

Lebanon FFA'r

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the bills such as electricity. Decisions are made jointly, with a meeting every Saturday night for kibbutz members to make major decisions. Irit says however, that many people who live on the kibbutz never become members, and many members don't attend the Saturday meetings unless there is an agenda item which is of particular interest to them.

The people in the kibbutz eat all their meals together and all their needs, such as laundry, are taken care of communally. The children are cared for in a children's house almost from birth. While this seems hard to accept, Irit says it is the only sensible thing to do. She said, "Everybody works, so women can't care for a baby. We grow up in groups of five." The five children stay together and are cared for by one person. At kindergarten age, several groups of five join together. She said children and parents get together frequently, adding, "I love my parents as much as Tim loves his." She explained that there are some kibbutz which allow children to live with parents and some others are changing to that way of living. She strongly supports the way she was brought up.

Tim said that Arabs are hired for hand work like picking up potatoes and picking citrus. He said they receive very low wages for their work and felt their lot was not the best.

Irit, however, disagreed with his skeptical assessment of the treatment of the Arab workers. She says emphatically, "They do get paid lower wages than the Israelis, but they are higher than they got before. And they need the work. We do them a big favor. A special car brings them each morning and takes them back in the evening."

There are some skilled Arab laborers working in

housing construction on the kibbutz, many of whom have worked there for several years. Both Irit and Tim agree that among these workers, some Israelis have made lasting friendships and the Arabs are treated with respect.

Bringing the construction workers to the kibbutz originally caused a "big argument" among the members, Irit said, because they are supposed to be totally self-sufficient and should have been able to do the work themselves. "We realized that we cannot do it by ourselves," she said.

Asked about the military danger in Israel, Tim responded, "It is as bad as they say. Everyone's in the Army and there is a full time guard with two night guards every night. I think I lost my fear in Poland where there were Army guys everywhere. It didn't bother me in Israel."

Irit adds, "You learn to live with it. People do worry, but you learn to live with the danger. The people in the north live in shelters."

About the proposed peace settlement, Irit said, "I don't know. We need to have hope." Tim added, "A lot of Israelis are really glad for it. They are happy to have peace."

Irit says that she will probably return to the kibbutz. "It is all I know. All my friends are there and I have my own position." She said she once lived for a year in Europe, but was very unhappy.

Following high school graduation, every young person spends two years in the Army, and then frequently leaves the kibbutz for a year off. They may work in town and earn their own money, Irit says. While many leave and feel they find something better, many people choose to come to the kibbutz.

From Israel, Tim traveled to India where he visited for one month. He was there

under the auspices of a private farmer, who was "quite wealthy." The man owned 500 acres, and his holdings included a sugar cane factory and several other factories which used by-products from the sugar cane refining process. Profits from these holdings were divided among family members, according to Tim, but a hospital to serve the community had been built from the treasury.

"India is quite an interesting country. Most farmer own five acres and the farms are worked with mostly hand labor. Water buffalo are used to plow and work the land," he said.

He described the people as "very poor. They cook along the streets and live in grass huts. The streets were unpaved. It is a poor and overcrowded country, where hundreds of people sleep on the streets at night."

After a short visit to Bangkok, Thailand, Tim returned to Israel and

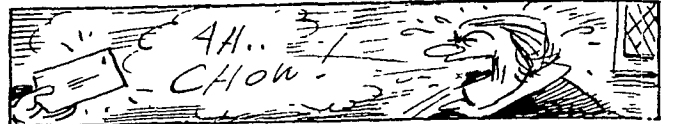
traveled to his home in October.

The whole trip, he explained, "Gave me a better outlook on life. People talk about America, and now that I am back I can see some of their comments. I think most people are jealous of Americans because we have so much and they don't."

He said he encountered many misconceptions about America, like the fact that many people feel Americans are all rich.

"Traveling used to frighten me." He feels the Work Experience Abroad program offers some unique opportunities for young people, but said he feels it is not publicized enough. He never would have known of the program without the guidance of his teacher.

All of the traveling, he reiterated, "just makes me want to go more."



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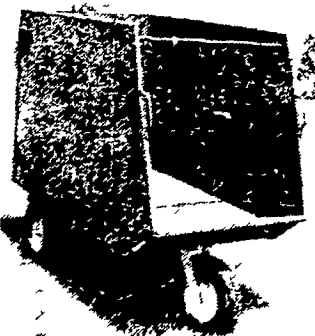
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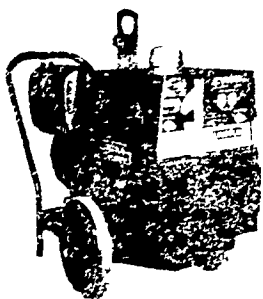
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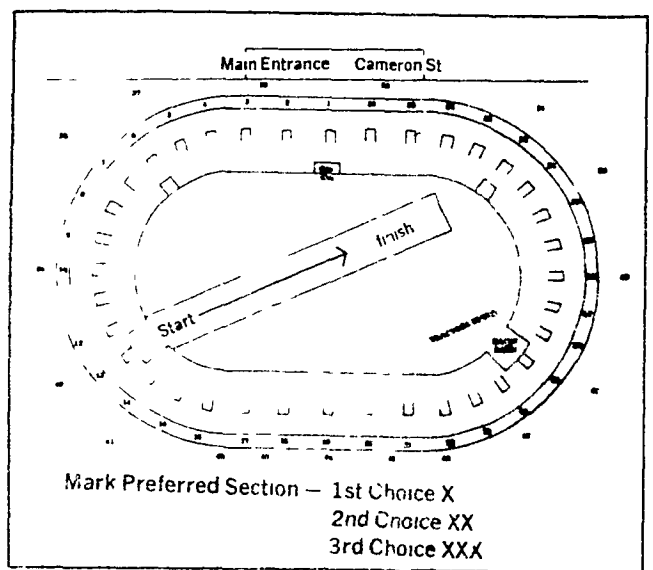
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