebrew. No problem write in German. How long does it take? About one week. So I make three different bundles. One for the dry cleaning, one for the laundry and one for the shirts to be washed and pressed, no starch. I write everything in all the four languages I speak, English, French, German and Hungarian to be on the safe side. And keep my fingers crossed fondly remembering my experiences with laundries and cleaners from my first séjour. -

Next morning after b'fast about eighth, I hype myself into to undertake the first safari to Givatayim, being anxious to meet the new place and new people and start my working life in the Jewish Homeland.

I go to the bus station and it is obvious that nothing changed in the modus operandi since my first Aliya and perhaps this is as good a time as any to say a few wellchosen words Dear Reader, about Israeli buses ^{and} Israeli bus service, using the word carelessly the way Israelis use buses and last but not the least the Israeli bus drivers employed by their co-operative, called EGGED. To put it simply the Egged drivers are a sui generis, a special breed whose equal I never ever encountered anywhere during my perambulations on five continents, including the Ecuadorian variety, and take my word ^{it} for they are not exactly shrinking violets either.

But as I said the EGGED driver is in a class by itself. I dont know how much truth is in the jokes that they are all tank drivers in the army but the way they drive I'm inclined to paraphrase the old show biz slogan: you can take a girl out of show biz, but you cannot take show biz out of the girl. Same goes for the EGGED drivers. You can take a ^{tankdriver} ^a out of ^a tank but you cant take the tank out of the driver. First of all you have to keep in mind that they are members of a co-op as I said, which means of course that the more money the co-op makes the more money the drivers make. They dont have to be graduates of the Technion to figure out that the best way to make more money for the co-op is to haul more bodies and the only way to haul more bodies is to jam more bodies into the buses, just this side of suffocating them as the Nazis did with their victims in the cattle cars en route to Auschwitz. To achieve this, one of their favourite trick is to make sudden stops and goes just before they get to the next bus stop, getting the

bodies, I mean the passengers, sorry, to stagger back by the laws of kinetic energy, they discovered not from book learning but during driving school handed down from the oldtimers, and thus making them stagger back, sort of COMPACTING the load. Asking them for directions stamps you immediately for a tourist or out of townner because the "natives" know by long experience that the drivers don't know the answers themselves nine times out of ten. Letters to the Editors about the rudeness, obnoxiousness and just plain stupidity of EGGED drivers are part and parcel of every newspaper. One of my favourite was from the EGGED spokesman answering the complaint of a passenger because the driver pulled a Wrongway Corrigan: "the mistake of the driver was NOT that he went the wrong way, but that he didn't ask the passengers for directions." To stay with the media, as we say, there was an article in The Jerusalem Post with the somewhat indelicate if justified question: Why do people on the buses stink so much? The answer was, in a nutshell, because it is hot, because people sweat a lot and because Israelis are not familiar with anti-perspirants and/or deodorants. I forgot to make it perfectly clear that there was no air conditioning in the buses when I was there. I don't know about now.

As for the standard operating procedure for boarding the buses there is only ONE rule: let the best elbow win! Whether the bus is crowded and there are a lot of people waiting to board it at the bus stop, or the bus is standing at the bus stop empty and there are only a handful of people waiting, makes no difference whatsoever. When the driver opens the door of the empty bus the five or six people waiting, instantly changes into the "assault mode"

storming the door, asking or giving no quarter, as if they would be all former members of the famous Golani Brigade, one of the crack units of the ZAHAL(IDF). I'm ashamed to admit that I never tried to master this Israeli patent. I stood back and if there was still place I boarded after evrybody did and if there was not I waited for the next bus. Even so one moron almost dragged me under the wheel at the backdoor by slamming the door on my arm and if another young husky guy wouldnt have preyed it open for himself I would have probably ended my Aliya righth there. -

One day I almost broke my leg but got away with nothing worse then my torn and ruined pants. An idiot dropped a big can of detergent on the floor on which I slipped and fell on my ass(tachat). The driver considered it of course beneath his dignity to wipe it up, this kind of shamus (servant) work being strictely reserved for the Arabs at the maintainance department. Arriving back to the Absorption Center I promptly made a parcel of my pants and just as promptly mailed it to Minister of Transport.^{the} with a few choice words. ^I didnt expect to hear from them but I thought if they gave me a hard time the least I'm entitled ^{to} is equal time from them.

So that the Reader has a sligth idea what is involved in Israel by travelling by bus I'll take you on my frist journey to my future working place, using the word very loosely,as it turned out. After taking the last bus to the home stretch to Givatayim I asked the driver to let me know when are we on the main road called Aluf Sadeh as I want to get off at a certain side street. I dont know Aluf Sadeh, he said. When I went back to my seat the woman sitting next to me and having

overheard my question, in German, told me laughing, "der ist ein alter Trottl" (he is an old fool) we are on Aluf Sadeh now, where do you want to get off? I told her the name of the side street and she told me when we got there. When I got off I told the "old fool" that this IS Aluf Sadeh. "Nu, machn Sie sich Shabbes damit!" This makes no sense transliterated. Closest I can come is, So, big deal!

I got to the office and introductions are made all around. Rafi wants me to explain how in hell did I got assigned to Herzliya in New York? I tell him the schaliach did the assignment. What is his name? Bienenfeld. Rafi clutches his head in despair, my god that idiot is still there? He already screwed up our Aliya years ago.

Rafi is a nice young guy about thirty I guess, tall and lanky an observant jew, wearing the little skull cap called yarmulka or kippa. As I found out later the kippa is in Israel a bit like the Clan Tartans are to the Scotch, identifying the wearer according to the way the kippa is made, whether it is knit, or woven, the size and colour how it is worn etc. Rafi seems to be very highstrung with a pronounced facial tick making the impression that he is under great stress. I ask him what could be done about my being relocated to an another absorption center closer by, because I never had to commute more then 30-40 minutes even im America with exception of the ITT strike, and I have no intention to do it here with three buses, specially these kinds of buses and conditions. He sees my point and starts making phone calls but it does not look very hopeful just now, as we came with a big group, as the Jewish Agency rep was proud to tell us, and most of the absorption centers are full.

To make a long story longer, I commuted almost three weeks from Herzliyah when after a specially lousy day when I missed all my connections, I got to the office fighting mad and asked Malka, Gordon's secretary, that I want to talk to Gordon right now. Malka had a reputation of being somewhat of a klafte (shrew) but in all fairness to her I never had the slightest problem with her and she couldnt have been nicer to me and more helpful. She went to see him and Gordon called me in, wanting to know what the problem is? I told him politely but firmly that I've had it with commuting two hours each way taking three buses and unless they can arrange for another place closer by, I'll stay in Herzliyah until I can find an apartment

By this time I was aware of it what everybody was drumming into me, that in Israel good manners and being easy going is not getting you anywhere. There are only two ways to get something here; you either have to cry or pound the table and shout. Both of these would have cramped my style but I did make up my mind that I'm not going to be pushed around either. Gordon said he was not aware of my problem and he will find me a place very shortly. This interview was on the 9th October and on the 11th I was transferred to another absorption center called Maon Academaim Alef which was a short bus ride from the office.

And how about the rest of the story? The bosses, the work I was hired for and the people I was supposed to work with? Let me put it this way. If I wouldnt have kept a diary as I did in the Legion; if I wouldnt have kept a copy of every Memo I wrote during those ten years; if I wouldnt have kept an exact Log with dates and subjects it concerned, I wouldnt have dared to recount this whole sad story, in case I would be challenged to prove what I say. But I did and I can.

For the first few days Rafi suggested that I just get my familiarize myself with the place etc and this I found fair and normal enough. However as the place was small with no more than some thirty five people including Gordon, his second in command Arnold Kolodnar who was the Chief technical writer and Chaim Gafney who was the production manager, there wasnt a whole lot to be familiar with. So a couple of days later I told Rafi, who was the art director of the outfit, that I'm bright and bushy tailed and ready to roll, adding that when Gordon hired me in New York he sounded

as if this place would be on fire, asking me how soon can I come, could I possibly make it in six weeks or less? Rafi looked a bit embarrassed and told me that they are "a bit slow" right now and just take it easy for a few more days. After the "few more days" went by too, I told Rafi I'm getting bored and how about getting started? Rafi pointed to a big metal cabinet and said, you see that cabinet over there? It is full of pocketbooks in several languages. Pick yourself something to read. You are joking Rafi right? Not at all. That's what the other guys do too when they have nothing to do which is often. I was just speechless. What did I get myself into here? The supervisor tells me to read pocketbooks during working hours and get paid for it? I just couldn't figure out WHAT to make of all this? This is the outfit which will be instrumental in helping me to reach the ZENITH of my career? I felt like somebody threw a bucket full of water on me and my hopes, being able to point to something worthwhile I did, and being justified to be proud of. To have been able at long last to "make a dent" in a problem for the better. As if this wouldn't have been bad enough, it didn't take me long to realize that this is not a happy ship by a long shot. No boss is universally liked, but I never worked in a place where the Boss was so universally hated and detested as Gordon was here. He was by any yardstick the most arrogant, overbearing, obnoxious and worst of all IGNORANT, incompetent bastard I ever had the bad luck to work for, even if only for a short time. He had absolutely not the vaguest idea about anything concerning the work in the department for which he tried to make up for, by being a worldclass pain in the ass. His own secretary, Malka, hated him so much that

she refused to make him a cup of tea, telling the porter to do it and take it in to him, and in Israel this was certainly part of the job no woman found it objectionable, Women's Lib being some fifty years behind America. Gordon used to be a partner in an advertising agency. The other guy was in charge of the technical part of the job and Gordon was supposed to bring in the clients. With his arrogance and obnoxiousness he was of course a complete flop and

had to leave. He was married to a statuesque blond who was part of the Israeli aristocracia if there is such a thing. They had a palatial home in Savyon which is the poshest part of Israel and Al Schwimmer who was the General Manager of IAI, was one of their neighbors. When Gordon lost his job in the advertising agency Schwimmer made him General Manager of TEUD, the publishing branch of IAI.

If the name Al Schwimmer rings a bell with some of you Dear Readers, it is because he was mentioned in a minor role as one of the "Arms merchants" in the Iran-Contra debacle. Poor Al. Calling him an arms merchant is like calling Lee Iacocca a car salesman. The simple fact is that Al Schwimmer is one of the true heroes of Israel. It was Al Schwimmer who scrounged up all the planes and other weapons in America and wherever he could find them, without which the War of Independence could have turned out very differently indeed. Al was the Founding Father of Israel Aircraft Industries which he started with a small maintenance shop in Lod, called BEDEK, which is still the name the oldtimers call IAI. Al was a crackerjack engineer, his problem was that the baby outgrew the Father. I'm sure Schwimmer would be the first to agree that by no stretch of the imagination

did he have either the technical and more importantly the administrative background or experience to be the CEO of a major engineering organization with 35,000 employees. Nor did IAI ever had the ways and the means to attract the necessary quantity and quality of middle management capable of supporting Schwimmer as he should have been. This created all sorts of problems as it was obvious in my own department of drafting as we'll see later. -

Gordon's Second in Command was Arnold Kolodnar who was the chief tech writer as I mentioned before. These two made a perfect pair. As they say in French, "ils se sont cherché, ils se sont trouvé!" Kolodnar was another arrogant overbearing bastard but at least he knew his job, unlike Gordon. And he was a dual personality. A pain in the ass at work but a charming guy with a great sense of humour outside the office. There were frequently wedding to attend for an employee and sometimes I was sitting next to Arnold and he was really a lot of laughs and wonderful company. But at work he was unsufferable. Once I did a small schematic diagram layout for him, which was my speciality for twenty years in America, and when I gave it back to him he wrote on it: "somewhat disappointing." I was ready to strangle the bastard. I took the diagram to his room and said, would you mind explaining to me Arnold WHAT is disappointing on this? First of all the remark in itself was asinine. If there is something wrong on a layout the "checker" just corrects it and ask you to change what needs to be changed. IF it needs to be changed. A commercial outfit is not a drafting school where the "homework" can be "disappointing". So he points to something saying this would have been better this way.

I said, look Arnold, I'm sure you know that there is NO such thing as a PERFECT schematic layout. You can give the same sketch to five L/O draftsman and you will get back five different L/O's and all of them adequate if they are familiar with the work. I'm willing to bet my next paycheck against yours that if you layout a complex schematic I'll be able to improve on it. It is just a question how much TIME I've to fool around with it and to know when to leave well enough alone. Arnold made a face like if he would have bitten into a very sour lemon but said nothing. I just could not believe the monumental chutzpah of this people. I had twenty years or more experience in this line in America, including eight years with ITT and three years with BENDIX and they think I had to come to Israel in general and TEUD in particular to LEARN my trade? Just unbelievable.

After sitting around for days reading pocketbooks and the Jerusalem Post I told Rafi that I did not come here to goldbrick and find something to do for me. Word went soon around that this meshugganeh American Oleh Chadash want to WORK, can you BELIEVE it?! My first customer soon arrived in the person of Yossele^a, young guy with a beard, carrying a bunch of catalogs under his arm. Rafi told me you want to have something to do, nachon? (agreed?) Yes. Could you help me to trim these catalogs? Sure. He gives me an Exacto knife and leaves. I start to trim them and a couple of hours later I go to the store room and passing by Yossele's desk what do I see? Yossele sitting behind an empty desk reading the paper! Yossele, do you know what it means helping? It means that you are working and I'm working. It does NOT mean that I'll

do your work and you read the paper. Go back to my desk pick up the remaining catalogs and bang them on his desk with a big THUMP while Yossele is looking very unhappy. I go to Rafi and tell him the story. These people are unbelievable. They would do anything to get their work done by somebody else. They consider it a challenge. Back to the pocketbooks. A few days later Rafi comes to ask me if I would mind running the Xerox machine as they have thousands of Xeroxes to do? I dont mind at all. After running the damn machine which was the oldfashioned type with a moving carriage making those funny noises, going back and forth damn near hypnotizing you, I had to go to the room of the tech writers for something and what do I see? Six of these young guys sitting there all of them VERY busy! Two ^{of} them playing sheshbesh (checkers) two of them playing chess, one of them reading the paper and one of them taking his beauty sleep! I again ask myself the same question: WHAT did I get myself INTO here? How did ^I end up in this half assed outfit? I go and fetch Rafi and take him to the tech writers room. I know this Erwin, they dont have work either. So why arent THEY running the Xerox machine Rafi they are all young enough to be my sons. I asked them Erwin but they said it is not their job. They are tech writers not a shamus (servant). Well, Rafi I have bad news for you, I'm not a shamus either from now on. Aw, come on Erwin dont give me a hard time, I dont have anybody else who is willing to do it. Sorry Rafi but that is YOUR problem. And from now on I'm not a Jack of all Trades either. If there is no work in my own line - too bad. Back to the pocketbooks. After a few days Rafi comes to me, Erwin could I ask you for a personal favour? Sure. Please help me to fix

the dark room. He takes me to the dark room which is a pigsty with all trimmed off papers from the pictures ankle deep on the floor, open bottles on the tables, the fluids in the developing tanks not changed the hell knows how long, a pigsty as I said. Rafi what happened here? You remember Bruce from America who was working here as volunteer of Sherut La'am? (some kind of Zionist organization which sends young skilled guys to work here for a year in jobs we don't have enough Israelis to fill and in the same time to train the "natives") sure I remember, I asked him a few weeks ago if he is going to stay for another year and he just laughed. I'd the intention but these guys changed my mind long ago. Well as long as Bruce was running this dark room he kept it spotless. After he left nobody wants to clean anything. When I asked them they looked at me as if I would have asked them to let me pull their teeth. Mapitom? I'm an artist not a shamus to sweep the floor and clean the tanks, bemet!

What I can't fathom HOW and WHY did a young country like Israel allowed this attitude to be instilled in the their people that manual work is something to be ashamed of and that it is beneath their dignity? This is something of a puzzle to me. When I came to America I was thirty five years old, had an education equivalent in ^{the US} to B.Sc, spoke four languages fluently. This didn't keep me from doing any work I could find in the first five years, from cleaning shithouses in department stores, doing factory work even the blacks didn't want to do, working as busboy in a restaurant hustle bedpans, you name it. Did I enjoy it? No, but not for one minute did I feel it is something to be ashamed of or

degrading me. Where, when and how did this perverse attitude to honest work got its start in this country and why is it still condoned and encouraged while in the same time we're going to the world jewry kippa in hand asking for help because we have such a hard life? Can anybody explain this to me? It fascinates me.

After another week of paid R&R I ambushed Rafi and politely but firmly insisted that he levels with me and tells me WHAT the problem is? Surely I wasn't imported all the way from America to sit here and look gorgeous? Err..hew...err..haw...well, part of the problem is that you don't have a secret clearance. And may I respectfully ask you why are you keeping this a secret? Surely they have a procedure here to have a secret clearance. Well, yes but for somebody who is not a sabra (native born Israeli) it is a very long complicated process involving a whole lot of questions, some of them rather personal, most of the new immigrants don't want to go thru. Perhaps so but I'm not most, just my li'l old self and having no dark secrets and/or skeletons in my closet I definitely want a secret clearance regardless the questions they might ask me if this ^{is} the price I've to pay for making myself useful as I intended to do when I came here. You mean you want to have an interview with the Bitachon? (Security). That's exactly what I mean. I'll have to tell Gordon. Fine Rafi and the sooner the better. A little later Malka comes to tell me that Gordon wants to see me. I understand you want to have your secret clearance and wants to have an interview with the Bitachon? Yes Mr. Gordon. Erwin I think I have to warn you that they are real bastards over there. If you are not as clean as houndstooth I wouldn't advise you to do it. Let me worry

about that Mr. Gordon, just set up the interview as soon as you can because Rafi says that is part of the reason why I've no work. OK, but remember I warned you. A couple of days later Rafi comes to tell me the Bitachon wants to see me tomorrow at 1000hrs and to bring all the documents and papers I have concerning my background starting with my birth certificate. Sounds good! -

What these dummies didnt know was that I already had an interview with the Bitachon when I came, although not for my secret clearance of course. The Chief ^{of} the Bitachon was Mr. Degani who spoke fluent French and not only that he didnt seem to be the monster they warned me about but we got along very well from the first minute. By the time I came to Israel, with my meticulous record keeping on five continents, I had three 3" ring binders full of documents, pictures, certificates etc etc. I put them in a small suitcase and made a beeline for the dreaded Bitachon's office. I gave the receptionist my name, showing my ID badge and telling her that I'm supposed to see Mr. Degani at 1000hrs. being 0955hrs. To my great surprise and consternation at exactly 1000hrs the receptionist took me to Mr. Degani's office, something unheard of in Israel. Mr. Degani greeted me cordially and after the usual Shalom switched to French. I understand Mr. Fuchs you want to have a secret clearance, sounding and looking a bit amused and bemused. Why? I explained. Well, what are ^{you} shlepping in that suitcase there? My documents. Laughs. A suitcase full of documents?! Well, I've lived and worked on five continents, and I believe in keeping records. Ok lets see them. So I take out the first ringbinder and put it

on his desk, the first page starting with my birthcertificate and a picture of my twin brother and myself sitting side by side on a couch at the ripe old age of six months, which gets a laugh of course. He keeps turning the pages and gets more and more amused and surprised. He keeps asking me questions I keep answering, and he turns to me saying, Mr. Fuchs I thought I'm a yecke, but compared to you I seem to be a schlampete! (slob) He is asking me to be permitted to make copies of certain documents and of course I tell him to go ahead and make all the copies he wants. After finishing the third ringbinder I ask him what my chances are for a secret clearance? You have nothing to worry about Mr. Fuchs. Can I have it soon please? I'll do my best. Merci beaucoup Monsieur Degani. Avec plaisir Monsieur Fuchs. Where is all the terror and horror? Two weeks later Malka comes to tell me that Gordon wants to see me. About what? I think about your secret clearance. Oh? I go in and Gordon is sitting there and glaring at me: HOW did you DO this? Do what Mr. Gordon? To get your secret clearance in TWO WEEKS? Israelis have to wait at least two MONTHS! I told you Mr. Gordon to let me worry about it. OK, Shalom. Shalom Mr. Gordon.

So I go see Rafi and tell him I got my secret clearance and lets roll now at last OK? You kidding, in two weeks? HOW the hell did you do this Erwin? No big deal Rafi. My life is an open book. I can account for every day. No skeletons in my closet.

When do I go in The Forteress Rafi? Tomorrow. The Forteress is a side room with bars on the door, a security guard at a desk and a list of The Anointed affixed to the door. There is one thing the Israelis are not fucking around ^{with} and that is Security, bordering on paranoid, but you cant blame them. They are sitting

in the middle of a sea of Arabs waiting for the first opportunity to slit their throat and in such a situation to take chances is not a very bright idea. The word of the Bitachon is a word nobody can argue with even in a country where nothing else is or can be done without arguments. If the Bitachon says we want this person fired - s/he is GONE. Period. It was the Bitachon which cooked at long last Gordon's goose too. More about this later.

Next day I move to the Forteress and five minutes later I'm in Rafi's hair telling him I'm ready to roll, bright and bushy. Relax for a minute OK? I was not prepared for this being so soon. I've to look what to give you to do. To make a long story longer Dear Reader, after doing nothing in the other room was doing now here.

As the limit allocated for keeping Hold Baggage free in the warehouse of the Jewish Agency was getting close, I decided that to break up the monotony - and do somethin' useful - I'll get them and store them somehow, ^{the} ~~someway~~ in Maon where I was staying now, ^{the} ~~al-~~ though I was aware of it that it is against rules. By now I was long enough in Israel to have found out that rules are something you ignore,

My outfit was kind enough to lend me a pickup truck and two guys to help me with getting them from the warehouse and more importantly to get it thru the Custom formalities, warning me that it will take a better part of the day. And they were right. It was also my first experience to have contact with Israeli bureaucracy and the legendary Israeli bureaucrats of mythical rudeness obnoxiousness and just plain orneriness. It was an old saw that "Israel LOVES Aliya (immigration) but HATES immigrants", specially

Westerners, read Americans,"who take the best jobs, get all kinds of privileges and still complain about everything."

WE got the four cabin trunks and the monster canvas bag out of the warehouse, with no more than the standard arguments and hassles with the keepers of same, after presenting all the required zeteles (papers) and headed for the Custom Authorities. They had a big sign very considerably enumerating the SEVEN steps, meaning of course seven different offices with ^{its} complement of bureaucrats, natch, required to clear the luggage ^{and} thru, rewarded for our co-operation with several pieces of zeteles at each step. I remember that they were SEVEN steps exactly, because years later when I was on vacation in Holland and had to leave one of my small carry on luggage behind because I did not have enough money to pay the overcharge, I had to go thru the same drill when it arrived, as the good ole Israelis considered ~~this~~ piece of hand luggage "Imported Merchandise". It took me the best part of the morning ONLY as my American boss Jerry Cantor, was kind enough to come with me. Otherwise it would have taken the best part of the day again. -

So we started ~~by~~ by clearing the trunks thru the Custom, which was the easiest part of ~~the~~ the ordeal due to my great wisdom and foresight, having made detailed lists for every trunk which I proudly presented ^{to} the custom agent who was very impressed saying several times KOL ha'KAVOD (all my respect/admiration) which you hear a thousand times every day, sometimes with sarcasm, if you screwed up something with more than the standard competence. He also told me that I'm a yecke, which I heard later several times also. The only difficulty was my record collection. The guy saw

it mentioned on the list of contents of course and asked me how many records do I have? I dont know the exactly but I'd say between two hundred fifty and three hundred. His eyes widened and his jaw dropped. MAAAA?! (what?) You must be a MILLIONAIRE! Chabibi, (this is an adopted Arabic word meaning dear one, loved one) if I were a millionaire I'd be in Switzerland not here. Laugh. But that many records costs a FORTUNE! Well, I dont know how much a record costs here but in America they cost about \$4-5 which is about half hour work for me, so surely in twenty years I could have bought 300 records. I was working with a guy who had a collection of three THOUSAND. Bemet?(really) Toy, (OK) but I'll have to call my supervisor anyway because this many records are considered a commercial quantity. But they are all used. Endavar(doesnt matter). So he calls the supervisor, who was fortunately a nice and knwoled-geable guy who OK'd it, saying to the agent that new immigrants from ^{the} West are allowed to import a "reasonable quantity of records" and what I have is considered over there reasonable.

The agent asked me to open one trunk, he matched the top tray contents with the list and seeing that it is OK, said, toda raba ze hakol, (thank you, thats all) and told me to get my zeteles stamped etc. and thats when the real fun started, going from office to office collecting stamps and signatures. Most of the bureaucrats were not ruder than standard, untill I got to the last one who was, I assume The Big One, as they say in Israel, what he was, not only figuratively but literally. He was a six foot tall OX with a pot-belly and baldhead to match. By that time I had a fistfull of zeteles which I handed to him exactly in the order I got them.

This mamzer (bastard) gave it one look and literally THREW them in my face snarling something in Yiddish I think, amounting to NOT IN ORDER! We were both lucky that I didn't have my gun yet, because I would have surely blown the shit out of his head right there. The guy from my outfit picked up the papers from the floor and started to rearrange them. I looked around and finding a face which looked more or less human I walked over and asked him what is the name of this mamzer? He whispered to me just to keep quiet and finish my business because there is nothing I can do. The guy is an old vatik (oldtimer) not even Golda could fire even if she wanted to. To say that I was furious is to put it mildly. Is THIS the kind of WELCOME we new immigrants get? Needless to say I heard dozens of stories of the boorishness of the Israeli bureaucrats and read dozens of similar stories in the Letter columns of the Jerusalem Post but I was still not prepared to this degree kind of open HOSTILITY from this scum. The Israeli Establishment could NEVER get it thru their collective heads that they can't kick us Westerners around as they did with the immigrants from North Africa, Rumania, Russia et al, who had NO choice but to stay and put up with all this garbage. WE did have a choice - and voted with our feet and then the Israeli Establishment was constantly whining and complaining that Westerners are staying away in droves. Big surprise. Who would want to offer help and get kicked in the teeth for it?

We took the trunks home and I stowed them in the stairwell. When I went up to my room it became obvious that this is definitely not my day. My laundry which I prepared a week ago was back all in ONE big heap on my bed. Everything washed and dried, that's it.

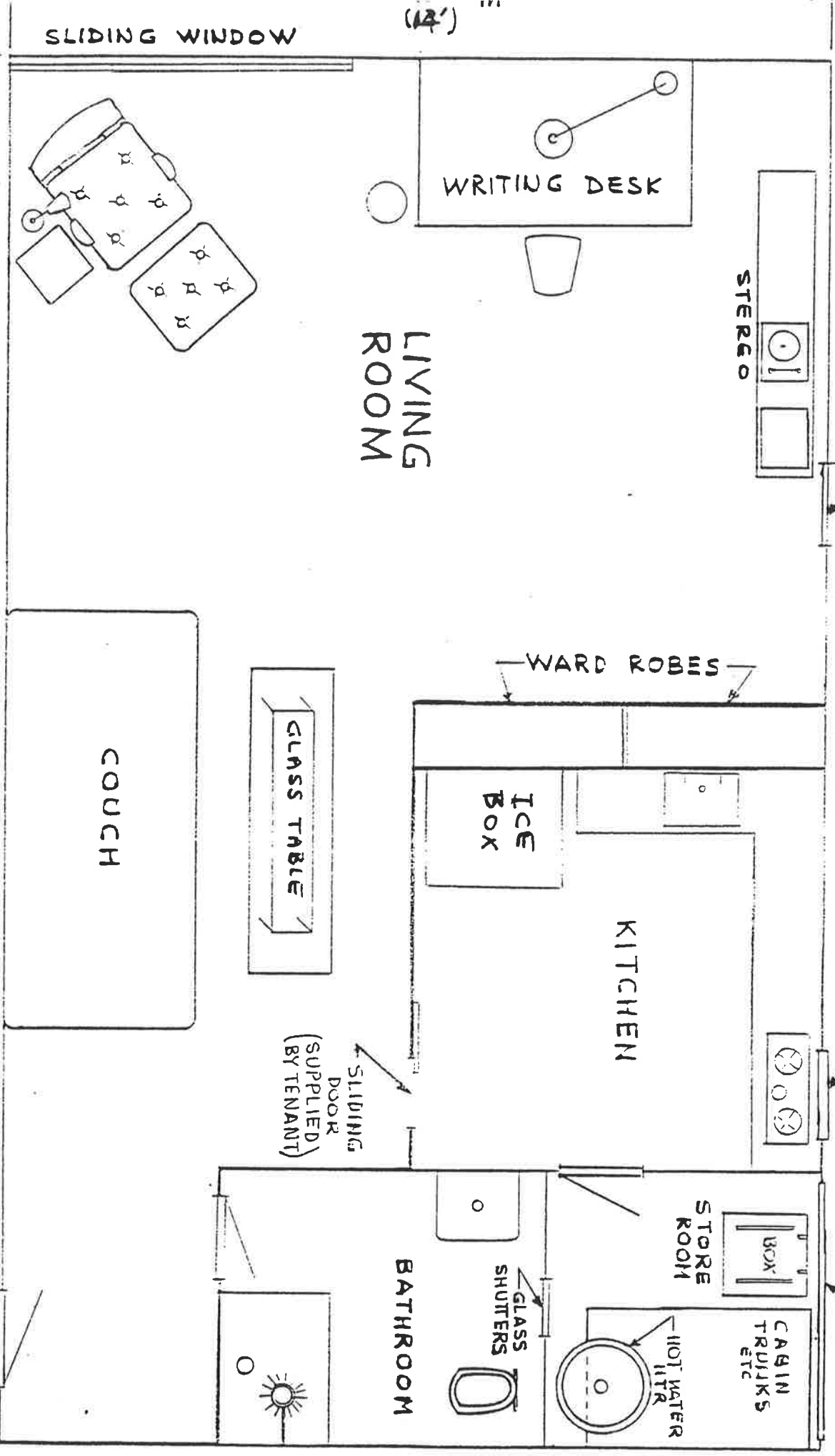
No shirt ironed and my beautiful yellow wool pullover I bought specially for the trip shrunk to . . . a perfect fit for a six year old. I went downstairs boiling mad and asked the receptionist to please come to my room for a minute. What is the problem? I'm going to show you. I point to the heap on my bed explaining that I made three different bundles as she suggested but no shirt is pressed and my new pullover ruined. I show it to her and ask her if she has kids? Yes. Take the pullover please it will be a perfect fit for one of them. She bursts into tears and refuses to let me pay the bill. Mr. Fuchs, these people are hopeless. This is the third laundry we try and every one is worse than the one before.

I'm going since weeks to the office in charge of Tzoressim Olim Chadashim, as we new immigrants call it (New immigrants problems) asking them to find me an apartment and the story is the same every time. Mr. Nachum Yossef who is in charge, is a very nice and friendly guy, whose office is bedlam several people talking in the same time. When things slows down a bit and I can talk to him, he asks me the very same question, after greeting me very cordially, what can I do for you Mr. Fuchs? The same thing what I asked you weeks ago, please find me an apartment. Oh yes. He never opened a file on me and has no records of me on his desk of any kind and he still doesnt when I leave. After this same shit was going on for five weeks I get tired of it and write a letter to Mr. Nachum Yossef's boss, by the name of Mr. Ribo, explaining that I'm going to Mr. Nachum's office since a month asking for his help to find an apartment and every time I'm there it is obvious that he does

not have the remotest idea who I'm and what my problem is. I cannot and will not live out of a suitcase for three years at the Maon Academaim Alef and if I cant find a place where I can unpack my books, records and furniture which is till sitting in the Jewish Agency warehouse I'll have no choice but to go back to America. One week later I get phone call from Mr. Nachum's office that they have an apartment for me and I should come to the office next morning and they will take me there. -

Next morning I get to the office and one of the secretaries tells me that they found an apartment for me at Ramat Efal located close to Ramat Gan in a nice park which is partly an Old People's Settlement partly owned by the Histadrut (Labour Union). We get in the Jeep and ride out. The place is in the middle of nowhere, no shops, no nothing but there is good bus service to Ramat-Gan and the place looks neat and wellkept, with lots of lawns, trees etc. Sofar sogood. We go to the renting office and a nice lady who speaks fluent Emglish takes us to one of several buildings all of them the same and seven floors heigh. There are several apartments empty yet as the building is practically new and she suggests that I take the one on the seventh floor as there ^{are} a couple of other English Speaking people there already, while the rest of the building is rented for people from the East, as she is putting it delicately. As she seems to be nice I take her advise and thanking her, the secretary and myself go up for a look-see. The place is indeed spanking new but very small, as I measured later 322 sq.ft. total including the bathroom with shower and the kitchenette. I take a quick appraisal and it looks that I'll be able to get in all the furniture

322 sq'
30 m²



SLIDING WINDOW

(12')

WRITING DESK

STEREO

GLASS SHUTTERS

LIVING ROOM

WARD ROBES

ICE BOX

KITCHEN

GLASS SHUTTERS

SLIDING DOOR (SUPPLIED BY TENANT)

COUCH

GLASS TABLE

PLASTIC SHUTTERS

STORE ROOM

BOX

CAGIN TRUJKS ETC

HOT WATER

GLASS SHUTTERS

BATHROOM

ENTRANCE



I bought with me, like my couch, coffee table and stereo with enough place left for a writing desk and easy chair I intend to buy here. I ask the secretary what does she think of the place, should I take it, having more experience with this kinds of things than I do. Mr. Fuchs, as you know I couldn't care less whether you stay in Israel or not, but if you intend to stay I'd advise you to GRAB this apartment because for Israeli standards and circumstances this is GOLD. As you already found out apartments are almost impossible to find for renting here because from a financial point of view it is not sound investment. Everybody here owns their apartments and new immigrants are getting help with their mortgage with the Jewish Agency. For you, being single I realize this doesn't make sense. The rent as you know is ridiculously cheap at IL 40/months because this is subsidized by the Histadrut with whom we pulled strings to get it for you. On the open market something like this IF you could find it would be about IL 500/months. As you can see the place is brand new and so very clean. It even has built in kitchen cabinets ^{and wardrobes,} something almost unheard of in Israel, where a tenant gets the four walls, and has to buy all the appliances, cabinets etc himself. If you want to stay here I very definitely ^{to} urge you take it because you won't find anything better. - So I took it of course.

Preparations of zeteles took about a week and D-Day for moving from Maon Akadema Alef was decided to be on the 11th of December 1970, after having spent exactly three months there. D-Day became a day I was not soon to forget. Although Israel does not advertise it, they have a very nasty winter for about three months with frog stranglin' rains and howling winds and although

snow falls only in Jerusalem and in the mountains of the Galilee it is cold except in Eilat, the Southernmost part of Israel at the Gulf of Aqaba.

I told Rafi I'm moving from the Maon to my new home and not to look for me for a few days I'll need for unpacking etc etc. He wished me mazal tov (good luck) realizing what this hapenings might mean in Israel, when even in "normal" circumstances moving is never much fun, to say the least.

I got a pickup truck with two guys to help me from the outfit. By the time we got to my new home Ramat Efal/Kiryat Siegal as the full name was, it was dark, pouring rain and howling winds. As I knew there are no shops around of any kinds I packed a basket with food, including tea and I bought long ago one of those heating coils to brew a cuppa tea in my room at the Maon. Ever since I became a tea addict in the British Bloody Army a cuppa tea became not only a drink but had acquired some "mystical" significance of everything being OK and more or less "normal". With a hot mug of tea in your fist, it cannot be all bad. We loaded my cabin trunks and the monster canvas bag into the pickup and I put the basket on the top of one of ^{the} trunks. I stayed upstairs and the two guys were shlepping the stuff upstairs by the elevator. When all was upstairs I gave Shlomo one of those folding BUCK knives which became a classic, I bought a couple with me for just this kind of occasion, costing \$50 each, and not available in Israel for love or money. For the other guy I gave some money. The guy for whom I gave the knife, barely looked at it and just put it in his pocket living up to the legendary Israeli good manners. They said

Shalom and were gone. By the time I realized that my basket is not here and ran after them the pickup truck was gone with them.

I think Dear Reader, I've to put you into the picture and situation I found myself in my new home. AS I mentioned before an Israeli aptment is EMPTY. No heat, no appliances NOTHING. Central heating in those days were known only in the most expensive luxury apartments and from what I heard the situation did not change much even now. Heating was the responsibility of the tenants. In a big building like mine with seven floors, it was not unusual to have all three systems represented available in Israel: kerosene (called neft) stove, gas heat or oil heat Kerosene stoves were the oldest system, still very much in use when I was there. It was the cheapest but it was smelly and a bitch to clean. Gas heat was far the most efficient but much more expensive then kerosene which was used also for cooking. The most expensive and least efficient, was oil heat which was actually a sort of radiator. It was filled with oil which was heated by electricity. I think it was a stupid system and very inefficient to boot. Needless to say I had gas heat because if there was anything I absolutely hated was a cold room in the winter. It reminded me of the army days in Hungary and the Legion. - The wiring for electricity was installed of course, but not on line until the tenant got his/her individual meter activated by the company. Floors in Israel are tiles, everywhere. During the eight months of summer it is very nice and cool but during the three months of winter they are cold and a pain in the ass.

apartment
So: here I was in my brand new and cold with most of the windows
having only glass ^{or} plastic shutters, hungry and craving a hot drink.
Israeli buildings are ^{often} made of cinderblocks and this also did
not change much because just a few months ago I read in an article
of the Jerusalem Post written by an architect, saying "the insu-
lations of our buildings are not much better then that of a tent."
My couch and other furniture was still sitting in the Jewish Agen-
cy warehouse having it shipped with ZIM. Fortunately I bought all
kinds of camping gear with me, packed in the monster canvas bag, and
of course I had several flashlights in my hand luggage also. After
all I was not exactly a newcomer to this game of moving around.
I also had some chocolates and cookies in my handluggage which be-
came my supper, washed down with imported Israeli water from
the kitchen faucet, water being turned on mercifully by the manage-
ment after I rented the apartment. If you eyeball the enclosed
floor plan of my , you will notice that the better part of
one wall of the room was taken up by a sliding window. It was made
of wood with tolerances of 3/8" between the window and the window
frame and a generous one inch space on the top left open, communi-
cating with the outside world. AS the wind was howling outside like
mad, the windows were rattling in their frames like if somebody would
have tried to come in but couldnt. It was an alltogether COSY and
deligthful situation for my first nighth in my new home, reminding
me of the hilarious limerick of Thomas Pynchon in GARAVITY'S RAINBOW:

It's...

Colder than the nipple on a witch's tit!

Colder than a bucket of penguin shit!

Colder than the hairs on a polar bear's ass!

Colder than the frost on a champagne glass!

I took out my flashlighth from my handluggage, unlaced the monster canvas bag, took out my folding campbed and my Eddie Bauer goosedown bag and as my sweet grampa used to say, I prepared to put myself away for tomorrow, being firmly resolved to castrate Shlomo with my own Buck folder, first thing in the morning, by the classic Chinese technic used for the imperial eunuchs: ALL external genitalia OFF, as so ably described by Professor Guido Majno in his scholarly work: THE HEALING HAND.

That wonderful Checkoslovakian writer, Karel Čapek, was right when he said "home is where you can find the electric switch in the dark". (Sadie Thopmson said something similar about her second pair of shoes if I remember well, but this doesnt apply.) As I couldnt find the switch in the dark yet, I made sure I've my flashlighth by my campbed.

Uncharacteristically for me, it took a littlewhile to fall asleep. As the Dear Reader remembers I've slept in lots of different places, circumstances and levels of comfort and discomfort but ^{this} latest abode of mine presented me with a completely new challenge: to sleep in a windtunnell. If you again eyeball my floorplan and ~~this~~time more carefully please, you'll notice that there is not one single window in the whole blessed place which you can actually SHUT in a standard way. The largest one in the room is a sliding window, as I said, made to "Israeli tolerances". The small window on the other wall by my stereo set has glass shutters, likewise made to "Israeli tolerances" with the leaves of the shutter separated by 3/8" spaces when "closed". The small window in the kitchen by the gasrange, more of the same. The same wall in the store-room is enterily taken up by a plastic shutter for a change, as a

a large glass shutter like that would have been too expensive I assume. The leaves of this shutter closed somewhat better but unfortunately and occasionally some of them did not follow the example of the others and stayed open. And as the years went by, as they do, tempus fugiting, the whole dreck got warped, closing less and less tightly. As there was a regular door, believe it or not, from the store room to the kitchen, this wouldnt have caused much problem. Unfortunately this big plastic shutter "communicated" with ^{the} glass shutter on the opposite wall of the bathroom, right next to the "throne". Yes there was a regular door from the bathroom to the living room, but this still didnt cancel out the effect of the windows. As you can see there is an open space between the kitchen and the living room considerately leaving the choice, ^{and expense} option to the tenant to supply a sliding door for which the rail was provided on the top. If this door was not installed, like now, the two windows with the glass shutters in the living room

together with the large sliding window in the living room, created the windtunnell effect I wrote about before, aided and abetted with the howling winds outside. The fact is that Israel and Israelis never acknowledged that there IS a winter in Israel, to this very day, and their buildings are planned accordingly, including the lack of central heating except in the luxury apartments. And not for lack of homegrown talent either. Moishe Safdi designed his HABITAT specially for the Jerusalem Hills, earning him international fame - and I assume fortune also - only to be turned down by the Israeli Establishment with their customary great wisdom. Safdi left the country disgusted and went on to become a worldfamous architect winning several international awards and prices while the good ole Israelis keep building their lousy cinderblock boxes. Seems not only that nobody can be a prophete in his own country, but architect neither and more is the pity.

- As I'm not dumber than the next guy, this was the first and the last winter which caught me, if not with my pants, but with my shutters down. As soon as I fully realized what is going on, scavenged all the foam rubber pads and cardboards used for packing the trunks, to "winterize". I put the foam rubber pads in front of the glass shutters, sealing them off with cardboards and tapes. The big plastic shutters in the store room I sealed off with the plastic dropcloth I used to line the cabin trunks in case they would be stored in paddles sometimes, somewhere during their adventure to the Holy Land. The big 2" space on top of the sliding window in the living room I stuffed full with foam rubber except for a 5" length on each corner, to let in air, so I don't get up dead one morning because the gas heater used up all the oxygen, although with the porosity of the wall made of cinderblocks this was unlikely.

Once gotten used to the windtunnell I slept as well as I always do, proving again what I used to say, that a man could get used even to hanging if he could hang long enough. AS there was no heat in the apartment yet the morning toilet was somewhat abbreviated to put it diplomatically, although there was hot water for shaving, baruch ha'Shem (may his name be blessed) as the hotwater heater was running on electricity - costing beaucoup lirot but with my ridiculously low rent it was no problem.

My first trip was to the Renting Office of the settlement where I turned on all the charm I could, asking the secretary to get the gasline installed to my apartment so that I can get a gasheater before I freeze to death in the Land of Milk and Honey\$. She promised me that they will be here tomorrow and I should stay home.

My next trip was to the transport office to castrate Shlomo and get my basket at long last. When I got there I realized that Shlomo was both much younger and sturdier than I'm.

Remembering Liddellhart's STRATEGY, The Indirect Approach, I decided to figure out something else, perhaps getting him laid with a zona (hooker) who is the proud owner of that Penicillin resistant Vietnameese clap I heard about. For the time ^{being} I contented myself asking him where is my basket of food? Maaaaaa? My basket of food you left in the pickup truck last night? Lo yodea. (dont know) Can we look? So we go out to the pickup and sure enough my basket is still sitting there. Oy vavoy, voy, voy wails Shlomo, ^{but} to say slichah (sorry) is of course above and beyond his modest ability. AS I found out later, for an Israeli to admit that s/he made a mistake would be as likely as for Shlomo Goren (Chief Rabbi) to have ham and cheese on rye for lunch on Yom Kippur.

Next day I stayed home waiting for the people from SUPERGAS to hook me up to what passes in Israel for central heating, which is a big tank of butane gas similar to the tanks of oxygen etc used by hospitals. Older and smaller buildings are using the kind of butane gas balloons campers and mobile homes are using all over the world. These balloons have to be shlepped upstairs by the stairs as some of the older buildings have no elevators even for buildings with six, seven floors. This is not all bad because it gives the ^{a chance} delivery men to go on strike every winter as sure as "The Rains came" one of my favourite singers, Jane Morgan sang. The delivery men could go on strike in the summer too as gas is used for cooking ^{also} not only for heating, but these guys are no fools. They realized long ago that people can go out to eat but not for a warm apartment. So they go on strike, holding the people of both sexes by the short hair with equal firmness. while we're at this

delicate subject of strike perhaps I should mention that this is a Spécialité de la Maison in Israel, like goose liver paté but unfortunately not as exportable. Just as restaurants have Soup du Jour, Israel has Strike du Jour and I kid you not. According to the Institute of Statistic, Israeli workers, using the word carelessly, establish a new record every year for days lost to strikes, "go slows" and "working to rule" which means to observe every little nitpicking regulation, the ONLY time Israelis do that. (The French call this with admirable sense of humour GREVE DU ZELE).

Needless to say all these lost working hours do wonders to the economy, but this is no problem as American largesse makes up for the shortfall, sure as the a/m rain. But I digressed.

The SUPERGAS people came as advertised and started to drill the holes thru the walls for their copper tubes and shutoff valves etc conducting the gas from the gastank installed in the basement. They almost finished the job when the lights went out and the drill fell ominously silent also, for which we all made up by starting to swear in several languages in chorus. Extrapolating from long experience they knew that the wind must have blown down one of the power lines and the only thing to do was hoping and praying. They must had better protekcia (influence) upstairs than I did because after ab.out. a half hour ^{waiting} the juice came back on and they finished the job. They explained how to shut off the main valve and the valve to the specific appliance I'm using, every time I dont need the gas, for safety's sake. One of the guys asked me if I need a gas range for cooking? I told him that as I eat in the canteen of the outfit practically for free and as I hate cooking there aint gonna be much

READERS' LETTERS

UNIONS WRECKING THE ECONOMY

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post

Sir, — I have spent 20 years of my working life — and I mean working — in the USA, most of it as a dues-paying member of the AFL-CIO. Nobody has to paint me pictures about what it means to be a card-punching stiff.

After making this perfectly clear, I must say that, in my honest opinion, it is an unmitigated disgrace what the labour unions are doing in this and with this poor country. It is an unmitigated disgrace not only because labour unions were not organized for the purpose they are used here for, but because it is a disgrace to do everything possible to wreck a country's economy which is permanently and constantly on the

edge since the very day it was founded.

I've no doubt whatsoever that this indiscriminate use of strikes, work sanctions, go-slows, working to rule, etc., are just a part of the syndrome of the disease which is the curse of this unfortunate country: the utter and complete disregard and consideration for the other person which is manifested in every aspect of life in Israel, from the people we're killing daily on our roads to the pushing, shoving and elbowing in lines and the ripping off of everybody by everybody wherever and whenever there is the slightest chance.

We call this democracy when what we have here is anarchy.

Ramat Efal.

ERWIN FUCHS

cooking beside an occasional b'fast on sundays when we dont work
so I need only a two burner range.
He said he can bring me a used two burner range in good condition
very cheap. I told him to bring it. The guy brought the
burner range, hooked it up ,regulated the flame and I asked him
how much it is? I dont want any money but something to wear from
America. I've shown him some of my pullovers I'd in abundance as
I was alawys crazy about knitwear, and he made a beelinē for one
made of a mixture of wool and mohair, mohair not available in Israel
in those days yet. I approved his choice and he tried it on. Alef-
alef! (first calss) Give me a shirt too. I was a bit pissed but I
thought; whattahell, I brought enough shirts with me to last for
years, so I gave him a shirt. I want a coat too. This tore it! I
could never get used to it that in Hebrew there is no such thing
as "I'd like" only "I want"(any rotzeh). I grabbed the rubber tube
and started to yank it off the range. Take your fucken range and
SHALOM! Besseder, besseder ein bayot! OK, OK no problem he said
laughing. These people invented chutzaph and never fail to live up
to the advance billing - and some. In Israel you always have to be
on guard NOT to let them confuse kindness^{with} weakness, unless you
want to be a worldclass sucker and a laughing stock.

Next day I went to SUPERGAS and bought a portable gas
heater for my new adobe and hooked it up as soon as I got home with
it by bus
and regulated it, setting it for the lowest flame. I left it on
24 hrs a day all winter till the spring came and NEVER again
less then a cosy 74°F in the place. I got up in cold barracks often
enough and long enough thank you.

Next day I told Rafi I'm more or less installed except for my furniture I've to get from the ZIM warehouse. The outfit couldnt give me a truck for this but they provided me with a guy to help me with the formalities and the hassles to get the stuff from ZIM and the hiring of a truck. I'll save you from all the gruesome details of this project except for saying that my guy and the truck driver he hired got into a shouting match and almost into a boxing match too, calling each other liars, concerning the size of the luggage and the size of the truck, the driver swearing that if he would have known the amount and size of the luggage he wouldnt have accepted the job etc etc. My guy solved the problem by telling me that he got me the truck and the rest is up to me. He jumped in his truck and drove off.

My truck driver disappeared to look for help with the loading and unloading of the truck and came back with a ten year old kid in tow.

I'll save the rest of the drama for myself and just say that we loaded and unloaded the truck somehow and got my furniture up to my room, having busted open the crate downstairs and shlepping my couch, foam rubber mattress, coffe table and stereo set in and out of the elevator without anybody ending up at the emergency room of TelHashomer hospital, conveniently located just a few minutes from where I lived. I paid' the driver what he asked for, which was of course too much as he expected me to haggle it down, another time honoured procedure all over the East, without

which no native would even dream of buying anything even in a drug-store and I'm not trying to be funny either. I fooled him this time as I was not in the mood for haggling by the time we got home. In all fairness to him he was so surprised that he even said toda raba Adoni. (Thank you Sir). I'm a great believer in the "DO IT NOW" system and set about to put everything in it's place as I already planned it, so that my new home should look as "gemütlich" (cosy) in the shortest time as possible and help me feel "settled in". I put a bedspread on one of the big trunks to use it as my temporary writing desk till I buy one here later on, and my army surplus wooden trunk being used as my temporary chair. This trunk was something of a masterpiece built as the proverbial brickshit-house to MIL-SPEC from $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood with a rubbergasket at the top, making it air and watertight, once the lid was closed, and fastened with that hook and wire system. It was painted OD of course also to MIL-SPEC and I still have the sucker right here and looking as sturdy as ever. Needless to say it came from my landsman's Al Army and Navy Emporium. I put my little award winning Olivetti Lettera on the "writing desk" and the place started to look not only as a house but a home. AS for the little Olivetti being an award winner I'm not bullshitting you either. When I bought this electronic job (BROTHER) a few years ago I got the Olivetti completely overhauled before putting it away, in case I ever need it again during a longer lasting power failure, and the typewriter mechanic looked at it as if it would be a BUGATTI ROYALE and told me never to sell it for any money because this is the best Olivetti portable ever made, having won an award too, for best design. It is a little

beauty, black and red and all metal, unlike the following ones which were made of plastic. Yuck. You cant beat the Eyeties when it comes to design classy stuff, whether it is a FERRARI, a typewriter a classy pair of boots or - Sophia Loren. Which reminds me, the next step was to put together my couch which I bought at WORKBENCH in New York, having lived in Passaic N.J. only half hour by bus. This was the kind of place I loved. They sold simple furniture but very well made for decent prices. The couch had a simple walnut frame with plywood base for a foam mattress and removable legs for transport. It is till in use and if the morons who packed it for the return trip wouldnt have banged it up it would look perfect. The problem was what to put on the couch for cover? I lived in a studio apartment and I didnt want to look like ^{it} a bedroom. I was hunting for ^a week for something what would look nice on the couch without looking like a bed. When at long last I found it, ^{and} it was love at first sight! I've very definite likes and dislikes and I never dither about anything I buy because if it is "the righth stuff" I know it immediately. My lifelong problem was, and is, that I've what is called champagne taste and beer wallet. It was a handloomed alpacca blanket from Bolivia with my favourit colour, chocolate brown, with lighth beige stripes. It cost an arm and a leg but I just had to have it. I was working at ITT and I could buy it if I eat porridge for a few weeks, which I did. Who cared? It was beautiful and as sometimes happens it was a perfect fit with one of my Swedish RYA rugs, almost the same colour. The RYA was of course machine made, as the handmade ones are museum pieces with prices to match, but it was pure wool and very lovely nevertheless. The other RYA rug

was Chinese red, my other favourite colour. I find the combination of these two colours make a terrific ambience in a room. The Chinese red is of course a "hot" colour and the brown sexy. It works great. I still have them right here in Seattle.

The next step was to hook up the stereo and have MUSIC. I brought the transformer with me from the US as Israel runs on 220V as Europe. AS I'm anything but an expert with electronic gear I colour coded every damn wire for the set before packing, so I did not have any problem to hook them up now, and soon enough I had my set ready to roll. It was by no stretch a state of the art job but good enough for my purpose, picked out from the Consumers Report. I hope I'm not disappointing you Dear Reader if I admit that I'm no "highbrow" in my taste for music. I never got into the heavy classic stuff. Somehow it didn't suit my lifestyle. I was a jazz and pop guy mostly. And needless to say I'd just about every record Piaf ever made, having been our mascot in the Legion. So to start things off right, the first record I put on my DUAL turntable was "Non, je ne regrette rien," although just now I wasn't so sure about THAT. I fixed myself a nice cuppa tea the Hungarian way for winter, with a generous shot of MYERS rum in it and I started to feel at home, more or less.

I've joined the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel, right after I arrived ^{and} decided to look them up next day to find out which is the best outfit to order a writing desk and chair, floorlamp and an easy chair. By unanimous vote Danish Interiors won hands down. Remembering what my Dad told me to always buy the best I can afford and take very good care of it, I ordered

a nice rosewood writing desk with an Eames chair, a simple but wellmade floor lamp and a nice easy chair with leather upholstery in chocolate brown natch, with footstool for my doggies, for services rendered all these many carless years to say nothing about the thousands of kilometers in the Legion. I gave them a downpayments, I mean Danish Interiors not my doggies, and considered it a valid investment for my future in the Jewish Homeland. And I decided the first time since I arrived, to do a little leisurely rubbernecking around Tel-Aviv, being convinced from previous experience sofar, that my outfit will not find it too hard to struggle around without me for another day, realizing that I'm trying to settle in which takes time, specially here where nothing is simple.

I wanted to find out whether my impression regarding my new country is valid or not. It seemed to me that it has hardly anything to do with the country I saw five years earlier when the great majority had practically nothing to wear and the people in the hospitals where I worked tried literally buy the clothes and shoes off my back and feet. Everybody wore khaki shorts, short sleeve shirts, togs, called Eilat sandalim, because they were sort of invented in Eilat, the Southernmost tip of Israel at the Gulf of Aqaba, topped off with the Kova Tembel (silly hat) which was made of white cotton and looked like the hat the American Navy wears but with the rim turned down to keep the sun out of one's eyes.

I remembered I wore the same kind of Jodhpur boots the little guy in the jungle made me of Cordovan colour but ordered from a mail order house from El Paso Texas by the name of Navarro Brothers.

The guy had great flair and sold terrific boots made in Mexico. I needed a new box of polish for them and wanted to buy it in a shoe repair shop. When I asked for Cordovan colour he looked at me as if I would have asked for the sky. Maze cordovan?? (what is cordovan?) I pointed to my boots. Adoni, we have TWO colours: black and brown. Which one do you want? Brown. B'vakasha. (Here you are, but it also means please in another context). When I ran out of my after shave lotion I brought with me, I wanted to buy another bottle. Do you have Yardley after shave lotion please? I spoke German as I knew he is German. Started to laugh. Are you a filmstar or something like that? In Israel the only after shave lotion we use is WATER. What passed for toilet paper was brown wrapping paper, I kid you not. The only imported booze was Johnny Walker Red, which did not bother me as I never drink whisky.

Well, Dear Reader, this was simply not the same country. The stores were jampacked with every kind of luxury goods you could think of. You could get not only cordovan shoe polish but every colour in the rainbow and every brand. You want whisky? What kind? Glenlivet? Chivas? you name it you got it. You want to wear Pierre Cardin? All you need is money. And most of the people did have the money too. And did you ever see a place where everybody was ten feet tall and SWAGGERED accordingly? Come to Israel. I kept asking the guys I worked with, WHAT happened here since I was here in 1965? Ah you dont know? What happened was the Six Day war. Israel and Israelis didnt only become the heroes of every jew in the world but the whole world. We beat the shit out of the Arabs in SIX DAYS! Dont you think we're justified to be PROUD and be rewarded?

Never again will anybody call us jews cowards and make fun of us for being good businessman but lousy fighters. Are we proud? You bet your tachat we are proud! So we expect the rich American jews send us money, so what? Isn't that the least they can do for making them proud to be jews in the Diaspora, the first time in their life? Yes, but NO extreme is good. To change from the meek jew to a proud jew is wonderful but to become a nation of swaggering bullies is not good either. And to change from a nation of poor schnorrers to a nation of schnorrers on horseback is even less ^{to} be proud of.

It didn't take long for most of the Israelis to admit and realize that the Six Day War was the worst thing that could have happened to Israel and Israelis. It divided the history of the Nation into two distinct and very different eras: before and after the Six Day war. Before, they saw themselves for what they were: a poor nation who had to buckle down and EARN a living. After, they saw themselves as a nation of heroes the world in general and world jewry in particular OWES a living. The Yom Kippur war cut them down a little to size but shnorring is a bit like being a hooker. Once you got the hang of it- pardon the pun- it is almost impossible to WORK again for a living. Another debilitating aspect of the easy victory of the Six Day War beside the appearance of the swaggering and swollen headed Israeli, was its twin brother, and sister, the OMNISCIENT Israeli who not only knew everything, but knew everything BETTER. Officially the Govt kept up a constant pleading and whining for experts from the West but when some naive and wellmeaning soul headed the call, what did they find? What they found in every single case was that they

were either ignored or fought tooth and nail every step of the way or even accused of sabotage as it happened to me. More about this later. Who is mad enough to come to a country with years and years of experience only to find his hard earned expertise questioned every step of the way and his efforts obstructed with every means and ways imaginable? To think for yourself is not only a good but laudable approach, but to insist on RE-inventing the wheel every step of the way is not only time consuming but downright dumb and self-defeating, no country in Israel's situation could afford.

Is it any wonder that most of the few who came got disgusted and "voted with their feet" only to be derided, taunted, ridiculed and even called traitors, all this compactly implied in the word "yored" with Mr. Rabin adding his own flourish which was delicately translated into English in the Jerusalem Post as "ants shit." And is it any wonder that when these people arrived back to America full of frustrations and worse, they spread the word between the brethren not to go to Israel? It is a wellknown fact that nothing is as effective as word of mouth advertising, both the positive and negative kind, because it is from person to person between people who trust the other person's judgement and veracity. The result of this word of mouth advertising was devastating for Israel specially between the Russian wannabe immigrants who were eager to escape the endemic anti-semitism in their Motherland. They found the solution soon enough by "dropping out" in Vienna in droves and using their passport to come to America and other Western countries. Israel started to scream bloody murder of course, trying to pressure HIAS, which

helped us also to immigrate from Ecuador to America, not to help the Russians to come to America, which come to think of it, was rather pathetic to say the least, as it was "with their own feathers, the more so not by other's hands were they now smitten." (HIAS is the acronym for Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society). HIAS had the chutzpah to rebuke Israel explaining that their duty is to help the Russians leave Russia not to assist with a shotgun wedding. Needless to say this went over in Israel as the proverbial lead balloon.

Having installed myself, more or less in my digs, including a small refrigerator in the kitchen I forgot to mention, which I could buy taxfree as a new immigrant, I reported back to TEUD hoping that by now they surely integrated me into Honorable TEUD Publication Organization Institute, and can start to earn my money, if not with the sweat of my brow at least with laying out some electronic diagrams according to US MIL-SPEC for which I was hired it seemed to me, years ago. Sadly all this turned out to be hoping against hope because the status was still quo ante - no work for me. I ambushed Rafi again and getting him, figuratively speaking into a headlock, I insisted that he levels with me and tell me what is the real skinny about this ridicuolus situation? After much hewing and howing and beating around the mullberry bush, he admitted that the work ELTA, another branch of IAI, was supposed to release to us, they decided with despicable egotism to keep it for themselves and if we dont like it they have a suggestion for the solution. TEUD did not insist they elaborate. A couple of days later Chaim Gafney, our production manager who took a big

shine to me after he realized that I'm not a real American, but a Hungarian, he stopped at my board for a little lunchtime schmuz (chat or in the American vernacular bullshitting) as he occasionally did, and to my big surprise launched into a very spirited tirade against that "bhassted Gordon", giving me the friendly etzes (advise) to either ask for a transfer to another department at IAI or look for a job with another outfit, because we will never get anything important to do, as we simply can't get the necessary personnel as long as this "bhassted Gordon" and Kolodnar are running the outfit. I was absolutely sure Chaim knew what he was talking about as he had all the connections necessary, being a former Air Force Major who was in charge there for Technical Publications before he retired. I promptly cornered Rafi and asked him to start the necessary procedures to get me transferred somewhere, where there is work for me. He asked me to wait for another two weeks perhaps he can hustle ^{up} some work after all. I agreed as I didn't want to leave with hard feelings. I on my part wrote a nice letter to Mr. Degani, the Chief of Security who gave me that superfast Secret Clearance, explaining my problem and saying that he must know surely everybody who is anybody and perhaps can find me a place so that I can start earning my salary and do something useful. He answered me right away, saying that as far as knowing everybody I'm right but he doesn't really know who does what and how much work they have because that is not of interest to him. Nevertheless he set up two interviews but neither of them panned out as the work was not the kind I was familiar with. So the two weeks passed just as I figured it will, and I asked Rafi to get the wheels

turning for my transfer. This didnt sit very well with Gordon because NOBODY is asking for transfers in Israel for lack of work or for that matter for any other reason either, as long as they get paid, and every dept. is doing their best to hang on to everybody who is or might be useful even in a minimal way in the future. -

If somebody is getting transferred from one department to the other s/he is getting transferred by his/her supervisor, this being the ONLY way to get rid of deadwood or troublemakers, as it is practically impossible to fire anybody once s/he has tenure what everybody gets after the six months probationary period unless s/he got caught stealing, beat up the supervisor - verbal abuse did not count - or was caught in willful sabotage. I want to emphasize that I'm talking about the ten years I was there. Things might have changed since, but I doubt it. -

At the end of May, four months after I asked Rafi for my transfer, I had an interview with Mr. Jerry Cantor and Mr. Himmelfarb, Jerry's boss at that time from MIFAL BET (MBT), which was part of the main plant of IAI at Lod. I'd the impression that the interview went off well and that Mr. Jerry Cantor was favourably impressed and wanted to have me in his department. My impression turned out to be correct and the hassanah (marriage) was formalized on the 14th of June, which is pretty fast for these kinds of thing in Israel, and I was transferred to Jerry's dept as layout draftsman according to my contract.

Jerry was a very easy going, good natured, personable guy. He was about 40-45 I guess, handsome, with curly salt and pepper hair, about my height but huskier. He told me that he is a

former US NAVY radar officer and later worked as technical writer for MOTOROLA in the US before immigrating to Israel, I dont remember exactly when but must have been some twenty years ago. Later, when I got to know him better, MUCH better, I told him once that if he really did everything he said he did he should be a lot older than he is. As I found out Jerry was one of those people you could not offend. Insults he simply didnt register. As the inscription on an old sundial "Mark only the sunny hours" Jerry heard only what he wanted to hear. He lived since many years on a kibbutz, called Mishmar Ha'Emek, but the kibbutz gave him permission to work outside as many others did by that time, with the kibbutz giving them an allowance and keeping the rest of their salaries.

Jerry introduced me to the drafting department consisting at that time of some twenty young girls if I remember correctly.

I asked him why is it an all girl team and Jerry explained that in Israel only girls do drafting the men considering it sissy work, wanting to be engineers or at least technicians. I found this a bit hilarious as in the US some 80% of the drafters are men and the few women "board people" are inkers or tracers, the lowest grade. Again, I must make it perfectly clear that this was before Women's Lib. It might be different now.

What surprised me again, and even more than at TEUD, this being a much larger department, was the incredible quality of the drafting equipment. Nothing but the best, which meant of course the most expensive. Where do they get all the money to buy all this luxury gear? I couldnt figure it out. Everybody had hydraulic fingertip controle drafting boards and even more surprisingly every

EXPERTS NEEDED BUT NOT HEHEDED

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post

Sir, — I want to second Sir Marcus Steff's remarks as reported in your issue of January 24. I too have been frustrated by the high-handed, nonsensical attitude of many of the executives of several companies I have tried to "help" as a marketing expert and management consultant. It could not be that they did not respect my expertise, which they thoroughly checked, and it could not be a left-handed objection to a fee, for there was none.

These executives are young, smart, but void of proper profit-making motives; they distrust the outsider, ending up in a crude effort to outsmart the game; they move at a speed that puts the slow pace of a

snail to shame, and make the gross error of overlaying on "foreign" (United States) marketing conditions the poor knowledge they have even of their own market — especially if, for years, they have lived on Israel Government contracts.

Sir Marcus Steff's lessons should be taken to heart by all, or almost all, of Israel's industry; perhaps a start should be made by inviting professionals from everywhere to conduct seminar workshops on sales and marketing, and production and manufacturing.

MACK RAPP,
Vice President,

Management Counselors Corporation

Port Washington, N.Y.

board had drafting machines and they dont come cheap being precision instruments. Neither ITT nor BENDIX, no fly by nighth outfits, had this kind of gear. We all had wooden boards with parallel straight edges for electronic drafting and the mechanical draftsmen had what is called a variable triangle also, for drawing angles. This was perfectly adequate for the work we did. They cost a tenth of the price of the hydraulic boards and drafting machines. What was even worse, the drafting machines were not only unnecessary for electronic drafting where there were no angles to draw for which the machines were invented, but they were a time consuming nuisance with their short rulers, you had to shift constantly for the long lines needed for electronic diagrams. What ^{they} did need they did not have, which was the kind of board cover with grids needed to space out the lines(wires) for the diagram, without which there was no way to layout diagrams without wasting enourmous amount of times, by measuring all the distances between every line by hand and on a big diagrams there ^{were} hundreds of them. It was obvious at first glance that the drafting department was ran by somebody who never did any electronic drafting in a up-to-date, modern outfit.

I asked Jerry for the reason for all these anomalies and he explained that when they started the department the first supervisor was probably a mechanical designer who was used to work with drafting meachines, so thats what he ordered for himself. As Israelis are extremely status conscious people when he started to hire drafter they all insisted that he orders the same kind of machines for them too. When they started to do electronic work they had to order drafting machines for the elctronic drafters for the same reasons. Parallel edges meant that their work is not as important as mechanical drafting, therefore it implies lower status and they

simply refused to work. Jerry gave me my own little room and board with a drafting machine of course. I told him that the machine is a nuisance for electronic layout and I want a parallel straight edge what I used for twenty years in America, and some of that green board cover with the grid we all used o'seas. Erwin, the board cover is no problem because I can camouflage it for the purchasing dept as drafting paper but the parallel edge is another story. We have drafting machines in stock and they want to buy a parallel edge, they never saw one and never heard of it and I'll have the devils own time to get you one and it will take weeks at best.

I hit on an idea, offering to buy my own if he is willing to give me a zetele testifying that it is my own property in case I get transferred or leave. This was agreed on and I went to town immediately and bought one, together with a roll of K&E board cover with grid which I charged to the firm's account. -

So at long last I could get down to work. I laid out a diagram and gave it to Jerry who asked me if I can ink? You are kidding, righth? Inking is the entry level job in drafting with the lowest pay of course, and beside I hated it even then, bringing back memories from my higschool days when I used to pay another guy to do it for me. Well, we are inking here everything as that is the only way to get a halfway decent loking drawing with this team of basically unskilled people. AS you know pencil technic is difficult and time consuming to learn and for lettering of course there is no way, as most of them cant write the Roman letters. With the LeRoy guides they have to letter righth. WEll Jerry it is up to you to solve this problem because sure as hell I wont ink. Beside it is

absolute madness to pay ME for inking when somebody else could do it much cheaper. As you know in the States the lowest paid job is inking and no supervisor would be mad enough to let a layout draftsman do inking who makes four times the salary of an inker. Yeahbut we have a different system here. I didnt ask him about the different system preferring to leave well enough alone as long as my layouts gets inked. Jerry took my layout and disappeared in the direction of the drafting room. He came back after a good long-while rolling his eyes and holding his head in mock horror. Hoo boy! Did I have a time persuading a little bitch to ink your layout! They all stick together like burrs and started to wail in chorus that inking somebody else's layout is shamus work as they are perfectly able to do their own layout and ink it, and on and on. Jerry said, having been long enough in this meshugganeh country he used psychology, saying that I'm an American and did this work for twenty years for some of the most famous outfits and it is a KAVOD (honour) to ink my layout and beside they can learn a lot how to do a complex layout and the sooner they can do it the sooner they will get another DARGA (grade) which is the MAGIC word in Israel, again because it is a question ^{of} status symbol what "grade" one has, although the difference in money is sometimes minimal. More about this later.

I worked this way from the time I was transferred in June till november without major difficulties. Les Girls got used

to ink my layouts although they never considered it a KAVOD as Jerry told them they should. One of my problem was what all Americans shared with me in Israel, that we were looked at with

suspicion. Israelis were convinced that nobody who is "normali" would come from America to Israel when most of them, specially the younger generation wanted to do exactly the opposite; immigrate to America. It was ^a bit like in the Legion, if you ^{were} in the Legion you must have something in your background which was not kosher or at best having a few screws lose and came for the adventure. By the time I immigrated to Israel it was estimated that there are close to half a million Israelis living in America, legally or illegally. Statistic was difficult to get as Israel was not keen to disclose this delicate subject and they also kept counting the people who emigrated as "students" but never returned, as Israeli citizens.

By this time I got Jerry's number down pat, realizing that he was a charming Luftmensch (literally airperson, but meaning a person without substance) and a twenty ^{four} carat phony with a backbone like a wet noodle. In all fairness to him he became a phony with the whole hearted co-operation of IAI which kept promoting him to the level of his incompetence since years, untill by now he was in charge of the drafting department, the art department and the tech writers group. Out of these three only the art department had a competent supervisor as far as artistic ability was concerned, although as administrator this guy was also "effess gadol," big zero,

as I had the opportunity to find out later. Jerry was supposed to be heading up the tech writers group himself having been a tech writer, according to himself at MOTOROLA. I dont want to call him a liar but I find this hard to believe. A competent tech writer for complex electronics gear must be either an engineer or at least a technician, because without understanding HOW the gear works there is no way that he can effectively DESCRIBE it, which is what tech writing is all about. Jerri was neither and didnt even claim that he is. As for his crew this one episode will give you a good idea. One day I saw a young husky guy with beard sitting there at a desk, I havent seen before. Jerry, who is the new guy with the shrubbery? My new tech writer. No kidding, where you find him and where did he work before? Well, he is not a tech writer actually but an archeologist from America. What does archeology has to do with techwriting? Well I thought being an archeologist he is good at digging out info, said Jerry laughing. Jerry you must be out of your mind. Aw come on Erwin, do you think a honest to godness tech writer will come from America to Israel? And if he would, could we meet his price? The guy is a college graduate so he can write fluent English, the rest I'll teach him with a bit of luck. I stopped wondering how many people from America was working in this outfit beside myself with legit background and qualifications instead of being phonies with or without the approval of the Management Later when I had nothing to do here either, I was sent to another department to help establishing an Engineering standard for the Mechanical engineers. I told the Boss I know nothing about mechanical engineering. He laughed. would it make you feel

better if I tell you I'm a textile engineer myself? It sure would because I'm a former Jacquard designer. Well, isn't it a small world?

In november Jerry called me to his office and asked me to take over six of the girls in the drafting department and teach them to work according to US MIL-SPEC because we're selling a lot of ordnance overseas and the old home made no-system system of every engineer inventing his own standards cannot cut the hummus anymore.

I kept wondering since some times who are all those guys in the drafting room hanging around the girls in animated conversation, but as it was no skin off my ass at that time, I kept my mouth shut. Jerri's remark about every engineer inventing his own standard gave me a hint of what was going on. Well Jerry, assuming that I accept your suggestion how is that going to affect the Phoenician aspect of this story? What do you mean Erwin? I mean GELT (money) of course. According to persistent rumours if an employee is expected to take on more work and more responsibility the paycheck is supposed to reflect this in the approved capitalistic tradition, nachon?(right?) Weeeelllll, this is a big problem because as you know your contract is as layout draftsman. Yes but contracts were known to be modified to new conditions if I remember correctly, so there is no valid reason why the zetele couldnt be modified for me being a Group Leader, which is what I would be called in the US if I accept your suggestion. Look Erwin, you did not come here to get rich, you came to help us. You make a pretty decent salary for Israeli standards, you have an apartment subsidized by the Histadrut paying a ridiculous rent, you eat almost for free in the cafeteria of the outfit, it is not like if you would be just

barely scraping by. Take the job and I promise to upgrade you to the next higher grade as Technai(technician) as soon as I can. I think I'll have to digress a bit to explain the Israeli system of GRADES, unique between the industrial nations. Ma od hadash? (what else is new?)

To put it simply it is the silliest, most ridiculous, complicated and inefficient system anybody could invent responsible for the constant and consistent bleating, whining and carping for "od darga" (one more grade) between the employees, driving the supervisors meshuggah. The reason for this constant seeking of "od darga" is not so much for more money, which is very often minimal, but for status seeking. The best I can explain this is by quoting from the book of Professor Fredynand Zweig: ISRAEL, The Sword and The Harp. Professor Zweig has impeccable credentials having conducted research for years in Israel and was also visiting Professor at the Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem Universities. He has several books published. Status Seeking(p23)

"Status seeking...has become a very strong tendency...it expresses itself primarily in an eagerness for promotion, and a MULTIPLICATION OF GRADES (emph.mine) in professional and clerical work as well as manual workers. ...

In factories and offices this results in conflicts and squabbles about real, assumed or suspected infringement of what the individual regards as his due in respect and dignity. Status seeking in Israel expresses itself primarily in a drive to climb higher and higher on the ladder of promotion, and when the top rung is reached to continue to climb by extending the ladder. Government employees have fifteen grades, and since 1962 one was added, called TWO PLUS. (emph. in orig). Engineers, architects, chemists, economists had

eighth grades from A to H, but later another grade was added, called A PLUS(emph in orig.) and since 1954 a still higher grade called A PLUS PLUS. (emph in orig.) Doctors and veterinary surgeons had eight grades, and in 1954 A PLUS was added. Lawyers had six grades and in in 1960 three more grades were added." Footnote in orig: Statistical Abstract of Israel 1965. -

If all this madness wouldnt be bad enough, for certain jobs not previously existing as in engineering and drafting, some of the jobs were not considered being worthy of a separate category, and grades, got lumped together with others, it had nothing in common, beside being in the same "trade". A perfect example is drafting. There are no grades for drafters who are "graded" and paid as "technaim" (technicians), never mind that we couldnt fix a transistor radio to save our lives. There are basically TWO kinds of Technicians. Technai Alef (A) And Technai Bet(B). Both of these groups had TEN grades and above that one grade called PLUS, and PLUS PLUS. Israelis being fanatical bureaucrats loving zeteles with a purple passion, having a zetele with status, even if that zetele was comletly IRRELEVANT and MEANINGLESS for the job the employee was hired for, it assured that employee higher DARGA then another employee who had no such status bearing zetele. And I'm not talking about a hypothetical situation either. Jerry hired a new girl while I was in charge of my group who had a Diploma from Israel's very respected Art Academy BEZALEL. She was hired with a Grade she no way deserved and beside she was pretty limited to put it politely. Later on Jerry hired another girl who had no zetele from anywhere as she did not go to drafting school either, which

would not have made any difference anyway as electronic drafting was not on their curriculum, so she got hired as "pakidah" (clerk). Yammy turned out one of my best and most talented workers, a fast study, as we say, to say nothing about having very good manners and a charming personality, nothing to sneer at in Israel, where good manners are considered sissy. That she was Hungarian goes without saying. As in Israel nothing stays secret for long, Yammy found out pretty soon that the dummy with the zetele from Bezalel has a darga three times ^{higher} than her, making more money of course. She came to see me, explaining this injustice, asking me to ask Jerry to upgrade her. I agreed with her mea chutz(100%) and went to see Jerry. Jerry started to talk out from both sides of his mouth as usual, but promised me he will "try". To make a long story short he never did anything about it and Yammy got disgusted and turned from a first class worker into a goof off doing the minimum of work, explaining to me the reason why and I had no choice but to agree with her.

Question: How & why did this young country which had the lifetime chance to pick the BEST systems extant from all over the world end up choosing the worst ones? Just asking. Ever since I got to Israel no day goes by that I wouldn't ask myself: WHAT happened to our famous Jewish "tam"?(flair) To quote Churchill's remark re Russia: It is a riddle, wrapped in mystery, inside an enigma.

As the Dear Reader already probably guessed I accepted Jerry's request to take over six girls from the drafting department and try to teach them US MIL-SPEC. Jerry assured me that he picked The Best and the Brightest and took me to the department

and introduced me to the Lucky Winners, whom I already knew from my excursions to get my layouts inked. They seemed to be friendly enough all of them repeating the accepted Hebrew formality: Naim meod. (Nice to meet you). My only worry was my non-existent Hebrew. I shouldn't have worried. Every time I tried to say something in Hebrew it was the same chorus: no-no-no Erwin, talk English we want to learn English. Most of them already had a good working vocabulary with one exception who didn't speak a single word nor did she want to try. Perhaps this is as good a time as any to introduce the Dramatis Personae, starting with what we call in America, Room Supervisor, who is in charge of the Groups in the room headed up by the Group Leaders, like me. The Room Supervisor was Yehezkel Nacker who was if not THE but ^{certainly} ONE of the most pathetic SCHLEMIELS, I don't think I've to translate this word, I met during my ten years in Israel and that covers a bit of territory. Even Jerry, whose standards were not exactly high, admitted that he was hopeless as a supervisor. Not only was he a complete ignoramus about the work, but he managed to make a laughingstock of himself with the girls. Jerry tried to transfer him since years but you can do that in ^{only} Israel with the approval of the employee, and even Yehezkel was not dumb enough not to know that he is unlikely to get another supervisor with Jerry's easy going manner to put it politely. Jerry did succeed to transfer him years later but only by bribing him with another DARGA first. AS my late landsman Harry Golden would have said: Only in Israel. HOW did this pathetic schmuck, you do know this word too, become a supervisor in the first place? Like this. The supervisor before Jerry had an eye for "chatichot"

(translated by Israelis as "good pieces") and Paula who was still in my group as you ^{will} see was a big well stacked Polish blond, just the kind Israelis are crazy about. Paula was not the kind who believed in playing hard to get, so pretty soon she and the supervisor started to have longer and longer lunch breaks, which are very generous in Israel anyway, until they made a habit of not coming back at all. The supervisor realized that it does not look good not to have anybody sitting at his desk, in case somebody comes in, made Yehezkel his assistant supervisor, figuring out correctly, that this schmuck is going to keep his mouth shut to keep his job and the money going with it. The supervisor left or was transferred, I don't remember, and Jerry got his job inheriting Yehezkel as a bonus. From day one Paula simply ignored Yehezkel, still exercising the Droit du Seigneur, doing nothing more than a minimum of pro forma work when she felt like it, which was not often. She literally terrorized this poor schmuck to the point that he waited till she left the room, to sneak some work on her desk and hurry away before she came back. Needless to say that I fixed Paula's highstrung ass in a hurry when Jerry put her in ^{my} group but more about that later. The other Group Leader by the name of Eli was a "good kid", a lot smarter than Yehezkel, who did not consider it beneath his dignity to ask me for advice if he needed it, but he was something of a clown. His overriding ambition was to marry a rich American girl and emigrate to America, which was nothing unusual between young Israeli guys.

The names of my sterling crew was: Yona, Nava, Michal, Shoshi, Yami and Paula. Yona turned out to be ^{the} Star of The Show

in every sense of the word. To put it simply she was a little Yemenite beauty, with the delicate features of her people, dark skin and pitchblack hair. And she was very bright to boot, speaking fluent English. And she was a little spitfire with a wordclass temper. We had some real knock dawn drag out fights for the first few weeks before I made it perfectly clear that I can get along without her quite well, but if she wants to stay in my group she will have to follow ^{instructions} because I did this work before she was born, I'm old enough to be her Aba(Dad) and I wont stand for any nonsense. she was ^{smart} enough to realize that I'm the only person she can learn something from, and she very seldom gave me any lip afterwards. Later she married a handsome Yemenite boy and they invited me often to their home for dinner which was always a treat as David, her husband was a terrific cook and Yona was no slouch either and they made those yummy Yemenite dishes. Yona told me some years later during one of those dinners, You know Erwin, the first few months when I started to work with you I hated you sometimes somuch I would have liked to strangle you, but later I realized you can teach me something I'll be able to make good money here. Which she did too when she left and got herself a job with a private outfit, where she introduced US MIL-SPEC the way she learned from me. Yona's best friend was Nava, another Yemenite girl. These two were inseparable, with Yona leading and Nava following. Nava was pretty too and smart also, but perhaps not up to Yona's standard, but she made more than up for it by being a really sweet good natured easy going little girl. She was the ONLY girl in my ten years who never ever gave me lip or one minute of trouble

and she was a reliable, competent drafter making a minimum of mistakes. Poor girl she had more than her share of tragedies in her young life. Michal was the third yemenite and my cross ^{to bear} pardn the expression. She was the only one in the group who didnt speak or understand a word of English and didnt want to learn. In all fairness to her she was pretty and had a lot of charm and she was well liked by the other girls. She was the kind of female who made a wonderful wife and even better mother but should have never worked outside the home. She had a mouth like a crocodile and most of the time wide open. I'm sure it was not a personality conflict because if and when we met at weddings she couldnt have been friendlier. She just hated to work in a structured environment. Once I gave her a drawing she didnt like, and snarling at me LO ROTZAH!!! (I dont want it!) threw it on the floor! Even the other girls were apalled. I told her to pick it up which she did very reluctantly. I took the drawing to Jerry and told him that I dont care a damn what he wants to do with Michal but from this minute on she is not in my group. Period. This kind of shit is not acceptable for me, Israel or not Israel. The drawing was on Jerry's desk months later and Michal was transferred to Eli with great loss of face which is the worst kind of punishment in the East. However this was not the end of the story as we'll see later. -

Shoshi was an Ashkenazi (European stock) and although not a beauty like Yona, still very pretty with pitchdark shoulder length hair with the figure Easterners love, a little on the "saftige" side. ("pleasingly plump" as they say). she was bright, good natured, polite and a pretty reliable drafter, most of the time, but

not completely devoid of the Israeli characteristic of wanting to prove that she is her own person with her own ideas. Once I gave her a rather complex diagram I laid out myself and told her not to fool around with it but ink it the way it is. By then most of them could handle moderately complicated layouts with a little help here and there. Also sometimes they tried to "improve" on my layout to show me how smart they are. As I mentioned before there is no such thing as a perfect schematic layout and if their version was adequate I let them ink it to build up their ^{selfconfidence.} Shoshi took more time than it would have been necessary IF he would have inked my layout as it was, but although I'm an atheist from way back I'm a great believer in The Golden Rule. I hate it when somebody is looking over MY shoulder and I never do it. I let her finish the layout and she brought it over for my OK. She made a completely new layout and it was a mess. Why did you make a new layout Shoshi? It was more interesting then just inking yours she said with a charming smile. I tell you what Shosh. Go ahead and ink it. But if the engineer will reject ^{it} DONT come and cry on my shoulder, tov?(OK?) The engineer rejected it of course and Shoshi sure enough came to cry on my shoulder.

About Yamy I already told you. She was very bright, a fast learner and a very good worker before she got disgusted with the stupid system and turned into a goof off. Privately she was still the charming polite girl as before. Her parents were from Hungary and they were both big wheels in the Irgun terrorist group and when Yamy's Dad died the papers were running full page stories about him. We all went to sit "shiva" with her although they were not observant

jews, but honouring the death is observed even with non-observant jews and to spend a few hours of "shiva" is showing solidarity and support for the family. As Yamy was well liked by all the girls we all went to sit with her. I told about Paula before and now I'll tell you the story how I cut her down to size tsick-tsack as they say there. Paula finished a drawing long ago and she was sitting there reading the latest BURDA which is the favourite fashion magazine of all Israeli women, running instructions for knitwear etc the girls did for their boyfirends and husbands, preferably during working hours, in the fall. I took an engineering sketch with me to be done and walked over to her board. She kept reading without even looking up. Paula? Ken(yes) without looking up. Paula, look up PLEASE! This caught the attention of the room, expecting a little fun. She looks at me. Paula, do I look like Yehezkkel? (giggles in the room) No, smiling. Keep this in mind, tov? I'm NOT Yehezkkel. I'm old enough to be your Dad I want a little respect, tov? This is a big and valid point in Israel which is very definetely a Patriarchi even now. I explained the drawing to her and left. WE were never buddies, but I never had anymore trouble with her.

The simple fact is that Israelis are not exactly workaholic generally speaking ^{and} women are very reluctant to work outside the home. They want to get married, have kids and be a good Yiddishe Mamme taking care of the household as they did since Biblical times. Women's Lib has a looooong way to go in Israel as far as bringing in a second paycheck is concerned. So why did all these girls work? For two reasons only. To buy the latest styles in clothes and to get married by looking very stylish and smart. Israeli women are very style conscious and with the

modest allowance most of the parents are able to give them they ^{keep} cant up with the latest styles. So they get a job to be able to buy clothes and find a husband. A big outfit like IAI with 35,000 employees, most of them men, is a prime hunting ground to kill the proverbial two birds with the same stone. Get a job, make some money for clothes, and hunt for husbands. Once this mission is accomplished - they quit. If not all of them and immediately those who didnt, will when they get preggy which is as soon as possible. This was one of my biggest problem. By the time I was able to teach one of them to be an asset to the group they quit and I could start teaching a new girl from scratch. We had a constant turnover as having a career for an Israeli woman was not the first choice.

Add to this the unique Israeli system, nu? ma ^{where} od chadash? (what else is new?) every girl was "entitled" to "try" to do her own layout from day one, regardless if it took her five times as long and regardless that I had to be teacher in the same time doing all the other jobs - more about this later - unlike in the West where drafters advanced from the lowest category of tracers to detailers etc LEARNING by DOING. The time wasted by this crazy system is impossible to estimate. It was just one aspect of the fact that there was no Chief Draftsman to establish a normal "Mode of Operation".

Having accepted Jerry's suggestion it was time to get the show on the road, as the saw goes. I visited Jerry in his office and told him to brief me on the details of the job. First of all I asked him ^{for} One of the Bibles (standards) no engineering outfit in America, or the West, would dream to operate

anymore, than a publishing house would without dictionaries and other sine-qua-nons of the trade. Jerry gets this little cockeyed smile on his face and tells me, I've good news for you: we have no Drafting Standards. Surely you're pulling my legs. Nope. So how do the girls know how to do a layout for a diagram? They dont. The engineers and the technicians give them a skitza (sketch) and the girls clean them up the best they can and ink them. If and when they need help they call the engineer or technician who comes over and helps them. now I understood why all these guys were hanging around the drafting room all day long. And what is your supervisor Yehezkel doing? What he is doing is making a fool of himself. Some of the girls know already more then he does. Sounds like real fun. So, tell me Jerry if you want me to teach my sterling crew to work for US MIL-SPEC, how am I going to do this without Standards? Very simple. YOU write the standards, says Jerry with a big smile on his face. To say that I was speechless is to put it mildly. One more question Jerry? How come the Chief Draftsman is putting up with all this madness? I've another good news for you: we dont have a Chief Draftsman. Jerry I cant believe this. Try. We've nothing what you could call a "Drafting Organization" in a Western sense. It is all "catch-as-catch-can." Its all from hand to mouth improvisation as everything is in this country. In one word, we MUDDLE THRU the best we can. Time means nothing here. If it takes five times longer than it should, Mal'-assot? Kacha ze. (what can we do? This is the way it is.)

Here was a perfect example of what happens in a major organization which is headed up by a CEO who is by no stretch of the

imagination has the background and the experience either technically and even less administratively to run such an outfit with any degree of efficiency.

To put you Dear Reader, who is not familiar with the field, in the picture and the magnitude of the problem I was facing I'll use a fortunately available very good analogy between the field of engineering and health care. Both are run by two complementary professional groups. Engineering outfits are run by engineers and what is called the "board people", drafters, designers etc. Hospitals are run by doctors and the nurses. Both groups have their own "headhoncho" and their own hierarchy, who keep out of each others hair as far as possible. If there is a conflict it is solved by the two headhonchos NOT by individual "mano a mano"s. So far you're with me? Good. Now to change the slogan you see on bumpers "Visualize Worldpeace", try to visualize the Mayo Clinic, John Hopkins et al, WITHOUT anybody being in charge of NURSING and every doctor INSTRUCTING every nurse for all the aspects of nursing procedure according to HIS ideas and system. Are you visualizing BEDLAM running amok? Good. Now do a little more visualizing. One of the supervisors realized that this system is not good for HIS purpose, hires an RN from the outside and tells her: I want you to write a Nursing Manual using a different system ^{and} be in charge of the new system which you'll teach to all the nurses on THIS specific floor, while all the doctors and nurses will fight you tooth and nail, wanting to keep the old system where THEY were in charge of the nurses. Did you visualize this system now? If you did, this was MY situation

by taking over the six girls in the Drafting department. Talking about "fools rush in where angels fear to tread" !

In all fairness(?) to Jerry he was not aware of the magnitude of the badlam himself as his presence in the drafting room was restricted to a short appearance at birthday parties of the girls when he made a little speach, drank Le Chaim (to Life) and retired to his private office across the hall, till the next birthday or other festive occasion, requiring his presence as the pro-forma supervisor of the department. Never in my twenty years as a draftsman did I have a supervisor who cared less and did less. If there is such a thing as a "hands-on" supervisor Jerry was surely the personification of the hands-OFF supervisor.

The first thing I checked when I took over my group was the filing system, always a pretty good yardstick of how well, or how badly, a group is organized because the prompt retrieval of drawings is of first importance in a drafting group where constant design changes and modifications is all in a days work. And I couldnt believe my eyes. There was NOTHING you could even remotely call a filing SYSTEM. Drawings were "filed" according to which girl did it, unlike in the West where they were filed of course according to PROJECTS and drawing numbers within projects. Every girl had the required number of drawers in the file cabinet - the best kind money could buy needless to say - where she kept all her drawings she was working on, together with all her "personal property" including the days lunch, her supply of coffee and tea, her current BURDA and the knitting project and other items of personal hygiene we wont go into here. The retrieval "system"

could best be called as The dogpaddle. When one of the engineers needed one of his drawings he told the girl who did it and she dogpaddled thru the whole mess till he found it, assuming that she did which was far from being taken for granted for the simple reason that all the drawings were devoid of drawing numbers, believe it or not. Unlike in the West where a drawing number is the first thing assigned to a new drawing, in Israel it had to be different and of course afuch (backassward^{as} usual. The drawing number was assigned by the Archion (arcives) when the drawing was READY. The result of this lunatic system was that all the time the drawing was worked on and sent back and forth any number of time to the blue print room, it was The Unknown Soldier, with nothing more than a tentative "working title". When it was taken to the blueprint room for a "chekprint" they stucked a piece of paper on it with the working title, which had the tendency to fall off, with the drawing joining the others of similar faith, floating around somewhere in the blue print room, waiting to be resurrected when the Meshgiach (Messias) came. Once when a drawing met such a fate on which one of the girls spent three weeks, I had it up to here, and stormed into Jerry's office to raise hell and to insist that we change this lunatic system of assigning drawing numbers when the drawing is READY and thus having no way to track the drawings while being worked on. Erwin, believe it or not this we actually tried to do, but the boss of the Archion is an oldtimer who is also missing a few screws. Every time we brought this up he threw a fit and started to scream and rave that NOBODY is going to tell HIM how to do HIS work and how to run HIS department! CHUTZAH! (get out!) But, said Jerry,

if you want to try ^{your} luck go ahead and mazal tov! I thought what-tahell, I've lived dangerously before and survived, and if this time I went, is there a better place to be buried than the Holy Land? So I go to see this old mamzer and first everything seems to be going OK, I'm explaining what I want to change and why and he listens, sort of. He wants me to explain again WHY is his system wrong, which I do finishing off with the remark that my system is used not only in America but all the West, and this was my mistake! He starts screaming at me "any lo ichPATLY" I dont give a DAMN, what the West does! This is NOT the West! This is Eretz Yisroel (the Land of Israel) and dont you forget it! CHUTZAH! (get out) As by then his eyes were bugging out and spittle running down his chin, I thought maybe I should. I went back to Jerry who gave me a quizzical look noticing my being somewhat upset to put it mildly -NU? I told him the story and he had a good laugh. Only in Israel.

I also told Jerry about the dogpaddle system and he says, what do you expect from that imbecile Yehezkel? Nothing, but if you know that he is an imbecile why dont YOU explain it to him how drawings should be filed? I dont have time for this kind details, says The Chairman of the Board. What did I do to DESERVE

is? - I told the girls to empty all the drawers and we will re-organize the files according to Projects and we'll assign a temporary drawing number for every drawing marked in the title boxes with pencil, while we're working on them and if the Archion wants to give them a new number - labriut! (To their helath)

You wouldnt have believed the wailing! OIVAVOY, voy.voy!
WHERE are we supposed to put our THINGS? Lo ichpatli. Bemet, Erwin!

Ze lo yaffe! (I dont give a damn! Honestly, Erwin ! This is not nice.) My next step was to draw up a LOG, showing all the drawings by projects, received from the engineer, the date received, the date the L/O started, the name of the girl, etc so that I'd have all the info at my fingertip at a glance and the little bitches knew that I KNOW how much time they spent on what etc etc. Not that all this helped a lot. Once one of the girls was way over the time she should have spent on that specific drawings even by Israeli standards, and I really needed 65 hrs to do this job? She looks at me and says: I dont like this kind of questions! I make a deep bow and say: Any MEOD mevakesh slichah geveret! (I very deeply beg your pardon Madam!) Giggles in the room and I walk away. As I said before: Only in Israel! The sad fact is that it is not their fault. If there ever was a Workers Paradise it is surely here in Israel. After six months everybody has KAVOA(tenure) and becomes untouchable. There is no such thing as "merit raises" here. After a certain time of VETEK(seniority) everybody is upgraded. What this amounts to is a system without REWARDS or PUNISHMENT leaving the Management utterly devoid of LEVERAGE with the workers. You dont have to be a Professor Emeritus of psychiatry to know that the proverbial Average Person is basically a donkey needing a carrot and a stick. If he works he gets a little carrot if he doesnt he gets a little stick. There are only two groups of human beings who dont need "external" motivations, creative artists and research scientists. These lucky people are motivated by the urge to CREATE art and the challenge to INVENT something new. They never have to do

the same thing TWICE, so they never get bored. Doctors are somewhere inbetween. The good ones enjoy what they do and also enjoy the money they make. There is only one speciality in medicine where you never have to do the same thing twice, which is traumatic and reconstructive surgery. AS every accident or injury is different, every case is a new challenge technically. For all other surgery the major challenge is the diagnosis. The rest is just "snitching and stitching" requiring a greater or lesser skill and manual dexterity. I cannot prove this but I'm convinced that for a competent doctor the greatest reward is the CHALLENGE to have successfully solved the "problem" of making a person healthy who was sick or in extreme cases of saving the life of a critically injured or ill patient. The "saving" of a life is just an additional bonus. If the "healing" or the "saving" of a life would be the main reward, there wouldnt be such a large number of sour pusses and downright sonsofbitches in the medical profession who are in it just for the money, or just for the "glory."

Leat-leat(little by little) the group settled down and we actually produced some work I didnt have to be ashamed of. My biggest problem were not Les Girls but ^{the} goddamn engineers and technicians, who with a very few exceptions, hated my guts with a passion. They felt that I intruded on THEIR territory by exiling them from the drafting room. These people were so pathetically primitive that they didnt even realize that it is in THEIR interest NOT to be involved and therefore to be RESPONSIBLE for the drafting problems and the inevitable drafting mistakes. AS they never worked anywhere else, where the engineers and the "board people" are two

completely different "societies" keeping out of each others hair as much as possible, they were convinced that I'm trying to pull a fast one on them by building my Little Empire! They gave me constant arguments which they just as constantly lost of course, because not only that I was familiar with US MIL-SPEC forward and backward after some twenty years, but I was smart enough to have brought them with me, and every time they gave an argument I just flipped it open at the right page, stuck it under their nose and said, Shalom, Shalom chevreh (good by friends) and they had to leave again and lose face. Usually ^I was able to keep my temper under control but one day when the same guy who was known all over the plant as a pain on the ass and who gave me a hard time every step of the way every time I worked for him, my cup runneth over! I did a diagram for him and he wanted to change a symbol, although practically none of them found it worthwhile to familiarize themselves with the most frequently used symbols of their trade, and there wasn't many more than a dozen. He kept insisting and as usual I pulled out the standard and stuck it under his nose. Besseder (OK) the standard says you are right, but it does not say that you cannot do it my way! You know what Alex? Go and fuck yourself! now to make something perfectly clear, this guy was a project engineer and to make it worse two of his side kicks were standing there with him. Maaaaa?! What did you say? I think you heard me but just in case you didn't, I said go and fuck yourself! They stomped away and five minutes later my phone rang, Yitzhak Tannenbaum calling me that he would like to see me in his office ASAP. Yitzhak was not only my boss but Jerry's boss too.

He should have been neither. He was a very pleasant and easy going guy and according to the grapevine a very good mechanical engineer who worked for FORD in Argentina. His boss was Yona-Bar-Orian likewise a very nice and pleasant guy, tall, dark and handsome, although with a bum leg, also from Argentina. Being Chief of engineering he wanted to do a favour to his landsman Yitzhak and promoted him to this administrative position, part of which was being in charge of the drafting department. And unlike, while being an engineer and a good one, he was a round peg in a round hole, as an administrator it was obvious from day one that he was a round peg in a square hole, which shouldn't be a big surprise, because it is a well known fact that generally speaking, engineers, with the exception of civil and human engineers, are lousy administrators. To be a good administrator you have to be PEOPLE oriented of course, but engineers are MACHINE oriented, relating very poorly to humans. So poor easy going Yitzhak was a flop as administrator and I'm sure he knew it because he looked very unhappy.

So I go to Yitzhak's office and the Three Musketeers, as they were called in the plant, are standing there and glaring at me. Yitzhak what can I do for you? Erwin, Alex tells me you used very bad words with him. Yes, but let me explain Yitzhak. Every time I work with Alex it is one argument after the other every step of the way about things I did for twenty years in America. I'm sure you realize I did not have to come to Israel and IAI to learn my trade. I knew it before I came here. As I said, Alex gives me the same silly arguments every time I work with him.

As you might know I did not ask for this job, Jerry talked me into it. My contract calls for being a layout draftsman, nothing more. I'm doing a job nobody in America would expect one guy to handle and I don't even get paid for it. When I came here I was a very patient easy going guy, but these constant arguments with the engineers are getting to be too much. Patience is like a sack of garinim (sunflowers seeds Israelis are addicted to). Regardless how big the sack is, sooner or later you will eat the LAST one. And when Alex told me that the standard does not say that I cannot do it HIS way, that was my last garinim and I told him to go and fuck himself. Now, Yitzhak, I don't ^{know} about you and Alex, but I've work up to my tachat. Shalom, Shalom. I turned and left. And that was the last I heard about this story.

Now Dear Reader, I'm pretty sure you wonder how could I getaway with telling a project engineer to go and fuck himself? Very easily. First of all by that time I had KAVOA (tenure) since a longtime. Second, although the engineers hated my guts they also knew that my group get more and better work done than any other in the plant. Once Jerry told me that one of the engineers came in to see him and started to bitch about me again, Erwin ~~this~~ and Erwin that. I was in a bad mood and cut him short saying, what I can't understand is that you are always kvetching about Erwin to me, but when you bring in a project which is urgent or difficult, the first thing you tell me, I want you to give this to Erwin's group. Can you explain this to me? Something else you have to keep in mind Dear Reader, which is that this kind of situation could NEVER arrive in the West in the first place. No engineer, much less

a project engineer would want to get caught dead arguing with the board people about drafting standards anymore, then a writer would ever even dream to argue ^{with} the typesetter of his book. This can happen only in this beit meshuggaim (madhouse) with this bunch of oberchochems (know it alls) because nobody is in charge of drafting, having no Chief Draftsman to lay down the law to one and all.

To avoid misunderstanding I want to make it perfectly clear that I'm not saying, implying or otherwise indicating that Alex Katzko is not a goodENGINEER. For all I know he might be the BEST engineer in Israel. What I'm saying is that the schmuck was still playing with his putz in the sandpit when I was already bending over the hot drafting board in America and that he did not know one end of US MIL-SPEC, or any other standard drafting SPEC for that matter, but that didnt keep him from not only wanting to know everything but wanting to know everything better, according to best Israeli traditions.

If you Dear Reader thinks that I was starting to get paranoid when I said that most of the engineers and technicians hated my guts, keep reading. There was another American working in our department by the name of George Friedlander, as something of a liaison between the engineers and Jerry Cantors people. George was an electrical contractor and old ham radio operator, a smart cookie and something of highstrung dynamo about forty five I think. He was married and had a daughter about twenty, and a young son about ten who was the apple of his eyes. George's wife was a True Believer Zionist whose family lived in Israel since years. She was nagging George since longtime to move to Israel about which