

George didnt want to hear. George told me the whole story how his wife found a way to change his mind, using his son, but it is private and not very nice story so we will skip it. Before going into the gruesome details which follows, I want to emphasize that George was a 100% trustworthy and serious guy and not given to tell cock and bull stories of any kind. One day he came to me and told me this, and I'm sure I'm quoting him word for word: Erwin, you old goat, better watch your ass because the engineers are after you and if you are not careful sooner or later they will get you. Tell me all about it George. I'm just coming from the Bitachon (Security). They have been grilling me about you. How well do I know you? How loyal are you to Israel? How trustworthy are you? How good a jew are you? etc etc. I told them I'm not sleeping with you, I'm not in your head but as far as I know you are loyal and trustworthy. Well they made me understand that they are asking all these questions because one or more - they didnt say - of the engineers came to them to say that I'm trying to sabotage the work by introducing American systems into the drafting room. I told them that you are doing so on Jerry's instructions and they told me I can leave, saying that I should keep my mouth shut about this interview and say nothing to me or anybody else. I decided to tell you anyway because I feel I should warn you, being another American, and we've already enough problems in this country as Westerners.

To say I was floored was putting it mildly. I didnt know whether I was more disgusted or furious. That they hated my guts because they felt I was poaching on THEIR territory was one thing, but to accuse me with sabotage while I'm busting my ass doing the

work of four people in America, and not even getting paid what I should get as layout draftsman, was a completely different ball-game. Although I'm not a quitter by nature, I think if I could have, I would have packed up and left the country with the first ship. I'd no way to do it of course, being fifty eight and no savings to speak of. Who would hire a guy in America at my age? I had only two choices, either stay here for the rest of my life or wait till I'm sixty five and entitled for Social Social Security in America and by then having worked here ten years perhaps some pension from here too. -

Nevertheless I was furious and disgusted to the nth degree. Here was a perfect example and a perfect microcosm of what we Westerners in general and Americans in particular can expect for coming here and trying to do something for this country we are accused of sabotage for trying to introduce a system which stood the test of time in America for years. I said before that I was doing the work of four people in America. Let me explain what I mean so as not to look like a blowhard. First of all to write a Drafting Standard, even if an abbreviated one, on my level as a layout draftsman, would be unprecedented if not laughable in America, in the same way as if a hospital would tell an RN to write a textbook on nursing and teach the new nurses to work according to this textbook.

1.) Job number one : Group Leader.

2.) " " two : layout draftsman. None of the girls stayed

long enough to have enough experience to handle a really complex diagram by herself. I either had to do it myself or help.



מדינת ישראל - משרד הבטחון

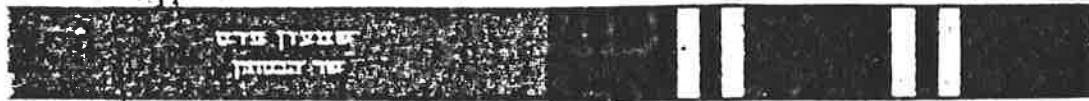
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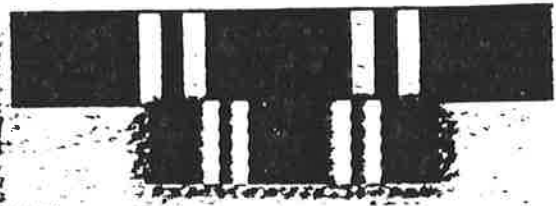
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הרענק

אות
מלחמת
יום הכיפורים



משרד הביטחון
מנהל המסמכים



התעודה האזרחית לישראל בעמ

ל ארנונג פוקס

מועק לר בזה

אות מלחמת יום הכיפורים

לציון תרומתו למאמץ המלחמתי

בהוקרה

א.ו.פ.ו.י.א.

א"ו שוימר

מנהל כללי

3.) Job number three: Checker. I had to check of course all the drawings for mistakes, and some of them three times. I had girls in the group who, if they made lets ^{say} ten mistakes in a drawing, which were eighth too many, and red penciled every one, she corrected six and gave it back to me saying it is OK. I pointed out the ones she did not correct and she corrected two and gave it back again, OK. I gave it back to her AGAIN to correct the two but by then she was broigez (insulted) and gave me drop dead looks. In America a drafter who is this sloppy gets fired. Period. Here of course this is not an option.

4.) Job number four: drafting clerck. I had to do all the paper work and record keeping which was here specially important as I couldnt rely on anybody to do his/her part. Actually I was not only keeping my own records but some of the engineers too, who came to ask ME which sketches they gave me when and for which project? This snowballed to such an extent that I had to put a big sign on the wall that NO information will be given out to engineering about the status of their drawings before they are ready to be picked^{up}. They were broigez. If I did it up to now why not continue?

ALL, repeat ALL of these jobs are done by different people in America. How did I keep up? Was I Superman? Nope, but I was well organized and I was a workhorse from way back. Nevertheless when all this is said, the lions share of the credit should go to the girls who produced, generally speaking, about 40% what drafters produce in America and the West.

I mentioned before that drawings are to be picked up when ready.

This created another uproar. THEY should pick up the drawings?! MAPITOM?! Before the girls delivered the drawings. I know but that was before. Look, you have to pickup only your own drawings. The girls have to deliver several drawings. If I let them do that they will stop for a little schmuz with every chaver and chavera they meet. By the time they come back half an hour or more was gone. Our output is nothing to brag about as it is. One of them said only half jokingly why cant Yehezkel deliver them? He is not doing anything anyway.

Perhaps you remember Dear Reader, Michal of the big mouth whom I excommunicated when she threw a drawing on the floor which didnt find favour in her eyes as they say in Hebrew. Her group Leader Eli, the wannabe American gigolo, came to see me and spake thus: Erwin I've a surprise for you! I love surprises Eli, lets hear it. Michael wants to come back in your group. This sure is a surprise and what is the reason? Well, she lost face with the girls because she was the first girl you found necessary to get rid off and she is ashamed of herself. Having a good jewish heart, what else, I told Eli I'm willing to give Michal a second chance but the next time she gives me a hard time she is OUT, gamarnu! (we're thru') So Michal took her old place and for two weeks she was OK, so I decided to put her to the test and find out if being in Exile teached her something? As you know every profession has it's kind of scutwork everybody hates, but has to get done nevertheless. drafting this is changes and corrections. Design changes, which comes with the territory, regularly certain components to be replaced and changed, eliminated etc etc. It is a pain in the

ass job, requiring to erase a letter here, a letter there etc etc. In the West and of course also in America this is done by entry level board people, like tracers and detailers whose work is the cheapest. AS I mentioned there is no such thing in Israel where everybody is allowed to "try" to start at the top, or almost so, doing layout even if it takes five times longer. And as everywhere else they all hate doing changes and corrections, called tikunim. As long as they have to do it on their own drawings they do it if reluctantly but vehass ve halilah (god forbid) that I give them somebody else's drawing to correct! The wailing, the moaning, the pleading you have to hear to believe. Needless to say I always try to give everybody her own tikunim to do but as girls are leaving, getting married, gettin sick, go on vacation, there is noway that I can always do this, so occasionally somebody just have to correct somebody else's drawing. This was why Michal threw that drawing on the floor. So, as I said, I wanted to find out if she learned her lesson? I gave her a tikunim from somebody else who was on vacation. LO ROTZAH! I took the drawing away, walked over to Eli and told him to get Michal out of the group righth now and she is finished with me. Eli did so and Michal started to cry to no avail, I told Eli I gave her a second chance but thats it. If every girl will decide what she is willing and not willing to do, I can just as well close up shop.

While we are at this vexed subject of problem children perhaps I can dedicate a few well chosen words to another girl in the group who was a sui generis. When I took over the group I noticed a slim Ashkenazi brunette about 20 or so, always very well

groomed, sitting way out in left field in the back of the room separated by rows of not occupied boards from the rest of the group, literally quarantined. She did not talk to any of the girls, nor did any of the girls talk to her. She worked with one or other of the engineers, who brought her a drawing and picked it up when she finished. She was literally a pariah. A ^{few} Weeks later when I was more or less accepted by the girls I asked Yona the little Yemenite spitfire who was by then saddle broken, sort of, what gives with the girl sitting alone? Her name is Mimi and she is a stuck up snob and we don't like her. She has French parents and she thinks she is better than the rest of us. Somehow this didn't sit right and sound right to me. I think I've a good nose for people and this girl didn't look like a shrew to me. I met people before who were aloof and it was taken for snobbishness when it was actually more a question of shyness. When I was talking to Jerry next time I asked him what is the story with Mimi? glad you ask. I want you to integrate her in your group. The girls hate her guts and they say she is a snob but I had enough seeing her sitting there in Siberia. If you get her in your group the girls will have to accept her sooner or later. Well, if you want to talk to her and she is willing to work with me I'm willing to give her a chance. I don't like seeing her sitting there alone as a pariah either. So Jerry talked to her and introduced her to me. I gave her a board and gave her a simple drawing to do, saying to bring it to me when she finished and I also told her as I do with new people, to take her time and do as good a job as she can, speed can come only with practice. She brought it back sooner than I expected and sure enough it was just

awful. The layout was not too bad but the inking was disaster territory. I gave it back and explained her again there is no hurry, take your time and do the best job you can. She looked unhappy but said nothing. She brought back the drawing the second time and it was obvious that Mimi is a round peg in a square hole as a drafter and specially in an outfit where everything is inked. Inking is a lousy, tedious, painstaking job requiring a lot of patience. It was obvious at a glance that Mimi was a bundle of nerves and probably had some endocrine problem too because she was much too slim for Israeli standards and the girls told me she eats like a horse but cannot put on weight. I told her as tactfully as I could that her inking is useless and if she wants to work with me she has to start from scratch with practicing inking. I don't want to do that Erwin. I was good enough for the engineers Tom: that is meaningless. Perhaps the engineers used your drawings for other purposes than we do in this group. She was adamant so I went to see Jerry and told him what the score is with Mimi. I've absolutely nothing against her personally, as a matter of fact I'm pretty sure she is getting a bum rap for being a snob but I'm willing to bet my next paycheck on it that she will never ever be a competent drafter, specially in a job where she has to ink because she is too highstrung and impatient to do a job which requires first and foremost patience. She is quite simply a round peg in a square hole. Jerry said he cannot fire her, which I believed, so we're to try to train her to ink. Jerry talked to Mimi explaining to her that this is her last chance to be integrated in the group and if she refuses to follow my instructions she will sit there in the corner and

keep working alone. Mimi decided that she wants to try. She learned to turn out a drawing which was usable but barely ^{even} by Israeli standards, but she always made too many mistakes and I had to check her drawings two three times and occasionally the layout had to be thrown away because she overlooked components on the engineers sketches and it is an old truism in diagram layout that you always overlook components where you have the least space to squeeze them in. As JFK correctly said, life is not fair. A couple of weeks after Mimi started to work with me she came to my board bearing gifts, in the form of a jar of homemade marmelade "from my mother and me." I thanked her but explained that I don't want her to do this anymore because it is embarrassing to me. If she wants to do me ^a favour she could try to do a better job and make less mistakes so that I've to spend less time on her drawings as I'm busy enough already. Couple of weeks later she arrives with a jar of homemade coleslaw "from my mother and me". I repeated the above megillah(story) and asked her not to do it anymore because I won't be able to accept it. It is too embarrassing for me and it looks bad with the other girls. Mimi tells me that she explained to the girls that she is not trying to bribe me but it is for accepting her in the group. Mimi never became Miss Popularity but slowly slowly the girls started to talk ^{to} her. She got married about a year later, baruch ha'Shem, and we were of course all invited to the hassanah (wedding) as we always were when one of them got married. One thing you have to hand to Israelis they know how to have a good time. Weddings are always a "big deal" with tables groaning with incredible amounts and varieties of food disappearing like if a swarm of locusts would

have passed thru. There are mobs of people, lots of them nobody knows from the family of the young couple, but word goes around and they show up for the food and the fun, both of them invariably available in abundance. All the wonderful Israeli folk dances are danced, starting but not ending with the all time favourite, the Horah, proceeding with the modern favourite tune HAVA NAGELAH (wake up happy) and on and on untill the last couples are exhausted and the musicians, who are likewise, take a break. The latest fad was the movies made by professionals of the young couple which became more and more elaborate, starting with posing them at a colourful and romantic spot, abounding in that lovely scenic country, and following them to the reception etc etc. Needless to say all this costs beaucoup lirot and the family goes in hock for years, all this having been imported from America like so many ^{other} good and bad customs. Mimi looked very pretty in her wedding gown and insisted to be photographed with me, like all the other girls did also. I have all the pictures in my album and thanks to the quirks of human memory, we all have the tendency to forget the bad and remember the good only. -

Perhaps this is why I recall at this point in time an incident starring Yona the little Yemenite spitfire and myself, which happened by the time we were already buddies, but of course Yona still made her little scenes occasionally. I was correcting one of her drawings and there was something wrong. I was in Israel by then more than long enough to have learned that Israelis HATE to be criticized and I handled all the girls with all the tact and best quality kidgloves I could muster.

Yona, could you come over for a minute, I think you made a little mistake here. Yona; snarling, I DONT MAKE MISTAKES!! Maybe it is not so nice, but I DONT MAKE MISTAKES!! Sorry, Yona, could you then make the part which is not so nice, a little nicer? One of the girls who picked up the sarcasm, giggled and Yona turned on her like a tigress, SHEKET!! (Shut up). She sat there, her soft Yemenite eyes shooting daggers at me while doodling on a piece of paper. I knew it from past such happenings that unless I find a way to shortcircuit this little drama she will sit there till closing time doodling and not doing a lick of work till tomorrow, when she will consider it to be politically correct to fix the drawing without losing face. I got ^a brainwave. Yona? Yes. Would you like to sit on my lap? This brought the house down of course. NO! I DONT WANT TO SIT ON YOUR LAP!! More laughing. Few minutes later she comes over smiling, where is the not so nice part Erwin? As the old saw goes, there is more than one way to skin a (Yemenite) pussy.

The next story concerns not the girls but Jerry Cantor my Boss Impersonator. I used to see in the art department since a few days, a girl who was skin and bone, obviously having some kind of endocrine problem. She was also extremely aggressive and a very unpleasant person all around. When I saw Jerry I asked him who the new girl is? She is a klafte (shrew) Arie (the supervisor of the art department and a very talented artist) kept bugging ^{him} for months to hire, being somewhat of a crackerjack graphic artist, but he tells me now that the girl changed completely and he doesnt want her anymore and now he wants me to fire her, which is no problem as she has no tenure yet but I hate to fire people. A few days later this

girl stands at my board. My name is Ilana, and Jerry told me to ask you for a job in your group. Ilana, Jerry told me absolutely nothing about you and in any case I dont need more people, sorry. The last thing I needed was another "problem child". But Jerry said if you cant give me a job I'll have to leave. Sorry Ilana but I cant help you. She gives me a drop dead look and leaves. Jerry tried to pull similar shit on me before but never so blatantly and I had it up to here with Jerry's kind of "supervising". When I was really mad at him I used to ask him to take a little walk with me downstairs and reamed his ass out. Jerry never ever said a word beside admitting that he is not much of supervisor blah, blah. I stormed into Jerry's office mad as hell and told him to take a little walk downstairs. Again? What did I do this time? Lets go Jerry. When we got far enough away from people I gave it ^{to} him with both barrells. Jerry, you ^{know} what you are? Nothing more than a fucken English speaking Israeli, and as you know that is no compliment in this context. How do you have the monumental chutzap to tell that shrew to ask ME for a job and trying to make me your hatchet man? You HIRED the bitch, you FIRE the bitch. It comes with the territory! If you are unable or unwilling to behave like a supervisor go back to your fucken kibbutz and herd sheep! I turned and left. I was mad enough to spit tacks. Dont I have enough tzores(problems) with my own crew and all the fucken engineers and technicians? To ask myself the same question, HOW could I EVER get myself into this mess? And more importantly how could I get myself OUT of it? I made up my mind to write to General Bar-Lev who was at that time the Minister of Commerce and industry. Two weeks later

Jerry comes to see me with a lopsided grin on his face to tell me, You and me are invited to a yeshiva (conference in this context) to Danny Yadin's office at 1100hres. (Yadin was the Personnel Manager) And what is the reason for this unexpected pleasure and honour? The little letter you wrote to Bar-Lev in your inimitable style says Jerry,grinning. Oh? We troupe into Yadin's office who tells us that Mr Arnon is waiting for us. Mr Arnon being the Plant Manager I'd the impression that the poopoo must have hit the propeller and perhaps I went a bit too far this time. However Mr.Arnon greets us very cordially and after asking us all to sit down he picks up my letter to Bar-Lev. Mr. Fuchs all what you say here is true and we 're all aware of this but nobody wants to talk about it. What I would like to ask you is to write another letter to the Minister of Defence, to whom your letter was forwarded from Bar-Lev's office because we are working for the Minister of Defence, as you know, and make it clear that what you wrote you meant generally, not specifically for IAI, otherwise it puts us in a poor lighth. Mr. arnon if that's what you want me to do I'll be glad to but anybody who read my letter carefully must have realized,that this was exactly what I meant. Well, yes but I would appreciate it if you would do it anyway. I'll be glad to. Thank you very much for all of you. Shalom, Shalom.-

Jerry comes to see me with that lopsided grin which always means that something unusual is up. Erwin I've good news for you. I can hardly wait Jerry to hear it. Your old boss wants to borrow you back for a couple of months. You dont mean Gordon, do you? The very same. I aint going. Well I dont really blame you but if this ^{is} your last word we gotta see Danny Yadin because this ^{is} coming from the top. So lets go see Danny. Danny's secretary is taking us in and Danny tells me the same story, Gordon wants me back for a couple of months and my answer is the same: I'm not going. I can see from Danny's body language that he is not unhappy about it but tells me we've to see Mr. Arnon, the Plant Manager because it is coming from Gordon thru Arnon. So we go to see Mr. Arnon and we have the same conversation. Well Mr. Fuchs I dont really blame you but this puts me in an embarrassing situation because when Mr. Gordon approved your transfer from TEUD the deal was that if and when he needs you temporarily we'll send you over. Mr. Arnon I see your problem but you've to realize that I was not part of this deal so I cant see why it would be binding on me? so you dont want to go? Absolutely not Mr. Arnon. OK then I'll let him know. Thank you Mr. Arnon, shalom, Shalom. However, this was not the end of the story. Months later I'm going into Jerry's office and guess who is there? Mr. Gordon in all his six ft. six majesty! I excuse myself for intruding and leave and Gordon follows me out! You know what? I feel like knowcking your head off! Why Mr. Gordon? Because you embarrassed me for refusing to come back when I need you. You cant blame me because we had no work for you. I realize that but that was not the reason. What was the reason then? There was a very unpleasant atmosphere in you your department Mr. Gordon. He walked away.

By now, Dear Reader, you must have a good inkling that Israel is truly a Sui Generis, where everything is done differently, if not better, but you aint seen nothing yet. Regardless of where you work in the West, and in what endeavour, for a card punching

'Tax system breeds lies, waste'

4-4-74

TEL AVIV. — The present wage and taxation system has encouraged a culture of lies, damaged work ethics, created an atmosphere of waste, and made its own circumvention possible, according to Yisra'el Meidan, Director of the Productivity Institute.

Mr. Meidan headed an Israel Management Centre "brains trust" to examine the effect of the wage and taxation system on Israel's management. Mr. Meidan and IMC chairman Meir Amit told a press conference at Beit Sokolow yesterday the system must be changed, so that most of the so-called "benefits" be included in the formal wages, and distortions done away with by including most of the "exceptions" in the taxable income.

The "brains trust" report concluded that during the years the present

system has been employed, the proportion of income derived in exchange for actual work done has grown smaller, relative to additional pay given as benefits for various occasions and conditions.

Payments for "expenses," "professional literature," "family benefits" and "clothing allowances," have increased, as have such things as automatic premiums and fictitious overtime, connected in no way to the amount of productivity. Additional "benefit" examples cited were meal allowances, representation fees and payments for non-essential services.

Mr. Meidan said false reports — which have had to be filed by employees in order to get reimbursement for expenses recognized by the income tax authorities — have led to straying from the truth in other areas as well, and management thus became unable to keep

proper tabs on work hours and production.

Concerns which have been unable to get around the tax laws and to pay various benefits have been unable to attract superior manpower. In addition, the difference in wage levels for different professional levels has shrunk, so that minor employees often earn more than senior ones who are more qualified. This, the "brains trust" felt, has caused damage to the workers' motivation.

The report recommends that the distortions in the system be done away with gradually, but that distortions in each component be corrected at the same time. Wage agreements, which have too broad a range of automatic promotions unlinked to excellence or productivity, should be changed, and the linkage of various scales should be eliminated.

Knesset panel to review ^{12/2/87} 'training fund' benefits

By SHLOMO MAOZ
Post Economic Reporter

The Knesset Finance Committee decided yesterday to consider changing the terms of "professional training" funds (*k'ranot hishtalmut*), whose benefits are available to only a small segment of employees.

This came because committee members view the funds as a superior form of savings plan and that the tax-exempt status of the funds has no legal basis.

Amos Hadar (Alignment-Labour) raised the matter in committee and urged giving self-employed people the same tax benefits received by employees who participate in the funds.

Employees pay 2.5 per cent of their salaries into the funds, while their employers put in 7.5 per cent.

The employer's contribution is tax-exempt, in contrast to other payments to employees.

The funds invest 92 per cent of their assets in linked government bonds, whose yield of 5.2 per cent is equal to the yield of pension-plan savings. The latter are closed for 15 years, whereas money from the training funds may be used for travel abroad after three years and may be withdrawn in cash after six years.

Committee chairman Shlomo Lorincz sent a letter to the finance minister complaining that the tax-exempt status of the funds had never been approved by the committee. He also stated that the terms of the funds encourage employees to use the money for illicit training programmes.

CARRIERS-NON-DRIVERS: Car Allowance Is Pay

A group of Broadcast Authority workers who neither own cars nor hold driving licences have asked the labour court in Jerusalem to order the authority to pay them car allowances. They say the allowance has become "an indivisible and highly significant salary component which in many instances amounts to more than 30 per cent of the recipient's total pay."

The 15 appellants, most of them women, say the Broadcasting Authority Participates in its employees' car expenses without making payment conditional on their duties or actual use of their cars.

It pays all who have driving licences, so long as they or their spouses own a car, the group says, and the rate is determined by the employee's grade.

The group claims the authority is discriminating against them and offering a case against the widely accepted rule in the public service that employees of the same grade earn the same salary no matter where they work. (Iltim) 7/11/79

CAR ALLOWANCES

6/12/79

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post
Sir, — I fully sympathize with the plight of the Broadcasting Authority's workers in the matter of the car allowance (November 14), but if it makes them feel better, I can assure them that they are not alone with this problem.

My outfit also pays so-called "car allowances" according to grade and also so-called "telephone allowances." All you need to do is to buy an old jalopy, get a driving licence and you receive up to 80 per cent of your salary in the above-mentioned "allowances" year after year after year, regardless of whether you use your car or not.

For me this system even fairer and more equitable. This outfit has

its own, but it is appropriate for its workers and it is used by the majority of employees with "car allowance." The result of this wonderful system is that it can easily happen — and does — that a supervisor makes less money. — If he has no car — than his subordinate, and a colleague sitting next to you doing exactly the same job can easily make 100 per cent more than you do if he happens to have a jalopy he doesn't use, and a telephone. Needless to say, this kind of thing does absolute wonders for work morale. But who worries about something old-fashioned like that?

OLD-FASHIONED
(Name and Address Supplied)
Ramat Efal.

The wrong goodbye

By SHLOMO MAOZ

Jerusalem Post Economics Editor

Workers dismissed from public sector jobs have been asking for and receiving severance pay in excess of their final monthly salary for each year of employment. Depending on how much pressure they put on their employers and how much backing they enjoy from Histadrut Trade Union chief Haim Haberfeld, these payments have varied from 150% to as high as 300%.

At first glance, it seems ridiculous that companies plagued by financial difficulties should pay more than the legally mandated rate of 100%. The more a company spends on redundancy payments, the more workers it must eventually sack to finance these payments. This vicious circle easily leads to bankruptcy, as was the case with the giant Solel Boneh construction firm.

With so many more companies in financial difficulty, however, there is growing move to lower the rate of severance pay to 100% or 150%.

Even so, the question remains how did a situation develop in which companies are prepared to pay their workers more than they are required by law.

The answer is that the wage system – like many other facets of our economy – is full of distortions. Employees are paid relatively low basic wages, which are padded with other items, like car allowances, holiday refunds (*dimei havra'a*), telephone allowances, advanced-training funds, and an assortment of other perks, which vary from job to job. The only items employers are obli-

gated to pay are basic wages, employee pensions, and National Insurance Institute benefits.

In the short run, both sides were happy because workers were earning more and employers were saving money on pension payments, which are only based on the base salary.

But what workers eventually discovered when they left their jobs or retired is that the pensions they received fell way below the standard of living they had grown accustomed to. So, in order to attain the full 100% of their last wage payment, the workers started to ask for 200% of their basic wage.

Maybe Haberfeld went overboard when he forced Solel Boneh to pay a severance pay of 250% of the basic wage, but workers cannot be cheated for too long. They learned that 100% is really only the equivalent of half their real wages.

The salaries and huge perks and fringe benefits paid to company heads are published in the papers every day. An Israel manager can easily cost his company NIS 20,000-30,000 a month, even when it is losing money. These disclosures have done nothing to convince workers that their severance pay is the only target for company budget cuts.

They would probably be more understanding if their managers' high salaries were accompanied by a risk. In Japan, if they fail at their job, they often commit suicide. Here we should settle for the milder but equally effective way out practised in the West – resignation.

Erwin Fuchs
29052 / 3806.

October 3, 1955

Dear Danny , (YADIN) .

Perhaps this is a bit premature but as you know the wheels of bureaucracy are turning slowly and I've no way of knowing how much time is involved in these kind of procedures. -

As you probably know I'll retire at the end of this year. - According to my information 1-6 months salary is given in similar circumstances as " final bonus " according to your recommendation. -

I think it would be fair taking into consideration at this final stage that I've saved at least IS 100,000 for IAI during these 10yrs of service due to the following facts :

1.)

IAI has some 7000 employees getting a so-called " car allowance " which at my " darga " 9 technai , amounts to almost a second salary after taxes. It is no great secret that the majority of these employees are routinely using our busas to and from work. It ^{is} also no great secret that a lot of these people just bought an old jalopy they never drive but let it rust in their backyard " using " it exclusively to be qualified for the " car allowance ". (This " system " is not unique with IAI as you know & there have been several articles about the " fairness " of it in the newspapers , including the JERUSALEM POST). I refused to play this game NOT because I'm a " tzadick " but because according to my " twisted logic " if I'd have taken part of it it would have meant that I APPROVE of the " system " - as long as I get MY share of the "cake" - and I definitely DONT approve of this " system ". - In my humble opinion if employees above a certain " darga " are entitled to additional " fringe benefits " than they should be ALL entitled regardless whether they drive to work , take the bus - or ride a camel. -

2.)

As you know we've here a plan which allows employees above a certain " darga " to go on a so-called " study trip " overseas every 3 years. The employee contributes a certain sum every months and IAI contributes 2 or 3 times the amount , I'm not sure. - The employee taking this " study trip " - with his family if he wishes - is supposed to bring some " proves " that he actually " studied " something/ somewhere along the line. It is again no great secret

that this plan is nthing more than a farce because hardly ANYBODY is studying anything. It is again nothing more - or less - than a fringe benefit for employees above a certain " darga " willing to tell a " little white lie ". I again didn't take part in this plan either - for the same reason : I'm NO " tzadick " but if IAI wants to help certain employees to go " chutz " they should do so without requiring said employees to tell a lie - even if " white " (This plan is not unique with IAI either of course and it was denounced in the Jerusalem Post also quite recently as unfair and immoral). -

3.)

I was told that I've accumulated some 1225 hrs of " hofesh machalah " during my 10 yrs service. As you know all this - amounting to some SEVEN MONTHS - will be just " written off " when I leave. -

I'm sure that you're aware of it that it is a rather widespread practice here - and not a big " kunst " - to ask your " friendly family doctor " for a "certificate" to let you take a " badly needed rest " - who will gladly oblige, to get you out of his hair, if you dont do it too often. - (This is also NO great secret and as one doctor remarked in the Jerusalem Post "One of the most important thing in the equipment of a doctor here are Certificates to distribute for " sick " workers asking for a few days " rest ". WHO has the energy and TIME to argue with them ? ") - It would have been specially easy for me to play this little game as my doctor happen to be the son in law of my best friends here where I live and I'm on a friendly basis with him & his wife.

The fact that I was able to accumulate seven months of sick leave proves that I did not partake in the game. -

I think you'll agree that I saved a small fortune to IAI during these 10 yrs and I hope you'll take these facts into your kind consideration when recommending me for the " final bonus " . -

Respectfully yours ,



stiff like myself the system of wages and fringe benefits are pretty straightforward and above board. As you probably know not much is straightforward and above board in the Middle East in general and in Israel in particular, where "deals" are a way of life and Caveat Emptor is something you can forget only to your own peril. As I mentioned this before, in Israel this is specially true as they got used to it long ago that they can survive only by their wits giving and asking for no quarters. This attitude of looking out for yourself is reflecting the system of wages and fringe benefits, the latter available only for the cognescenti who are asking for them on a case by case basis. I found out only years later that I'm getting shafted because I was not aware of certain fringe benefits available to employees at my DARGA (grade) who are "in the know".

The first thing an Israeli employee does in a new outfit is, to start sniffing around and asking around about what kinds of fringe benefits are available for somebody with his DARGA? For an Israeli this presents no difficulties as he is in the Clan and the others don't mind sharing this information with him/her as it is not in their interest ^{not to} do so. With us Westerners in general and Americans in particular it is a whole different ballgame. As I mentioned before, we Americans are not exactly the fair haired boys of the "natives". ^{here} Not only do we come to take the best jobs from Israelis, according to them, but as if this wouldn't be good/bad enough, on top of this we get all these yummy special privileges and exemptions like being allowed to bring in a car tax free, to say nothing about household appliances like washing machines, dryers, refrigerators, stereos etc, Israelis keep us urging to

sell them or buy them here, even if we dont need them, so they can "take them off our hands" and split the difference in price of what they would have to pay with taxes. With all these special privileges and exemptions thrown at us WHY should they help us to get the fringe benefits too? MAPITOM? If we're smart enough to ferret them out kol ha'Kavod(all my respect) but they sure as hell wont help us to do so. AS one ^{American} wrote in a Letter to the Editor of the Jerusaelm Post, Israel is the only country between the industrial nations where the fringe benefits make up the major part of one's salary. What is the reason for this anomaly? The reason is that with the possible exception of Sweden Israelis are the most heavily taxed citizens in the world. This resulted in another Israeli speciality. As we all know cheating on taxes is as endemic as the cold virus all over the world. But "Only in Israel" does your employer help you to cheat on the Government - with the Government's wholehearted approval. Howso and whyso? Because due to the very high taxes it makes no sense for the employer to pay high salaries from which the worker would barely benefit anyway. With their well-known jewish financial acumen they hit on the solution to invent a whole slew of so-called fringe benefits which are not taxable. Zeu! (there you are). Some of these fringe benefits are available for everybody but most of them are available for employees above a certain DARGA-only. The trouble with this sytem is that it creates a lot of hard feelings and rancor because it is a very unfair and capricious sytem. There were any number of articles, to say nothing about Letters to the Editor about this story but as long as I was there nothing was done about it and I saw an article in the Jerusalem Post only a year ago about the same story. -

By far the best deal of all these fringe benefits is the famous/infamous "car allowance", which is also the longest and sharpest thorn in the sides of the majority of Israeli workers for two reasons. First, because only the highest paid employees can afford to buy a car even if it is only a rustbucket, second because the majority of the employees who can afford to have a car are the Americans, who either brought them in taxfree or can buy one here taxfree. The amount of the car allowance again depends on one's DARGA. On my level it amounted to almost a second paycheck.

Needless to say nobody gives ^a damn whether you actually DRIVE your car or not as long as you have a valid driving licence. It is accepted M.O. to buy a rustbucket, ~~dump~~ ^{dump} same in your backyard and ride the company's buses free to work as hundreds of my colleagues did, or if you don't have free transport, ride EGGED.

Truth to be told I was tempted to play this game myself. While it is true that money can't buy happiness it can buy a lot of other nice stuff. I realized that I cannot do it after all. You either dance the dance, in which case you cannot kvetch about the lousy music, or you don't dance the dance - and kvetch. I knew I'm going to kvetch, because if you don't try to change in this country what needs to be changed, WHY come here at all? The next best deal in fringe benefits is the so-called "study tour" every three years o'seas. The way it works is like this: you pay a certain amount of money in ^a Study Fund which is equalled by the same sum by the outfit. I don't remember either the exact sum or the exact length of the... vacation which it is. I assume it is again according to your DARGA.

When you arrived o'seas ^{you} get yourself a zetele from an outfit certifying, that you "studied" their system of this and that Zeu. It is all a farce and everybody is aware of it of course, being just another way to pay an employee above a certain DARGA additional money which is not taxable. I found out about this after I was here for three years and only by accident. When I told my colleague I wouldn't know from where I could bring a zetele, he just laughed. Erwin, benet you are an idiot. You worked by ITT and BENDIX for years. Are you telling me that you couldn't get a zetele from somebody testifying that you studied the latest drafting technics? It was my turn to laugh. I passed this up for the same reason as the car allowance. Another nice fringe benefit was the Book Allowance. According to your DARGA you got a certain sum of money every year to buy books in your ~~spe~~cial field. For this you did not have to bring a zetele from the book store. You will be glad to hear Dear Reader what I said before, being honest is one thing but being a saint or a fool is another. Some of the guys spent it on a subscription for PLAYBOY, which was not cheap in Israel, but I shunned such frivolity and spent it on surgical textbooks which is my life-long interest if you recall. There was a wonderful bookstore in Tel-Aviv run by an old Yecke who had an encyclopedic knowledge of the field. Another fringe benefit was the Telephone Allowance. As in Israel it takes from 2-9 yrs to get a phone installed it was obvious that the majority of the people, specially new immigrants, could not have a phone, but again everybody knew this was a farce, for more taxfree money. There was a cute story in the Jewrusalem Post while I was there about an old couple who were

waiting for a phone since many years. One day they got a letter from the phone Co. to come in to sign the zeteles because they will get the phone in a couple of months, sof-sof. (at last). Said the old geezer: HOW did they know we're still ALIVE?

Apart from these more important fringe benefits there are a half a dozen others, like clothing allowance, including us draftsman who never ever wore any kind of special garment with the exception of Yehezkel the Schlemiel who wore a white lab coat. He looked real sharp in the morning going around like a kindergarten teacher klapping his hands: chevreh, chevreh, ha'shaah shmoooooneeeeh! (it is eighth o'clock friends!) I must make perfectly clear that the chevreh was supposed to start to work at seven, not at eighth, but what is one hour diff, righth? I also want you to know that at 0930hr there was an official "haffsacka" (coffe break) of ten minutes officially, which became of course at least twenty minutes. In case Dear Reader, you assume that all this is exaggeration, i.e. a lie, please read the story of my former colleague Jay Shapiro describe in his book FROM BOTH SIDES NOW p.133 (inter alia): "The result of this setup was the phenomenon of a total take-home pay in which fringe benefits far exceeded the actual base salary... by discussing each other's wages, one can learn about available fringe benefits of which one might not have been aware otherwise... the employee is not always made aware of the fringe benefits to which he is entitled, thus the extras can be doled out by management to whoever it sees fit, without relationship to the work performed. (read not for Westerners. (My add.)). In one case an excellent electronics technician cannot receive a car allowance because he has

eye problems...another interesting case is a married couple, both chemists. The husband receives a large ^{car} allowance, but goes to work by bus. The wife works at another institution and also receives a large car allowance but walks to work. The car is actually a wage earning member of the family. The newcomer may run into difficulty when the modus operandi goes against the grain of his upbringing and integrity...and in response to this some people decide to leave the country...I didn't know that 'telephone allowance' was only a name... my contract did not require me to sign a false statement...I had never been in a position where I had to sign my name to a blatant lie...very much disturbed I met with a rabbi... his response only added to my misgivings...he explained we were dealing with a lie agreed by both sides." Poor Jay found himself between a rock and hard place. Being a True Believer and ardent Zionist he wanted to stay because he was convinced that his academic background as physicist can contribute to the country, but having a large family to support he could use every lira he could get. He decided to dance the dance and ignore the discord in the music. I don't blame him. I blame the system which forces a honest person to become a ganef (crook).

Talking about time, does tempus ever fugit! I just realized that my three years contract expired more than a month ago without hearing as much as a peep from our Management, using the word carelessly. I ask Jerry what the score is on this delicate subject? Jerry: Are you getting paid? Yes. So what are you worrying about? I dont remember saying anything about worrying, but I dont like to be in a limbo. Go find out will you? After a few more NU's on this subject, Jerry tells me he was told by Dany Yadin (personal Mgr.) that he put in a request for my tenure. You have to hand it to this people! They know talent when they see it!

I heard it on the grapewine that my former boss, that gracious, charming, universally loved and admired GENTLEMAN, and

the Manager - a misnomer in this case if ever there was one - Mr. Matt (Bowl) Gordon was liberated from TEUD at long last. As I said before the Bitachon is one outfit which is on the ball at least most of the time. It took them a little while but they realized that they hardly briefed somebody on a classified project and the next thing they knew the person was gone. As this kind of thing became a habit at TEUD they started to interview all the people who left TEUD wanting to know their reason for leaving, which turned out in every instance, that mamzer (bastard), that putz (prick), that ben-zona (son of a whore) Gordon. As you can't have people briefed on classified projects one day and the person leaving the next, Mr. Gordon was told to take a hike. As Mr. Gordon was well connected, as I mentioned, he was given a job as salesman for the Arava. The ARAVA was a STOL aircraft (short take off/landing) and the beloved prima para of IAI. It was a good aircraft, selling for a while briskly in Third World countries, but by the time Gordon was "empowered" with its sale it was yesterday's snow anyway, so even Gordon couldn't do much harm to it.

And now Dear Reader, this being October 1973, we're interrupted in the normally smooth (?) flow of my personal chronicle by nothing less than History, by what became known as The Yom Kippur War. I hope you realize that at my advanced youth of 58 yrs I could not have been more than a bystander and that my days of derring and doing were long over. As you probably remember there were a few white nuckle cum tight asshole days when Uncle Saddam started this adventure on the Holiest of the Holy days for us Jews. And although he lost the battle, as the Ay-rabs always did before, this time

he didnt completely lost the war, having proved to himself and all the Ay-rabs, and the world too, that they are not the complete klutzes anymore they used to be, and that they can give us jews a hard time even if only for a short time, inflicting serious losses in lives and casualties, which a little country as Israel can ill afford. Truth to be told, all the white knuckle days were our own fault and could have been avoided if even such a brilliant and seasoned warrior as Dayan wouldnt have made the two classic mistakes military historians and strategist warned against since time immemorial. Dont underestimate your enemy, and dont misinterpret your intelligence, influenced by ^{your} own convictions. As that old OSS hand Malcolm Muggeridge said with great insight and paraphrasing the Old Bestseller: "Where your heart is, there is your intelligence also." Or as Goethe put it: " You find what you look for, and you look for what you know." Israel's ZAHAL (IDF) had more than enough intelligence at hand to be prepared for Saddam's offensive but ^{Dayan} was convinced that Saddam's army was not up to it for a longtime yet.

As you know he was in very good and distinguished company. To mention just the latest example before the Yom Kippur war, that other Erwin, Rommel, was visiting his Gemahlin in Germany, when the Allied debarked in Europe where according to the Wehrmacht they were NOT going to debark , also disregarding and misinterpreting all the necessary intelligence they had. All this proves only again the old saw: "None so blind as those who dont want to see." -

AS for my part in this drama it was minuscule indeed. All of us who were too old or otherwise decrepit etc were told to report to work the best we can, as all the buses were of course mobilized

for the war effort. We hitch rides to and from work which was no problem under the circumstances as everybody picked up everybody. Jerry gave me a ride the first day and we were stopped at the crossroads at Tel Hashomer Hospital at Qvish Gaha, where I lived, by two little kids with a bucket full of blue paint and brushes to slop on the headlights for the blackout. I'm not ashamed to admit that it choked me up for a minute. What kind of life this little country and its people must have when little kids consider painting headlights blue, something what comes with the territory?

When I got home I raked what I have for brains what could I do to help beside reporting to "work"? When Israel have to fight a war it is not for "politics" or some other esoteric reason. It fights for the life of every man, woman and child. Period. Remembering my operating room days I dugged out my Testimonials and recommendations from surgeons I've worked with, and taking my ID badge with me to show that I'm kosher, I reported to Tel-Hashomer hospital across the road, showing my papers and offering whatever help I can. they thanked me politely but they said that they have more volunteers than they can handle. This left me no other choice but go to work the best I could, but there was nothing much we did as most everybody was mobilized so there was even less Management as before. It took months after the war was over to get people demobilized and start to trickle back to work and get back to normal abnormalcy. After the war all of us who reported to work got a commemorative medal and a little certificate thanking us for our part in the war effort, signed by Al Schwimmer.

There were two obvious consequences of the Yom Kippur war. One general and one particular. The general, as I mentioned previously was the diminishing of their DELUSION DE GRANDEUR or according to that wonderful French expression SE DEGONFLER. The particular was to the benefit of Americans, although needless to say it was not planned that way. It concerned the elimination after many years of that idiotic rule which had no valid reason in the first place, the special green/white license plates for taxfree cars. These plates which identified the taxfree cars of Americans, as neither the Rumanians, nor the Russian could afford even taxfree cars, to say nothing of the other immigrants from North Africa etc, were the proverbial red cape in the eyes of our admirers and friends who hated our guts for receiving all these exemptions and privileges. The next step was obvious. They vandalized the cars with the green/white plates. The Americans bitched about this for years, only to be told that we're all a bunch of cry babies, never satisfied. During the Yom Kippur wars there were unfortunately a lot of amputees who were entitled to taxfree cars, which meant of course the same green/white license plates Americans had to put up with. The next happening was obvious. The meshugganes who vandalized the American cars started to do the same with the cars of the amputees. And you know what happened? Of course you know! They eliminated the green/white license plates tsick-tsack, proving the old saw: where there is a will there IS a way!



מדינת ישראל משרד הבטחון

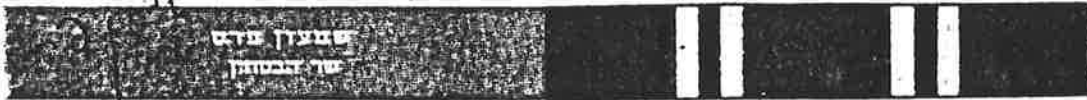
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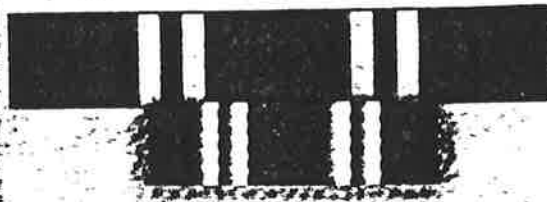
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הועבד

אות
מלחמת
יום הכיפורים



משרד הביטחון
סניף מרכז



התעשייה האווירית לישראל בע"מ

ל ארנון פוקס

מועק לך בזה

אות מלחמת יום הכיפורים

לציון תרומתך למאמץ המלחמתי

בהוקרה

א.ו. שוימר

א'ו שוימר
מנהל כללי

9 There was big excitement between the girls because Nava was supposed to get married soon, when tragedy struck this sweet girl the second time; Her first fiancee was hit by a car some years ago and became a vegetable. This time, when everything was ready to go, including all the invitations sent out etc, her fiance' got into an argument with his Moroccan neighbor over the extending of a balcony and the Moroccan killed him with a knife. The Moroccans are known here as knife fighters and are not exactly the most popular immigrants. All the girls were devastated of course coming in with red eyes for days. I felt terrible about this tragedy myself, specially as Nava was the only girl who never gave me a minute of trouble. For me from the Diaspora the whole thing was quite simply unbelievable and devastatingly ugly. Whatever we Jews had been accused of we were known as the most law abiding group, apart from occasional white collar crime, and gangsterism during the Prohibition era, but violent crime inside The Clan specially, was simply unheard of. Is this why we wanted to have our own country after two thousand years, to start killing each other over a goddamn balcony? I was devastated, the more so as this was anything but an isolated case. I'm not going to get into statistics here but the sad fact is that Israel has more than its share of every crime going. According to an article in the Jerusalem Post August 28/78 crime was neatly organized according to military lines, with special branches for burglary, blowing up police stations, politician's cars, headed up by a former demolition expert. One of the reporters interviewed the Superintendent of Police Mr, Tavori, wanting to know why do we have all this crime in Israel.

Said Mr. Tavori: "Israelis consider the Law an invasion of privacy." They are all maniac drivers asking or expecting no quarters. As one wit wrote in a Letter to the Editor, if the Arabs would be smart they would buy a car for every Israeli, and in a couple of years nothing but the memory would be left of Israel. One traffic policeman stopped a driver who didn't have his headlights on during the night. Why don't you have your headlights on Chabibi? I don't need it, I've very good night vision! I don't think an American traffic policeman ever heard this one, which can only happen in a country where everybody thinks only of himself. "Any kodem!" I come first! -

My group started to dwindle with Nava and Yona leaving for greener pastures with better pay and closer to home also. Yona told me proudly Nava and I will teach them to work to US MIL-SPEC as you have shown us Erwin, and we're going to keep in touch. Much to my surprise they did too. Yona arrived with her husband David, a very nice Yemenite boy she met at IAI, on next Purim bearing gifts and yummy Yemenite food and homemade decorations. That the group started to dwindle was just as well as we had again very little to do.

Summer vacation arrived mercifully on schedule and I was invited to my old friend Mezi, I met during my first Aliya when I worked for a short time in the same hospital Poriyah, close to Tiberias on the shore of the Kinneret, the Sea of Galilee. Mezi was the Chief of X-ray in this little hospital whose saving grace was of being the closest to Israel's Northern border where the terrorists infiltrated most often causing casualties. Mezi was from Iraq and a very unusual Israeli, a workaholic and perfectionist.

In his housekeeping habits he reminded me of my former wife. Everything had to be spotless. It is often said about somebody who is a good housewife that you could eat from the floor but with Hezi it was a fact. Every time he used the toilet he scrubbed it with the brush and desinfectant. Hezi had three passions in life not necessarily in this order: his work as X-ray technician, girls and swimming. He was probably one of the best technician in Israel who could have easily gotten a job in a much bigger and more important hospital but he didnt want to leave his beloved Kinneret, The Sea of Galilee. As for girls, he was the greatest womanizer I ever met in my life. He was not specially handsome and he was only a bit taller than I'm but he was solid muscle and more importantly he had the most incredible chutzpah even for an Israeli and a prototype of what we call today the male chauvinist pig par excellence. He treated women as dirt and they loved it. As he kept telling me women are good only for two things, the second being for cooking. He always had a "speshel" girlfriend and whatever he could pickup as a sidedish. When I met him he was about 35yrs and girls over twenty were over the hill for him. His third passion was swimming as I said. He got up early in the morning except when I was there and went swimming in the Kinneret for an hour 365 days a year rain or shine. There is every year a mass swim across the Kinneret and everybody who completed it got a medal. Hezi had every medal since the swim started hanging in his room. He was also a Certified Life Guard and made a little money on the side working part time at any of the beach clubs and restaurants. Needless to say that everybody knew Hezi. It was truly

a case of being a big fish in a small lake. The girls were literally running after him. Once we walked about in Tiberias and a girl ran after him Hezi, Hezi. He stopped and I tactfully kept my distance. After they finished the conversation and Hezi rejoined me I asked him what did she want? He looked at me like I were retarded. Erwin, BEMER! what did she want? She wanted to fuck.

Whenever I visited Hezi he considered it a matter of honour to try to "fix me up" but never even came close as all the girls he knew could have been my daughters of course, nevertheless he never gave up. This time it was the same story. We went out to ^{the} beach after he finished work and Hezi took up his observation point and switched on his search radar for both of us. Soon enough he spotted two girls playing paddle ball, the Israeli speciality. One was a tall lovely blond the other a little Oriental looking brunette with a great chassy with that feline grace Oriental girls have. Erwin, the blonde is for me - all Israelis are crazy about blondes specially those from Arab Countries like Hezi - and the brunette is for you. Are the girls in on this decision Hezi? If you live in Israel Erwin, you have to be an optimist. He walks over to the brunette and asks her for her paddle because he wants to play ball with her girlfriend. Before the little brunette realizes what is going on Hezi takes her paddle and serving to the blonde the first ball. And this ^{is} how the most incredible story of my life started. If you would read it in a book you would say, well, paper is patient. After a couple of minutes the blonde says thanks and walks off. Hezi never at a loss, takes the little brunette by her hand and tells her he wants to

killed me but we left anyway and Ine quieted down. Ine and I got into the backseat and Hezi started out for the kibbutz. Ine snuggled up to me and big Don Juan what I was I wanted to give her a little peck on the cheek. Ine had other ideas and we got into some frantic necking and groping during which I found out what I suspected that Ine had nothing under her halter dress but a bikini panty. We got to the kibbutz and had a fond farewell and Ine gave me her address and asked for mine ^{as} she wanted to correspond, which was fine with me of course. As soon as we got into the car Hezi started into his tirade what a hopeless idiot I am, slichu, (excuse me) ^{to spend all} this money on a girl and I didnt even fuck her! I fuck them FIRST and maybe I take them out to dinner afterwards if they are lucky! And on and on and on till we got back home, untill I felt like strangling the bastard. A couple of days later we 're sitting at the beach when Hezi's search radar picks up a tall brunette obviously looking for a likely place to dive in. Hezi always the helpful gentlemen walks over to tell her that he is a certified lifeguard here and it is forbidden to dive because it is dangerous and what is her name and where is she from etc? Hezi tells her that he would like to introduce her to his friend from America. The gal is politely friendly and comes over and we introduce each other: her name is Ine and she is from Amsterdam, visiting Israel the third time etc etc. I tell her that she is the second Ine in three weeks and from Holland. She laughs and we get into a polite conversation and she says she would like to go back to her hostel, so we all pile into Hezi's VW and drive her to the hostel where we say polite farwells to each other.

The rest of the vacation passed uneventfully and I went back to Ramat Efal and work. Couple of weeks later Hezi sends me a post-card from Innah, who is politely thanking us for taking her back to her hostel etc. Hezi telling me that she must be the gal we took out for dinner, the nightclub etc etc. I get a bit mad, confused and bemused. I write a polite letter to her in which I say that I realize that Hezi is the ladiesman not me but she was dancing with me all night and was very friendly in the car on the way back to the Kibbutz, so why is she writing to Hezi?! Back comes an amused letter explaining that there must be another girl I'm talking about because we most certainly did not go out for dinner less much for dancing. She wrote to Hezi because Hezi told her that he is working at the Poriyah hospital but she did not have my address although she would like to correspond with me if I want to, which I did. One week later I do get a letter from Ine, in which she recapitulates "all the nice times we had" and would like to correspond with me if I would like to. Sure I would like to, specially as she enclosed a picture of herself wearing the same handcrocheted two piece suit she wore when we met, which would have qualified for indecent exposure if it would have been anywhere smaller. I kept up the correspondence with both girls of course and out of the blue as they say, Innah, the taller and older one, asks me if I would like to spend the Xmas Holidays with her? Would a dolphin like to swim?! Financially I was in a curious position in Israel. Although I made only about half the salary in \$ US I made in America, I had absolutely no way to spend it. As I explained my rent was ridiculously cheap. I ate for almost free

One of the many things I cannot fathom about this country, and what turns me off, needless to say, why is everybody almost pathologically distrustful and suspicious of everybody else, not only from person-to-person, but what is worse from The Bureaucracy to the citizens. This execrable system of insisting on a zetele from a new immigrant to prove that one is not trying to leave the country without paying ones - nonexistent - debts is far from the only example. Here I give you the experience of my former colleague's at IAI, Jay Shapiro, from his book FROM BOTH SIDES NOW p.147 where he is trying to clear his goods from the port after his arrival.

"Port clerk: That will be 135 lirot Mr. Shapiro. I pulled out my checkbook. Dont bother. We dont accept checks. Let me talk to the Manager. Manager: thats righth. It's company policy. But I just drove all the way from Rehovot for two hours to get here. Then go back to Rehovot and bring cash. If it's cash you want, cash you will get. (Jay who is no shrinking violet goes to his bank and ask the teller to give him 135 Lirot in in single coins and goes back to the Port clerk). I'm back. Do you have the cash now? Sure do. I pulled the coin lade bag out of my pocket, raised it above his desk and turned it over, coins pouring out and rolling in all directions. You are an American arent you? Yes. I must tell you something important. You come from a country where ninety-nine percent of the people are honest and one percent are dishonest. Now you're in a country where ninety-nine percent of the are dishonest and one percent are honest and we muct accordingly."

Do you know another country, Dear Reader, where this could happen? I dont. Is it any wonder that sooner or later this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy?

in the cafeteria. I brought trunks full of clothes with me. Also records and I was sure as hell not spend the equivalent of \$20-25 on an imported record and the local ones were dreck. I couldn't even go to a movie as they were filthy and if you happened to sit in front of a young punk he thought it was great fun to spit the shells of his sunflower seeds on the neck of this old guy with grey hair. And the morons were amusing themselves rolling the Coca-Cola bottles down the aisles. Cathouses were sordid. I long ago established this hypothesis that the best yardstick of how sophisticated a country is to see how they handle the mail and prostitution. I'm not kidding. Compare Holland, America and Israel and you will see what I mean. As Innah made it plain that I can stay in her place as long as I want, the money was no problem as in those days the dollar was much stronger than now, exactly twice the Dutch Guilder. As for \$3.00-4.00 I could get a very good lunch, money was no problem. Dollars I had to buy on the black market of course but that was no problem either, as it was openly bought and sold at the unofficial Foreign Exchange of Tel-Aviv, Lillienblum Str. Although I cannot prove this, it was common knowledge that the Govt. itself was involved in the foreign currency blackmarket of Lillienblum Str. to regulate the supply and demand of the market. After having bought my share of dollars for my trip at the above described but accepted nefarious means, I was ready willing and able with all systems GO, when two days before my departure I got a frantic phone call from my Travel Agency. I should immediately report to the MISRAD HAPANIM of Ramat-Gan who need a zetele from IDUD proving that I don't OWE them money and trying to leave the country

without paying up!

Perhaps Dear Reader this is the appropriate time to regale you and reward you for your persistence, perseverance and patience for being such a good sport to follow this megillah, by giving you a free, if small sample of the legendary, mythical, often imitated but never equalled, da one and da only Israeli bureaucracy, imported FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE going back to the myst of antiquity, lovingly nurtured as a cherished hot house flower, never to be tampered with anymore than the Two Sacred Tablets handed to Moishika on Mount Sinai, also going back to the myst of antiquity.

I think I should start by explainign what MISRAD HAPANIM means, were I was supposed to report in due haste as requested by my frantic Travel Agent. MISRAD presents no problem. It means office. HAPANIM is another story. Transliterated it means OF THE FACES, thus we get OFFICE OF THE FACES. Nobody but a bureaucrat could come up with such a barbaric name concerning PEOPLE. Mr. Craig M. Mooney of the Defense Research Board of Canada was right. He said: "Bureaucrats are legitimate madmen. They have an occupational warrant and are therefore mad within their righths."- Amen.

Knowing from past such experiences that arguing is a waste of my breath I betoke myself to the MISRAD HAPANIM, making sure not to forget to take my face with me, for better or for worse. After having waited for the required hours, my face not being the only one they were interested in, I elbowed myself into the room of the interested(?) bureaucrat stating my business and inquiring about the reason they are wanting my face, consoling myself with the wit who said "It is better to be wanted for murder, than not to be wanted at all!"

The bureaucrat who was supposed to be interested in my face but wasn't, said in the patented voice of the tired and belaboured Israeli bureaucrats who has to deal day after day after day with the zillions of "Lama?"/"lama lo?" of The Faces (why/why not) told me that he needs a zetele from IDUD which is the Bank of the Jewish Agency, proving that I don't owe them money. My protestations that I never asked them for a cent, apart from the fact that I'm an employee of IAI and have my apartment at Ramat Efal and all I want to do is go on a vacation to Holland, fell on the bureaucratic ears, connected to the bureaucratic mouth which gave me the required answer: THESE ARE THE RULES. Knowing defeat when I feel it I said Shalom, but what I really wanted to say is better left here unrecorded. Instead Let's hear loud and clear what Professor Zweig has to say about Israeli bureaucrats and bureaucracy in his scholarly work: Israel, the Sword and the Harp p.131-2. inter alia: The bureaucratic mechanism in Israel is highly developed...and is also highly 'de-humanized'. The Israeli bureaucrat trust no one and keeps asking: 'what, how, why, and why not?'... Documents, records, testimonials are requested and produced and then taken to the next room to be shown to the supervisor, as he does not like to take responsibility on himself. As the supervisor is also not very sure, he advises caution. Procrastination is the rule and this produces queues, beleaguering every office in Israel. The civil servant not only frustrates others but also is the most frustrated person in the country...and if he is a sadist or if he wants to give back what he himself experienced in the past, he has full opportunity to do so...the Israeli bureaucracy is often described jokingly as Talmudic-socialistic-bureaucracy."

One of the many things I cannot fathom about this country, and what turns me off, needless to say, why is everybody almost pathologically distrustful and suspicious of everybody else, not only from person-to-person, but what is worse from The Bureaucracy to the citizens. This execrable system of insisting on a zetele from a new immigrant to prove that one is not trying to leave the country without paying one's - nonexistent - debts is far from the only example. Here I give you the experience of my former colleague's at IAI, Jay Shapiro, from his book FROM BOTH SIDES NOW p.147 where he is trying to clear his goods from the port after his arrival:

"Port clerk: That will be 135 lirot Mr. Shapiro. I pulled out my checkbook. Dont bother. We dont accept checks. Let me talk to the Manager. Manager: thats righth. It's company policy. But I just drove all the way from Rehovot for two hours to get here. Then go back to Rehovot and bring cash. If it's cash you want, cash you will get. (Jay who is no shrinking violet goes to his bank and ask the teller to give him 135 Lirot in single coins and goes back to the Port clerk). I'm back. Do you have the cash now? Sure do. I pulled the bag out of my pocket, raised it above his desk and turned it over, coins pouring out and rolling in all directions. You are an American arent you? Yes. I must tell you something important. You come from a country where ninety-nine percent of the people are honest and one percent are dishonest. Now you're in a country where ninety-nine percent of them are dishonest and one percent are honest and we must accordingly."

Do you know another country, Dear Reader, where this could happen? I dont. Is it any wonder that sooner or later this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy?

There was a lot more to this little drama and nice guy what I'm here it is for your pleasure and delectation. I felt it my duty as a patriot to try to "make a dent" in this kind of lunacy which bedevilled all Israelis since day one, but specially us Westerners, who were not inoculated with it at a tender age and thus being more sensitive to its ravages. So I decided to write a few hundred well-chosen if unminced words to the "relevant authorities" including the redoubtable Doctor Burg who became till recently the longest serving government official in several Govt. Posts. My letter was answered by his secretary Ms. Judith Hubner who was a VIP in her own right. AS the letter was written in Hebrew it required translation so I'll give the highlights of it: "Where do you get ^{the}chutzpah to write in such a tone to a Minister of Israel? (As you notice she was stealing my lines here). Would you have written such a letter in Austria or America?" My answer was that in Austria it would have been impossible as I left in my swaddling clothes in my mother's arm never to return, while in America there was no reason for it. There is a Russian story everybody in Russia is familiar with from the Stalin era. "A rabbit was racing in a wild terror out of a forest. A bear stopped him asking why was he so frightened? They are castrating all the camels, said the rabbit. What do you have to worry about? You are not a camel. You try to prove to them you are not a camel, said the rabbit."

This is the idea the Soviet legal system is based on. They don't have to prove you're guilty. You have to prove you are innocent. What I can't understand is why Israel had to import the worst aspects of the Soviet legal system? Could somebody explain it to me please?

After successfully negotiated all these bureaucratic barriers not much worse for wear and tear, I took off for Holland with Israel's very own airline, having no choice, EL-AL, (To the Sky) better known as Pay Now, Fly Much Later, due to their somewhat cavalier attitude for keeping to schedule. In all fairness to them they made up ^{for it} with the tightest security regulations and measures in the industry and having crackerjack pilots, all of them former members of the Israeli Air Force, arguably the best airforce man for man of the world, due to the strictest selection and most advanced training anywhere. As there were always many times more candidates than what they needed they could afford the luxury of accepting only the best of the best. It was a well-known fact in Israel that the Air Force was one of the very few places where "protekcia" (connections) didn't cut the mustard. If you didn't have The Right Stuff, Shalom. Likewise if you screwed up once, there was no second chance. -

I landed at SHIPHOL airport which is considered one of the best laid out and best organized airports in the world by the cognoscenti, which is the more astonishing if we take it into consideration that it used to be part and parcel of the North Sea and the graveyard of many ships. As a matter of fact SHIPHOL means Shipp's Hell. At SHIPHOL started my long love affair if not with Innah and Ine, but with Holland. To make it short and sweet, in my humble opinion Holland is the most CIVILIZED country in the world in the best sense of the word. In all my perambulations I have never lived in another country whose people were more gracious, friendly, helpful, broadminded, tolerant, cosmopolitan, sophisticated,

cultured in one word CIVILIZED as the Dutch, and by the time I've left Israel in 1981 I had spent about one year there having taken long vacations since 1974 every winter except in 1980 when I had to save every cent for my return to America and settle down again for my retirement. As I had very little to do after 1975, my outfit was only too glad not to have to pay me for my long vacations above and beyond what I had coming. These vacations in that lovely, delightful country saved me from going completely nuts in Israel, where nothing could be done without arguments and complications, where small things you just DO in the West giving it a second thought, ^{without} becomes a PROJECT in Israel to PLAN every step of the way, only to go wrong anyway. As Philip Roth of Portnoy's Complaint's fame said after spending a short séjour there and writing about it in COUNTERLIFE : " In Israel it is enough to live. You dont have to do anything else, and you go to bed exhausted." And he found this out as a visitor. If you live and work there you have to do a whole lot more then just "live".

Innah picked me up at Shiphol and after giving me a polite kiss took me home. Her apartment was spotless, needless to say in Holland but Spartan, not even flowers, almost unheard of in Holland, but she changed a lot for the better since the first visit. Her apartment became more and more "gezellig" with nicer furniture and flowers. Gezellig is Dutch for cosy. She also became kinder and less severe with herself enjoying travelling a lot including the Far East. About five years ago she came to visit me with her older sister Nel who is working in a zoo in Canada. She seems to be getting along with animals much better than humans, including her sister Innah.

I couldnt help noticing that she has only one bedroom with a very definetely one person bed in it. During our correspondence since our meeting at the Sea of Galilee we wrote about a lot of things but sex was not one of them. As I was going on fifty eight and Innah was about thirty, neither of us was over the hill, so I assumed that if she wants me to stay in her place, sex will be included. As it turned out she assumed likewise. Sort of. Well, beddy time came around , so I asked her as tactfully as I could where am I going to sleep? Oh,I worked it all out. We're going to put all the pillows from the couch and the easy chair on the floor for both of us, but knowing the little I know about men, they are very sensitive about this subject, so I think it is only fair to tell you that I never got any fun out of sex. Nevertheless, if you want sex it is OK by me. She said all this in a tone as if she would have said if you want OUTSMIJTER (ham and eggs) for breakfast it's fine with me. Well, Erwin ole buddy, if there ever was a case of damned if you do, damned if you dont, it ^{is} surely this one. After a little soul searching I decided to be damned for doing. To make a ticklish subject short it was the first and last time we had sex, as I surely wouldnt call it making love. Next morning Innah had a brainwave. She knew of course about Ine and suggested that we invite her for the weekend ^{while} she goes to visit her mother. As she remarked, I heard that Oriental girls are great lovers and as Ine's father is Dutch and her mother Chinese she should be a lot of fun, unlike me. Innah called her up and she readily agreed to come and visit us. The trouble started when Innah told her that she is going to visit her mother for the weekend and left.

Ine who was neither saint nor fool sized up the situation pretty fast and giving me a funny look said, as you know I like you Erwin, but what I dont like ^{is} the way you two cooked t his up. Ine we did not cook up anything the way you mean, you are under no obligation of any kind to stay if you dont want to. Innah just assumed that we would like to see each other again. Which in a sense was true enough, at least as far as I was concerned. Ine, tell you what, lets go out for dinner and see what happens, OK? Yeah that sounds good. So we went out for dinner and had a bottle of wine with it and that solved the problem. As I said before all Ine needed to get romantic was two glasses of wine. Ine stayed for the weekend and I must have done something righ^{me}t as she invited to her place in Eindhoven for the next weekend. And the next too. Ine was studying to become a speech therapist and had no time during the week as she also had a part time job as mother's helper. I saw her text-books they were anything but easy, anatomy, psychology, the whole bit.

The vacation was the best I ever had in my life. Not only "romantically" but for being in Holland. Innah and I stayed friends and she introduced me to her sister Perrie whose friends invited us to all kinds of lovely parties with lovely people. Perrie was as different from Innah as any two people could be. While Innah was also pretty, trim and slim, Perrie was a typical Northern Beauty, a tall blond with that fabulous creamy complexion they have and a terrific clothe sense, bordering on the dramatic which she carried off with great panache.

As you know Holland is a small country with wonderful public transport, spotless and running on time. I took a lot of trips sometimes with Innah sometimes alone mostly exploring Amsterdam, one of the most beautiful towns in the world and very easy to get around in, as it is almost impossible to get lost. All you have to do is follow one of the radiuses intersecting the canals and sooner or later you get to the Dam, the center of the town. And the town is as safe as any town of that size can be and needless to say anybody and everybody will be glad to give you information. When I first went to visit Ine in Eindhoven I walked with my map in hand and soon enough a lady stopped to ask me where I want to go and offered to take me there. I told her that I'll manage, thank you very much and kept walking. A few minutes later an old gentleman passed me on a bicycle and dismounted to ask me if need help, seeing the map in my hand. Everybody speaks of course English, French and German except in the smallest villages so there is no language barriere either. I think Holland is the only country where tourists are not considered a goose to be plucked, and the result is of course that they are flooded with tourists year after year. And if there is one country where CAVEAT EMPTOR can be hold in abeyance it is Holland. Generally speaking the Dutch are very honest including even the cab drivers, and that says a lot. It is a country where you always get your money's worth and more, whether it is a restaurant or a "man's club". Yes, I speak from first hand experience, so sue me already. The Dutch are generally speaking tall people and they eat like trenchermen the portions in the restaurants are accordingly huge. They noticed

that most of the tourists cant do them justice and leave lots of their food on the plates. This didnt sit well with their Calvinistic soul, so they invented the Tourist Menu. it is a smaller portion for less money of course. There are signs in most restauarnt's window: TOURIST MENU AVAILABLE.

Thus started my love affair with Holland which I renewed every winter with long vacations. I always took my vacations in winter. There were no mobs of tourists and young people from all over the world, hotels were cheaper and easier to find and most importantly I escaped those terrible Israeli winters with their frog stranglin' rains days on end with howling winds. In Holland there was a bit of rain, a bit of sunshine, lots of grey cloudy days but never did I have a full day of pouring rain, much less two in a row as in Israel. As after 1975 there was hardly anything to do for me, my outfit was only too glad to let me have those long unpaid vacations, beside what I had coming.

Next year Ine invited me to spend the Xmas vacation with her at TERSCHELLING in a lovely pension called De Walvisvaarder, (The Whaler). Terschelling is a small island on the North of Holland very popular with the Dutch for vacations. Ine introduced me to Her girlfriend Marie-Rose who turned out to be a really charming person, much more easy going then Ine who was a typical Gemini, half witch half angel and could be a charming pain in the neck. I stopped corresponding with Ine years ago but I still keep in touch with Marie-Rose who married a lovely guy some five years ago who is a worldclass organist. I sent them a picture of myself a few years ago and they said Erwin you are going to be our Wise Old Jew.

We put your picture on our b'fast table so we can start the day off righth.~Cute. -

Sadly enough, all good things have to come to an end and although the same thing is true of bad things those

we dont miss. On January 24 I took my favourite airline, KLM of course, back to Israel after fond farewells and my heartfelt gratitude for the wonderful times and all the kindnesses they all showered me with, who was little more than a stranger to them, and promising to keep in touch.

While I was away the group dwindled down to two girls who were transferred to my new department and new boss Manny Steinberg, another American who lived in Israel since long time. As a matter of fact Manny interviewed me during my first Aliya but those were very bad years for Israel economically and he couldnt give me a job. Manny was a nice, good natured guy but he assumed that every problem can be solved with a wisecrack. As we ^{say} "alevei" (whish it were true) One thing I was never accused of is being devoid of a sense of humour, but as the Old Bestseller says, There is a time and a place for everything. There was a wonderful woman from Argentine in the group who was sitting in front of me so I had plenty of opportunity to observe her work and she was without doubt one of the handful of people in the group who would have hacked ^{it} in any country, including America. Her Group Leader who was a real bastard, whose name I forgot, took an instant dislike to this nice woman, who was not only a wonderful worker and very bright but also had a very pleasant personality making her life a veritable nightmare. They were neighbors and this woman told me that he is not even returning her Shalom if they meet, which is "lo yaffe"

(not nice) even between strangers, much less between neighbors and co-workers. One day this woman told Manny that this bastard told her she is lazy and unreliable. Manny's answer: make a sign, Manny said I'm a good worker and reliable. The poor gal turned to me saying, my group leader is a bastard and my supervisor an imbecile, why did we come to this country? she was married to an engineer who was also working in the outfit.

AS there was no work for me in my line Manny asked me to write a more comprehensive Drafting Standard than what I did "on the run" while working for Jerry. After finishing it he told me to give it to his senior designer Jacob Drory for proofreading and comments. A month later Jacob brings it back saying he did not have the time to look at it. Manny said get it translated into Hebrew as it is. I gave it to his translator and that was the last thing I heard about it.

A few days later I got ^a call from my old boss Jerry, asking me if I'm busy? Yeah, reading books. Can you come over I would like to talk to you. There is nothing I wouldn't do for you Jerry. I hope you'll prove it. He takes me to the file cabinets of the Art Dept. headed up by Arie Kimtchick a very talented graphic artist but as administrator Effes Gadol (big zero) as most artists are. Jerry yanks open a couple of drawers and motioning to the stuff inside says, this schmuck and his group made hundreds of drawings since years from 2x2" to five feet roll sizes, without putting any kind of identifications on it. No drawing numbers, no titles, nothing. When they finished a drawing they just shoved it in a drawer. Can you believe it? I'm long enough in Israel Jerry to believe ANYTHING by now.

However I would like to ask you a question? Where were YOU while all this was going on? As you know I dont have the mentality of a policeman, he is the Group Leader not me. Anyway by now it is such a bardak (whorehouse) that they cant retrieve anything. You are a Yecke, can you organize this file? Jerry, you are playing my song. It seems I'm specializing in cleaning up other peoples mess. I did it first in Ecuador for SHELL in their jungle hospital, later PHILIPS in Quito, why shouldnt I do it for you and Israel? Good boy, when can you start? Tomorrow. Go man, go. Just a minute. I assume you realize that I cant do anything without somebody identifying all the drawings for me. I know that, but Arie will help you of course. I report to Arie next morning to tell him that I'll organize his bardak. Yaffe meod Erwin (very nice). And I also tell him that I need his help to identify all the drawings. Sorry Erwin but I dont have time for that. I make a smart about face and go to Jerry's office. Hi, Jerry, I have good news for you! NU? I already finished ^{the} job, how's that for fast work? Very funny, what is the problem Arie made it perfectly clear that he has no time to help me. It was the first and only time that I saw Jerry getting mad enough to bound out of his chair and storm into Arie's place. I didnt understand what Jerry said to him but Arie looked pretty sheepish and agreed to help me. I asked Jerry what he told him? Basically I told him that he should kiss your ass for helping you instead of refusing to do so, this being the only time somebody will do what you should have done all these years. As it turned out a goodly number of drawings he couldnt identify either.

In such cases he hold up the the culprit and waving it around asked, Chevreh, who did this and what is it? Sooner ^{OR} later somebody pleaded guilty and we could go on. And on. And on. After labouring like Hercules cleaning out the Aqueian Stables but without the benefits of two rivers, I was almost ready except for the putting together of an Index with all the Titles and Drawing numbers of the whole lot, to faciliate the RETRIEVAL of any one drawing tsick-tsack, when Jerry arrived on the scene asking me how far am I, which reminded me of a cartoon in a men's mag with this sexy dame at a bus stop when this hunk drives by in his Caddy convertible asking the sexpot "how far are you going baby?" Thanx, but not THAT far! I tell Jerry that I'm almost finished except for the Index. Glad to hear that because I ran out of money for this project. Shit! Why whats the problem? The problem is that I HATE not to finish a job I started, specially when it is 90% done and I know that this schmuck is going to fuck it up in the last minute and everybody is going to say Erwin did a half assed job. I was wrong. The schmuck did not fuck it up for the simple reason that he never finished the job, saying that he will find the drawings without the index as they all have titles and numbers. That it will take much longer made of course no difference as time was no object anyway. Ma l'hassot? (what can I do?)

So as not to lose the time element this brings us up Dear Reader to the end of June 1975, with five more years to go. After and unsuitable one month interval of reading more books in the back of the room, more or less out of sigth on Manny's suggestion, my next "assignation" was to help out in the library, starting on the

24th July. I was warned that the boss there is a wellknown board-certified meshuggeneh, and sure enough he lived up and more to the advance billing. First of all he had a booming voice which filled the small room from the minute the doors opened in the morning till the doors closed in the afternoon, the fact that this is a library where people are likely to try to read something not intimidating this nut in the slightest. We had a new microfiche system installed and he told me to organize the cartridges for same in the turntable which I did. They were all color coded according to subjects. Next morning this meshugganeh walks around contemplating the turntable as someone looking at a sculpture in a museum from every angle. At long last he says, Erwin, I think this would look nicer if you would switch around the colours on the turntable. Having been warned that this schmuck is not playing with a full deck I did it, without comments. Next morning he pulls the same shit on me and by then I was contemplating if I shouldnt do an encore and tell him to get fucked à la Alex Katzko but I like a little more originality, so I let it go. Next morning I was putting the magazines away left on the desks from the previous days when this nut comes in and motions to his watch, Erwin, it is eighth o'clock! I know, as you can see I'm picking up the place. I dont want you to pick up the place. I want you to start the work I told you to do yesterday. You know what Moishe. I dont think we make a good team. Shalom. And walked out.

As surgeons say, the job lasted six days "from skin to skin". Back to Manny and reading more books. What I still cant understand is, HOW did this country "ingather" all these nuts and other marginal Homo Saps from all over the world?

Suffering again from my periodic pangs of conscience I asked for an interview with Mr. German the Personnel Manager asking him to find me a job, which incidentally must have stamped me also in the eyes of the Israelis as a meshugganeh, as no person who is "kol kach normali"(completely normal) would ask for WORK! Mr. German being no Personnel Manager for nothing, knew a meshugganeh if he saw one and wanting to humour me, sent me over to Mr. David Strauss at HIP(I dont remember what the acronym stands for) which was a small drafting dept. David told me all they have is TIKUNIM the dreaded word Michal threw on the floor if you recall, and I decided if TIKUNIM were not good enough for Michal they are not good enough for me either. I mean whattahell, "yesh gvul!" (there is a limit).

Back to Manny Steinberg and reading more books I ambushed
and
him at an appropriate moment terrain and ask him whether he ever really tried to find a job for me. His answer: Erwin you're small potato There are hundreds of guys like you with nothing to do and some of them are making a lot more money than you, and nobody is worrying about them. Why dont you relax? I cant figure this out: How can this outfit pay the salary of hundreds of people as Manny
Newlands
says who are not producing anything? As my CSM in the Pioneer Corps used to say, Nix fucking compree! -

My Plant Manager Mr. Arnon is living in the same neighborhood as I do, sometimes he gives me a ride if I can catch his attention while standing at the bus stop of the companie bus. This is what happened again a few days ago and assuming that this was god's way to help me, I asked him where I could find something to do? After all if the Plant Manager doesnt know WHO does? He said

I should see Mr. Kessler. Mr. Kessler sends me to Lod, the main plant, who sends me to FLIGHT TEST's drafting Dept. I never heard about such place but I go anyway. The FLIGHT TEST drafting dept consist of a yingele(young kid) of about eighteen, who is in charge of ONE woman, on maternity leave. The yingele is not impressed with my credentials at all, and tells me he will call me back. Which he does, saying I should bring some samples of my work and he wants to give me a test. I hang up before I die laughing. This pathetic punk kid doesnt even know that you ask for samples only from inkers and detailers because layout draftsman dont HAVE samples. It is like asking an executive secretary to bring samples of her typing. This country beats Alice's Wonderland all to Hell and gone!

A few days later I get a phone call again from Mr. Kessler: Go immediately to MAHANE ISRAEL, across the road from the main plant, at Lod and see Mr. Ben-Bassad. As our own shuttle already left and not wanting to miss this chance of a lifetime, I take the regular bus. I find Mr. Ben Bassad's office but not Mr. Ben Bassad. I talk to his secretary who knows nothing about nothing. I talk to Mr. Ben-Bassad's Second in Command, whose name is Erwin Spitzer and also a Hungarian. He doesnt know anything about me either but he says as far as he knows they are looking for somebody to take telephone messages, but he will call me back, but he never did. Nor did Mr. Ben-Bassad. To quote Alice in Wonderland, things are getting curi-oser and curi-oser! or are they just getting more and more fucked up? Ladies and Gennulmen of the Jury! Here is the glamour outfit, of 35,000 employees the Flagship of Israeli indoostry and they are unable to set up an interview from one department to another. Reminds me of the old song: "There is no way to go but UP!"

My next chance to earn my money was supposed to be at APA which was the Engineering Standard Department whose head honcho was Kurt the Schiff Textile engineer we already met previously. I was supposed to help to put together an engineering Standard which should have been done years ago, by cutting out from catalogs pictures of components. As having a Standard means UNIFORMITY, which is anathema to a good Israeli, this was put off from year to year, and by now it will take years, if ever will see the light of day. The guy who was supposed to help me, was called up for reserve duty and without him I could do nothing. I'm back with Manny and more reading of books, my only steady "work". Manny says perhaps I can get a job at the main Library at Lod. He sets up an interview with the Boss, Mr. Zuckermann who says he has nothing for me just now but if he can get permission for hiring more people he will call me up. He either did not get the permission to hire more people or he forgot about me because he never called me up. After four more months at my steady job of reading, Manny sends me to the Purchasing Dept. where he set up an interview for me. I report to the Purchasing department in our own plant, and they say there gotta be some kind of mistake because they need somebody to fill out orders and shlepp boxes around " and some of them are pretty heavy. Surely you dont want to do THAT?!" You are SOOOO righth. Manny sends me back to the Library at Lod, where this time "everything is arranged". I go to Lod and it turns out that NOTHING is arranged and they dont want any part of me. Is this supposed to be FUNNY? Perhaps I'm not only losing my mind but my sense of humour too? This brings up to January 28th 1979 Dear Reader. Nine down one more to go!

After two more months of my steady job, reading, Manny comes to tell me that Danny Yadin, the Personnel Manager, wants to see me. MAPITOM? What is the reason for this unexpected honour and pleasure Manny? Mr. Becker (our new Plant Manager who took over from Mr. Arnon and who is supposed to be a tough hombre) saw you taking your beauty sleep after lunch. This can be interesting! Needless to say I had it by then up to my tachat (ass) and made up my so-called mind that if Danny is going to read me the riot act, I'll jump in there with both feet. And what did you tell Mr. Becker, Manny? The truth, that I've no work for you. I shouldn't have worried as Danny greets me cordially and tells me that he is familiar with the problem, and promises to find some work for me I can do. And would you believe it he is as good as ^{his} word. Three days later he sends me to the Customer Service Department, whose boss is Avri Shefts an engineer from South Africa. Danny told me he doesn't exactly know what the job is but has to do with being fluent in English, which sounded a whole lot better than shlepping boxes etc.

Avri turns out to be definitely head and shoulders above the other managers I've met at IAI. In one word he is COMPETENT. I don't mean this as an engineer what I'm no way qualified to judge. I mean the man is no fool or slacker. He reminded me of a saw of my mother concerning two exact opposites. "These two people should be kneaded together and cut into two halves and you would get two normal people." Avri is something of a perfectionist with a photographic memory for details and he wants to be on top of everything. While Jerry Cantor wanted to "delegate" all authority, Avri wanted to be involved in every itsy-bitsy aspect of everything

going on, which is not good for a Manager either, because he tended to become a nuisance, by checking on everything and everybody every step of the way. In all fairness to him, I assume he got into this habit after realizing that Israelis, generally speaking, cannot be depended on for anything. It took me a few weeks to get across that I'm NOT an "Israeli" in this sense of the word and that I neither need or want anybody looking over my shoulder. When this sunk in, it resulted in another kind of repercussion. He wanted me to be his "final quality control man" and one man army, he wanted to deal with exclusively, concerning the checking of technical manuals right down to the shipping of same to the RIGHT customers et etc. We have a good word for this here in America called FALL GUY! Here again I couldn't blame him, because we had beautiful fuckups sending the right manuals for a certain ordnance to the wrong customer in the wrong country, resulting in VERY embarrassing situations as the same ordnance was modified for every customer in different ways about which other customers were not supposed know of course.
to

Perhaps, just perhaps, IF I would have been some thirty years younger this kind of responsibility would have tickled me pink, but as we say in Hungarian, IF my Aunt Mary would have a cock she would be my Uncle Mary! I was not thirty years younger but less than a year from my well deserved retirement from the ratrace and I had no pow'ful hankerin' to get myself in the middle of this kind of can of worms, and told Avri so politely but firmly. As the deal was that this not being the job I was hired for, we can both unilaterally terminate it any time, the worse what could happen to me was going back to Manny and read more books. In plain words this

meant that Avri either accepted me on my own terms or could send me back to Manny Steinberg. As it turned out he accepted me on my own terms. Perhaps he remembered the old story from the bad old days of the heroic times of Israel when they had barely enough to eat, with such luxuries as coffee almost impossible to find. This resulted in advising any wannabe immigrant to bring all the coffee s/he can carry, because it can be exchanged for most anything. So this little old guy comes to Israel and passing thru Customs with nothing more than two big sacks of coffee and a parrot sitting on his shoulder. Custom agent: what do you have in those sacks? Coffee. Are you meshuggeh?! You can bring in only five kg. coffee per person. Nu? five kg is for me and five kg for the parrot! The parrot eats COFFEE?! Nu, if he doesnt eat coffe he wont get NOTHING!

My job consisted mostly of checking and editing technical manuals, reorganizing and colour coding them for our own use according to customers etc etc. Not exactly exciting but the colleagues and the happenings resulted in some fun. One day a very nice guy comes in, introduces himself as Efrayim and after some pleasantries he tells me he will come back tomorrow and tells me more about the job. This sounded a bit funny to me as I had the impression that Avri is my boss and Danny, a big bear of a guy I got along fine, his second in command. So I go and ask Danny who is the guy who said his name is Efrayim who said he'll be back tomorrow to tell me more about the job. Danny says laughing, dont bet on it. He might come back tomorrow or never. He is Avri's boss. He is a nice guy alrighth but " a bit dizzy". Sure enough I never saw him again.

I'm sharing my office with a young guy about twenty whose name is Yankele. He is a nice easy going kid but no ball of fire to put it delicately. We have a phone in the office which rings quite a bit but I ignore it of course. First because I dont speak the lingo, second because nobody knows me from Moishe, third because I dont know anything about what is going on. Yankele never picks up the phone unless it rang at least five-six times occasionally giving me a funny look. I dont get ^{it} so I ask another guy what is the reason for this story? The guy laughs and tells me Yankele tries to get YOU to pick up the phone because it has something to do with STATUS who picks up the phone. Before you came, there was a young schlemiel in the office Yankele outranked, and now because you are the "new guy on the block" he thinks you should pick up the phone. As they say : O!! (I get it!) Next time when the phone keeps ringing I explain to Yankele that as far as I'm concerned it can ring till the Mesgiach(Messias) comes. sheepishly he picks it up. Nevertheless, he still lets it ring at least three times. Yankele, why do you let the phone ring when you sit righth there? If I pick up the phone righth away it is not good because it mean that I've nothing to do. O!! - sometimes when Yankele is not in the office I pick up the phone and almost always somebody wants the engineer two offices down the corridor with whom we're on the same line. When yankele comes back I ask him why is our phone getting all the calls for the engineer down the hall when every time I go there to tell him that he has a call he sits at his desk? Because he pushes the "Busy" button down, so we get all his calls what amounts to, that we're screening his calls for him, saving him wrong. O!!

Israelis, generally speaking have atrocious manners and very proud of it as they consider good manners sissy stuff they dont have time for. These lousy manners are the same on the phone of course. One day I was not in a very good mood and the phone rings when Yankele is out. I pick it up and somebody BARKS in my ears: YIGAL! Click, I hang up. Rings back again and barks YIGAL! Click, I hang up. Rings again and barks MIZE?! (who is it) Erwin. WHY do you hang up on me? The next time you call me up, first I want you to say Shalom, then I want you to tell me your name, then I want you to say, I would like to talk to Yigal please, tov? Click I hang up. Few minutes later the phone rings: Shalom, this is Moishe, I would like to talk to Yigal . Just a minute please. Hey! This guy is a fast learner! Maybe this is the time to tell you Dear Reader about another story also related to the legendary Israeli good manners and favourite sport of jumping TOR(lines). There is a small Supermarket where I live, with a separate line for veggies and fruits. After waiting for my turn in the line for some five poeple to get their stuff checked out, at last it is my turn. When I get to the . . . a young woman very stylishly dressed in the latest fashion, comes from the opposite direction, not even jumping the line, and puts her bag of fruits on the scale! Not with ME baby you wont! I pick ^{up} her bag from the scale and drop it on the floor! MAZE, MAZE?? she shouts at me (what is this?) The way you're dressed lady you should know better! Oh I'm terribly sorry, she says with barely an accent. Part of Samat Efal where I live has very expensive little houses where some of the upper middle class of Israel lives, like pilots and other officers who can afford to send their children

to American colleges, and this dame must have been one of them. Next to Supermarket there is a branch of Bank Mapoalim, if I remember correctly, and of course standing in line was frowned upon there also. However in the other part of Ramat Efal where I lived there were a lot of elderly people in the Senior Citizens part of the settlement from America who came to Israel because their Social Security check in dollars went much further. These people kept complaining at the bank about all the line jumpers and elbows, so they decided to put up one of those red cords to keep people in line, or so they hoped. One day I was standing in line too when this old geezer comes in. He looks at the new line, toddles to the front, lifts his arthritic leg in slow motion over the cord ending up at the front of the line! Hilarious laughing and Kol ha'Kavod's all around. where there is a will, there is a way!

We've a hot tempered technician in Avri's crew by the name of Turgeman who is from Morocco. The poor guy was really behind the eighth ball because he is the only technician in a crew of engineers and he is clearly over his head. That Avri and Danny are watching him like a hawk doesn't help much either and the poor guy is getting paranoid being convinced that every ^{body} is trying to screw him. One day he came in my office saying, Monsieur Erwin - as he is from Morocco we speak French - are you familiar with this Hebrew saying : Elef kuss beshamayim, af ehad lo beshvili, zayin ehad nofelet meshamayim, yeshar betachat sheli! What does it mean? "There are thousands cunts in heaven, but not one for me, but if one prick falls from heaven, it goes straight up my ass!" I barely could stop laughing.

Now that I've work to do every day, time passes much faster and apart form little dramas with the shipping department there is very little to break up the monotony and before I know it is time for my yearly R&R in my favourite country, Holland. I take off on the 20th December for almost six weeks of my last vacation in Holland. I'm taking with me a record sum FL 9000 which was a whole lot of money in those days in Holland, as one person could live modestly on FL2000/month. I have no idea how did I manage to save that much money in one year but as I explained I had practically no expenses in Israel. I took of course nice presents for my old friends or bought some there for Xmas. And needless to say I had a good time and did a little shopping for myself too like a lovely STANWELL pipe, what is called "freehand" which is still my favourite pipe to this day and a lovely pair of Italian boots by A. Testoni, still going strong, and a suede jacket which was on sale because some minor flaws but with a whole bunch of pockets which invariably makes me a gone goose with every garments which have them, and some other things not "packable". Which reminds me that Ine the little witch landed a husband, a tall, handsome blond guy and a really charming person and a fabulous cook to boot which was just as well as Ine was lousy at it. The previous year she decided to cook some fancy dish with kidneys. I warned her to wash it and rinse it very well otherwise it will smell and taste of urine but she waved it off as if she were a Cordon Bleu cook. To make a long story stink, it had to be thrown away for the very reason I foresaw with great wisdom and foresigth, but we had the bottle of wine with omelet which helped. I mean the wine not the omelet. This time when they

invited me for the week end it was of course Hank who cooked for dinner and the guy really shined. Innah found me a little hotel by the name of Belga owned by a young guy and her fiancée, just a few minutes from the Dam, the center of A'dam but out of the worst traffic. For New Year they gave us guests a lovely party with all kinds of yummy Dutch food. On New Years morning I found a bottle of wine before the door "to start the New Year off righth." As I said you cant beat the Dutch in graciousnes. After I came back to Israel, they sent me a wedding picture of themselves as having stayed there for six weeks I was considered an old friend.

Innah invited me too of course and by then she had a very nice and cosy apartment and it was obvious that she felt much more relaxed and enjoyed her life more too. -

In February I took a fond farewell of all my dear friends knowing that this is the last visit to Holland as next year I'll have to save every cent I can for my return to America and start everything from scratch again, a new apartment etc etc. By that time it was obvious that there is no way that I can spend the rest of my life in Israel, whatever that rest will turn out to be. I forgot to mention that Ine and Hank took me to Paris for the big Picasso Expo of the Year which unfortunately turned into a fiasco as there was such a MOB that it was impossible to enjoy the paintings. As if this wouldnt have been bad enough there was no heat and hot water in the little hotel where we stayed because there was something wrong with the gear. Come to think of it I realize that I never said a single word about all the fabulous museums of Amsterdam and you Dear Reader must have thought

I'm something of a yahoo cum bumpkin etc. God forbid. I visited all of them several times and with the STEDELIJK it was love at first sight. They always had something special going. Once it was Karel Appel and the last time it was an enormous setup of computerized drawing with a gadget hanging from the ceiling and painting on a cardboard, I think, on the floor. Fascinating stuff. I hope I saved my honour now.

Realizing that In Israel nothing is simple and everything takes five times longer then in the West, I started to plan for my emigration soon after I returned to Israel in February 1979 from my last vacation in Holland. I remembered that Mr. Rosen a nice and friendly guy from South Africa was in charge of shipping when Manny sent me there to shlepp boxes. I paid him a visit and asked him for his advise for the best available shipping outfit around. Erwin, I want you to keep something in mind, you're not going to get here American service from any of them. We tried them all and the best of a bad lot is DAPHNE, here is their address and phone number, and mazal tov, you'll need it. This doesnt sounded too encouraging but as the French say, the most beautiful woman in the world cant give you more than what she has.

I made up my so-called mind during my last visit that I'll do everything legally possible to retire in Holland not America. Perhaps the idea of not returning to America where I spent my last twenty years before coming to Israel sounds a bit crazy, but every time I landed at SHIPHOL I felt like coming home, even the first time. I dont think this is as outlandish as it sounds. The place where you spent your so-called formative years will always have special meaning even if it harbours some very unpleasant memories too and regardless how long ago you left it. After all these many years I was still more European than American|regardless how I slice this baloney, and talking about baloney, I still eat the European way and cant help being amused and bemused watching an American struggling to cut something with the side of a FORK when the knife is righth there. Nor could I drink MILK with a meal if they would

pay me for it. Nor could I ever get used to the iodini taste of whisky. In Hungary we drank wine, and very good one too, beer, also pretty good and as for hard likker(sic) we had apricot brandy which must be pretty good if it was good enough for the Prince of Wales (Wally's hubby) who got plastered on it nighth after nighth at the same nighthclub during his visit. We also had a Hungarian gin, much more pungent than the English type or the French genièvre, called boróka(juniper berry) pálinka(brandy). And the same was true of sports, which you grow up with. Ashamed to admit I still dont know one ^{end} of a baseball from the other, which looks to me a deadly boring game with one guy trying to hit a ball and all the rest of the crew standing around watching him. Give me a good soccer game anytime or water polo where the goalý is likely to get his swim trunks yanked off to the great hilarity of everybody specially what used to be called before Women's Lib The Weaker sex.

Following Mr. Rosen's advise I visited DAPHNE and I've to admit they made a professional appearance, with rows and rows of cubbyholes, typists poudding their machines and big black boards listing all the ships coming and going etc, AS I didnt know yet if I'll succeed to go to Holland I asked an estimate per cu.m. both for Holland and America, likewise for their insurance rates and for their general Modus Operandi. All in all for an Israeli outfit they looked like they knew what they were doing. Hoo boy! Did I ever had a surprise... but then again perhaps after ten years in Israel it shouldnt have been a surprise, but lets not get ahead of the events, shall we?

Meanwhile back at Avri's farm things were getting a bit out of hand, the problem being that, Avri who was no dummy as I said, realized that this old geezer is reliable and willing to put in a full days work, so lets see how far can I push him? As the sex-pot said at the bus stop "not that far". After having bugged me for a few days why this isnt, and why that isnt, I had enough and put a big sign on the wall of my office: YOU CANNOT CREATE AN ISLAND OF EFFICIENCY IN A SEA OF CHAOS! Next time when he came in my office noticing the sign, he looked at it for awhile and said, "perhaps you have a point." A couple of weeks later he came in my office to say that we have constant problems and difficulties shipping out the Manuals to our customers o'seas because the inventory of the machsan(store room) bears little relations to what we actually have on the shelves. Well Avri, why dont you tell the guy in charge of the store room that you want a completely new inventory made of all the Manuals tsick-tsuck? These people are unreliable and incompetent. The new inventory wont be any better then what we have now. By then I knew of course at what he is hinting at but I played it dumb, which required no monumental effort, truth to be told. Avri: could you do it? Erwin ole buddy, he is playing your song! Another shithouse to clean up after hotshots who didnt do THEIR work? Naaaah, not THIS time, thank you fucken very much!

Avri, excuse ^{me} for saying so but I'm not sure you realize WHAT is involved in this little job. So tell me. I didnt count them of course but there are hundreds and hundreds of books in the store room on shelves from floor to ceiling, most of those wasnt touched long enough to have enough dust on their covers to write your

name in it. As you realize if we want to be sure that the inventory will be correct this time, I'll have to count every damn book myself, note their titles, numbers etc. This would involve climbing up and down the ladders for weeks. Sorry Avri but this is not in the cards. Those clowns in the store room are getting paid for keeping records. Let them do it. Avri just walked out without saying a word. Did I come to Israel to become everybody's shames? (servant) Mapitom? The only way these slob will ever learn to do their job is to start insisting that they do it or else, not by getting it done by somebody else. It is past time to exchange the national motto of KOL MAMZER MELECH (every bastard a king) into KOL MAMZER POAL. (every bastard a worker).

What kept surprising me in this country, how can a nation which is barely a toddler, as nations go, ^{be} so set in it's - wrong-ways, be so resistant, nay recalcitrant, to change what should be changed, to improve it's quality of life.

Since generations we've been found guilty of being smart, sometimes too smart, businessmen. And since some 2000 year we've been kvetching about "Next year in Jerusalem". Nu? Now we not only have Jerusalem, Baruch ha'Shem (may his name be blessed), but Supermarket too. So what happens? Every time I'm shopping there I see the same little drama. The checker is checking out the items of the next custome^{too} because they are all chewing the fat and by the time they realize it, it is too late for anything but the oivavoy, voy, voy. I told the so-called Manager more often then I care to recall to put a piece of wood or something between the purchases like they do in America. Very good idea, very good idea. But did he do it? Mapitom?

Can somebody explain this mysstery to me? How did all these dimbulbs and schlemiels rendez vous'd in this country? Could this be the result of not only having generated since day one a negative selection in immigrants, but we judiciously and lovingly nortured same to this very day. Just asking.

"A thousand times a day in modern society your life is made easier or harder, depending on the care with which someone else done his job." (James Fallows: THE JAPANESE ARE DIFFERENT).

While we're at the subject of Supermarkets we can study another Israeli characteristic. If you absolutely must import a goyishe system from the West, you have to modify it at least so,as not to work as was intended to, but to provide some kind of aggravation and inconvenience as required, so as to further degrade the already lousy enough quality of life. This is a country where the idea of if N.I.H. (Not Invented Here) it is N.F.G.(No fucken Good) reigns with a vengeance. To wit: AS we know in the West the shopping carts are pushed thru at the checkout counters so that the next customer can come in with hers. The Israeliens, as my friend Hezi says, ret-rofitted this sytem so that the customer empty the cart onto the conveyor belt and LEAVES the cart there to block the entrance for the next customer. This cart is supposed to be collected by an employee and stored somewhere else. Even if the employee would do it, what she seldom does, as soon as the traffic gets even moderately buzy she cant keep up of course. The rsult is a minefield of shopping carts for the customers they have to clear for themselves, needless to say with much shoving and pushing, which is de rigeur. Whenever I push my own cart thru, hoping that the "natives" will

follow my pioneering spirit, all I get is a loud MAZEMAZE? from the checker as if I would have checked out "bassar lavan" (white meat as the inventive Israelis call pig) together with "cottege" (cottage cheese) adding insult to injury. Incidentally, no knowledgeable Israeli would buy "cottege" without taking the lid off to sniff it

ascertaining that it is not moldy. My favourite Israeli cartoonist Jacov (Dry Bones) Kirschner from New York, had some hilarious cartoons showing Israeli women sniffing the cottege. CAVEAT EMPTOR is big, big, big in Israel, regardless whether you're buying "cottege" or a new vacuum cleaner. No Israeli would dream taking ^{it} home without opening the box and make sure that all the attachment etc are in the box and not sold separately for another customer. Nobody said it is a perfect world, not even in the Holy Land. Alas.

Another example a bit more hightech than the modified checkout à la Israeli, are the Public phones. In another country as long as you have small change, no problem. For Israel and Israelis who have a too easy and simple life this goyishe system was "lo besseder" (not acceptable). They have to have special tokens for the payphones. These tokens are sold in post offices at special windows. The way to find out which are these windows is very simple. There is a sign hanging over them saying :EIN ASSIMONIM. NO TOKENS. Or if you are very lucky: FIVE TOKENS PER PERSON ONLY. Some other little shops are also supposed to sell tokens but usually they don't because it is more trouble than worth, due to the constant arguments about the restricted numbers available and the unrestricted number the customer intends to buy. According to best Govt estimate by now there are 1000 tokens hoarded for every man, woman

and child. The reason for this hoarding is that there is a big inflation and tokens get more and more expensive overnight. As the Israelis long ago learned to deal with rules and regulations they have to overcome to survive, this restriction of the number of tokens they are allowed to buy is chickenshit for them. They simply show up with all the mishpacha and friends and buy the allowed number of tokens. When that is exhausted they go on a little pilgrimage from post office to post office for an encore in the same town. If they are greedy or adventurous they visit a friend in a nearby town repeating the process, mixing business with pleasure. Ein bayot. (no problems). Shortly before I left there were rumours that they will retrofit the phones for coins "but it will take years". I wonder if it is done by now.

If we didn't show the best judgement in selecting a system for public phones, we likewise didn't show much wisdom in selecting our system of government either, proving if nothing else, that we're consistent. With great wisdom worthy of our celebrated ancestor Solomon, we chose ^{one} reminding me of the story about the tail wagging the dog. However in all fairness, being good Israelis we invented, if not improved, on the old model, by developing a mutation with six tails instead of only one, in different sizes, with all the six trying to outdo the other five in wagging the doggie. This new model is called COALITION GOVERNMENT. Kol ha'Kavod! This great system reminds me of my favourite writer, and in my opinion the most underrated in America, Eric Hoffer, saying in his brilliant essay THE TRUE BELIEVER: "It is said that a society is free only when the dissenting minorities have room to throw their weight around. As a

matter of fact, a dissenting minority feels free only when it can impose its will on the majority. What it abominates most is the dissent of the majority." If Hoffer would have the Israeli orthodoxy in mind he couldn't have put it better. As we well know they are a minuscule minority but this doesn't keep them from being ready and willing, if not able, to impose their will on the majority trying to turn all Israel into a Polish Shtetl (village).

As we know the rest of the industrial world is on five day week since years. For Israel this is a no-no because the Rabbinate insists, bless them, that if we work(?) five days the Shabbat is not going to be a "special day" anymore as prescribed in the Bible.

After years of haggling and arm-twisting the Govt succeeded to make a compromise with the Rabbinate: it will be left to the individual industries to decide whether they want to work five or six days. IAI in his great wisdom decided to have a five day week. But before we could break out with the Hoshannas we ^{were} told it is not as good as it sounds because we'll have to make up for the sixth day with unpaid O.T.! The monumental, indeed monstereous hypocrisy, not to say dishonesty, of this boggles the mind. Everybody who has eyes in his head knows that every outfit which is part of the Histadrut (Labour Union), which in Israel means everything but a few sweatshops, barely works more than 4-5hrs/day max. And now suddenly this very same workaholic will work NINE hours?! Is this supposed to be a joke?! Who is kidding here whom?! Couldn't we just once be honest enough and face the facts that the overwhelming majority of Israelis are primitive Easterners who never before worked in a structured industrial environment, have no work discipline to

speak of, coming in late making up for it by going home early and on and on, who cannot be expected to become in this sense of the word "Westerners" for generations to come specially with the kind of "Leadership" we have?

When I was still working with Jerry we talked about this problem and I said if we would have enough common sense to poor piss out of our Eilat sandalim (togs) we would institute a three shift day of four hours each, for the same pay as now, with the first shift starting at 0700-1100, the second 1100-1500, the third 1500-1900 with the clear understanding with the Histadrut that after three warnings for goofing off - SHALOM! This way we could train these bunch of goldbricks what working means in industry and they would all have enough sunny time to go to the beach and play with the kids. In the four winter months the first shifts would start at 0800hrs. Jerry's reaction was his favourite expression: Erwin, you are absolutely righth! So why dont you talk to Schwimmer? From what I heard he is approachable, specially you being his landsman from America. It will never work. How do you know? Nothing risked nothing gained, beside you would risk nothing. Naaaah... The plain fact is that with 35,000 employees IAI were in a very good position to pioneer change, this number of employees consisting of one percent of Israel's population. If we would have an outfit like this in America it would have 250,000 employees, half of Seattle's population.

We do have brave visionaries here who are trying to modernize and improve things but alas they usually fight a losing battle. A fireball of a Canadian gal by the name of Hanna Greenbaum worked like a beaver for two years to organize an Israeli Consumer's Union called CONSUMERS SHIELD against sharp business practices to put it delicately and to educate the public about after sales service, unknown here, only to have to give up after two years of frustrations and stonewalling by the public. Said Hanna: "People here are too primitive to care". Fortunately there are exceptions. The Rabbinate DO care. Bemet. (honestly) And I must make it perfectly clear that by Rabbinate I mean the orthodox variety of course, as any other kind, like what we call "conservative" or "reform" here in America, even accepting WOMEN horrible dictu, are utterly and completely PERSONA NON GRATA with no more rights or prestige than Billy Graham or Louis Farrakhan would have.

This above mentioned orthodox Rabbinate endeared itself not only with its own Clan, but perhaps even more with the secular, that is major, strata of the population, which admired their incredible, almost chameleon like metamorphosis and adaptability from the respected and beloved Holy Man of the Polish Shtetl

to the Eastern Horse Trader, without missing a MINJAH! (a group of jews adequate for prayer). By adaptability I meant changing from horse trading to peddling KASHRUT certificates to the highest bidders and selling seats in the House of Worship of their own Clan. (Kashrut Certificates are zeteles displayed by hotels and restaurants certifying by the Rabbinate that the establishment is conforming with all the Dietary Laws required by the Chalacha[religious SPECS], thus reassuring the observant clientel that the place is KOSHER.) This KASHRUT Certificate is of course a very effective tool of not so subtle blackmail because without it the religious clientel coming on pilgrimage for the High Holidays from The Golde-ne Medina(America) if not with gold but with VISA cards, would stay away because if they want to eat TREIFE (dirty) as they do all year in America, why should they come to the Jewish Homeland?

AS for the peddling of seats for the High Holidays, this needs a little explanation. There are two Chief Rabbis in Israel. One for the Ashkenazim (European Clan) and one for the Sephardim (the Oriental Clan). Both have of course their own Synagogues with different rituals, and as Kipling sayeth the twain shall never meet. AS this rule effectively divide the worhsippers, almost said customers, for the available seats to be filled, the Rabbinate of both Clans does not exactly shuns the Madison Avenue approach. Au contraire. Before every High Holiday they put large ads in all the papers of The Jewish Homeland that unless the Observant Public will worship in THEIR Synagogue using their Kasherred FAX machines the messages will not find favour in the eyes of G-D. Zeu. (thats it)

There were some muted admonishments concerning this blatant

and unseemly, not to say crass, commercialism in this approach in selling seats in a House^{of} Worship, but they were firmly refuted with the authority only those possess who has a Hotline to G-D. We all do the best we can with what we have, including the Rabbinate.

Unfortunately sometimes our best is not very good. As follows. In every other industrial country in the world the premises are cleaned during the evening or the night, so that the employees are not disturbed and also, they can come in the morning to work in a clean place. In Israel non-such. Ma od chadash?(what else is new?) Why not? Because nobody wants to work in the evening, much less during the night. It is not convenient. True, work is never convenient, but in the evening beside not being convenient it also has to do with STATUS, as important people don't work in the evening or even less during the night. As Israelis are, generally speaking "not specially neat" to borrow the self-description of a former girlfriend who was a worldclass slob, and most of them addicted to nibbling garinim, sunflower and other seeds, by the end of the day the floor is littered with the shells of these seeds plus other garbage thrown on the floor with great abandon. This system of cleaning the premises is not all bad however, because it gives one more excuse to interrupt "working" for ten minutes or so, while the cleaning crew is shoving around chairs, tables and people. That we all have to inhale all the dreck is a small price to pay. Once when I was still working at TEUD where we had those big industrial fluorescent light fixtures hanging over the drafting tables, this "specialist" came in with one of those big brooms covered with a rag and proceeded to sweep the top of the lights with it, liberating

enourmous clouds of dust cascading down on the drawings and us too and believe it or not, nobody said a single word. Nobody that^{is} but this writer, using the word carelessly, who stormed into Rafi's office suggesting that he gets rid of this schmuck before I strangle him. Which he did nice guy what he was, and also as an observant jew not wanting to be an accessory to murder.

One day when a girl in my group who was specially addicted to this garinim, had a more then acceptable pile of the shells on the floor was admonished by the "sponga". (Israelis call the cleaning women sponga because they use sponges, see?) She turned on her furiously: SHEKET!! (shuddup!) My job is drafting, your job is sweeping the floor! reminding her that she is head and shoulders above her in the pecking order.

Generally speaking, and I always speak generally, Israelis are not very nice to each other. Not because they are mean, generally speaking again, but because this little country, where nothing is simple with all the picayune, stupid little zillions of daily aggravations, brings the worst out in people. I can see it even on myself. All my life before I came here I was known as the prototype of the relaxed, easy going LAIDBACK kind of guy. I remember during one of those Alert Exercises in the Legion when everybody but me was running around like a freshly castrated doggie looking for his balls, one of the other sergeants said laughing, dit donc Erwin tu n'perds jamais ton calm coloniale? Here I lost my calm coloniale long ago and I'm always just one step from losing my cool too and get in trouble. Tourists are forever complaining in the papers about the rudeness of the natives, but what they dont realize that we're^{is}

just as rude, or worse, with each others. At least we dont call the tourists CHAMOR!

As sooner or later we all need a doctor, perhaps I say a few words about the Israeli system of healthcare, using my own experience again, not hearsay and rumours. It is of course Socialized Medicin and also of course à la Israeli, modofied and adapted to local conditions of habits and customs, to put it diplomatically.

Before going into the barest but necessary details I must make it perfectly clear, that doctors, as the rest of the population are coming from all over the world in addition to the home grown variety. The obvious result of this is, that Israel has some of the best and some of the worst doctors in the world. Same goes for dentists. Foreign doctors are supposed to pass an exam before they can hang out their shingles. As supervision is not any stricter then in the Supermarkets for "cottege" etc, things arent always what they supposed to be and accidents happen. Israel being a very small country where word of mouth spreads very fast and efficiently, not only about a good , or bad doctor, but a good or bad shoerepair man also, a lousy medico does not survive long even if he s/he switches towns. For better or for worse there is no such thing in Israel as a malpractice suit. As I said Israelis are very primitive people and doctors are still gods, and WHO would have the chutzpah to sue G-D in the Holy Land of all places. Bemet!

Israel has several Sick Funds, all of them with their own long and short comings. I honored Kupat Cholim Maccabe with my membership whose little brown booklet still reposes in my files, baruch dayin emet. (may it rest in peace.) As one day I noticed some problem with

my plumbing - not to worry Dear Reader nothing serious - I inquired at an old Hungarian couple in my building whose son in-law was a heart specialist from Bucharest Rumania, about the best GU man in Tel-Aviv or anywhere else in Israel failing that. Doctor Shapiro said it is Zvi Rudberg hands down All the doctors and their families are the patients of Doctor Rudberg, a Yecke but homegrown graduate of medical school here. What we call a doctor's doctor. As the guy said who fell out of the window of a skyscraper, sofar-sogood. Now the next step: how to get from here(Ramat Efal) to there, to Doctor Rudberg's Sanctum Sanctorum in Tel-Aviv? Keep reading and thou shalt know. Before going into the details for those who have "The Need to Know" you must realize Dear Reader that in The Jewish Homeland there AINT such animal as an appointment by telephone for two reasons. First and more importantly most people who are here less then ten years have no phone. Second due to the primitiveness of the people, sorry about harping on this but we gotta keep this in mind, they have no concept of TIME in the Western sense, so making an appointment would be a waste of time, not only by phone but any other way.

As musicians say: take it from the top. How do you visit a doctor? There are good news and bad news. The only good news is that you gotta take a day off from work. From here on it is all downhill. You get up as early as if you would go to work, but instead taking your booklet of your Sick Fund with you, proceed to the address of your chosen doctor. If you're reasonably early, say not later then 0900hrs you'll find a zetele sticked to the front door of your doctor, with no more then 3-4 names on it, to which you add your own to the TOR(line or queu) and go home. Assuming that your doctor's office hours starts at 1400hr- ending when the last patient

is dispatched or the doctor slumps over from exhaustion, whichever comes first, you want to be there no later than 1330 hrs, TOR or no TOR, because if you come later there will be SRO in the waiting room, with the early birds getting the available chairs and sofas if any, with the latecomers relegated to the wall space and other leanable items for standing. You have to realize that good doctors in Israel are terribly overworked, making salaries not even a competent vet would consider in America. Under these circumstances you cant blame them if they try to keep overhead expenses to the very minimum. For a doctor like Rudberg who is a worldclass GU man who could work in any of the best hospitals anywhere, including in America, to stay in Israel is a sacrifice most people dont realize and appreciate even less.

Waiting time in the waiting room of a doctor of Rudberg's caliber is anywhere between 1-2 hrs.

When Doctor Rudberg and his wife - who is his receptionist - arrives at ±1400hr, they are yeckes as I said, there is always a small mob at the door already waiting, and a shout goes up something like at Stage Door when the Star arrives: he is coming! Doctor Rudberg or his wife takes the zetele off the door giving the cognescenti a chance to carefully scrutinize his face for signs of excess fatigue from the morning spent in the operating room, which is bad news. The mob respectfully divides like the Dead Sea, to let Doctor Rudberg and his wife pass thru' and just as disrespectfully closes behind them after they passe thru', stampeding up the stairs bwhind them to occupy the available sitting accomodations for the lucky few. Mrs Rudberg who is a charming lady with correct

Yecke manners, transfers the names from the zetele to her appointment book and calls the patients to her desk to deposit their Booklet with her, to be called according to the list on the zetele, which she stocks on her desk in neat piles. As I said they are Yeckes.

When it is my turn, after having waited the standard hour and half or so, she calls me to her desk with a friendly smile inquiring what language do I wish to speak and from ^{where} I am etc, realizing of course that I'm a new patient. She speaks fluent English but we settle on German. I enter Doctor Rudberg's office who is a tall ruggedly handsome guy about forty I would guess, with easy going manners at the beginning of the afternoon but likely to become less so later, when he is becoming visibly ^{fr}assed as all good doctors are in Israel. Doctor Rudberg speaks fluent English as he takes my history and good doctor and good Yecke he is, he orders a complete lab workup and tells me to come back with it for follow up.

When during a later visit I told him that I've a piece of shrapnell in my back which gives me some trouble lately, he cut me short explaining: Pux, I'm sorry but I've six and half minute per patient and I've to spend that on my speciality. If you need surgery I'll be glad to recommend a competent surgeon but I cannot do it because the other surgeons will lynch me for not sticking to my speciality. Rudberg has a good sense of humour and he calls me sometimes Pux because there is no letter "F" in Hebrew. Somuch for a regular visit. How'bout to get a prescription refilled? Sorry, but it is the same bad news/good news story as before because it is the same drill as for a regular visit and I cant really blame the doctors. As I said they make very little money and as they get

the same amount for writing out a new prescription as for a regular visit I cant see why they would want to change the system. Also, as writing out a prescription takes only a minute it gives them a bit of slack to spend a few ^{more} minutes with Pux and others who ^{might} need it. The result of this atrocious system is that doctors go out on strike as regularly as banks and others do, doing nothing but life-saving procedures in the hospitals. AS the late John Daily of the late WHATSMY LINE? would have said: YES! it is not a perfect system, NO! - One day I arrived after the office was opened and when I got to the waiting room bedlam was runnig amok. What happened? A mamzer (bastard) who came late, took off the zetele from the door, putting his own name first on the list, copying all the others behind his. This was of course discovered in short order. The ganef(crook) was unceremoniously kicked down the steps ^{by a volunteer} and told by Mrs. Rudberg never to show his face again if he knows what is good for him. When it was my turn with Doctor Rudberg I suggested to avoid similar little dramas in the future, that he puts a zetele with his letter-head on the door. He gave me a little grin saying: Pux, maybe it is true that Americans are smart? and this time it was my turn to laugh as he knew quite well that I'm not American anymore then I'm Israeli, because I was nothing more than what they call a "zu g'rasste" in Vienna which is Viennese slang for "zu gereisste" meaning word for word "arrived by train", that is "Johnny came late."

In June 1980 some six months before my divorce from IAI and final retirement from what is called the rat race, The Management, ou soit disant tel, of IAI distributed a flyer to all employees asking for suggestions, recommendations or in the vernacular ETZESSIM,

all across the board. After trying to piss against the wind, as we say in Hungarian, for ten years by then, I should have known not only better but MUCH better, I decided to make a last supreme and superhuman effort as a sort of "Last Hurrah" by trying to contribute something useful and valuable, not to say long overdue, to the modus operandi of "generating" COST EFFECTIVE DRAFTING of my Alma Mater of the last ten years. I submitted a Diagrammed PROPOSAL for a complete NEW Drafting Hierarchy from the TOP down starting with a honest to godness CHIEF DRAFTSMAN to the littlest little inker/tracer. I even succeeded in talking our secretary into typing it up in a professional manner unlike I did with all my previous Memo's and letters, which were all typed on my little Olivetti at home, on my own time. This Magnum Opus was mailed by "Shula" to the Relevant Authorities at the date shown on the top of the Flyer. It disappeared into the Blue & White Hole (à la cosmic Black Hole) or perhaps into the Israeli equivalent of the Bermuda Triangle whatever, it is called in the Middle East, never to be seen or heard from again, even to the extent of a note of acknowledgment, to say nothing about a Toda Raba. (thank you). Maaaaapitooooom?!

In case you Dear Reader is inclined to believe that this was my just dessert for being a non-believer in the Jewish Homeland, here is a very similar story from my former colleague Jay Shapiro's book FROM BOTH SIDES NOW I quoted previously also, p.149-151, who has impeccable credentials as former emissary or as I used to call him, snake oil salesman, kippa wearing True Believer and all that jazz. (Inter alia):" IAI in an attempt to leearn how these 300 newcomers were adapting to the country and industry

assigned two immigrants from America to take a Survey...a Report was written complete with conclusions and recommendations, promptly submitted to Management and never seen again."

While I must honestly admit that my PROPOSAL was not something what could have been accomplished overnight, I also made a suggestion concerning a delicate subject which required no quantum leap even by Israeli standards. My suggestion was to discontinue forthwith the unhygienic system - to put it mildly - to deposit the USED toilet tissues into a bucket, considerately provided for this very purpose by our ever vigilant Management, instead of flushing it down the toilet as other so-called civilized countries do it. This suggestion was hand carried by myself - the letter not the bucket please - to the secretary of Mr. German, Personnel Mgr, as our medical dept had only a part time doctor in our plant. Again, nothing was heard, much less done about this suggestion, and this in a country where amoebic dysentery and cholera is endemic, although the latter is not advertised or admitted. As they say in Yiddish, *Le plus ça change, le plus c'est la même bardak.*

As you Dear Reader remembers, I hope, I mentioned that I tried to immigrate to Holland instead of returning to America after my ten years sejour in Israel is over, for my well deserved retirement from what we call The Rat Race. Unfortunately the Dutch authorities decided to struggle along without me, contrary to the hopes of my friends and myself. I was advised that Holland is already a very crowded country, which is true enough, and they can admit only people with special skills needed in Holland or those who are in need of sanctuary for political or other reasons. As I dont qualify

for either category I'm out of luck. My friends assured me that I could still live in Holland like tens of thousands do, including thousands of Israelis, by coming in on a tourists visa which can be renewed after every three months, by leaving the country for a couple of weeks and then returning again as a "new" tourist. The father-in-law of one of my friends who is a policeman, said that nobody is ever exiled as long as they keep out of trouble. This is not an option for me. I admire and respect this wonderful country too much to pull this kind of dirty trick on it. If I would have no other choice it would be another story, but having dual citizenships and two valid passports in my pocket I cant see it.

I dont like America less, but I like Holland more. However, I was never a great believer in crying over spilled opportunities, preferring to move on. As one of Nasser's general said after the Six Day war: We cant win them all! I wrote to my former colleague at IAI aircraft, Al Feldmann, who went back to Seattle one year before, having worked for BOEING before immigrating to Israel, asking him about info re Seattle. His report was positive so the next was a little more intelligence gathering, remembering my two previous fiascos when I relied on the info of one person. I found out long ago that if you need help or info, always go the TOP! They are usually nicer then the flunkies and either they have all the info at their fingertip or they can find out by pushing the righth buttons on their intercomes. And they dont have to consult anybody whether they should do it or not? I wrote a letter addressed to The Honorable Mayor of Seattle, c/o City Hall asking for info in general and the housing situation in particular - and I hit the jackpot!

The Mayor of Seattle turned out to be Charles Royer, a former newspaper man and a really charming guy, generally well liked. He sent me a very nice letter enclosing cuttings from both local papers re apartments for rent, warning me that the situation is very tight on account of the BOEING boom, with engineers and other technical people pouring into Seattle from all over America. He also sent me a little booklet about all the Senior Citizen benefits available - a whole bunch of them - and a beautiful map of Seattle I was never able to find again after I came here. I promptly decided that any town with a Mayor like this cannot be all bad and asked Al Feldmann to start hunting for an apartment for me. When I came here I brought Charlie one of those bookends made of olive wood and he made a big fuss about it.

Sometime in the middle of June of 1980 a young husky guy walked in my office and introduced himself as Zvika Chodnik. It was the beginning of a beautiful friendship as the saw goes, which is still going strong after all these years. It ^{was} the best thing what happened to me during those turbulent years in Israel, which could have been a lot easier to handle if we would have met years earlier. Zvika was about thirty, had a friendly smile and told me he will share my office with me and right off the bat I was sure we'll hit off fine. He used to be the foreman in the machine shop, being a precision mechanic himself, but had to give it up because he was something of a perfectionist and had constant arguments with the crew. As I found out later Zvika was one of those lucky people who is a wizard with his hands and could fix anything made of metal, but was also a talented artist. The better part of a wall in my

lasting for days. It was obvious that it was "love at first sight" from both sides including the kids. Never anything like this happened to me before or after in all my life, anywhere. By the end of next week Zvika said, Erwin, Raya and the kids gave strict orders to bring you for lunch for Shabbat and no arguments please. This became something of a weekly ritual, the "lunches" always lasting till the evening. The first time since I came to Israel I had something pleasant to look forward to all week and it certainly made a tremendous difference, specially now when I had to start worrying about going back to America and start my life there from scratch after a ten year hiatus and I don't mind admitting that it made me worry. My only friends were Joe and Erna in New Jersey and I made up my mind right after the Dutch Consulate turned down my application, that I'm not going back to New Jersey for more of its brass monkey winters and tropical summers, thank you very much. Al Feldmann was kind enough to help me to find an apartment but it was clear from the tone of his letters that he has no intention to include me in his social life and we ^{were} never anything more than "colleagues" at work either while he was at IAI.

When you're "comfortably off" financially, it is no "big deal" to relocate even if you're sixty five, but being comfortably off was not in the card as far as I could figure out, specially as I had no idea how much my American Social Security Benefits will amount to, to say nothing about my Israeli pension - if any. It was almost sure that having completed ten years service with IAI I'll be entitled to some pension but every time I asked I got a different answer, sometimes for the better sometimes for the worse, the

latest bureaucrat assuring me that the previous one was a chamor who didnt know what s/he was talking about. Aš for my severance pay - same story. To say the least it was not exactly the most re-assuring situation. Aš I explained with the fringe benefits previously, it all depends on good will and how they want to "spin" it.

AS the old saw goes, everything has to come to an end. On December first I picked up my last paycheck from IAI and Zvika saved me from making a horses ass of myself, explaining that the guys are going to give me a little going away party, but unlike in other places where these kinds of affairs are "sponsored" by the party givers, in Israel it is of course backassward and I'm supposed to buy the fixin's. So we jumped into Zvika's car and boughth some stuff, not forgetting the very important GARINIM, without which there is NO party in Israel, regardless how modest or how posh it might be. The guys took up a collection for me and Zvika boughth on the money two nice bottles of French brandy, which is not cheap in Israel. My boss Avri was out of town so he missed the party.

At the end of January I was again invited to lunch to Zvika and Raya and they asked me a question which really floored me, although I knew of course that they all liked me. Zvika said, we talked this over Erwin, even including the kids in the yeshiva (conference in this context), and we would like to know if you would be willing to stay in Israel if you could come and live with us? I was speechless. This was of course an open ended offer as nobody could have known how long I'll be around, to say nothing about how it would work out on the long run? When I regained more or less my

composure, I had to tell them the sad truth that it is too late. I find this country just impossible to live in, as there were too many frustrations and aggravations to deal with day after day which accumulated, impossible to disregard, forget and forgive, with more of the same to come if I stay I'm sure I couldn't handle at my age. They understood they told me, having heard the same tsipur(story) from other Westerners who left for the same reasons, but they asked me anyway just to be sure, so that they can't blame themselves that they didn't try. Why didn't I meet this wonderful people years ago? It could have made all the difference.

As at sixtyfive I was not the man I used to be, if I ever was, I wanted to give myself plenty of time with the hated, loathed and by now dreaded GODDDAM job of packing the last GODDAMN time in my somewhat eventful life. I started by boxing all my books and records, packing all my clothes etc in the cabin trunks, except what I'll need for the rest of the LAST Israeli winter. It seemed like a never ending GODDAMN job, adding boxes to boxes. In a case like this when I know I have to get a job done on a deadline, factoring in the unforeseeable events as accidents - which I never had so far in my life even as much as cut finger believe it or not - I'm a driven man, until everything to the last detail is "cocked and locked" as they say in the army. The weekend lunches with Zvika and Raya ending in the evening was the only thing what kept me going. Needless to say both Zvika and Raya offered to help with the packing but I explained to them that I have to do this myself otherwise I won't know what is where, and what I didn't tell them, being a Yecke everything had to be done RIGTH and with all the experience I had

I was sure I can do a better job faster then either of them could. I told Zvika his help will be very much needed and appreciated for the shlepping and "handling" The Best of a Bad Lot DAPHNA & LAVY when they come for packing and crating the furniture.

A week before the moving men came my apartment looked more then a warehouse then an apartment and Zvika with Raya's approval suggested that I stay with them for which I was eternally grateful, not having to spend the last week in that badlam. The simple truth is, and I'm not exagerating, I doubt it that I've gotten thru with all the lunacy of dealing with not one, but two different bureaucracies, without ending up either in jail for killing somebody or in a nuthouse, except for Zvika's help in dealing with that of IAI and the Israeli one without the help of both Zvika and Raya.

When I left BENDIX I'd to hand in my badge, sign a paper that I'm not taking any classified info with me and I was out in five minutes or less. At IAI I had to sign pages and pages of documents, most of which completly irrelevant to my work and presence with them, testifying that I returned all the tools I never needed or used, all the technical manuals, ditto and on and on. I went with Zvika from office to office arguing about everything re my severance pay and the time when it is going to be paid, my pension etc etc. not for hours but for days. Zvika almost got in trouble with the "outside" authorities when he got into an argument with an old yecke of the Savings Fund (Kupat Tagmulim) and if Raya wouldnt have grabbed his arm and pulled him away, the old yecke would have ended up as my neighbor in Tel-Hashomer hospital. AS for myself I was physically and emotionally exhausted and at the end of

my rope and my patience, after these gruelling days of packing up again and these frustrating ten years for which I had nothing or very little to show. I remembered an entry I made into my Diary years ago in one of my more original and creative moments: To live in this country is like being married to a klafte (shrew) who will think up thousand and one ways to make your day an ordeal, from giving you lukewarm coffee and burned toast for b'fast, to bedtime, when she will initiate coitus interruptus without warning, and then yell at you for having made pecker tracks on the bed sheet. Yeah, sounds about righth.

On February 12th I booked my flighth for March 16th with EL-Al to JFK and from there to SEATAC (Seattle/Tacoma) with UNITED AIRLINES, whose poster showing two geese screwing in flighth, with their motto underneath was my all time favourite: FLY UNITED, ITS THE ONLY WAY TO FLY!. On February 16th I rebooked my flighth to Athens with TWA to save \$200, shrugging off with fatalistic non-chalence the crack of one pilot who said, I like the runway in Athens, it starts in the sea, it ends in the sea, with mountains on both sides. As I found out from Zvika later he was more worried about the terrorists than about the runway, who liked Athens too for their cavalier attitude concerning security arrangements, they took good advantage of several times with "good results".

At the end of february I finished all the packing except for the crating DAPHNA "the best of a bad lot" had to do, and I called them up to tell them I'm ready for their man to make his survey for the preparation of their crate for my worldly goods.

On the third March an old guy arrived named Schmulik, without

as much as a piece of paper and pencil, and also without a blessed word other than "rack ivrit" (only Hebrew) although he was friendly enough complimenting me on my Yecke efficiency I packed and numbered the boxes, 1 of 15, 2 of 15 etc earning me several kol ha'kavod. He said it adds up to about 5cu.m. and he was Gone with the Wind. Remembering the young guy in New York making a similarly quick survey and a fast buck too, I hoped Shmuli was old enough to know what he was doing.

The same day, also the 3rd March I got wonderful news from Al Feldmann, that with incredible luck he was able to rent an apartment for me from his old landlord, the very same one he had for years, ^{and} for a very reasonable rent too, as the old gent was a retired railroad man whose wife died not long ago, and he was not interested in making money, having a comfortable pension, but to rent for somebody who is not going to be a problem, for which Al vouched. Those were the days of the big BOEING boom and people lived anywhere and everywhere including the alleys and their cars.

Four days after Shmuli's faster than sound survey of my wordly goods, I paid a visit to DAPHNA to pick up my BILL OF LADING I assumed was waiting for me by then, and to pay their bill for the shipping. They had no objection to paying their bill but when I asked for the BILL OF LADING they looked at me as if I would be asking for a copy of the DEAD SEA SCROLLS. MApitom? How can we give you the BILL OF LADING before we shipped your goods? We send you the BILL OF LADING to America after we shipped your goods, bemet! (in this context "bemet" means, surely you're kidding!) But that is not ^{how} the rest of the world is doing it, hey. What kind of proof will I have that you have my goods? Ma ichpatli? (what do I care?)

You have a Receipt for the bill you paid, that is enough proof. That is enough proof that I paid my bill but it is no proof that you have my goods. This is the way we're doing it, gamarnu. (thats it.) What could I do, I remembered what my friend Hezi told me: If you live in Israel you gotta be an optimist.

Next morning The Best of a Bad Lot arrived and thats when the real fun started in more then one sense. Zvika took a day off from work to help and superwise the crating and loading, and if it wouldnt have been for him and Shmuli, who was a hard worker, they wouldnt have finished before midnight or next morning.

The crew was something to cherish to behold and to marvel at, surpassing all my expectations. First off the bat when they unloaded their crate supposed to hold all my stuff, I gave it one look and told Zvika remembering an old Viennese expression, if they get everything in that crate I'll eat a toilet brush (friss a Heisl Bes'n). Zvika who is favourably impressed with this kind of humour laughed so hard his tears were coming, assuring me that as I already paid my bill, it is their problem.

The young guy who was supposed to take the cabin trunks downstairs from apartment by the elevator with a trolley, obviously never did this kind of work before. He not only had no idea how to get the trunk on the trolley but wanted to put the steel straps OVER the handles of the trunk not under, so that they wont slip off. These are the times when all the Wisdom of Old Age comes in handy to impress the young! Remembering the vicarious thrills I had during the first five years in America when I did everything I could get hold on for a bare living, including the trundling of 600lbs

steel barrels of malt syrup, before the foreman mercifully fired me after four days, I've shown this young schmuck how to tip the trunk on its side . . . slip the blade of the trolley underneath it and tip the trunk on the trolley. However, it was the crating and loading crew who stole the show, hands down. The stars of the team were two Laurel and Hardy impersonators, both of them deaf and dumb for good measure. As my favourite syndicated columnist Dave Barry would say, I'm not making this up. When the Long One lifted up his side of a piece of furniture to load it, putting the weight on the Short One, he promptly fell on his ass dropping the furniture. Too bad in those days there were no VCR otherwise I bet I could have sold the film to a TV show. After trying every thirty-two position recommended by the French, they admitted that about one third of it would fit in the crate just as I foresaw again, using the wisdom of old age. They had no choice but to return to Haifa for another crate. Fortunately Israel is a small country so it was only 50kms both ways and it was not all bad. The crew could take a little nap on the lawn meanwhile, for which they already got into position with effortless ease coming from long practice. When they returned with the second container I had instant misgivings as it was obviously meant for AIRFREIGHT not for a long sea trip, as its name made it perfectly clear: KAYSAIRTAINER, made from cardboard not wood. I pointed this out to Shmuli, who brushed it off with the all purpose magical expression used a thousand times every day in Israel: Yehiye tov! (it will be OK) Tov or not I insisted that only the boxes holding books and other non-breakables should be packed

à la yehiye tov cardboard box, once again calling on my inexhaustible supply of Old Age Wisdom. As it turned out it paid off too, sort of, as the container arrived with a one and half foot hole substituting for one corner. I made a picture of same and forwarded it to DAPHNE with a few wellchosen words. Not that my furniture in the wooden crate had an esier life. All the four pieces arrived more or less severly traumatized. Watching the show with increasingly jaundiced eyeballs I made some appropriate remarks to Zvika, who was not impressed. Erwin what do you want, bemet? They are alef-alef(A-OK) they dint throw anything! Perhaps they didnt throw, but they sure dropped things. It can happen. This brougth back happy memories from my days with Les Girls. Every time they screwed something up, which was daily, the answer was: it can happen, to which I had no arguments as it already DID,^{but} sometimes I was worried that the next time when ^{it, was} "it can happen" time again, I'll lose my cool and inflict serious bodily harm on one of them.

Well, at long last they loaded up everything and mercifully fucked off Haifa bound. The rest of it was in the hands of Fate and ZIM-Israels very own shipping line, but about THAT later. Zvika and myself returned for Raya's wonderul dinner to forget about the previous happenings^{who}. Poor Zvika worked all day like a chamor was exhausted and famished, and out of solidarity I was too, and also from watching this hilarious crew's performance worthy of a SITCOM.

Zvika, who kept a sharp eye on the IAI bureaucracy concerning my not lamented departure, came home one day telling me that

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he just caught them in the last minute from mailing some important documents to my address of ten years ago when I came, Maon Akadem-aim Alef, although they unfailingly mailed the IAI Newsletter all these many years to my correct address to Ramat Efal. Needless to say this little caper gave me the heeby-jeebies and the willy-nillies wondering what other documents they might have sent to SHELL to Ecuador or the British Alien Pioneer Corp c/o War Office, England. I never ceased to be amazed how efficient they can be when it is NOT required or necessary.

As the day of farewell came close to take leave of Zvika and his wonderful family, who literally adopted me when I needed help so desperately, there were two overwhelming emotions I had to deal with. First a great sadness and loss leaving these wonderful friends, second, an enormous resentment, indignation and bitterness toward this country, for making it impossible - as for so many other Westerners before and after me - to spend the rest of my remaining years here, as I intended to do when I came here ten years ago, sending me back to the Galut, when I was not only ready and willing but able to meet it halfway or more. Well, there is always a silver lining to every coin. Israel's gain in LOSING me, will be Seattle's LOSS in gaining me.

How could I not be bitter with ten years of my life down the toilet? Come to think of it I couldn't even get them to flush their shitpapers down the toilet instead of throwing them in that stinking bucket. You think this is funny? I don't. I think it is pathetic. I often remembered that KLM pilot whose plane collided with another one I think over Tenerife and had the whole top of

his plane shorn off. He said, I reached up for the firehandle and all I grabbed was air. This is exactly ^{how} I felt in Israel. Every time I reached for a "handle" to change something what needed to be changed all I grabbed was air. There was nobody to talk to who would listen and ^{DO} something. Nobody. Ever.-

On March 13th 1981 the fateful day arrived. I said farewell to the kids and Zvika and Raya drove me out to the airport at Lod with my handluggage. It was a very emotional farewell for all of us. I'm not ashamed to say that it was the first time I cried - with Zvika and Raya keeping me company - since Tibor and myself said farewell to our sweet grampa at the station of Sopron in 1939. To bring this Saga, or megillah, to end, perhaps it is appropriate to use the same French saying I started it with, after leaving Sopron: Partir, c'est un peu mourir...

PART SIX

P.S.

PS.

Although this story belongs technically to the next chapter dealing with my re-entry into Civilisation, being an organic ^{and} logical part my séjour in Israel, I'm including it here as a fitting last chapter sort of "here is a little something to remember us by" contributed by DAPHNA and ZIM, who handled the crating and shipping my goods to Seattle.

The enclosed documents tell the whole fascinating, hilarious happenings in all it's gruesome details, but if you, Dear Reader, find it more then you have bargained for, or can handle, here it is in a nutshell.

"The Best of the Bad Lot" DAPHNA who crated all my furniture and everything else I packed and boxed myself, managed to mutilate every four piece of furniture. My beautiful rosewood desk arrived with its top freefloating. The righth armrest of my pride and joy Eames chair was broken off and hanging there like a fractured arm. My cute red bedside table was banged up and so was my walnut couch from WORKBENCH. And all this was duly insured to...ROTTERDAM, Holland, instead of Seattle USA. Howcum? As I mentioned previously Israelis can be maddeningly efficient when there is no need for it. As the Dear Reader will remember, I mentioned that I enquired at DAPHNA some six months before leaving how much would the shipping cost, both to Holland and to the USA as I wasnt sure yet where I will retire. Somebody must have found this zetele mentioning Holland and without looking at the BILL OF LADING which was made out correctly for Seattle, duly insured my goods for Rotterdam! If their

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PS/2.)

efficiency would have extended to the clerck giving a fast last glance to ALL the documents before shoving them into their common envelope, s/he would have noticed that the BILL OF LADING and the Insurance Document are addressed to two DIFFERENT destinations. AS these documents were just more zeteles to get rid off and out of the way for the clerck tsick-tsack, no such thing happened. Bad as this was, what really gave ^{me} an over abundance of flatus because it embarrassed me with my new mailman, was their envelope and the way it was addressed. For me it was a perfect misrococosmos of some of things plaguing that poor little country, one of which was and still is, that they never got their shit together and decide on their priorities, apart from having a first class Defense Force, which is of course PRIORITY ONE for obvious reasons. -

As I mentioned previously after the Six Day war you could buy any kind of luxury item you wanted or needed, from single malt whiskey, to \$100 perfume - you name it. But could you buy a decent MANILLA ENVELOPE for love or money? MAPITOM?! They still use the same crummy brown wrapping paper as after the war of Independence. And that was what my new mailman was looking at PLUS the way their Letterhead was designed and printed.(I'm enclosing it also.) As you know the rest of the world is printing the address of the ADDRESSEE in the center of the envelope and the sender's in the upper left hand corner - or in some countries in the back - in small letters. In Israel it has to be of course backassward. DAPHNA, WEISSMANN & ALVY had to be printed in big heavy Hebrew letters in the CENTER, while my name and address was typed somewhere on the top with an old worn out ribbon barely legibly. My mailman

admiring this strange specimen with an amused and bemused smile, the envelope having been sent Registered and therefore requiring my signature, asked me, this is the way they do it over there? Er...

Somuch about DAPHNA. Now lets see the selfless contribution of ZIM, Israel's very own shipping line. Before leaving Israel for Seattle, I wrote both to DAPHNA and ZIM giving as my temporary address that of Mr. Al Feldmann and my permanent address after my arrival, requesting the confirmation of this communication so that I can be sure it was duly noted. All this was duly ignored by ZIM which sent all my documents regarding the arrival of my goods and instructions re their retrieval to Mr. Al Feldmann who was by that time in Israel for his Pessach Holiday. In these documents ZIM advised me that I can pick up my goods from their warehouse in WILMINGTON California, very considerately enclosing a map about the exact location of their warehouse, only thousand miles from Seattle. By Divine Grace they sent all these documents, as I said to Mr. Al Feldmann thus neutralizing their FIRST fuckup by this second one and saving me from a possible massive cardiac infarct if I'd would have received their instructions to pick up my goods in California.

When they noticed that I didnt pick up my stuff they checked their files and realizing their fuckup they sent me a MAIL-GRAM advising me where to pickup my goods in Seattle, which I did.

By that time Al got home from the Jewish Homeland and forwarded the original documents in person. I sent a few wellchosen words to the Manager of ZIM with copies of all their correspondence including their cordial invitation to come to Wilmington CA.

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PS/4.)

This communication to ZIM elicited a spirited letter from Mr. Joseph Merante, Vice President, North America Traffic and Documentation (and how about THAT for impressive TITLE?) in which Mr. Merante made it perfectly clear what I already assumed, having just finished a ten years séjour in Israel, that he will tell me that it was all MY fault because I gave Mr. Feldmann's address in Seattle, so what else could they do but ship my goods to CALIFORNIA?! See all the correspondence I'm enclosing Dear Reader in case you think I'm making this all up.

This little incident proves what I found out years ago, which is that Israelis got it down to a science how they always blame the victim and thus avoid admitting that they EVER make a mistake, even if they were boiled in extra virgin, cold pressed kosher olive oil. Reminds me of the cartoon showing a dog the size of a calf chomping on the leg of a mailman, and an old harridan screaming in the door. The caption says: take your filthy leg OUT of the mouth of my little dog, you MONSTER!

E P I L O G U E.

After all these years of Israeli independence - ou` soit disant tel - everybody with a modicum of ability to grasp reality, have to admit, that the idea of a Zionist Israeli Nation, in the sense envisioned by the Funding Fathers and Mothers, containing all or most of World Jewry was never more than a chimera. It was against everything we know about human nature. We jews lived in the Diaspora some 2000 years, and generally speaking, untill Hitler's Holocaust we lived more or less comfortably and without major upheavals. Simply put, we were accepted, and if not always cherished, at least tolerated. And we felt at home wherever we lived. The old Latin proverb UBI BENE, IBI PATRIA, sums it up best.

To have assumed or hoped that all those millions of jews from all over the world will pack up and move to Israel, lock stock and Cadillac, was a pipe dream. It could and would never happen. To use the colloquial expression, it was not in the cards. Nekuda. (Period.)

As for the old and frequently trotted out scare stories of hoping for mass Aliya from the West due to another Holocaust, vehass ve hahlilah (God forbid) it is nothing short of pathetic. As the Russian example proves, mass Aliyah happens only when the circumstances in GENERAL changes in a country so drastically that

the whole situation for Jewry is changing with it, either for the better or the worse. In Russia it changed for the better as emigration got easier. In America the situation would have to change for the worse, with antisemitism OFFICALLY encouraged or at least condoned. If and when that happens, God forbid, Israel won't last for two weeks in that Sea of Arabs unless they want to pull another Samson in the Temple (à la Dimona.) Surely no American Jew will be dumb enough to exchange possible death for certain death by going on Aliyah to Israel under those circumstances.

When it is said and admitted that the original version of the Zionist Dream was not in the cards, it must also be said and admitted that the present variety was likewise not foreseen, and more importantly, did NOT have to happen because this was not in the cards either.

To have ended up after thousands of years in the Diaspora with this Jewish Community of neither fish or fowl, neither socialist nor capitalist, neither religious nor secular, is a TRAVESTY what COULD have been, if handled with our wellknown Jewish flair we're justifiably proud of.

Nobody in his/her right mind expected or envisaged from a people who contributed for centuries not only their share but more to art, science, medicine, literature, you name it, in every country they lived, to end up with a country which is the result of NEGATIVE selectivity of World Jewry, to put it delicately. It would be painful to elaborate on this aspect of my comment and I won't do it because it is not necessary. Everybody who lived in Israel longer than a few hours will know what I meant.

To deny this fact would be a clear case of "None so blind as those who dont want to see."

The obvious question is: What went wrong? To use an old cliché, there is enough blame to cover everybody who was and is anybody in World Jewry.

It is obvious that World Jewry handed over the responsibility to the wrong, that is unqualified, people who might have had the goodwill - and the wrong vision? - but not the skill and the necessary background for this monumental task of building a Nation from the ground up, literally and figuratively.

The notion that Israel HAD to become another "Levantine" country in the worst sense of the word because it is in the Middle East ("geography is Destiny") is unaltered garbage, belied and disproved without any doubt, and does not even wash as a good excuse.

Nobody will ever convince me that Israel could not have become another Singapore if skillfully handled, and as we all know Singapore is not only in the East but regarding natural resources Singapore, which has to import even water, is the Sahara compared to Israel. All this didnt keep Harry Lee Kuan Yew from turning it in twenty years into the cleanest, safest, best administered Metropolis in the World, with a standard of living as high as Japan and in housing higher still. The only difference was LEADERSHIP in the person of Harry Lee Kuan Yew or if you'll excuse me the vernacular: BALLS & BRAINS! And according to persistent rumours we Jews have BOTH in spades. Whatever we might have been accused by our enemies, being a race/people of imbeciles and slackers was not one on the list. And that we undertook this Herculean

task of building a new country in the first place, and won all our wars so far, Baruch ha 'Shem, proves that we have balls also.

Whoever have the chutzpah to say or imply that we couldn't have found another Jewish Harry Lee Kuan Yew, raise your hand! The question is: WHY didn't we? The answer is again the same: the NEGATIVE selection of the candidates for The Jewish Homeland. From day one the unofficial motto was: we want jews without money (from the East), and money without jews (from the West). To chose an analogy, if you open a restaurant where the ambience is that of a "greasy spoon" with food to match, the only customers you'll attract are those who want to eat in a greasy spoon, either because that is the only kind they can afford, or because that is what they are used to. And this is where World Jewry in general and American Jewry in particular committed it's tragic mistake and therefore has to take it's share of the blame, for not saying loud and clear, Hey, wait a goddamn minute! We DONT want a greasy spoon! We want a nice clean restaurant where we too want to eat! Of course the logical answer to this was: Welcome! Get your tachat down here and become part of the Management. And this was were "they" had Western Jewry by the shorthair, because "they" knew that Western Jewry doesnt have a pow'ful hankerin' to come to that miserable little country which had nothing to offer but "blood sweat and tears".

Am I contradicting myself and say that Western Jewry SHOULD have packed up lock stock and Cadillac and streamed into Israel? Nope. Building a nation - also called pioneering - is not for everybody. But as the Peace Corp proved it beyond doubt, there

ARE tens of thousands of talented, dedicated, skilled and YES, idealistic and relatively young people, who are not only willing but eager to respond to a CHALLENGE, above and beyond "making a good buck", IF they are motivated correctly and, lets not forget, APPRECIATED by the "natives" instead of being told either in very plain words or by body language: "go home! Nobody called you!"

Am I exaggerating, a polite euphemism for lying? Here is a charming little episode from the book of my former colleague at IAI and still friend I hope, Jay Shapiro, American Physicist with impeccable Zionist credentials and True Believer cum kippa, former Shaliach (emissary) for Israel, FROM BOTH SIDES NOW p. 47. Dramatis Personae: Jay Shapiro, his wife Naomi and the bank Manager of Jay's bank. Scenario: Jay and Naomi are trying to get a mortgage for their new apartment. Jay: You will recall that we're having a problem obtaining a mortgage. Manager: Yes. Jay: Thank you. As you know we arrived from the United States only a short time ago and... Manager cutting in: Then go back to the United States. Nobody sent for you."

There are tens of thousands of people who are looking for nothing better while still young and full of piss and vinegar, then to "make a dent"! Come to think of it, there are even a few old fools like me.