



DEAR ALL is about Ruth Miriam Ziff Adler's year in Israel from August 1961-1962 on Bnei Akiva Hochshara at Kibbutz Yavneh and the "year in Israel"/"gap year" after high school programs.

While in Israel Ruth wrote letters ("Dear All") to her family, which are presented in this book and give an insight into her experience during the year program and life in Israel in the early 1960's. There is also an introduction which summarizes and discusses various topics which the letters relate to, such as kibbutz life, religion in Israel, how the program influenced Ruth's Zionism, religious beliefs and personality, and what American youth knew about Israel and the Holocaust. Photos which Ruth took that year appear in the book, as do articles from "hometown" Minneapolis papers describing Ruth's year in Israel.

The "year in Israel" programs have since become a part of American Jewish culture and this book explores their effect on young people and whether they are worthwhile on a personal and community level, what their content should be and what effect they have had on American Jewish culture and religion.

The "Dear All" letters describe Ruth's program, which consisted of kibbutz work chores, Jewish religious studies and preparations for making Aliyah (immigrating to Israel and living on a kibbutz). There are descriptions of many aspects of kibbutz life and, in addition, the group's travels around Israel. Israeli history unfolds thru Ruth's letters and the footnote explanations relating to sites, institutions and people. Also, there are many interesting and amusing descriptions of Israel in the 1960's, such as kibbutz food and eating habits, the difficulties of phoning from a public telephone booth, "long winded propaganda" speeches by officials, and how to deal with the antiquated Israeli customs regulations. Ruth's letters also discuss whether she should live in Israel, learning about the holocaust from survivors and the Eichmann trial, the shock of hearing Jordanian radio broadcasts talk about the destruction of Israel and other issues which are still relevant today.

For those who have been on year programs or visited Israel this diary of a young girl can be a nostalgic reminder of their experiences. For those who plan to spend time in Israel after high school Ruth's letters can increase their understanding of what awaits them and provide insights into what they should strive to achieve from their program.

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Dear All

Letters from Kibbutz Yavneh, 1961-1962 | By Ruth Ziff Adler | Edited with an Introduction by Stephen (Steve) Adler

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Letters of an American teenager to her family from a year in Israel program at Kibbutz Yavneh, 1961-1962

BY RUTH ZIFF ADLER

Edited with an Introduction by Stephen (Steve) Adler



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Letters of an American teenager to her family from a
year in Israel Bnei Akiva Hochshara program at Kibbutz
Yavne, 1961-1962

BY RUTH ZIFF ADLER

Edited with an Introduction by Stephen (Steve) Adler



Published by Stephen J. Adler for the Rhoda Adler and
Helen and Sam Ziff Memorial Foundation, adlersteve281@gmail.com
<http://stephen-adler.com>

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Adler, Ruth Miriam Ziff, Adler Stephen J.

DEAR ALL: LETTERS OF AN AMERICAN TEENAGER TO HER FAMILY FROM A YEAR IN ISRAEL
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CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Family Notes.....	18
Institutions	23
Glossary.....	25
Ruth's "Dear All" Letters from her stay in Israel	27
Addendum: Ruth's next sixty five Years.....	156
Articles in Minneapolis newspapers about Ruth's Israel Experience	158
Photos of Ruth's family today.....	160



Ruth's Hoch group, Ruth: top row of girls, second from left

INTRODUCTION

BY STEPHEN (STEVE) ADLER

This book is about Ruth Miriam Ziff's¹ year (August, 1961 - August, 1962) in Israel at Kibbutz Yavne and the American-Jewish-Israeli historical phenomenon called the "year in Israel" / "gap year" after high school program.

The book consists of an introduction to the letters which Ruth wrote to her family during her year in Israel and a discussion of the ethnography aspects of the year in Israel program at the kibbutz and in general. For better understanding of the letters they are preceded by information about some of Ruth's family who are mentioned numerous times in the letters, and also the institutions and Zionist figures referred to in her letters. There is also a short glossary of some Israeli and Jewish terms used in the letters. In the book are some of the photos Ruth took during her year in Israel of events and places she refers to in her letters and two articles published in Minneapolis newspapers by reporters who visited her on the kibbutz.

I am most grateful to the following scholars who have read the manuscript and made helpful comments and also corrections. Jonathan Sarna, Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University; Bernard (Dov) Spolsky, Professor Emeritus of Linguistics at Bar Ilan University; Ellen Spolsky, Professor Emeritus of Literature at Bar Ilan University. A discussion with Jonathan Boyarin, Professor of Modern Jewish Studies at the Cornell University Near Eastern Studies Department, was helpful and encouraging.

Ruth graduated from North High School in Minneapolis Minnesota in 1961. She was among the top 7 students in her class² of about 600, and could have entered a top university after High School. Instead she traveled to a distant newly reborn country, Israel, to participate in a program centered on both hard work and study

1 In 1967 we were married and since then she is Ruth Miriam Ziff Adler.

2 Being among the National Honor Society from the time she was a junior, on the Senior Scholastic Honor Roll and among the top seven students in her graduating class. She was the speaker for her class at the graduation ceremony



Ruth leads her high school class graduation ceremony

of Jewish and Zionist subjects. This program, whose official name was Hochshara, (“Hoch”, for short), which means preparation in Hebrew, was based at Kibbutz Yavne, located south of Tel Aviv. Hochshara was part of the Bnei Akiva religious youth movement and designed to prepare diaspora Jewish youth to make Aliyah, integrate into Israeli society and settle on a kibbutz.

Ruth was on Hochshara in Israel from August 1961 to August 1962 and wrote weekly letters to family and friends describing Israeli society of the early 60’s, how a young American relates to Israeli people, kibbutz life, Israeli modern Orthodox religious observance, settling in Israel and other experiences of her year abroad. Ruth’s mother, Helen (née Geffen) Ziff, saved these letters which the family received and letters given to her by others who received them from Ruth. Also saved were photographs taken by Ruth when she was in Israel and mentioned

in her letters and articles written by Minneapolis newspaper reporters who visited the kibbutz and interviewed Ruth.

These letters are an ethnographical³ study of the early phenomenon of American youth spending a year in Israel following high school graduation.⁴ The “gap year in Israel” programs have become part of American Jewish culture and history. What motivated a normative American girl from the Midwest to spend a year on an Israeli kibbutz instead of beginning her university studies? What were her expectations and how did her relation to Israel and Israeli society develop during this year? What was her relation to Israeli society, on the kibbutz and off and how did this influence her attitude to Israel? Was the “year in Israel” a worthwhile investment of Ruth’s time for her long term life development? Did it encourage her to return and settle in Israel as was the purpose of the Hochshara program? How did the year in Israel influence Ruth’s religiosity, her desire to continue Jewish studies, continue to observe Orthodox traditions? Did the year away from her family weaken or strengthen Ruth’s ties with her parents and siblings?

Today, most American organizations, both religious and secular, run “year in Israel” or “summer or month in Israel” programs. Are the huge efforts made by Israel and American Jewry in sending American youth to Israel for a year after high school a worthwhile investment of resources and peoplepower? Furthermore, the focus of Ruth’s program was Zionist, to encourage her to make Aliyah; how much should this be emphasized in other programs?

Ruth’s letters provide insights into these and other questions which are still relevant today as the phenomenon of “a year in Israel” has developed and expanded and other programs have overshadowed the kibbutz program.

In addition, Ruth’s letters provide an interesting, and sometimes amusing, picture of Israel in the early 1960’s and especially life on a kibbutz.

Here are some of the highlights of this experience which are useful for understanding Ruth’s letters and evaluating the “year in Israel” programs.

3 Ethnography observes society from the point of view of the subject of the research. It is an account of the life of a community based on first-hand accounts or observation. See Wikipedia.

4 See: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Learning from ethnography: Reflections on the nature and efficacy of youth tours to Israel", in *The Israel Experience: studies in youth travel and Jewish identity*, by Harvey Goldberg, Samuel Heilman and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (Jerusalem: Studio Kavgraph, Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, 2002), 267-331.

The excitement of being in Israel, how Israelis related to Ruth and the Zionist experience:

Ruth describes the excitement of arriving in the Holy Land. Numerous times she mentions how thankful she is for being in Israel and for the experiences she is having there. As she traveled around the country during the year in Israel Ruth expressed how excited she felt about being at the various religious and historical sites. As the year progressed this feeling becomes more intense and is reiterated at the sight of many places and events.

Life on the Kibbutz:

People on the kibbutz were very welcoming to Ruth, she had a “kibbutz family”, people were friendly, she was invited into their homes and she mixed with the kibbutz youth. There was an effort to make her feel at home on the kibbutz and in Israel. Israel of the late fifties and sixties was a welcoming country to potential immigrants from America.

The living quarters of the Hochshara group were simple wooden shacks, which Ruth later described as “chicken coops”. The toilets and showers were outside and there was not always hot water for showers. These conditions are sometimes accepted without complaints and with some humor. Sometimes, however, Ruth mentions that they were roughing it and that it was cold and uncomfortable to get undressed in a room with no heat and walk a long way to an outside bathroom. While Ruth was not a spoiled American, she pointed out the differences in the standard of living and sometimes expressed her preference for the comforts of home.

The descriptions of meals and eating habits on the kibbutz are both humorous and fascinating. Meals were in the common dining room in which all kibbutz members ate. Ruth’s describes the lack of Americans eating manners and etiquette and what it was like to sit at a kibbutz dining room table at that time.

Her detailed listing of the food served at meals indicates a kibbutz diet far different from what she was used to at home. Even today the Israeli diet has changed from what was common in the fifties and sixties. For breakfast and supper Ruth ate bread, tomatoes, cucumbers, margarine, cheeses, jam, eggs, and plain yogurt and is constantly complaining that this diet will make her over-weight, which it apparently did. This is far from the diet of cornflakes and fancy milk products served today. There was one daily “meat” meal, consisting of either ground meat

“hamburger”, fried fish or salami, with soup, carrots, rice or potatoes but “real meat” was served only a few times during the whole year, on holidays.

Her humorous description of being encouraged to overeat at the home of relatives and other hosts, who felt it a good deed to feed the young girl, was a typical Jewish phenomenon.

There are also detailed descriptions of the daily schedule and routine on the kibbutz in general and especially for the Hoch group.

Towards the end of Ruth’s year in Israel the group spent time learning at a Zionist institution in Jerusalem. She compares life on the kibbutz to city life and especially life in Jerusalem.

Religion in Israel:

In Minneapolis Ruth was used to a “modern” Orthodox synagogue and a modern Orthodox family life. Her grandfather on her maternal side was an important Rabbi in Atlanta, Georgia who had a large congregation, wrote religious tracts and played an important role in that community. Ruth’s parents were active in the Minneapolis Jewish community; her father was president of the local Orthodox Synagogue and her mother was active in Hadassah women and other Jewish groups.

In the late 1950’s, early 1960’s, Americans in general were not familiar with religious and secular life in Israel. It is interesting, therefore, to read about Ruth’s first impressions of secular Israeli society and modern Israeli religious practices. Ruth describes the initial shock of coming into contact with the Israeli secular society. Israel has sometimes been described as a secular country claiming to be religious. Ruth describes the shock and disappointment of her meeting with the overwhelming secular Israeli society she had not heard about.

From Ruth’s letter we learn her impressions of Israeli religious kibbutz life and how it influenced her. Comparing what modern American Orthodox synagogues were like in the early 1960’s with today’s rituals we can discern the influence of the Israeli rituals that Ruth experienced on her and future American Orthodox Jewry. The dynamics of the kibbutz service, the congregational singing and participation and the emphasis on prayers rather than Cantors and choirs and Rabbis’ speeches was quite different from what Ruth was used to in the traditional Orthodox or Conservative synagogue in Minneapolis or other American cities. The American religious youth returning from the “year in Israel” program probably had an influence on the development of the religious services and observances in modern Orthodox and Conservative America.

Ruth also described how various holidays were celebrated on the kibbutz, down to the details of how it was cleaned spic and span for Pesach.

Jerusalem was a spiritual experience for Ruth and she describes the excitement of wandering through the city and visiting its landmarks, which were fewer prior to the city's unification in 1967. It is interesting how an old, small, rather run down city can have such an emotional and inspiring effect on a "year in Israel" participant who spends only a few months there. Buildings which we look at today as mundane and nothing special were described by Ruth with great excitement.

The studies and learning Hebrew:

Ruth's letters describe in detail the Hochshara's study program. She discusses the subjects which the group studied during the year. In addition to Hebrew and Jewish studies there were also lectures about Israeli society and especially Zionism.

The emphasis of the Hochshara program was not on one aspect of Jewish studies, such as learning Talmud, but a balanced presentation of subjects which included Tanach (Bible) and Jewish religious beliefs and development. This is in contrast to "Yeshiva" year in Israel programs today, which emphasize study of Talmud, sometimes in Yiddish and English, without emphasizing the study of Tanach, Hebrew, modern Israel or other subjects.

Ruth has numerous descriptions of her struggles with the Hebrew language. Despite a reasonable Hebrew School and family background she did not attend a Jewish Day School and, therefore, had less knowledge of Hebrew than many other participants in the Hoch program.

Also interesting is Ruth's descriptions of books as an important part of her studies and life. She was still living in the "book generation". In those days the book was central to studying and to Israeli society as a whole. Till today Ruth has books which she purchased while in Israel on the kibbutz, when it was seen as a special privilege to be able to buy books at reasonable prices and bring them home. This was the "year in Israel program" prior to television or internet or mobile phones and it resulted in an emphasis on studying, reading and group interaction.

The work:

During the year on kibbutz Ruth was assigned various work tasks. In her letters we find detailed descriptions of the work. From these descriptions we realize the rather primitive (in today's terms) level of work done in the late fifties and early sixties on the kibbutz. Dishwashing and laundry involved much hand work.

The processing of fruit was also tiresome hand work, today probably done by a combination of modern machines and “foreign workers”. She even worked a few days sorting cotton plants outside, which was described as difficult physical labor. She mentions her kibbutz allowance of 5 Lira a month, which did not purchase much. She also mentions missing “Sunday” and the burden of the six day work week.

Israel in 1961-1962:

Ruth’s trips outside the kibbutz present a picture of Israel in the eyes of an American teenager. There are detailed descriptions of the groups’ tours around the country visiting Israel’s historic sites and singing Hebrew songs as they travel. Descriptions of Israel’s infrastructure give us insight to the country in its early, underdeveloped stage when it was poor and people lived a modest life. Even the descriptions of Israel weather and its effect on kibbutz life are interesting and emphasize the difference between the cold of Minnesota and the relatively mild winter and warm summer of Israel.

There is also the amusing tale of Ruth at a phone booth trying to make a call, with the operator yelling at her while she looked in her purse for additional change and people outside yelling at her to hurry with the call [May 7 letter p.126]. Or, bickering with customs officials about the value of her flute which she brought with her to Israel, since an item worth more than a meager amount would be heavily taxed. Also, the difficulties of bank clerks figuring out how to transfer money from Minneapolis to Israel before this became common. Amusing are her complaints about long-winded speeches by Zionist officials; Israeli politicians haven’t changed till today. However, she was very excited by the Independence Day Military Parade, which no longer exists.

The Israel of the early 1960’s described in Ruth’s letters has changed radically. Israel’s telephone infrastructure has been modernized and the old time socialist government-run telephone system has been replaced by semi-private companies which offer modern telecommunication services. The Israeli banking system is modern and it is no problem to transfer funds in and out of the country. Youth who are on “year in Israel” programs today obtain funds with their credit cards and can contact their families daily on computers and mobile phones. Even the Israeli Customs regulations and officials allow visiting youth to bring many of their personal items without bother. It is no longer necessary to have tourists bring Kleenex, gum, toilet paper, coffee, or other basic items from America – most “American” items can now be purchased in Israel. The Post Office, on the

other hand, has not improved: Ruth mentions receiving letters from Minneapolis to Kibbutz Yavne in four days, which means that the postal service was better in those days than it is now!

In Israel Ruth learns for the first time some of the difficulties of Israeli society; she discovers that men have to do reserve army duty. She also describes the differences between Israeli and American schools.

The group also toured the country to get a good picture of Israeli cities and historical sites. There were also attempts to introduce the group to other young Bnei Akiva youth and visit other kibbutz and moshav communities. Ruth also travelled freely alone or with a friend or two on buses and hitchhiking without any fear or mention of danger. Israel in the early 1960's seemed to be safer in that way than Israel today.

How little American youth understood about Israel:

Ruth came from a modern Orthodox background, with a solid education in Jewish subjects at the Minneapolis Talmud Torah (TT, she calls it). Furthermore, it was common knowledge that Israel had fought the War of Independence and the 1956 Sinai War with Egypt. However, Ruth describes her "shock" at hearing the Jordanian radio broadcasting about the Arabs plan to fight the "immigrant Zionists" and conquer Palestine from them. This is an indication of how little American committed and religious high school youth were taught at that time about the Arab-Israeli conflict and the goals of Arab countries to destroy the State of Israel.

Also to be noted is how little the letters had to say about events of the day in Israel and even in Ruth's homeland the United States. There is no reference to Prime Minister David Ben Gurion or any Israeli politics, other than the religious Mizrahi members who spoke with the Hoch group. The closest we get to current events is Ruth's description of the Israel Independence Day parade and seeing Israeli soldiers. She does note the American landing on the moon, which was thrilling news throughout the globe. Taking into account the general Israeli interest in politics this would not seem to reflect the kibbutz isolation from political discourse but rather an American high school groups' lack of engagement in politics and especially Israeli politics.

She further describes the impression that visiting the Eichmann trial made on her and her group. Very interesting was the visit to the kibbutz of Ruth's friend Sharon Shulman with her German University girlfriend. It had not occurred to either of them that Kibbutz members who were Holocaust survivors would be extremely uncomfortable by the presence of a German girl.

If this was the level of awareness of the Holocaust by youth with a strong Jewish education and commitment in the early sixties we can imagine the situation of most American Jewish youth of the period, and probably their American born parents.

Ruth's stay in Israel was an awakening for her to the situation of Jews in the world in both the recent past, present and what could be expected in the future.

The difficulties of living in Israel in the early 1960's and especially of American Olim (immigrants):

In many letters Ruth asks her American family to send clothes, food or other items for Israeli relatives and friends. She mentions how these gifts were appreciated. From the types of basic items sent we realize that in the early sixties Israel was still a relatively poor developing country whose standard of living was far below that of the United States. It was not easy for Israelis to make ends meet in those days and many of them looked forward to assistance from relatives and other Jews living in the United States or other developed nations.

It is to Ruth's credit that she cared enough to want to help relatives and friends and till today it is characteristic of her personality that she makes great efforts to help others. Perhaps this is one of the reasons she became a social worker by profession.

Particularly interesting are the stories of the Americans who came to Israel and returned to the States, such as the Sprung family. She even mentions the difficulties of Israelis who had visited America and returned, such as the Fixler's. American Aliyah in the early days of the State of Israel was minimal and, unfortunately, many had such a difficult time adjusting to life in Israel that they returned to the States. However, we should note that there were also some American Olim who made important contributions during the founding years, such as Shimon Agranat, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; Golda Meir, Prime Minister; and Moshe Arens, Minister of Defense.

Family:

Ruth spends much time in her letters relating to connections with family in Israel. She goes out of her way to visit them and spend time with them. During the year in Israel Ruth met family members who she had not previously known and were

distant relatives. However, their warm reception made a deep impression on her and gave her the feeling that she was in a country which was different than other countries and with which she as a Jew has a special relationship.

Ruth has a large family on both her mother's and father's sides, spread out all over the U.S. However, the newly met relatives in Israel gave her the feeling that Israel was an extension of being near home. It showed her how even distant relatives living in a faraway land would go out of their way to welcome her in their homes and lives.

Love of family is an aspect of Ruth's life which has continued till today, a family trait inherited from her parents, which has been passed on to our children.

Friends and environment:

Ruth's letters reveal the dynamic personality of a young girl, full of life, exploring a new country and searching for new ideas. Such is youth at its best when it has a chance to develop in a healthy environment.

The year in Israel also includes the interactions with the group the person is part of. Ruth's descriptions of the relations with her roommates and other group members indicates the positive influence the "year in Israel" program had when she was part of a group that shares similar values.

The kibbutz members, Ruth's "kibbutz family" and friends and her actual family in Israel also provided a favorable environment for a pleasant stay and positive experience in Israel.

The year in Israel program as shaping character and personality:

From Ruth's descriptions of her feelings about being on her own in a strange country at age 18, in a group of people she did not know prior to the Hoch program, and where there was quite a bit of free time and freedom of movement around Israel, we can gain insight into the effect it had on her personality.

While the improvement in Israel's standard of living has made it easier for those who want to spend a year after High School studying in Israel they can learn from Ruth's experiences what to expect on a personal level when they are away from home for an extended period. Today, most of these programs have more

restrictions and supervision than Ruth's Hoch program. However, there still is an element of freedom from the home environment and necessity to discover and develop one's own personality.

The overall impression which develops from Ruth's letters is that there was a deep and positive personality development during the year. The appreciation of family, the ability to get along with other young people and relate to the kibbutz members and youth, the independence of traveling on her own or with family and friends around Israel and the deepening religious feelings. All these were indications of a maturity which would probably have had less chance of developing the same way had she attended college in the U.S directly after high school.

Ruth's letters provide an insight how she did this during the year in Israel. Every youth will have a different experience while in Israel for a year program. However, the impression from Ruth's letters is that the year abroad in a religious and friendly environment which was compatible to her basic outlook on life had a positive influence on her. She became more independent, thought for herself about ideas and problems which were critical to her religious and personal life, and reinforced her ideas about her goals and directions in life.

Zionism, religious beliefs and values:

The Hoch program was aimed at preparing youth to settle in Israel and especially on a kibbutz. Ruth mentions the many Israelis and former Americans who tried to influence her to settle in Israel. What they said and her reactions are very interesting. Especially important are the talks to the Hoch group by the various Bnei Akiva people, kibbutz members and Jewish Agency officials - and Ruth's descriptions of the group members' reactions.

The group heard and felt from the kibbutz members about the difference in the "easy life" in America and their struggles in Israel. This was put into a framework of dedication to building the Jewish State and sacrificing for an important goal.

At the end of the group's stay on the kibbutz and in Israel they received a frank statement from the Bnei Akiva leaders of the movement's ideals and hope they would make Aliya and settle on a kibbutz. This is well described by Ruth in her letter of July 19, including her feelings and thoughts as reactions to what she described as both Zionist "propaganda" and ideals.

The attempt of the program to prepare Ruth for Aliyah and living on a kibbutz did not have immediate success but planted the seeds for her future immigration and life in Israel. From Ruth's letters we can learn what was being taught to her about immigrating to Israel, her reactions and, finally "her decision" that she was interested in making Aliyah. However, she also writes of her decision to enroll as a first year student in the University of Minnesota, which she did upon returning from Israel. The next year she studied at Stern College in New York City and the next two years she studied at New York University, where she received a B.A. Three years later, we made Aliyah together with our newborn son, Jay. During her year in Israel Ruth improved her knowledge of Hebrew, which enabled her to better understand Jewish texts and beliefs when she returned to the States. After marriage when we decided to live in Israel Ruth's ability to speak Hebrew was a big advantage in helping her to adapt to life in Israel.

The year in Israel program - looking back and looking ahead:

More than half a century has passed since Ruth was on Hochshara. Since then the program of American youth spending a year in Israel after graduating High School has expanded significantly. The largest groups participating in these programs attend Yeshivot and Midrashot whose emphasis is on religious studies. They offer programs for both boys and girls. There are also programs offered by American Jewish movements and organizations, such as the Conservative, Chabad and Reform Movements, Habonim, Kivunim, and Hadassah. Israel's prestigious universities and colleges also offer programs for Jews and non-Jews who want to study in Israel for a specific period. Many young people come for short trips on the Taglit program. While these programs generally attempt to expose visiting youth to positive aspects of Israeli society many of them lack the Zionist connection which Ruth was exposed to during her year on the kibbutz. This means getting to know the people, understanding Israel's problems and feeling what it is to be an Israeli. A comparison between the Ruth's year long kibbutz learning program and the various current programs can validate and examine some of the strengths and weaknesses of current programs. Ruth's letters provide insight into the advantages a work-study-Zionist oriented program has on youth. It is open for comparative study what the other "one year" or short term programs have on American youth.

Conclusion: my present to Ruth on our 50th anniversary:

This book was prepared as a present to Ruth for our 50th wedding anniversary. It gave me further insight into my wife's personality that added to the respect already existing in our relationship. Her love of family, her deep religious feeling, her searching for meaning in life and her willingness to analyze new ideas and take chances to explore new worlds, which in future years included marrying me. We share many of these values and, much to my good fortune, Ruth continued to search until we found each other. This book is presented to her as an expression of my admiration and love.

FAMILY NOTES

The letters are written to Ruth's family and have many references to family members, institutions and Israeli people and terms. Therefore, for a better understanding of the letters, following is some background information.

Immediate family mentioned in her letters:

SAMUEL (SAM) ZIFF: Ruth's father - was born in 1907 in Hurly, Wisconsin, where his family had a dry goods store. At some point his family moved to Minneapolis and his brothers Louis and Joe were partners with him in a family business. He married Helen Geffen and they had three children: Daniel, Ruth and Joel. His sister Rose (Ziff) Gottstein lived across the street from them. Another sister Nell (Ziff) Pekarsky lived in Chicago and another sister Reva lived in New York. Another sister Anne married Aaron Edgar and lived in Omaha, Nebraska. Sam was President of the Minneapolis Talmud Torah and the Orthodox Synagogue Knesset Israel and served on the Board of Directors of the Minneapolis Federation for Jewish Services. He died in Minneapolis on January 18, 1980 and was reburied in Jerusalem.

HELEN (GEFFEN) ZIFF: Ruth's mother - was born in 1914 in Atlanta, Georgia, and died on April 1, 2003. Her father was Rabbi Tobias-Tuvia Geffen, the senior Orthodox Rabbi of Atlanta and the Southeastern United States. She received a BA from the University of Georgia and was working on her PhD at Columbia University when she married Sam and moved to his home town of Minneapolis. She was active in many voluntary organizations, such as Hadassah, the Minneapolis Jewish Federation and the Knesset Israel Synagogue. Both Helen and Sam were active in Zionist organizations and raising funds for Israel.

DANIEL ZIFF: Ruth's older brother - received his BA from Yeshiva University and a PhD from Columbia University in the study of Jewish music. He was married to Eleanor (Ellie) of Montreal, Canada, with whom he made Aliyah and had three daughters: Rachael, Batsheva and Shirit, all of whom reside with their families in Israel. He also had another daughter, Naama, by his second wife, Rachel. Daniel

taught at Yeshiva University and at the Rubin Academy in Jerusalem. He was also a cantor at synagogues in the United States and performed in shows there and in Israel. His doctorate is published online at the University of Michigan archives as are some of the articles which he wrote. He passed away on June 1, 1997.

JOEL ZIFF: Ruth's younger brother - received his BA from Columbia, an MAT from Harvard and an EdD from the University of Massachusetts. He has two children, Lev and Daniel. Joel is a licensed Psychologist and Senior Lecturer at Cambridge College in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has also taught at Lesley University in Cambridge. Joel authored the book *Mirrors in Time: the Psycho-Spiritual Journey through the Jewish Year*, and many articles.

RABBI TUVIA-TOBIAS GEFFEN (ZADIE) (grandfather in Yiddish): Ruth's maternal grandfather - was born August 1, 1870 in Kovno (today-Kaunas), Lithuania and died February 10, 1970. He studied at the Grodno Yeshiva for a year and mainly at the Slobodka Yeshiva in Kovno and received his rabbinical ordination by the Ga'on Rabbi Tzvi Rabinowitz of Kovno and also with Rabbi Moses Danishevsky of the Slobodka Yeshiva. He immigrated to the United States in 1903, and served as the Rabbi of New York's Ahavat Zedek Congregation until 1907, when he moved to Canton, Ohio to become Rabbi of a small synagogue. From 1910 he was the Rabbi and spiritual leader of Congregation Shearith Israel in Atlanta, Georgia, where he also standardized regulation of kosher food supervision for the Southeast United States. For many years he was the only rabbi in the Southeastern United States authorized to give an Orthodox divorce, and was the leader of the Southern Division of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. Rabbi Geffen published eight books of Talmudic and Biblical exegesis.

SARA HENE RABINOWITZ (Bubbie) GEFFEN: wife of Rabbi Tuvia, Ruth's grandmother. She was the daughter of Aryeh Lieb and Gitel Rabinowitz. They were married in 1898 in Kovno.

Sara and Tobias Geffen had eight children: Lottie Geffen (1900-1991), Joel Geffen (1902-1988), Louis Geffen (1904-2001), Samuel Geffen (1907-2002), Bessie Geffen (1908-2005), Annette Geffen (1912-2001), Helen Geffen (1914-2003) and Abraham Geffen (1916-2014).

The Geffen children were married as follows: Lottie (and Abe); Joel (and Sylvia); Louis (and Anna); Samuel (and Ruth); Bessie (and Carl); Annette (and Ralph); Helen (and Samuel); Abraham (and Ethel).

[See: Lev Tuviah, edited by Joel Ziff, published by the Rabbi Tobias Geffen Memorial Fund, 1988; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tobias_Geffen].

Ruth's aunts, uncles and cousins mentioned in her letters:

LOU and JOE ZIFF: bothers of Ruth's father Sam Ziff and his business partners. Both Lou and Joe lived close to Ruth's family, were with them for Sabbath meals and were loving uncles. Lou traveled to Israel to visit Ruth during her stay at the kibbutz and his visit is described with great detail and excitement.

ROSE (Ziff) and NATHAN (NATE) GOTTSTEIN: Rose Gottstein, Ruth's father's sister, and her husband Nate lived across the street from the Ziffs in Minneapolis. Their son Jerry was a few years younger than Ruth, went to the same high school, and mentioned often in her letters. Other Gottstein children and their husbands were Naomi (Larry), Corrine (Tom), Hinda and Leland (Mary). Nate and Rose visited Ruth while she was in Israel. (Ruth's cousin Jerry Gottstein should not be confused with Jerry Goldstein, who was the other Minneapolis member of Ruth's Hochshara program).

ANNETTE (GEFFEN) RASKAS: married to RALPH, residing in St. Louis, have three children: Heshel, Stanley and Judy. Ruth writes about preparations for attending the wedding of Heshel to Adina when she will return from Israel.

RABBI SAMUEL GEFFEN; married to Ruth, father of Peter Geffen, who Ruth mentions in her letters. Peter founded in 1981 the Heshel School in N.Y.C. and also founded Kivunim, a "gap year" program.

NELL (ZIFF) PEKARSKY and MAURICE PEKARSKY: Rabbi Maurice Pekarsky was married to Ruth's aunt Nell, who was Ruth's father's sister. They have two children: Daniel and Davida. Nell worked in New York City as Chaim Weitzman's secretary and roomed with Helen Geffen, who she introduced to Sam Ziff – Ruth's parents! Maurice was born in Poland in 1905, grew up in Grand Rapids Michigan where his family settled in 1921, received a BA from the University of Michigan and was ordained as a Reform Rabbi by the Jewish Institute of Religion in 1933. He then began a career as a Hillel Rabbi: he was the first Hillel Rabbi at Cornell University (1933-1937); the Hillel Rabbi at Northwestern University (1937-1940); the Hillel Rabbi at University of Chicago (1937-1940); established the Hillel at

Hebrew University (1950-1955); and then returned to be the Hillel Rabbi at the University of Chicago until his untimely death in 1961.

REVA (ZIFF) STERN: Sister of Ruth's father Sam, married to Herbert Stern, lived in New York City. Reva roomed with her sister Nell and Ruth's mother Helen when they lived in New York City. Reva was the secretary to Mayer Weisgal, a founder and President of the Weitzman Institute in Rehovot. They have one daughter, Aviva.

BESSIE (Geffen) WILLENSKY: Sister of Ruth's mother Helen, married to Dr. Carl Wilensky. The family resided in New Orleans, with three children: Yacov ("Yankee"), David and Jane. Yankee visited Ruth while she was in Israel. David and his wife Sheila later immigrated to Israel, where he works as a physician. Their children, Chanan, Rinat, Dorit, Sharon and Hadas also reside in Israel.

Rabbi DAVID GEFFEN: Ruth's cousin, the only child of Louis and Anna Geffen was born in Atlanta, Georgia on November 1, 1938. He attended Emory University (BA, 1965), the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (MHL, 1963), and Columbia University (PhD, 1970). After becoming ordained as a rabbi in 1965, he served as a Chaplain in United States Army from 1965-1967, eventually reaching the rank of Captain. In 1970, he became Rabbi of Beth Shalom in Wilmington Delaware, serving from 1970-1977. In 1977, the Rabbi and his family moved to Israel, where he worked several jobs and did research in preparation of the publication of his book, *American Heritage Haggadah* (1992) (Gefen Publishing House Ltd, 1992). While in Israel, he also served in the reserves of Israel Armed Forces. Returning to the United States in 1992, he served as Rabbi at Temple Israel (Scranton, Pennsylvania) from 1993-2004. He married Rita Feld on December 29, 1962. In 2006, David and Rita Geffen returned to Jerusalem, Israel to be closer to their children, Avi, Jeremy and Elisa, all of whom reside in Israel. Since then he has been a prolific writer for the Jerusalem Post newspaper.

Professor DOV LEVIN: Ruth's Geffen relative, born in Kovno, Lithuania, made Aliya after fighting as a partisan against the Nazis. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife Bilha. Dov received a PhD in History from Hebrew University, where he became a professor of Contemporary Jewry and a pioneer in the Oral Research Department and a prolific writer on the history of Lithuanian Jewry during the Holocaust.

Professor RELA MINTZ GEFFEN: Ruth's cousin, daughter of Rabbi Joel Geffen, brother of Ruth's mother Helen, and Sylvia Mintz Geffen. Rela received a BRE degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary, a BS and MA degree from Columbia University and PhD in Sociology from the University of Florida. She was a professor of sociology at Gratz College for Jewish Studies and the Baltimore Hebrew College, where she also served as President from 2000-2007. She has published numerous articles and edited books.

MIRIAM and CHAIM RABINOWITZ: Miriam Rabinowitz was a relative of Rabbi Tuvia Geffen. Rabbi Geffen's sister Osna married Chaim Rabinowitz of the Telz Yeshivah in Kovno, whose son Yosef married Miram. Yosef and Miriam lived in Kfar Saba where he was a Rabbi and teacher; they had one son - Chaim. When Ruth was at kibbutz Yavne only Miriam and Chaim were alive, they hosted her often and Chaim took her to see family and sites. When Ruth was at Yavneh he had finished army service and was completing his studies at the Technion. Chaim became an important scientist at Raphael Israel Defense Industry but tragically died young leaving a wife and two children.

RIVA GUTTMAN: survived the Holocaust, lived in Tel Aviv and was Professor Dov Levin's aunt.

HERBERT AND ROSE JOSHUA: the Joshua family were neighbors and close friends of the Ziffs in Minneapolis. Herbert and Rose's children (and spouses), who all live in Israel, are: Michael, Z'l (Noralee), Naomi (Michael), Joel (Ruth), and Myron (Hindi). As Ruth's program was finishing Michael came to Israel for a post high school program, studying for a few months at Yeshiva Mercaz Harav and then joining a Hochshara group.

Friends of family mentioned in her letters:

PROFESSOR NATHAN SALTZ: נתן זלץ was the head of surgery at Hadassah hospital, received the Israel Prize for medicine and the Jerusalem Honorary Citizenship. He was born in 1912, grew up in Florida and while studying medicine at Emory University in Atlanta lived with Rabbi and Mrs. Geffen. He made Aliyah in 1953 to head Hadassah's surgery department.

INSTITUTIONS

KIBBUTZ YAVNE | Kvutzat Yavne (Hebrew: קְבוּצַת יָבֵנָה), the location of Ruth's Hochshara program, is a religious kibbutz in the Center District of Israel. Located in the coastal plain just east of Ashdod. The idea of Kvutzat Yavne was conceived in Germany. The intention of the founders was to make the settlement in the area near ancient Yavne (from which it takes its name). These founders, members of the Religious Zionist movement, began to prepare themselves for agricultural work on German farms in 1929. Shortly thereafter, they immigrated to Mandatory Palestine. They initially settled as the "Rodgas group" near Petah Tikva". Finally, in 1941, the 180-person group of German Zionists, began to build Kvutzat Yavne at its intended location. The kibbutz continued to grow, joined by German, American, and native Israeli born ("Sabras"). It came to be known as the cradle of the Religious Kibbutz Movement, with which the kibbutz is associated. Most of Yavne's agricultural production is in field crops, fruit orchards, poultry, and dairy, all contained within approximately 1,500 acres (6.1 km²) of land. Major industry located on the kibbutz includes olive and cucumber processing plants, the Adi watch factory, and the largest chicken hatchery in Israel (dispatching up to 600,000 chicks per day). It is also the location of Yeshivat Kerem B 'Yavne, the first Hesder Yeshiva. The kibbutz used to run a Jewish studies program preparing candidates for conversion to Judaism and a Hebrew ulpan for both Jewish students and Converts, but these no longer exist. See internet site Moreshet Kvutzat Yavneh.

MACHON GOLD | Machon Gold was originally an Orthodox girl's seminary founded in 1958 by the Torah Education department of the World Zionist Organization and named after Rabbi Wolf Gold, one of the signatures of Israel's Declaration of Independence. It's premises were also used by the WZO for programs for English speakers in Israel. It shut down in 2008 due to financial problems. It was located in Jerusalem's Old Katamon neighborhood. It was one of the few Religious Zionist seminaries for English speakers in Israel and most students were high school teens who came to Israel to study Jewish subjects. It also ran a year program for youth leaders from various Zionist youth groups. Graduates received a teacher's degree from the Ministry of Education. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machon_Gold

MOSSAD ALIYAH IN PETACH TIKVAH | Mossad Aliyah in Petach Tikvah is an educational Zionist institution founded in 1944 by Amit, the Mizrahi Women's Organization of America for the original purpose of educating and absorbing European Holocaust survivors in a modern religious environment. It had courses in farming and vocational training. It was also a seminary for English speaking high school teens who came to Israel to study Jewish subjects and work-study in a modern religious environment. In the course of time future generations of immigrants and native born Israelis studied and continue to study at this institution. See http://www.amit.org.il/90anniversary/amit_book/part4/Pages/P4chapter1.aspx

BNEI AKIVA established in Mandatory Palestine in 1929, as the youth wing of the Mizrahi Movement. Its axiom is "Torah and Avodah (work)" and claims to have today about 125,000 members in 42 countries. See: www.worldbneiakiva.org/israel-year-programs-portal. which outlines today's Hochsarah programs. Also: english.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Bnei_akiva. Also, regarding "gap year programs in Israel" see site of GoOverseas for summer which links sites regarding 19 Israel gap programs, not including many of the Yeshivah programs.



Early days of kibbutz Yavneh. photo thanks to Atar Moresheet Kvutzat Yavneh

GLOSSARY

ALIYAH - OLIM | Aliyah is when a Jew immigrates to Israel. He or she is then referred to as an “Oleh” (plural = “olim”). After arriving in Israel olim attend a special school called an “ulpan” where they are taught Hebrew and about how to adjust to life in Israel.

DAVEN - TEFILLAH | Daven is to pray and the prayer is called “tefillah”. The Morning Prayer is called SHACHARIT. The afternoon prayer is called MINCHAH and the evening prayer is called ARAVIT. The prayers are led by a CHAZAN. The person who assists to run the prayer service is called a GABBAI, or in other Anglo-Saxon traditions a Warden, Sexton or Beadle. During the prayer service or at certain other times the Rabbi or another learned person sometimes presents a religious sermon called a “derasha”. **PARSHA** | in the synagogue the Five Books of Moses, called in Hebrew the “Torah”, is read during certain prayer services; a portion of the Torah reading is called a “parsha”. The parsha is divided up and one special portion is called “Maphtir”.

MADRICH | group leader. Plural is MADRICHIM, female is MADRICHA. The group is called a KEVUTZA.

KIBBUTZ | A communal settlement, a member of whom is called a CHAVER, plural being CHAVERIM. Members are also called as nicknames KIBBUTZNIKIM. In Hebrew Chaver also means a friend. When kibbutz members are assigned communal work it is called TORANUT.

SHALIACH | emissary. SNIF - branch.

CHALIL | a simple plastic flute.

TIYUL | is a trip and the plural is TIYULIM.

CHOLENT | a traditional Jewish stew which simmers overnight on the Sabbath. Generally consisting of meat, potatoes and barley but can have various ingredients according to local tradition. Generally served with the Sabbath or Holiday festive meal. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cholent>.

RUTH'S "DEAR ALL"

LETTERS HOME FROM HER STAY IN
ISRAEL, AND A FEW LETTERS TO
OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS



mother, I asked for the address to send
clothes and shoes and shoes and shoes
like Rina's sister-in-law) said to send any-
thing here:
1210 Washburn No.
Minneapolis 11, Minn
U.S.A.
She gives them to Rina's sister-in-law



Ruth at the boat in New York City



August 17, 1961 [written from the Zim boat "Israel" travelling to Israel]

*Dear All,*⁵

Right now it is about 2:30PM and I am sitting up in my upper berth. For the first time I slept through breakfast and lunch, so my steward brought me some food to tide me over. The weather has been beautiful. I am even getting a little tan. However yesterday it got quite rough and we were supposed to hit a storm last night. I don't know if we did or not. It still is quite rocky. It almost feels like an airplane going up and down constantly. As I lie in bed I feel like I am riding in a train swaying from side to side, except I don't feel the bottom road.

5 Ruth's father Sam Ziff, mother Helen, older brother Daniel and younger brother Joel.

My time in the boat is spent doing anything I can think of to pass the time. We are supposed to get up at 7:30, daven at 8:00 and be at breakfast by 9:00. However we just don't seem to be able make it for davening, and lately not even for breakfast. At 10:30 we have a lesson. Mine is in Hebrew. It surprises me how I can converse in Hebrew with the Israelis on the ship. I realize also, however, that I have much to learn. The lesson is quite informal and we are left on our own. So lately we have not had one, but when we do have one it is quite good. There is no planned program for us.

At 11:30 we have lunch. I may add here the meals are fair. (Nothing like what mother makes!). Breakfast consists of cheeses, eggs, bread, juice, tea or coffee, vegetables. Just the other day I found out that we could have cereal and pancakes. So breakfast, when I eat, is better. Lunch is usually meat. Once we could have milk if we wanted, but it was quite bad. Milk here is scarce and tastes terrible, so my fingernails are suffering.

Until 4:00 we have free time. The boat has some activities planned, but to me they are not appealing. We spend the time in the sun, reading, crocheting, I made 2 כפות so far, talking or playing cards, checkers, etc. At 4:00 we are called in for tea time. Tea and pastry. A good custom, but fattening. At 4:30 we have another lesson, usually led by one of the older kids in the group. אליהו our Madrich spoke on the Parsha of the week. It was all in Hebrew and I didn't get much of it.

Dinner is at 6:30 and we must dress in skirts. I sure am glad I brought those skirts. We have the rest of the time free. It's amazing but we find things to keep us busy until all hours of the morning. For example, last night 2 chalil [flute] players and I (my flute) were fooling around for a while. Then the room became more crowded and we ended by listening to guitar music.

Overall everyone seems to wish that there was more to do. We've seen 2 movies and heard classical music. Everyone is anxiously awaiting our first stop in Madeira. Our first chance to see land and get out of the confinement of a ship.

Our second stop will be Gibraltar. But we arrive there on Shabbat and unless it is late enough I won't be able to get off the ship or even take pictures. This really burns me.

This reminds me of a new impression that I want to tell you about. I have heard and even learned about the religiousness of the Jews in Israel, but to see it here in the ship gave me quite a shock at first. It just seemed so paradoxical to hear people speaking Hebrew as they smoked a cigarette in the bar on Shabbat. During the Shabbat Prayers people in swim suits and Bermuda's would walk by completely oblivious to the service that was going on. There was very little, if any, Shabbat

spirit on the boat. This was quite disappointing since we had just begun to be settled, etc. Well, I guess I have a lot to learn yet during this year.

There are 7 people in my room. One bed is empty. 4 are kids from Hoch, 3 are older women who are Israelis. It is interesting to talk to them and be with them, but it would be, perhaps, more pleasant to be with kids. All the other Hoch kids are on the other side of the ship, so we feel sort of separated and we can't have the group in here at night to fool around. But this probably is not so serious, I guess.

I forgot to tell you about our big night. We had cocktails with the captain – a very disappointing affair. Hundreds of people crowded into the bar to shake hands with this great man and drink cocktails. We stayed for about 5 minutes and then left.

Before I forget please remind Dan⁶ to inform me of the type of music he wants. I found out that our Madrich on the kibbutz is himself a musician, even writes music quite frequently; perhaps he will be able to help me.

It is now 5:00. The rocking seems to be getting worse. No one has strength to get up; it's hard to move around. The wind is quite strong, so I guess that is why it is so wavy.

Flash – my clothesline is gone. Our steward won't let us hang clothes in the room so I hung the line out on the crew's deck. Today it was gone. At this rate I'll come home without anything.

Tomorrow we get off the boat. I can't wait!! Land!!

I hope you all had a good time in New York. Did Joel see almost everything he wanted? How were your week-ends? How's the weather?

I hope all is well. Give my regards to Uncle Lou and Joe,⁷ the Gottsteins⁸ and the Joshuas.⁹ I got the telegrams Friday before the boat left. One from Annette and Uncle Ralph¹⁰ and one from Davida.¹¹ It was sweet of them to think of me.

The stationery case is actually coming in quite handy. It's almost like my trademark. I've written a few cards to kids. Enough news for now. The next time I write I will probably be in Israel. It sure is hard to believe, I feel like I'm going back to N.Y. Be well, Waiting to hear from you, Love, Ruthie

6 Daniel Ziff, Ruth's brother. .

7 Joe Ziff and Lou Ziff, Ruth's uncles who live in Minneapolis.

8 Rose Gottstein is Ruth's aunt, on Ziff side of family, married to Nate, they live across the street from Ruth in Minneapolis.

9 Rose and Herbert Joshua, Ruth's neighbors, very good friends of the Ziff family.

10 Annette Raskas is Ruth's aunt on Geffen side of family, married to Ralph, live in St. Louis. Parents of Stanley and Heshel. .

11 Davida Pekarsky, Ruth's Ziff cousin from Chicago.

P.S. It is now ערב שבת. We have finally seen real land. We had our feet on solid ground for a whole 2 hours. Most of our time was spent in a yarn shop, buying yarn. Dad, this is a good place for Rubinstein & Ziff to sell – lots of embroidery and material places. So when you come to visit me, stop here! We had a very interesting visit to this small island. I'll tell you more about it when I get home, if I remember.

It's hard to believe that next week at this time I will be at the kibbutz. It rather frightens me, I'll try to drop you a card from our stop in Athens on Thursday. Then I will begin the routine writing on Mondays. Ok? Ok?

Dad, I want to wish you a very happy birthday. I wish that I could have been with you to celebrate it. You'll get my present when I come home, so be patient.

Please write Israeli relatives that I am coming in. They may like to meet me in Haifa when the boat arrives. You know who, if anybody, to ask.



August 17, 1961 [on the Zim boat travelling to Israel]

Dear Aunt Reva, Uncle Herbert and Aviva,¹²

Greetings from the traveling girl. After almost a week I'm beginning to get used to this rocking life. The weather has been good so far, except beginning last night it became somewhat rough. I guess that even this is not so bad, could be much worse.

Tomorrow we arrive in Madeira at long last we can get off of this confinement. It seems like a long time since I left N.Y., but yet I still can't believe that I am on my way to Israel.

Already I have many new strange shocking experiences. It certainly is thrilling to hear Hebrew spoken as a main and conversational language – even more than English.

¹² Reva Stern, Ruth's aunt from New York City, on the Ziff family side, her husband Herbert and daughter Aviva.

The life here is getting to be quite routine. If it wasn't for the group here I would be quite bored. We have very little active work; mostly sitting, and a little dancing now and then. One night we listened to classical music – the first enjoyable evening. Tonight we are going to see “Romanoff and Juliet”, I hope it is as good as it is supposed to be. I'm sure it's nothing like Fiorello.

If mother and Joel are still there tell them that a letter is waiting for them at home. I wasn't sure when they were leaving or how long it would take to send the letter. I imagine that you all went to see Rela¹³ when she arrived home. It must have been quite an experience for her – I can realize it as much now myself.

Before I finish I want to thank you so much for entertaining me during my last few days in the States. Those days are growing more meaningful to me now that I am away. I enjoyed myself a lot and look forward to seeing you when I return next year.

Hope you are all well. My address is: c/o kibbutz Yavne, Ashdod, Israel



August 24, 1961 [post card from Zim “Israel” with Greek stamp]

Dear All,

Just a line to hello from Athens. Wrote, with help, a Yiddish letter to Zadie! Last night heard the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, by record of course. It was wonderful – I imagined myself sitting in Northrop.

Very disappointed because we will arrive in Athens at 6:00 PM, too late to get good pictures. Gibraltar we saw at 5:00 AM, too early to take pictures. I hope the ones I tried to take will come out. Now I am a little nervous about reaching Haifa! Love to all, Ruthie

13 Rela Mintz Geffen, Ruth's cousin, daughter of Joel and Sylvia Geffen, who just returned from Israel, to study in college. See glossary.



Alighting on truck for trip to kibbutz



August 27, 1961 Sunday

Dear All,

It is quite hard to believe, but the postmark on this letter is real. I still feel like I am dreaming. So much has happened that it is hard to begin. So I will try to fill you in on what has happened since my last card.

We saw, although from a distance, הר כרמל, at about 12:30. Since we had a distance to go and it was so close to Shabbat we were rather rushed through customs. In all this hustle just as I reached the ground people chasing me and yelling at me, I heard someone with a familiar voice calling my name. As I looked around the strange faces in this beautiful area I tried to find out who it was. And all of a sudden I saw a familiar face – Naomi Shulman and Mrs. Shulman¹⁴ It was wonderful of them to

14 Rabbi Shulman was an Orthodox Rabbi in Minneapolis, Mrs. Shulman his wife and Naomi a high school friend of Ruth.



Arriving in Haifa port

come – they are staying in Haifa. I was thrilled and shocked to see them. They are going to try to come here today.

Well, anyway, back to the adventure. We had to leave all our luggage, except that which we were carrying, so all we had was one change of clothes – p.j's, robe, some cosmetics, etc. Not much, whatever it was. Then we piled into a truck and sped from Haifa to Yavne in about 2 hours. Just look at a map and see the distance we covered, almost the whole length of the country. The land is really beautiful.

We arrived on the kibbutz just in time to find our home, and run to shul. The girl's I room with are: one from Los Angeles and one from Brooklyn. The rooms are very plain but comfortable.

Shabbat after breakfast (after davening at about 10:00) we each ate with a family. My family is a neighbor of Miriam Rabinowitz.¹⁵ She called me last night and Chaim¹⁶ is coming here today about 4:00 afternoon.

15 Miriam Rabinowitz is a Geffen relative who lived in Kfar Saba. Her deceased husband was a Rabbi there.

16 Chaim Rabinowitz was Miriam's only son.



left: Ruth's roommates at play; right: Ruth, second from right, and friends from her Hoch group

The kibbutz itself is beautiful and everyone is very friendly. I received your letter and am happy to hear from you. Please write some more.

Oh, I have regards to Elhanan's family in Sa'ad.¹⁷ One of my roommates has a cousin from there who visited us last night. This girl also knows Rela, as do a few of the kids who are here from India who were on Machon.

I would love to write more, but the mail is leaving shortly. I will try to write tomorrow.

Hope you all are well, love to all, Ruthie

17 Kibbutz Sa'ad is a religious kibbutz in the south west Negev, bordering on the Gaza Strip. It was founded in 1947 as the first Bnei Akiva kibbutz founded by native born Israelis. Elhanan is a nephew of Ruth's neighbor Herbert Joshua.



Thursday evening, August 31, 1961

Dear All,

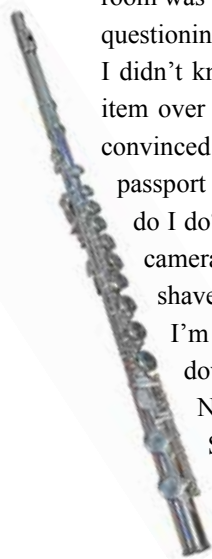
Here is that long promised letter. We have been promised air letters and didn't get them until tonight. Besides that we have been kept so busy that probably wouldn't have had time. Will try to fill you in on some of my experiences; but it is hard because there is so much.

We arrived so close to שבת that we almost didn't make it, but running into shul, dirty clothes and all, seeing all the white shirts and hearing the beautiful soft voices singing was breathtaking.

We left all our luggage in customs. Sunday our luggage which we had in the room was brought to us. Tuesday evening we got our trunks. Now let me do some questioning. First, I had problems with my flute. I declared it for \$600 because I didn't know how much. Well, it seems that one is not allowed to bring in an item over \$100. Through some amazingly fast talking the customs official was convinced that I meant to say הליל for \$6.00. Fine, but now I have a [note] in my passport and my flute will be in trouble when I try to come back. HELP! What do I do? Then for another matter. My whole trunk was opened to look for the cameras and shavers. Two cameras and two shavers were found (one other shaver I found later). After all that I didn't have to pay any customs. Well, I'm here – all of my possessions. Now we are beginning to try to settle down – now the room is full of luggage and clothes – real lived in!

Now for a few shocks. The first Friday evening a lady came up to me.

She told me about the family I was assigned to for Shabbat, etc. In the meantime she told me that she was a good friend of Miriam Rabinowitz and they arranged for חיים to come Sunday. I spent a few hours with him. In the course of the conversation we mentioned Reva Gutman, so this friend of Miriam's said that Reva's brother or sister or some relation lived on kibbutz. When I met the people I found out that they were one of my roommate's assigned family. This place is crawling with coincidences.



We are getting our first חפש for shabbas. I have arranged to go with the Rabinowitz's. Chaim has chofesh [vacation] now so he has time to take me around. I hope I am not imposing. We have until Wednesday evening free.

Now for my schedule. We get up at 5:00. Davening is supposed to be at 5:30, but I never seem to make it. At 6:30 my work begins. It is not permanent, but so far I have worked at the חדר אוכל לילדים [children's dining room]. It is clean-up, table setting, etc. Not bad. I finish at 11:00. At 12:00 or so we have lunch and then free time until 1:15 the שיעורים [classes] begin. They are in ידיעת הארץ, משנה, רשי, חומש, עברית. We have four 45 minute classes with breaks between. At 6:00 we have supper and from then are free. I am somewhat disappointed in the שיעורים. I am in the lowest class because of my Hebrew (though I can get along somewhat with what I do know) but the subject matter is too easy. The Mishna we are studying is the one I learned already. So classes are boring. Even the teachers are not so outstanding but I still am not giving up hope. It may be quite possible that things improve as the year progresses.

Before I forget, to whom do I give the sweaters Mrs. Joshua gave me? I forgot and don't have the list. The picture I am taking with me tomorrow and will try to deliver it.

I have decided to try to write on Sat, Sunday, so that you get the letter before Shabbat. I will try to write again from my chofesh.

Hope to hear from you soon, Love to all, Ruthie

P.S. did you get my post cards? Saw the Shulmans.



September 3, 1961

Dear All,

Right now I am sitting in a beautiful home in כפר סבא [Kfar Saba]. I just woke up from a most peaceful sleep. Miriam and Chaim have been so wonderful to me. I am beginning to appreciate my relatives more and more. I was supposed to meet Chaim at the bus stop in Tel Aviv on Friday but he came to Yavne to get me and on top of that he had to walk for an hour to get here.

We arrived here at about 3:00 in the afternoon. I showered, had something to eat and went to sleep. I slept until supper – they had to wake me, and then we talked. Shabbat I slept late, had breakfast, relaxed, had lunch, slept until 4:00 when we left for a walk. We walked from here to כלקליה [Qalqilya-S.A.] an [Arab] village. It is on the border between Israel and Jordan. From there we could see the big beautiful mountains separating Israel and her neighbor. There are houses right up to the border where people must live. Also saw the place where בנימין [Benjamin] is said to be buried.

You would love it here so much. All around every house and along the streets and gardens there is so much shrubbery. It's beautiful and green.

Last night I saw a movie "From the Hill". It is in English with Hebrew sub-titles. By the way that little walk I mentioned lasted until 7:00. That's what I call a walk. I also met a boy who studied at Bar Ilan and knows David Brudnoy,¹⁸ he's a good friend of Chaim.

Today we are going to Jerusalem to see Dov.¹⁹ I am very excited, and it still is hard to believe.

The next person who leaves for Israel please give them as many pictures as possible of area, family, events, home, whatever. those that they could keep. Here at Miriam's they want very much to hear about the family and keep up a connection between the families. In fact Miriam told me she wants very much to see you some day, soon!

Joel, how was your convention? I still haven't used up one roll of film. I already know that I have some mistakes. Also is there something you could send me to be able to take pictures when it is dim light, for example at sunset? I was angry because at Gibraltar on the way it was not light enough to take pictures.

The real reason I write was to wish you a שנה טובה תכתבו

Last night on our walk we passed the big shul at the end of סליחות. It was then they I realized that I will be separated from my family for the holidays for the first time. I wish so much that I could be with you, or rather that you could be here with me. I feel selfish enjoying all this without you. I always think about how you would love to see so many of the things I have already seen and meet the wonderful people I have met.

18 David Brudnoy is the older brother of Ruth's good high school friend Rachael Brudnoy.

19 Dov Levin, Ruth's Geffen relative, who lives in Jerusalem with his wife Belha and three children. See glossary.

Miriam also asked me to wish you a Shanah Tova for her. She forgot to include it in her letter.

Please, please, send my Shana Tova wishes to the Gottstein's, Uncle Lou and Uncle Joe, the Joshua's and everyone else. I just have not had time to write like I should, also include my regards to Rachel,²⁰ and any other friends.

Did I tell you that I received telegrams from Aunt Annette and Davida [while I was] on the boat?

By the way, I was not sea sick at all. The boat was rocky for a couple days, but nothing serious. I felt quite well the whole time, so don't worry.

Please tell Daniel to tell me about the music he wants – give me some idea.

I will try to write after Rosh Hashanah.

Love, Ruthie,

P.S. this is the first English I have talked since Friday, wow.



September 12, 1961 Tuesday night

Dear All,

I guess our letters are crossing all the time. To make it a little more unconfusing I will wait for a reply to this letter before writing again. I hope you don't mind, but I am terribly confused this way. I never can remember what I have told you.

My roommates are very interesting people. We are quite compatible – I hope it continues. One is from New York. She went to college for one year there and worked during the day. The other girl is from Los Angeles. She is very charming, artistic and intelligent. I enjoy their company very much.

Now about my kibbutz family. At the beginning it was a wonderful family with 3 children, but now I have changed. I think I told you that Riva Guttmann has a

20 Rachael Brodnoy, Ruth's close high school friend.

brother-in-law who is a kibbutz member. So they decided to become my parents. They have a 15 year old daughter who is wonderful and we have had interesting discussions together.

Before I forget, Mrs. Goldstein is also sending Jerry²¹ the “The Jewish World”. It is not necessary for both copies. Maybe get in touch with her. I receive your letters also in 4 days or so.

As of now I have not yet received the package of papers. I have received quite a few letters from you. Several were waiting for me when I got here. I was thrilled to get them. Keep it up. [Where is Dan’s letter?]

About my luggage. Nothing was taken – nothing had to be paid. Am I lucky! I gave away one camera to my roommate and one shaver to a boy on Hoch. The rest I’ll leave for later. It is hard to give something away! I have not asked anyone here about the flute, yet. I don’t like to be a pest about it. I’ll do it later.

About the classes. I am not saying anything. We have a Madrich, who is an old-time Chaver [member of the] kibbutz, who is experienced with Hoch. He is very demanding and although it is hard, I suppose it is good. Also a Madricha about the same age.

Flash, I just asked someone about the flute. I can bring in anything to the U.S. without paying, so I don’t have to do anything.

Someone from Jerusalem picked up one sweater set for Cohen.

Joel, how’s school? Who are your teachers?

Now, for the main event of the letter. Rosh Hashanah at the kibbutz was thrilling. You could feel it in the air. We sat outside because there was not enough room inside for us, but that didn’t detract one bit. I thought about you a lot as I sat there – I know you really would have enjoyed it. The Chazan was plain, but good. Just enough fancy stuff and no speech. We started at 7:00 AM (I was there by 8:00) and finished at 11:30; had a snack, hour later lunch. Today I was on תורנות during the service. So for the Shofar I went to shul, apron and all. How about that in America! I was in the kitchen opening tin cans and dishing up desserts, I made it for the last part of עמידה. I loved sitting there, not worrying about how I look or anyone else. In fact, all of us have to under-dress as much as possible. Skirts and blouses are the thing!

21 Jerry Goldstein, the other Hoch group member from Minneapolis.



Dr. Salz

Riva Guttman was here for Rosh Hashanah, too. I ate with them last night and today for the afternoon meal and the Israeli equivalent to English tea time. How were services at Mikro Kodesh?²²

Oh, I gave some film to Rabbi Levin's sister and some other stuff for Joel. I hope she gives it to you. Please tell me when you get it.

Another thing I can tell you about is the food. I can see now why I am going to gain weight. Breakfast is eggs, tomatoes, tea, coffee, cream (cold), bread, etc. Lunch is meat, mostly breaded, however, [also] soup, rice or potatoes. Supper is similar to breakfast. It's hard not to eat bread. We drink a Mitz-juce instead of water which is also sugar. So it is really hard [not to gain weight]. To top it off, when I eat with relatives they are very hurt if I don't stuff myself. It's really a sin. So that's my position. Just hope for the best. So far I've noticed no change.

Right now I still feel like a visitor here and I want to feel more attachment to the country. I realize that this takes time. So I'll wait. I keep in mind that "allis anfang ist schwer". That's to prove that I still haven't forgotten all that I learned.

They have given us permission to leave for holidays if we want, but I plan to remain here.

22 The Orthodox synagogue in Minneapolis which Ruth's family attended at that time. For further information about the Mikro Kodesh congregation see: <http://www.mnopedia.org/structure/mikro-kodesh-synagogue-minneapolis>

Oh, I saw Dr. Salz.²³ He was very sweet. He toured us around the hospital and invited me to his house. Do you know if he is kosher? I guess he's quite a big-wig there. He send you regards.

If I didn't tell you about my vacation, please tell me and I will tell you. It was marvelous.

I guess that's it. Hope you all have an easy fast.

Love, Ruthie

Love to all, please



September 17, 1961

Dear All,

Surprised? I just couldn't hold back – so I am writing even though I haven't gotten an answer from you. Friday I heard from you, Rachel and the Sterns. It is wonderful to get mail. Rachel wrote how all the kids are registering, etc. it sounds very exciting.



Ruth at home of Dov, Bila, Busmat and Nitzanah Levin

²³ Professor Nathan Saltz נתן זלץ was the head of surgery at Hadassah hospital. See glossary



Street in Jerusalem

Again I forget if I told you about Jerusalem; so, I stayed at Dov's. It was very beautiful – right across from the Hebrew University. Dov and Chaim were both trying to convince me to go there – so I was under propaganda. To top it off the other day we were at a meeting with the kids of grade 12 of the kibbutz and they asked the question, how a religious person can live in the U.S. when they say ותחונה and they are waiting for the Messiah? Well, that is quite hard to answer. The following day an American who came here with his family also told us that it is actually a sin to leave here – of course there are many excuses, etc., but, well, it is frustrating.

Joel, how is school? Sounds like you're going to have a real tough year. I will try to get the information for you about the chemical engineering, but this you could probably find out faster by a book from the library.

I guess I will leave the camera alone. So far it has been all right. If I have more trouble I will write again. I sure was surprised to hear about the Lincoln staff. I guess that's sort of like fame after death or so. Well, just keep them posted on my progress.

I hope this letter gets to you before my big brother leaves. How was the davening for the Holidays? Were you as big as or bigger of a success than last year. And

now, you poor thing, have to sit cooped up at school, while I sit here free as a bird. Mother, have you started your class yet? How is it?

I just realized that I didn't finish my travelogue. In Jerusalem I saw Hechal Shlomo; the Betzalel Museum, the place where Eichmann was – all of these were closed so I only saw them from the outside – also the Jewish Agency and Yeshurun Synagogue.



Cousin Chaim Rabinovitz at Mount Herzl

The next day we went to Har (Mount) Herzl, Herzl's grave, and the Hadassah hospital. It was somewhat disorderly – as it appeared to me anyway. Really I was disappointed – but it was wonderful to hear the Hebrew and the people were very friendly, especially your friend Dr. Salz.

Since my last letter not much has happened.

Right now I am sitting at a **אסיפה** [meeting] – our Madrich is supposed to teach us a song. So I will write when I learn.

I learned 2 songs and a little about music from our Madrich – really wonderful. Now I am in my room getting a haircut from one of the girls on Hoch.

On with the travelogue. In Jerusalem I also saw Mea Shearim and it is much worse than any pictures. I was amazed at the living conditions – horrible!

The next day we left for Tel Aviv and I stayed with the Ben-Zvi's. They have a daughter my age – very nice, and it was good to be with youth again.



David Beit Arye

Yesterday David Beit-Aryeh (Intellegator)²⁴ introduced himself to me. A very nice person.

Now we are all waiting for Yom Kippur. I don't know how I'll last a whole day. I just get starved during the day. I try not to eat too much bread, etc., but there's not too much else. Tomatoes are now in season so Dad, when you write about the tomatoes, you hit home. How were the rest of the crops you and Joel planted?

By the way, how's the weather by you? All I know is that they could never compare to ours here. Something beyond description – you have to see it for yourself!

Now we are on the kibbutz until after Succot. Then we have a trip to the Galilee. They gave us permission to leave here for the holiday, but I think I will be most happy here – even though I would love to go to Jerusalem.

Already I saw the wooden boards which they use to build a Succah. Now I think of you building our Succah from pipes. I think of these things which are small now seem important.

24 David Beit-Aryeh (Intellegator) is a Geffen relative, born in Kovno, made Aliya in 1929 and was one of the founders of Kibbutz Yavneh and the Religious Kibbutz Movement. When Ruth was on Hoch he was Chairman of the World Zionist Religious Education Department for the Diaspora.

I will wait (probably) to write after I receive your letter because I never know what I have said, or else you wait.

Love to all, Ruthie

P.S. Hope you all had an easy fast. Give my love to Zadie and I hope he had an easy fast.

I heard the Soviet Army Chorus and Bala Lika is my favorite



The Kibbutz Succah



The Kibbutz Succah



Inside the Kibbutz Succah



September 20 1961

Dear All,

Please forgive me for not writing so much, but I forget when I wrote last. I got your letter and the package of articles ערב יום כפור. I was very excited to read the comics – felt just like home.

Now that the holidays are over and I have read your description of your services I can say this [Kibbutz service] was wonderful. The Chazan here was tremendous – I never have heard so much deep feeling in my life. You could just feel the solemnity of this day in the air. I hope you all had an easy fast. We had quite a day here. By morning 4 of our Hoch kids were in the hospital with fever. Later 4 or 5 other ended in bed. I got up at 10:00 and stayed in shul until after מוסף at 1:30. Then I slept until 4:00 or so when I returned to shul for נעילה and מעריב. By this time I felt quite weak, but that was expected. We broke the fast with apples

and cake which the kibbutz supplied for us. Then we made tea for ourselves with a heater that I bought when I was on vacation. About an hour later we had supper, but I couldn't eat much. Now I feel quite pooped out, so I am anxious to get into bed.

How was Dan's davening? All during the services I thought about you all. While we finished מוסף you were just beginning and now that we are fed and happy you are probably saying נעילה. However, as I sat outside because there was no room inside, I looked up at the most beautiful sunset and clouds and thought that you are also under the same sky. My how romantic I am getting. Another spectacular feeling was the saying of "לשנה הבאה". I remember last year saying it and now that actually came true. Quite a strange feeling.

Reva Guttman's brother-in-law is the Gabbai here. Very friendly and jolly. Reva was here for Yom Kippur but I didn't see her much. Chaim was here also on Monday evening.

I received Sharon's card Monday and I sent a card Tuesday, but to make things certain I am going to call her tomorrow, as she requested. I am very anxious to see her.

I heard from Rachel and she wrote about all the University registering, etc. It made me a little homesick. I keep waiting for the old routine of early rising, sandwich lunches, school and homework. Actually, it feels good.

Just now the boys began to bring our סכה [Succah] to the backyard of our rooms. How is our good old סוכה, Dad?

Did you call Zadie? I hope all is well there. Is he coming to Minneapolis?

Joel, Chaim says he can find information for you about chemical engineering – so he will either send it to you or give it to me directly. When do you need it by?

Please give regards to Uncle Joe and Lou and the Gottstein's and give them my regrets for not writing, but it is very hard to find the time. The days goes so fast and we have to get up so early. Ask Jerry²⁵ to write if he has time.

Before I forget let's get together in the letters. Please wait for me to answer your last letter before writing me. It will make things much easier.

So far I have worked with pomegranates outside and believe I told you about it. It was wonderful working [with] Israeli fruits, except that I still have stickles in my hand and arms from the trees. Yesterday I worked in the מחסן – where clothes are sewed, sold and laundry delivered. Of all the various jobs I picked the doozer! –

25 Jerry Gottstein, son of Rose and Nate, younger cousin of Ruth who lived across the street. See Glossary.

cut thread off grey work socks that had been mended. Oh, four hours never went soo slowly. Tomorrow I am working in the children's kitchen, something new.
Love to all, Ruthie



September 26, 1961 Tuesday night

Dear All,

Please forgive me for not writing sooner, but we just have been extra busy with so much Yom Tov. I think that this day was one of the most interesting days of my life. The whole time we think of being in Israel to celebrate the holidays. Well, the first day of Succoth was something thrilling. All day Sunday people were working on the building and decorations. They have one big (about 4 or 5 times the size or ours) succah by the dining room. This is for the children's dining room and one for the Americans on Aliyah. Also we built one by our huts (צריפים). Add to this the 50 or so small sukkot which families build and you really have a spirit of the holiday wherever you go. We eat in the succah all week, all meals.

Well, anyway, the first day was really quite a day. I felt a little of the real spirit of the holiday, being right here in Israel and all. Today, however, was another story. We all felt like in חוץ לארץ - cars and tractors traveling around, women doing laundry and everyone dressed in work clothes and eating weekday food. All, that is, except us. Anyway, it was strange.

Now we have a new experience, Chol Hamoad in Israel. Tomorrow we have a trip around this area and Thursday we have vacation. As yet I'm not sure where we will go. Then for Simchat Torah we are trying to get places in Jerusalem for the big festivities there. I am excited to see this if at all possible.

This weekend was filled with surprises. Sharon came for Shabbat and is staying until tomorrow. Sunday afternoon as I returned from a lesson I walk into my hut and I found a boy from Machon and he informed that Mickey was on his way. Well, he came; but they had no room left for more visitors so they had to leave.

Today we had an American from the Jewish Agency speak to us. In opening we noticed his faint southern accent and he mentioned that he was from Atlanta,

Georgia. Of course I asked him later if he knew the Geffens and, of course, he knew the whole family. His name is David Macarov²⁶ and he sends regards to you. He said he was director of Herzl camp in about 1958. What a small world. He spoke very well, mostly about the advantages of life in Israel. Oh well, they just don't leave us alone. While he was here I asked him about my flute. He said it would be best for you to get in touch with the American embassy there and get a letter saying that I (in my naivety) didn't know I had to declare my flute and that it is from the U.S. So try and see what you can do.

Besides sandals, book-ends, and a water warmer upper, I brought nothing; but you would be surprised how much and fast money goes for air letters and such. We do receive 5 Liras a month from the kibbutz, so that helps a little.

Now a little more about my trip. Shabbat afternoon we walked to the Jordanian border. Dov and his family were wonderful to me. They have 2 very charming children, one just started school, and the other is younger. Jerusalem was fabulous, we saw Hechal Shlomo, Yeshurun, the Jewish Agency building, the Betzalel museum (all from the outside). We saw Mt. Zion from a distance, Mea Shearim. I'm keeping a diary, but it is not worthwhile to check all this stuff, it would be a mess. Whatever I leave out you will hear when I get back. Dr. Salz told that he lived at your house [in Atlanta], and he was full of praise for the Geffen's.

I really can't give a suggestion as what to give the Rabinowitz's, but I hope Uncle Lou can perhaps bring something for them. As to my birthday I feel that I have no right to ask for a gift. Just being here in Israel is enough, if not too much for any gift. All that I can ask for is your good wishes.

The weather here is beautiful. The day is warm and the nights are cool. I have good clothes. The girls here work in dresses and skirts for that purpose, and I am missing that, so the Americans all wear slacks. If things keep up I'm going to need bigger clothes. I'm still trying, though.

I had to laugh at your comment about the שנה טובה. We got the cards free from the kibbutz, so it seemed like a typical Jew trying to get something free. I know that you didn't know this. Maybe next year before I leave I can get some. I got your package today, very fun to read. Didn't know you were such celebrities. Dr. Swift, wow! I heard from the Gottstein's and will write back soon.

Among ourselves we speak English, although I dread it, the Guttman's speak only

26 David Macarov grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, and knew the Geffen family. He worked for Zionist organizations in America, in 1947 went to Palestine, returned to the States in 1949, and returned to Israel in 1958.

Hebrew to me. The lessons are a little better, I'm adjusting to them.

Love to all, Ruthie

שלום ידידים, שלום מקיבוץ יבנה אני בלת חג כל כך שמח כן עם הבת הנמצא שלכם. אני רוצה לברך
אותכם בשנה טובה וכל טוב, שלום, שרון יהודית שולמן



October 4, 1961

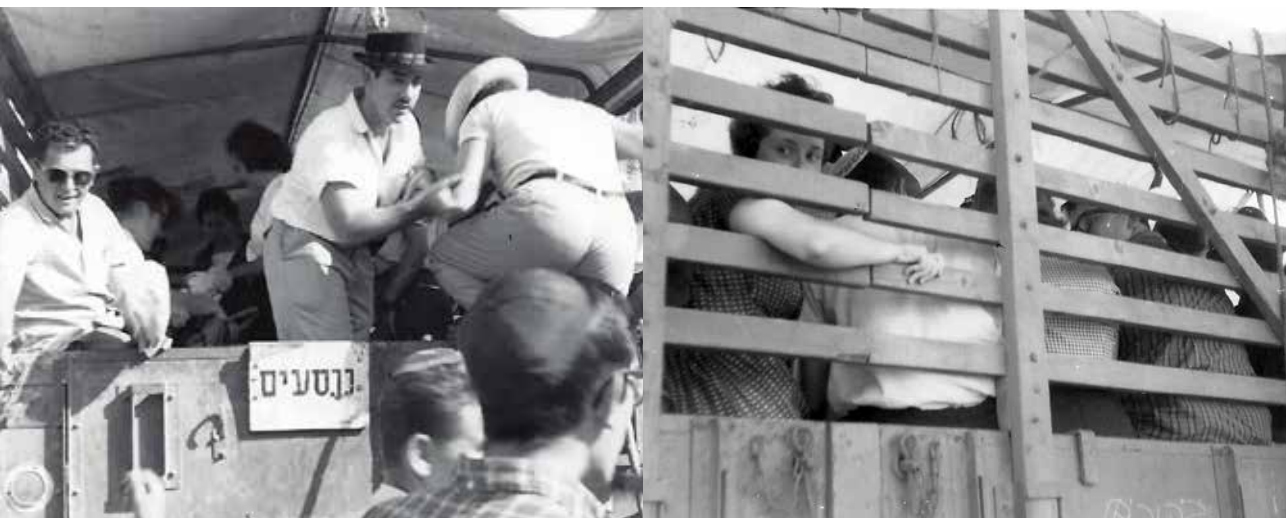
Dear All,

I realize that I have not written for some time, but what with Shabbat and Yom Tov it is hard to get air letters and anyway the time was quite scarce. Now we are sitting down for a few days of routine before our tiyul Monday. We will be gone (the whole Hoch) until Thursday night. I am very excited! חול המועד סוכות is almost like a holiday here. We eat all meals in the succah, no laundry is done; outside the kibbutz banks are open only half day, etc. During the week the members of the kibbutz take tiyulim during the afternoon. We also went one afternoon with grade 12 of the kibbutz to the surrounding areas. We left about 1:00 and came back about 7:00. It was fabulous! We were tired when we got back but it was worth it and felt good! The scenery we saw is just what you would imagine Israel to be like. I just cannot describe the beauty of it. We were in Ashkelon, hill 64 (or some #), the fire observatory built by the J.N.F. It was all sort of a miniature of our tiyul Monday, traveling by truck with food, etc.

Again we had our extra day of chag went by with a strange air all around. In the afternoon I helped Sarah, my kibbutz sister (Guttman's daughter) with her English. I enjoyed it very much, I almost felt like their daughter.

Every day I realize more and more the problems and adjustments I have to make not only being here, but being on my own. I love it and am challenged. We have a lot of free time and we can go crazy, and have, I think, if we don't find something to do. One night I played my flute with one of the girls here from the kibbutz who plays chalil and wants to learn flute.

Simchat Torah here (Shmini Atzeret for you) was something wonderful. Never before have I seen such dignified confusion. Dov said that I could stay at his house



Touring Israel in an open truck. Ruth on truck

in Jerusalem for 2 days even though they would be out of town, but the Guttman here advised me to stay here, because it would be easier. So I stayed. Each Hakafah both at night and during the day was at least about 1/2 hour or 45 minutes. The little kids were displayed on their father's shoulders as they danced. There were two spaces cleared out in front and after they circled the men's section they broke into 2 circles of dance. As my father (the Gabbai) tried to get the Torah's back, they trapped him into the middle of the circle or ran outside, etc. Monday we stopped after Shacharit for breakfast, continued with the Hakafot, separated for the reading of the Torah, came back together for the Chatan Beraeshit and finished about 1:30. To top off all this, now, I had toranut [duty] for lunch. If I wash dishes at home in the fast, sloppy way they do here, I think you will try to keep me out of the kitchen.

The lessons are improving a little as the teachers see our level.

You wrote that you thought my visit to Jerusalem was superficial, but even going inside building doesn't show much more. I enjoyed the trip very much and got a lot from it. Don't forget that we spend 6 weeks in the holy city, so I will get to know it much better then. This was sort of a beginning introduction. Alice [Joshua]²⁷ does live near Dov and I plan to see her as soon as I can.

27 Herbert Joshua's sister.

About the Hadassah hospital, it seemed to be quite informal, a girl in the lobby on a stretcher with a cast. I am not saying this is necessarily bad, but it struck me. I was shocked that so much money and emphasis is going into windows for the synagogue when there still is so much to be done for the hospital itself. By the way, I also saw the Hadassah hospital in the city.

Has anyone made more definite plans about coming yet? I am anxious to hear how the films came out. How have my letters been, anything I can do to make them more informative? This is my one chance to write and I want to make it good.

Hope you all are well, Love Ruthie

P.S. there are mosquitos here too and they bite something awful! Relay belated birthday wishes to Naomi Joshua!²⁸ Tonight we are seeing the movie “Ballad of a Soldier”, supposed to be fabulous.



October 7, 1961 Saturday night

Dear All,

Although I have no letter of yours to answer I am writing now, because we are having our *טויל* this week and I don't know if I will find time during the week.

I started this at a meeting *אסיפה*, but I couldn't concentrate. I guess things are really beginning to get settled. We are starting after the trip the *חוגים*. I signed up for *chalil* and dancing. Our *Madrach* suggested very highly not to take more, because with homework, etc. there wouldn't be time.

Flash! I finally met the missing link to the family. The other day I heard someone who was working with me called Beit-Arye (Intellegator) as she left. Friday she worked again with me, so I asked her and sure enough she's the one – her husband is THE David Intellegator. Chaim came for the week-end, so together we visited with them. Both of them – and their married children are wonderful people. David

28 Naomi is the daughter of Herbert and Rose Joshua, Ruth's neighbors. See glossary.

had Maphtir today (my sedrah) and I just thought how wonderful it is to see important men called at the Torah, even the pres. Etc. He even has תורנות in the kitchen at times. Will wonders never cease!

Since I have no news for you at present I will try to give you a better picture of the life of your only daughter wandering the Holy Land. Probably the most important thing in my life is sustenance, clearly FOOD – or as we say here אוכל. The meals here are something extraordinary themselves.

Breakfast consists of a real variety. One can chose what he wants. Every morning there is fresh bread, margarine, delicious jelly, herring, tomatoes. Then there is coffee or/and tea. One thing I really miss is good old cereal! Ooh! Usually at work we have an apple or something to nosh.

Lunch is the big (?) meal of the day. There is quite a variety. Some examples are: soup, potatoes, something that looks somewhat like hamburger or fried fish, eggs and salami, carrots or beets and to drink מיץ.

Supper is almost exactly like breakfast. During the afternoon we usually make tea, coffee or cocoa in the room. The food I brought was a “G-d send”. We live for it. In fact, I just finished a cup of delicious tea. I don’t think I’m going to give much for gifts – I’m selfish!

Shabbat the arrangement is a little different. Lunch Erev Shabbat is delicious – kugel, except not kugel. Really, plain noodles on which we throw cinnamon and sugar. It’s terrific, but fattening! Supper is soup, chicken, nuts and grapes. Most of the time there is no such thing as dessert. (I guess when I come home it will be easier to lose weight!) Shabbat morning after davening we eat breakfast with our family. Some eat in their own homes, but we eat in the dining room cake and coffee. After a class at 11:00 (davening from 7:30-9:00) we eat about 11:00 lunch, salami, applesauce, bread, rice (or cholent) I don’t know how to spell it. By the way, even blessing the New Month doesn’t take long, it’s wonderful!

The main thing about the meals, however, is the manner in which they (we) eat. The table is set with 6 soup bowls, 6 cups and a silverware container. When you come to the table each person takes his own equipment and begins with the food around him – bread, cheese, soup, etc. The food is passed around on carts. All food is eaten in one soup bowl – quite different from America. It sure was strange at first – but now we are getting used to it. The members here are quite unaware of Emily Post and the “boardinghouse reach” is more popular than “please pass”. At first this is shocking and hard to try. חבל when I get home!!

I have a lot to learn about eating here. When I ate in the Guttman’s sukkah they were quite upset because I didn’t finish the “skin and bones” of the chicken. I have

already learned to eat grapes (which are very much in season now) with the seeds and even an apple – core and all!!

Today was a very interesting day. For breakfast Chaim and I were at Miriam's friend. There a discussion started of war time episodes of people they know in Kfar Sabah. For the afternoon meal we were at the Intelligators – from there we went to the *חֵתָן בְּרֵאשִׁית*. Have you ever heard of this? Do they do it at Mikva Kodesh?²⁹ On Simchat Torah after the Torah reading they call upon a worthy man as Chatan Torah, who later gives a drashah and then Chatan Bereisheit. The latter is also chosen carefully, so on Shabbat Bereisheit all the members visit his home – make a lechaim and make merry. We also went – nothing special as far as entertainment, but interesting. It is held outside and there is a constant shift of people – no room for everyone at once.

Well, so much for this lesson. When you learn this well I will continue with another episode of my life in the wilds of Israel.

One more news item – tonight I ate raw meat! A boy from South Africa received a package from home and so I tasted this delicacy. It's meat that has stood for a while – like canned beef or salami. Not bad!

Please tell the Gottstein's that I received their letter and will try to answer soon. In the meantime share this with them, as I'm sure you do.

Love, Ruthie

P.S. Love from my room-mates. I will probably write next Motzei Shabbat, if I don't get a chance on our trip.



October 14, 1961 Saturday night

Dear All,

Surprised to see regular stationery from me. Please forgive me for wasting regular postage, but I have so much to tell you about our *טייל* that I'm sure it's worth it. I think you also will understand that I had little time to write – though I sent a card to the Gottstein's.

We left Monday morning at 5:00 AM in a big truck with 4 rows of seats and a

²⁹ The Orthodox synagogue which Ruth and her parents attend in Minneapolis.



Trip to the shuk in Nazareth and the tank at kibbutz Degania

“tender” – a smaller truck for food. Our luggage consisted of a knapsack and a blanket roll. It’s fun to travel that way.

Our first stop was Afula (follow us on a map to understand) where they davened and we ate. Then Nazareth; we walked through the market place, shuk. I felt like I was walking in a page of a book, unbelievable. Open markets full of people, animals and filth, very few cars – things transported on mules and heads – even little boys carry things on their heads. I bought a כפייה (white Arab scarf) there. We had lunch at Har Atzmon and then climbed the mountain, hard but worthwhile. We slept at a youth hostel in Tzfatz [Safed], really beautiful, bunk beds. I wore my saddle shoes and got huge painful blisters in my heels, the rest of the trip I wore sandals.

Again we got up early (there were 50 of us, including 4 women who cooked, 1 guide and our Madrich) had breakfast and began on our way. Saw the synagogue ruins at Bar-Am, it is the picture on the half-lira. From there along the road we could see white stones which marked the Lebanon border. We stopped at a police station and memorial מצודת כ"ה from where we could see the Hula Valley and the fish hatcheries.

We stopped at 2 kibbutzim, Ramim and Mizgav-Am (non-religious) where we could see views of the Valley. Then to Trumpeldor’s grave – saw Tel-Chai where he fell. At Metulla we had lunch outside of a little grocery store. Travelling we saw

the תנור – the only [water] falls in Israel – but was dry. Then to a most beautiful spot – Dan, the beginning of the Jordan, green like a garden of paradise. We walked about 6 blocks on a long thick water pipe to the mouth. This was right on the Syrian border – which is the worst border of Israel. We went wrong and were in Syria for a few minutes. [Don't worry, we had a gun with us!] On the way back South we saw Gan Dafna. Before we reached our hostel we visited 3 old synagogues. The boys' davened in one shul across from the Ha-Ari shul. This is imported from France and is absolutely beautiful, colorfully ornate. The bema in the center was above the congregation facing the Ark. Very dignified. Then we saw the Yosef Karo shul, a real Sephardic one, seats only around the edge, the Torah in cases that stand up – very interesting. Someone said that in this one city there are 50 some shuls. Then we stopped in the artists' colony, but it was night and only one place was opened. They had an exhibition of pictures of Shalom Aleichem, I wanted to buy a folder of 15 pictures, but I didn't have enough money along, I learned a lesson!

Again we left the next morning early, we stopped at Mazda, a point on a mountain overlooking Tzfata which was a military lookout in the war and now is a memorial. Then we stopped at the grave of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. For a holy place this was filthy – I couldn't stand it. People come there to stay for a week or so and live there – I don't know how they can stand it. We saw the roof of the place where they have a big celebration on Lag b'Omer. Then we climbed Har Miron, the highest in Israel – I saw Miron, but no time to visit. I'll have to wait.

From there we felt the heat so much that when all of a sudden we saw the blue of the Kinneret [Sea of Gallilee] we could hardly sit still. I just wish I had brought my swim suit but I went in up to my knees and it felt great! I also collected sea shells from there, I hope to bring them home yet. We had lunch there. We rode to Kfar Nachum, a monastery nearby the ruins of a shul where Jews are said to have gone. It also had beautiful stone carvings. We stopped in Tiberias, walked around on our own, saw the town market – I must get used to their way of buying – much different than ours. We saw the grave of the Rambam. I get a strange feeling when I realize the places such as these famous ones I have seen.

We worked it out and took a boat ride across the Kinneret to Ein Gev – right on the Syrian border – 2 Hoch kids got shot at last year. It was probably one of the highlights of the trip – just at sunset time, ooh so romantic. The kibbutz has 200 people and just built a huge hall built by Americans and during Chul Hamoad, etc. they have famous people (L. Bernstein, J. Heifetz, etc.) and people come from all over Israel.



kibbutz farm

The youth hostel we stayed at was near Poria, near Tiberius, again overlooking the Kinneret Sea. Again it was beautiful!

The next day our first stop was Daganian and I was most impressed – so green and beautiful, our guide was one of the founders of this (the oldest) kibbutz – יוסף ברק.³⁰ He wrote a book about the kibbutz and I bought it. The kibbutz built a science lab in memory of גורדון א.ד. who spent much time there.³¹ It is beautiful and they also have a museum and a library with books in many languages. Since they are also right on the border a Syrian tank came up to the kibbutz boundary and it is still there, quite an experience to see this.

We rode to Beit Shan and saw the excavations of the Roman amphitheater. It was amazing. The acoustics there are fantastic – without a microphone almost a whisper can be heard everywhere. Right next to this is תל בית שן a big mountain like structure on which city on top of city was built. Fantastic!

30 Yosef Beretz (1890-1968) was a member of the first Knesset. He was one of the founders of Kibbutz Degania in 1920 and also in 1942 of the Association for the Welfare of Israeli Soldiers *האגודה למען החייל*.

31 Aaron David Gordon (A.D. Gordon) was an ideological and spiritual leader of labor Zionism. He was born in Russia in 1856 and died in kibbutz Degania, Palestine in 1922. He was active in Zionist circles in Russia and immigrated to Palestine in 1904, spending his last years at Kibbutz Degania. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._D._Gordon

We had lunch at a kibbutz, הכפצירה. There they had an old shul also ruins. The unusual thing about this was the mosaic floor, absolutely magnificent – each stone placed one by one. The shul was huge on top of it.

Then as a climax to 4 fabulous days we climbed Har Tabor, but I didn't climb because it was steep and I couldn't wear good shoes. We got back at the kibbutz about 9:00. The first thing we did was take a hot shower and wash our hair. After the tiyul we really feel like we're living in pure luxury! Home seems like real extravagance. The food on the tiyul wasn't so bad. We had bread, margarine, jelly, eggs, sardines, and jelly for breakfast and lunch. Supper we had peas or beans (cold) and canned meat that tasted like cat food and apricots canned. But after 4



Beit She'an amphitheater

days of traveling in somewhat crowded quarters and on diet, etc., it was wonderful getting home. But we had a wonderful time every tired minute of the tiyul – I never sang so much in my life!

Friday we had a discussion with Michael, our Madrich, and we discussed our classes. So now he knows our problems and now I hope that things will improve. I used up about 30 pictures on our tiyul. I sure hope they come out. Have you gotten the roll of film yet from Miss Levine?

Anything else new? How's Dan? Please give regards to everyone for me.

Love, Ruthie



October 18, 1961

Dear All,

This has been quite a week for mail. I got letters from you, Lou, and Daniel (do you believe it, I still don't). Then I got your card and a card from George Jarvis³² – really thoughtful of him and I owe him a letter too! Also thanks so much for the check. It really was unnecessary, but I will try to cash it as soon as I can. It is very hard to get to a bank. They are only open until 4:00 PM and we can't get off. The flute says made in Boston – so I guess that settles it. The camera is on my visa. All is well.

I will write to Zadie the first opportunity I have, in Hebrew if I get brave enough! The weather here is now beginning to be winter. But it sure is a strange kind of winter, no leaves falling, no beautiful color changes, no rain yet and definitely no snow. There isn't even real cold weather. The mornings and evening are cold – 2 blankets and flannel pajamas are perfect, but from 10:00 – 4:00 it is sunny and warm. The changes daily are great for colds, but, thank God I still haven't got sick. I sure hope it keeps up.

The kids from Hoch are quite nice kids. So far we haven't formed a real חברה. We stick pretty much in small groups, but now that we have started more of a routine schedule I think it will change. Many of the kids are children of Rabbis, cantors or Hebrew school teachers – all come from religious homes, most are from N.Y.; Chicago and L.A. Also have a good number of kids I have found a lot in common with these kids. We've had good fun and serious discussions. The kids from other countries are also fabulous kids. During our trip the boys from South Africa kept us all singing and peppy.

We are left on our own most completely. At times it is very frustrating, but so far for me it is a challenge to succeed. Since we are our own bosses we stick mostly with our group of Americans, talk English, read little Hebrew, even though we are scolded for it. Even listening to the radio we hear more English and Arabic almost than Hebrew. I try to listen to news in Hebrew, but I still understand little of it.

32 Classmate at North High School in Minneapolis.

You may wonder why they say we have more contact with the kibbutzniks, but for example, all morning I work with 2 women by myself and of course we speak Hebrew. Besides I hear them discuss current problems etc. At meals we sit often with kibbutz members. What's more, the Guttmans are a wonderful family. Once in a while during the week I see them and talk with them. They are very helpful. They have lived here for 15 years, also are Litvak's (Lithuanian Jews) – family! They were married in Poland and Sarah came to Israel when she was half year old. She right now wants very much to leave kibbutz, because of monetary [issues] and lack of things to do. She is quite a smart girl and we have become quite good friends. One night this week I was asked to the chalil teachers house and we played together – she piano. My Mozart concerto is really travelling! I'm ashamed how badly I played.

I heard from Uncle Lou today and I am quite excited. I can't wait for 2 months. But I have a suggestion for his agenda. Perhaps he would like to stay here over Shabbat. It would be very worthwhile, if you think its possible let me know a little in advance and I can arrange a room.

I am going to try to work extra now to see if I can get off during the week to be with him.

In a future letter I will write a list of things to bring and you can send as much as possible.

Please send me Davida's address at school, if you know it.

Oh, Dad, the beige wool shirt I took is fabulous. I used it during the tiyul and it was so warm. Now I use it during the coolness of the morning.

In case you go shopping in those big American stores (ooh!) I need summer slacks and cotton skirts, the latter rather cheap and old to use for work. Please make them big enough, get the idea! (The laundry shrinks stuff to make it worse!) Also, I have black corduroy slacks at home I could use.

Sharon is coming I think again in 2 weeks. I guess she found it nice here. I love having her.

In case I forgot to tell you, we sure have great relatives. Dov Levin left a key for me next door to take since he was gone during Simchat Torah. Since I didn't come he left a key at Riva Guttmans for me. I just can't believe it.

One last comment. Please, please think of me each time you walk into the bathroom. We have such inconvenience, we walk one block to the toilet and its outside in the cold. The showers are even further away. I really miss that convenience. At least we have hot water for showers.

Love to all, Ruthie,

P.S. I guess I will try to write Wed. and Sat nights. Tell Dan he had the right address and give regards to [his fiancée] Ellie.



October 22, 1961

Dear All,

Greetings to all. I have just come from lunch and after a good day's work (in which I opened 180 eggs) and a refreshing shower. I feel really great.

I hope you enjoyed reading my report of the טיול as much as I enjoyed living it. It is very hard to describe such things. About the roll of film, the pictures were of the boat leaving Madeira, Gibraltar (did they come out), masquerade on the boat. The last pictures were of the Hebrew University on my first trip to Jerusalem. I am keeping track of all pictures I take – as best as possible, but I will send the list with Uncle Lou. I'm on the 3rd roll of film. I'm not sure what was wrong with the pictures, if I remember correctly I moved the A.S.A. accidentally. If not there could be too much sun, if that's true I hope my other pictures come out. It would be a real tragedy, I'm anxious to see them. Can you place any of them? Some should be of Yavne.

I was with Beit Aryeh (Intellegator) yesterday for ארוחות ארבע. He is traveling to South America and New York so I sent regards to my Uncles. He will try to call them if he gets a chance. He also will try to write to Zadie. He even was asking to see if there is any chance for a stop to Atlanta but I don't think he will be able [to do so]. They explained the relationship, but I can't keep it straight, ask Zadie. They have also a daughter who is not in the army. I met her yesterday.

The classes are improving a little as we get used to them and they get used to us. We speak English most of the time although we are scolded for it constantly. Nevertheless we hear Hebrew spoken around us and to the kibbutzniks I speak only Hebrew. For example: at work I speak Hebrew, here however, one hears almost more German than Hebrew, and words thrown into the latter are so natural. I see Jerry all the time. We all live in the outskirts of the משק. He is getting along quite well, but he has trouble since he can't speak Hebrew. After giving them classes with a teacher who is still learning herself, and who knows very little English, they decided to let him and 4 others go to an ulpan for 1 month. I also would like to go, but I can't. This teacher also teaches us Hebrew and it is very hard!

Now for the important part of the letter. I have gathered a list of things I need and want. I know Uncle Lou probably won't have room for much, but I am including everything I could think of and just send whatever you can. Listed in order of importance, here goes. 1) Clothes for me – 2 pairs of girls jeans front zipper, size 16; 1 pair cord. Slacks dark color (black, navy blue); any over blouses I have left, even if in poor condition. 2) Instant tea and Pream, very important. 3) Gum, as much as possible. Israeli stuff horrid. 4) Pictures of family, as much as possible, relatives, very interested. 5) Hanging shoe bag, one with pockets made of cloth, very important; 6) thongs, size 5 1/2, 2 pair; 7) material cover for big trunk, we keep it in the room and it gets pretty dirty. Also cover for suitcase, not so important. 8) 4 big size rollers, clips, and pink hairnet; 9) loafers; 10) calamine, spot remover; 11) 2 mugs, like mine, not cheap plastic because we boil water in them; small plastic plates; 12) blouse hangers (skirt hangers, not as necessary); 13) travel iron board, if you can find it; 14) winter slippers, muc lucs or some such thing; 15) annual, I want if very much but I know it is quite a luxury, so if possible; 16) instant coffee, cocoa; 7) small pencil sharpener.

Throw in any other clothes that you can. I can use anything, nothing fancy. I haven't even worn the black dress yet. For working I like to wear skirts or what they call חלוק, sort of like robes or outer dresses (?), so if possible stick some cotton full! Skirts in.

I hope I don't seem too bothersome. Just send what you can. The rest I will look around for here, but it is hard to get time off to go shopping. While I think of it, I won't have a chance to cash the check for a while. Is that OK?

If, by the way, Uncle Lou has more time to spend in Israel, he should. Has he decided whether to come for Shabbat here? It really would be nice, as possibly if he's here for one Shabbat. I just asked my Madricha if I could get time off during the week when Uncle Lou comes. She also suggested that he try to stay more time in Israel, if possible. Will he fly back or take the boat. I really am very excited, am already counting the days until his arrival.

We also could use more Kleenex. I can give him the toilet paper, because the stuff here's not so bad after all.

My Madricha mentioned that a friend of hers was here and he married a girl from Atlanta, her married name is Jacobs. They were just in Israel, the man is in the army now, stationed in France.

Now for the name. The Guttman said I should make my name Hebrew, (זי) so for a lack of things to do I have started writing it that way. Do you mind?

Today is Sunday and I really miss the Sunday atmosphere of home. We all mark

this today especially today for some reason. We're really gripped, one extra day of work, etc.

That reminds me, Intelligator (Beit Aryeh) told me that he's in charge of Hebrew Education in America, and he keeps supply [of] Hebrew teachers for schools around the world. Has Minneapolis used their (the Jewish Agency) facilities?

If this is somewhat incoherent it is because I feel good today. Tonight I'm having my first Chalil lesson. Oh, I bought a Chalil for 5 lira.

I'm finally beginning to learn the currency. Time to sign off. I'm going to do a little exercise, running around the מועדון a little.

Love to all, Ruthie

P.S. Regards from my roommates. Please also send any flute music you can, duets if I have any.



October 28, 1961 Saturday night

Dear All,

Before I say anything I want to let you know that I am dead tired. I just finished washing dishes from 8:00 – 11:00. On Shabbat morning after lunch they only rinse the dishes so at night there is real work to do. To get people to do the work they have a deal – work at night, get half a day work off. That was enough to entice me, so now I have one day free to travel with Uncle Lou. So you see I am quite eager for him to come.

I have to tell you a real story. Friday afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Thorkelson, do you know them? Well, he's a reporter from the good old Minneapolis Star. They are writing an article about religion around the world, so while in Israel they somehow heard about us here, and since they wanted to see a religious kibbutz they came here. So in about a week from today, around the time you get this letter the article should be in the paper. Please send me the article, if you find it, as soon as possible. There also should be pictures, they took a number of pictures, and maybe you

could get a hold of them by calling the Star. Anyway it was quite an experience. I guess it takes Israel to get me in the papers.³³

I still have all my money. Here, on kibbutz I don't need much money so I just cash traveler's checks whenever I need them. It is too much trouble to have checks.

I wrote a Hebrew letter to Zadie and will mail it tomorrow with this. I hope he can read my Hebrew. Sarah Guttman corrected it for me.

The weather here has been marvelous, yesterday we had our first real rain, just enough to make mud. Today it was beautiful! Sunny and windy, real convertible weather. I guess now we will have to bring out the winter clothes.

Sharon was here this week-end. She also brought a friend who she met at the ulpan. She's a German girl who came to Israel with a feeling that it is very important. I was reluctant to have Sharon bring her and everything to go all right, the girl was very interesting, until Sarah came and told me that her parents were very angry that I let her come. Well, I just don't know what to do now. I can't feel guilty, that won't help matters any. Please don't say anything of this to the Schulmans. I don't want Sharon to feel guilty.

Next weekend we have vacation and I think we are going to Jerusalem. There is a שבת ארגון there, Bnei Akiva has a big doings all Shabbat. I'm not sure whether I'll stay by Dov's or not. It may be out of the way.

Well it is very late and I'm quite tired as are my roommates

Please relay my love to all, Love Ruthie



November 1, 1961

Dear All,

Greetings again from the world traveler. Today I got letters from both Mom and Dad, and you, have no idea how wonderful it is to get mail. So don't stop writing. First and foremost this place is probably not as bad as R. L. said. Now that I think of our first impressions compared to how we feel after two (long) months. They

³³ See newspaper article on page 158

sure have changed. Sure the buildings are not beautiful and at first they seem horrible, but now that we have some small attachment they seem almost beautiful. I notice this especially with the dining room and even with our own rooms. In fact we rather forget (at least I) that we have inconveniences at all. Sometimes I even begin to wonder about the luxuries we have at home – the necessity of them. I can't even remember what they are like, life is so different.

I will try to get in touch with Aunt Lottie's³⁴ sister-in-law when I get a chance, but it is very difficult to get away. I really heard about Joel's U.N. experience, Mom and Dad you both wrote, but I still don't know what he actually did. Maybe I could hear from the horse's mouth, a little of what happened. What was his role as Russian delegate?

Now our evenings have become quite busy. We do have some homework, mostly busy work, however, I hate it, though, as usual, I do it. We have a number of groups - חוגים, I am in Chalil and dancing, and I want to join the choir. Besides this we have a movie every Tuesday night, we saw "Ballad of a Soldier" (Russian), "Room at the Top", "Bridge on the River Kwai". It really is wonderful. Somehow by the time we reach bed, it is late and not too hard to fall asleep.

You would be surprised how much the kids here do. I forgot that you that read the letter have no idea what life is like here. The kibbutz has its own school through twelfth grade and most kids finish. A few are sent in the upper grades to specialized schools like cooking, etc. A few work all day –but those who have school don't work at all. After 12th grade they are in the army. The days are so short here, I never have enough time to do what I want. I still can't read my book. The feeling is not enough to do but plenty. My work now is permanent, at least for the meantime, anyway. I'm in the children's kitchen and it isn't too bad.

Now about sending me the stuff. I asked about sending stuff and I will find out in the next few days. Old clothes is almost no duty! The time element I'm not sure about – the last papers I got were before the trip. I also think it would be worthwhile to send stuff by mail, but the top stuff please send with Uncle Lou, for they are important. Say, could you send me a well done broiled steak? I think size 14 will be big enough, I'm not sure what I have. Pleated skirts are good, I don't care whether they are new or not.

We had a meeting, [assaifa in Hebrew], tonight, next week is Shabbat irgun, a big Bnei Akiva doings, all over. So we can go to Jerusalem and see it. Another friend

34 Lottie Geffen Simon, Ruth's mother's sister. Her husband Abe Simon had joined the Jewish Brigade in the First World War and served in Palestine.

and I are going, so I'm writing to Dov to see if we can stay there. I'm quite excited,
Well, I'm very tired, please give my love to all, love, Ruthie
P.S. Please find out when school starts next year, and if possible if I still have
registering to do that can't be done from here.



November 5, 1961

Dear All,

I received your letter today and was anxiously awaiting to hear if the telegram arrived, and am glad you got it. The wedding sounded very nice. Did they take a honeymoon?

Now about the list. The mugs are used as follows. We have an "element" shaped like U which plugs into a socket and heats up. This we put into the cup of water until it boils. The mug I have is from Franklin Cottage Cheese, pink inside, white and pink outside and is very good. Metal isn't good, perhaps something like ceramic, no coffee pot, not necessary. I meant travel iron board. It really is not at all necessary. Maybe later in the year.

Flash! The Minneapolis Symphony is now on the radio! 1812 overture. By the way I don't need big clothes only because of the shrinkage. I really try hard, but it is very hard. I have such an appetite (as do many of the kids) and bread is the only filler upper. I've already eaten so many things I've never touched before, Dad, cream cheese and jelly is almost a favorite!

The skirts, Mom, should be not loud colors, and full, please, either pleated or gathered. The white pleated skirt of yours fits me well. The saddle shoes gave me blisters on my heels, so if I can't get used to them, for better or worse, I will buy the working shoes here which although horribly unfashionable are good for the feet.

Am also glad you are sending music and my annual. I really have little opportunity to shop. We have classes until 5:30; on Friday until 2:00. Shabbat we can only leave when we have vacation, so it is difficult to do shopping. Even during vacation we hate to spend time shopping; so that's that.

Speaking of vacation, due to a mix-up we had no classes last Friday. So we decided to go to Rehovot and try our luck tramping (hitch-hiking to you foreigners). It was our first time and we were quite excited. The 3 of us walked to the road and for 1 hour tried to stop a car. An oil truck stopped but had room only for 2 and some Arabs stopped, but we couldn't communicate with them, so when the bus came we took it. What a disappointment. Well, maybe we'll have better luck next time. This Friday we have vacation, so we're going to Jerusalem. Suzy, my roommate from Los Angeles' girlfriend from Machon³⁵ was here and we're going to stay with her. It should be quite an experience; to see what I am missing. Truthfully from what I've heard so far from kids I've met from Machon I still feel that I made the best choice. This girl, by the way, was from Shomer Hatzahir,³⁶ so I have another side of the picture.

I plan to get together with Sharon if at all possible and also pick up my sleeping bag. Will tell you about it next letter.

By the way I want to mention that I got my hair cut in Rehovot in a cute little pseudo-modern beauty shop. It was only 1.20 lira (about 60 cents) so I can't complain much. I'm wearing my hair back, dips on side, brushed up in back and bump instead of a "bubble" because it's easier to take care of.

As to the Intelligator teacher I'll tell you later. I'm now going to play my flute with 2 chalil players from the kibbutz. After we have a chalil group and I'll write after that. It's now after. The address is world Zionist Organization, Torah Culture Department, or David Beit Arye, Box 92 Jerusalem. He's now in South America and in a few weeks he will possibly be in N.Y. The best is to write to him at the above address.

Flash! Our Madrich told us today about a chalil group that plays here of kids from this kibbutz and others, about 30 kids. They are playing Tuesday from 4:30 until about 8:30, so after the group he told me also to come. I'm going now to pick up the music,

Love, Ruthie

35 Machon Gold: see glossary.

36 Shomer Hatzahir is a secular socialist youth movement, founded 1913, in Poland, said to be the first Zionist Youth Movement, which became strong also in Palestine and Israel.



November 12, 1961

Dear All,

I have now reached another highlight in my year. For I think that every time I am in Jerusalem I am more attached to it. We left Friday after work and reached the center of the city by 3:00. Most of the kids (those that went) were fixed up in homes of Bnei Akiva members, but my roommates and I stayed at Machon, although it officially is illegal. This week-end I should explain, was Bnei Akiva *שבת ארגון* (Shabbat Argeon), so we wanted to see what it was. Friday night we davened in the small synagogue at the Machon and at dinner there we were told that that was to be our last meal from them. There had been a misunderstanding and it seems there was no extra food, etc. I saw David Frankel, but I didn't get a real chance to speak to him. Friday evening we walked to the Poel Mizrachi building. It was about a 45 minute walk and in spite of the coolness I enjoyed the walk. Dad, I thought about how much you would like such a walk on Friday night. First, we had interesting company. A Swedish boy from B.A. [Bnei Akiva] and also a boy from Scotland also from B.A. It was amazing to find religious, what more B.A. all over. It gives one a thrilling feeling. Secondly, we passed the Knesset, Beit Hillel, Sochnut, Yeshurun, Hechal Shlomo, seeing such sights how could it help but be wonderful.



Hoch group at Sochnut (Jewish Agency) building



Davidka square

We stay through the meeting but it was not exceptional. A Madrich from a kibbutz spoke about the importance of youth movements in life of youth around the world. He spoke too long and kids were not very attentive.

By the time we got home (Machon) we were falling asleep. The next morning we slept late. After the Machon kids ate, we ate the food they brought and hiked to הר ציון. I never saw such a thing before in my life. I wished very much you could have been there with me. Seeing the קבר דוד was such a wonderful (even strange) feeling – such a sacred place. We climbed the tower and saw the Old City. The whole city is spread from here.

Saturday night we went to the Center and never did I expect what I saw. Streets jammed with people either just walking or perhaps seeing a movie, eating the popular Israeli equivalent of hamburger – פלפל falafel, etc. We walked around and decided to go to a movie – “Oklahoma” and after we went out for coffee, just like Saturday night at home. At night the B.A. had, what I understand a most fabulous torch-like parade; over 600 kids participating. We tried to find it, but missed it. So we went to Mea Shearim, it was my second time but one sees more every time. We saw the Satmar Yeshiva – the most radical of them all. Seeing through a window we saw a small group of kids to us they seemed to be fooling around but one never knows. We walked back to Machon and were tired enough to sleep!

This morning we started out early because we wanted to try our luck hitching,



Jaffa Road

but after an hour we gave up and then missed our bus too. In the meantime I ran into Sharon Shulman, so we had a nice talk. We also met a boy from the Youth Aliyah from Kibbutz and with his help we reached Yavne. We took buses and 2 tramps (hitches). It was really fun, although we got here very late. After each of these vacations I feel I know Israel a little more. Especially hitching and walking around the country.

Jerusalem really grows on you – you get so attached to it. It's such a combination of new, old, holy, city and even a little rural flavor. Everything is beautiful.

I think that I will be able to get out for as much time as Uncle Lou stays, because we have vacation for Chanukah and I will save it. Does he want me the whole time to be with him or would he rather be on his own? Be honest! I'm already counting the days. Please hurry! I got the papers Thursday. Thanks. Mickey Greenberg³⁷ also enjoyed them.

37 A classmate of Ruth from North High School in Minneapolis.



View of Old City

There was a problem with Sharon's friend – she was not Jewish and I just said it was Sharon (who was here) and a friend. Actually anyone can come for meals, but if someone wants to stay in a private room we must make reservations. Thus, at least Sara Guttman says, bringing the girls was wrong. Since these people all German it's hard for them. I guess I understand, but is over.

Please write soon, Joel, let's hear from you,

Love, Ruthie

P.S. Reva visited me here last Tuesday. She was angry because I haven't visited or written her. I don't know almost what to do anymore!



November 15, 1961

Dear All,

The funniest thing – last night I sat down ready to write and then I realized that it was not Wednesday, as I thought, but only Tuesday and I decided to wait till today. Luckily I did, because I had a wonderful day and I hope you sense this for a change, as most letters I write late at night and are probably characteristic of my mood.

Actually I'm not sure why I'm so content today, everything went the same as usual. Work – straining carrots, washing dishes, cleaning stove, handing out fruit for the kid's afternoon snack and last, helping make 2 cakes. But after work the real fun began. We went to the רפת (cow barn) and collected זבל (need I translate, look it up if you don't know!), brought it back and began hewing the small garden in front of the house, spread out the stuff and now we are ready to plant. The gardener is giving us stuff. I really enjoyed the work.

Then sitting in the classes, etc. I really felt a slight sense of accomplishment. We are studying פרשת השבוע and I try to review it before class each week and the little I learned before (some) I recall and I can feel myself becoming closer to it all as the picture becomes clearer, the stories begin to take on a new color.

I guess I sort of got carried away, but these thoughts did occur to me, strange as they may seem. I still am amazed to see how much I did learn, how much I did absorb during those most hard ten years. I guess I do owe those teachers a thanks. So, Joel, keep up the good work. You'll never regret it.

Now, in answer to your letters. First, I filled out such a form for the U. of Minnesota for this year. I imagine that there is no rush, so if they need another one, I'll give it to Uncle Lou. Dad, thanks for the letter, better late than never. It was a good idea anyway. Oh, in regard to New Year, I really am still quite uncertain and I don't know when to decide, I don't want to have to make last minute decisions, although it still is very early. Any comments, or advice.

The article was very good. I was impressed by him here also. They are not returning to Minneapolis till January. In regard to David Beit Arye, I heard from his wife this morning (she was with me) that he is now in South America and in about 2 weeks

he will be in N.Y. If Mr. Kaiser wants to get in connection with him he can write to him in care of the Jewish Agency in N.Y. However, there is still doubt whether he even will be in N.Y.

Now in regard to Uncle Lou's trip. Plastic really isn't so good because it doesn't fit over the canvas bag (suitcase) already has 2 small holes because I have it on the floor in my room. As far as the trunk, one girl has a cloth cover, fitted, it is good. Any chance, it was home-made, but not urgent. Forget the plastic plates, not necessary. Bring as much coffee, tea and as possible. 4 oz. is allowed, I think. In addition I have two requests. One, if you think it necessary could I have a more powerful portable radio. This isn't necessary, however, and I realize that is a big request. My radio works, but we can only get 2 stations or so, and many times find nothing but Arab music to listen to. Next, one more thing, quite unusual, but we miss very much, good old cereal. Perhaps, if there is room, he could bring a snack pack or even a small box of cereal. Again not necessary but appreciated. Next, I would like very much to know exactly when Uncle Lou would like me to be with him. Does he want to come here at all? I think I can get off anytime, but I have to know more specifics. Anyway, I'm quite excited and not a day goes by that I don't think of it.

Yesterday afternoon we had visitors from the Religious Department of the Jewish Agency. I never heard of them before and it was quite interesting. They wrote the "Religious Kibbutz" book and have quite a few publications free for the asking – they are sending us catalogues and I'll try to send one home. I think Bnei Akiva in Minneapolis could benefit from them.

Last night we saw "Twelve Angry Men" and it was one of the most fabulous movies I have seen. So full of meaning. Have you seen it?

Well, until the next letter, Love, Ruthie



November 19, 1961 Sunday

Dear All,

Since my last letter a few interesting things have happened to me. Last Thursday Michael, my Madrich, asked me to play for two of his classes – he teaches music in the school here. So I played for the 8th and 9th grade classes. It was quite interesting to see the classes in sessions. There are about 30 kids in a class – mostly from this kibbutz, but also from others in the area. The teachers all live here, but some are not members, but permanent residents. The kids have 6 classes a day, starting early and ending by lunch, I think. In between each class they have 10 minute breaks. The kids stay in one room and the teachers change. They have many problems here that we never find anywhere else. First, many of the male teachers must leave for the army in the middle [of the school year] – because up until 35 or 40 years of age men are continually called in. So every day there are changes in schedule, etc. My Madrich teaches 10 hours a week in the school, plus giving lessons to us in the afternoon. Besides having our troubles on his shoulders as Madrich he also leads the kibbutz choir and the choral group I played with.

Anyway the kids seemed quite excited with this new thing and were interested in it. I had to answer a few questions and explain it a little in Hebrew of course, and I never thought I'd live through it. It really is wonderful to see how much foundation the kids have in the music line, even those who don't have a real interest in it.

Friday we had exercises with the 12th grade here. It was wonderful to stretch a little again. Of course we were overshadowed by the Israelis, but we enjoyed it anyway. Now I sure feel it, though, maybe in a few days I'll be able to walk enough to try again.

Shabbat afternoon a few of us went to the home of one of our teachers. She is a widow, she lived in America for 3 years and can understand us; she has no children so loves to have company. It did my heart good to visit her, she's such a kind, patient woman; very interesting and I'm glad there is finally someone with whom I can talk to freely. Most people here are a little too busy to bother for more than a few minutes.

I received another folder of Jewish Worlds and comics. Before shul on Friday evening I sat and read – it felt almost like home. Good! By the way, Jerry was wondering if Uncle Lou could bring some medicine for him. His mother will call Uncle Lou. Please tell Uncle Lou not to feel obligated, I can't resist when people tell me!

Shabbat was really busy for me. In the morning I had תורנות washing dishes from breakfast and at night I had washing all the dishes from Shabbat, because the dishes are only rinsed. This is for vacation. I spoke with Rachel, my Madricha today and she will tell me soon about how much I can get off, etc. Then you can relay the message to Lou. By the way, I heard from him today. So the excitement is really building on this side of the ocean.

Today a number of the kids, Jerry included, left for an ulpan in Jerusalem. They were those who were quite lacking in the language and weren't being helped here. Now I'm beginning to worry about my own Hebrew. The longer I'm here the more I realize how deficient I am and the more I feel a lack of progress and the need for more. I guess I'll have to put time in on my own, but our day is so full as it is, it's hard to find the time for extra work. There is so much I want to do and I never have enough time.

The classes, other than Hebrew, are not too bad and I do feel like I'm learning something.

So how's the weather there? Any snow yet? Storm windows up? Here it is not bad. Morning cold, afternoon very hot, night freezing (exaggeration), but it is cold. The change in temperature is huge and many of the kibbutz kids (so I heard in the children's kitchen) are sick from it. No rain yet, however.

Flash, we are now in the clementine, tangerine, etc. stage. Good for a change to have some decent fruit; but still is frustrating when you go to the factory and see the beautiful fruit which is shipped out, but guess that is what I get for living on a farm.³⁸

I hope you are all well, keeping busy and happy, I miss you all,

Love, Ruthie,

P.S. Perhaps Mrs. Goldstein would like to send something for Jerry.

38 Even today it is common that the best agricultural produce is exported. However, the produce sold in Israel is also of high quality.



November 26, 1961

Dear All,

I have finally found a room of peace and quiet where I can concentrate on a letter. Since my last letter a number of neat things have happened.

First and most important, I have been allowed 5 days' vacation for Uncle Lou. Sunday is a fast day, so if we are in Jerusalem I would probably stay that day there. As far as the other 4 days I leave that up to Uncle Lou. Perhaps I could leave here Monday after classes and meet Uncle Lou in Tel Aviv. Then return to work the next morning – leaving the rest of the days for the end. However, if he will arrive late Thursday night perhaps it isn't worthwhile. Well, fix up a schedule and let me know. It's hard for me to believe that in only 2 weeks he'll be here. I really can't wait. I hope Uncle Lou has plans to be here on Kibbutz for a while. It's worth the time. Does he want to get in touch with the relatives? If so I will write to them.

Well, we are now in real winter. Last week we had our first rainy day, but not only that it is cold!! Actually it isn't colder than Minneapolis, however, remember, we have no heating anywhere. I walk around with a jacket the whole day. By the way, in case you haven't noticed, I took 2 left hand black gloves. Perhaps send me the other hand with Uncle Lou. Also, very important, please send a quilt cover – I am using one of my roommates with my 2 blankets and it is much warmer. I also wear flannel pajamas, flannel shirt and tights. In case I didn't ask before, I also need Muc-Lucs or some warm slippers. If not, I can get some here, prefer home ones, however. With the cold weather I have really seen how wonderful indoor heating is – I think about getting undressed or even going to the toilet is horrible, we go as infrequently as possible!

This past week we moved into the new dining room. You can't imagine the excitement – everybody was and is still talking about it. But all the talk is well worth it for the חברים have been eating in the same shack (and I mean it) for twenty years, what's more they waited 3 years for the completion of the building. The change is tremendous. I didn't mind the old place – but it was like a real kibbutz structure. The new place, however, is rather out of place, for it looks more like a

modern, exquisite hotel dining room. I guess it will take time to get used to seeing men in dirty work clothes eating there. Quite comical at first! We Americans decided to fix things, so the first night we all decided to dress right for the place. The girls all put on heels, etc. and the boys wore suits and ties. Perhaps for you this does not seem so strange but let me give you a little background first.

We Americans are constantly listening to cracks about our luxurious, easy life in rich America. Our clothing is different than theirs – so it is bad, etc. Here the girls of course never wear heels, rarely use lipstick – the men of course never own a tie and a suit jacket is only owned by a few for cold weather. Now imagine the scene of 40 such dressed kids bombarding a full dining room of working people. Well it caused quite a stir and we still hear comments about it. Luckily the members took it as a joke, sort of a masquerade stunt, I guess. Anyway it sure was fun! It's funny how strange I felt in lipstick and strange looking it was. I don't even miss it anymore. Almost forgot what it was.

Our lessons are really not so bad. We have: תפילה – there we are learning about the basis for them and analyzing certain ones ורש"י once a week and Parshat Hashavuah, Shmuel Alef, with a wonderful teacher is the one I told you about. Mishnah, we are learning Sanhedrin and it is also wonderful. Once a week we have a class with Rabbi Aberman from Chicago in הלכה – we are all learning to read the Mishnah Brurah and it is interesting and challenging.

I really find quite a lack of time – always need more time to write and read, not to speak of crocheting kippot. I'm using Israeli thread and it takes years to finish. This Shabbat the kids from the Machon were here, at least the Bnei Akiva kids. I didn't have too much to do with them, however.

I guess by the time this letter reaches you it will be almost time for Chanukah. I wanted very much to get something for you all, but I couldn't because we had no opportunity to shop. So please forgive me – you'll have to wait until I get home.

I keep thinking how amazing it is that I'm here. Last Chanukah I had very little idea that I would be on kibbutz this year. Much less even away from home. It's usually during holidays and things like הבדלה when the family was together when I am reminded that I am away and on my own. I'm now going to work – it is for הפש.

Hope to hear from you soon

Love to all, Ruthie

P.S. I want to buy an alto Chalil for 20 some lira – do you think it is worth it. I do! Any objections?



December 2, 1961

Dear All,

I have just had one of the most heartwarming experiences. For at least a week now the air has been buzzing of Chanukah perpetrations for vacation, making menorahs, special programs, etc., but never did I expect such a wonderful ceremony as I witnessed tonight. Immediately after מעריב, the Chanukah candles were lit. After the lighting all the people (and the big synagogue was full – even people outside) sang מען צור – all verses – in the same quiet voice which I noticed and described to you about the first Shabbat. It made me a little homesick and I imagine all of you – with a dwindled family – lighting the two Menorot and no quarrels! I just wish you all could have been here.

For Chanukah we have our own schedule. Tonight we have a party – judging of a Menorah building contest, records.

December 3, 1961

Right in the middle of everything I was called to the party. It was marvelous. We made latkes on 4 small frying pans over small gas flames – a thing called a primus. It was crude but still good. Of course not as good as yours! Even our Madrichim enjoyed themselves thoroughly – we played games like relay races – ducks walks, etc. and our מדריכה who must be in her late 30's at least participated most energetically. We went to sleep quite late and it sure was hard to get up

this morning for work. I guess this whole week, however, will be special. Everywhere things are bubbling – even the radio stations have special Chanukah programs. We just heard on the radio that there is some type of torch ceremony that is carried from city to city.



We also have a special work schedule (תורנית) this week. We work in the morning but we have different classes – things of interest. Today we had three wonderful ones. The same man who teaches us Mishna who I already told you about also writes occasionally for newspapers. He is quite descriptive and has an unusually funny sense of humor. He read us 2 articles of a series that he wrote about the life of a kibbutznik. They were most interesting – one about the troubles he had as מזכיר פנים (like pres.) of putting up a house for new babies and the second a comparison of the senior members and the youth of the kibbutz. The former brings out in an amusing way the problem of trying to get something accomplished when no one can be told to do anything and everyone must agree. The latter brings out the conflicting views of the old timers who jealously watch the youth dancing hard, but in the fields are [less] hardier. I guess this problem is similar around the world. As he said, each group has its own ideas – neither are wrong and each group has or will have the other viewpoint at some time in life.

We also had a lesson in history of the period of Chanukah. Then last we learned lessons from our Madrich. Tonight we are having חנוכה הבית for the new dining room and it really seems to be quite a thing. Tell you about it in my next letter.

This week we have other events in store. Tomorrow we have vacation but I'm staying here to work for vacation with Uncle Lou. Tuesday we are going to נר-גלים a cooperative moshav where we will eat supper with a family and daven in their new synagogue. At night I'm supposed to play for a wedding reception. Wednesday we are going to Chafetz Chaim an Aguda kibbutz. Then, every night there is something special on the משק – one night "Gigi" will be here. So now you see I'm in excitement.

Last week we saw "Giant". It was fabulous. We really are getting our money's worth just seeing the good movies. I am now on the ועד of the הכשרה. I'm not sure exactly what that means, but I guess we are sort of the ruling body of Hoch for a period of time.

Erev Shabbat I had a discussion on pro-con of kibbutz life. It was very interesting and I feel that I really gained something listening to the opinions of the others whose backgrounds are a little different than mine, being brought up with Bnei Akiva.

The problem with Machon was simply that no one is allowed to sleep there but Machonies.

Silverberg Bar Mitzvah, must have been quite interesting, but just remember, we didn't even see turkey or stuffing, or even cranberry sauce, um!

As far as my flute – I don't practice too much on my own, it's hard to find the privacy. I am trying however.

Clemintinos are like tangerines as far as I'm concerned.³⁹ Monday night I am going to a play in Gadara, the day Uncle Lou comes in. All of Hoch is going and the kibbutz is paying for us. If he comes in early I will come to Tel Aviv instead. If I don't hear from you before I will arrange to go to the play and see Uncle Lou Tuesday. I hope that is ok.

Love to all, Ruthie

P.S. Uncle Lou, please hurry! Please send me the time of arrival, remembering time of difference. If you come in late Monday night perhaps you can come here Tuesday and spend the day.

How's Naomi and Larry?⁴⁰



December 10, 1961

Dear All,

It has been quite some time since I wrote, but I'm sure you understand. Right now I am sitting in the Beit Midrash, a room with tables, chairs and many books, Hebrew books of לימודי קודש. So, what am I doing here? Well it is a comparatively quiet place where I like to do homework – so after this letter I will try to do a little studying.

I say try because I am now waiting for a call from Uncle Lou. I haven't stopped thinking about the visit for a minute. It sure is hard to believe that he is really coming. I see now that I really do miss all of you. I ran across the picture I have of the family and I stopped to look at it for a while. I wish very much that you could be here with me.

³⁹ See: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clementine>

⁴⁰ Naomi, Ruth's cousin, is the daughter of Rose and Nate Gottstein and is married to Larry.

But I don't have time to think like that very much. This week was especially wonderful. For Chanukah, as all school kids here, we had vacation. Although we couldn't leave here, we had some very interesting experiences.

The whole week felt really like a holiday. The biggest change (most noticeable) was special food; not really special, but special for the kibbutz. Coffee (otherwise it is only served on Monday and Thursday when the Torah is read), chicken for lunch, rolls for supper (usually have them only once a week), etc. I was in shul every night for *מנהג, מעריב והדלקת נרות* because I got a real thrill participating.

Tuesday we had 2 lessons with Michael our counsellor. First, he recalled some of his experiences as a youth in the Hochshara in Germany (on a farm with a non-Jewish family) and this was real preparation for Aliyah to Israel. Listening to stories like this I feel that I better understand the person. Second, he taught us some fabulous songs. Teach you them when I get back – if I remember.

In the evening we saw our first kibbutz wedding. However, since it wasn't a girl who now lives here it wasn't a real big thing. Nevertheless, it was interesting – really like the pictures, very plain and simple. The actual ceremony was held in the Synagogue because it was raining (otherwise out on the lawn). The groom came in first, accompanied by the singing of the community. They came dressed as any night and this was quite strange. The bride then came in and the ceremony. After the couple went outside, where a group circled around them singing and dancing, till they reached the *עגלה* which was hitched to a trailer, decorated with flowers and under an archway of palm branches a bench. The couple rode to the children's dining room where there was a reception for about 30 close friends. I was honored to play for them – just 2 short numbers with an accordion.

Wednesday we walked 2 hours to the Aguda kibbutz Chafetz Chaim.⁴¹ It was good to finally see for myself a place which I had heard talk about. Perhaps the most important lesson from the trip was the realization of the conflict between Mizrachi and Aguda. It is a nice kibbutz, however, I prefer Yavne, myself.

Thursday we also had 2 lessons (all week we worked half days). One was with one of the *חכמים* of the kibbutz. He talked a little above my head about the Law of Hanukah. It's a little frustrating at times to realize how little I do know, and how much I want to learn – because I wonder if it is even possible.

Friday night I had *תורנית* in the kitchen. It was really fun washing dishes there, even though [it was] work I could feel the Shabbat spirit.

41 Kibbutz Chafetz Chaim was founded in 1944 by the Poali Aguda Yisrael movement and is located near Yavneh. Many of its founders were from Germany.

But of the whole week I enjoyed Shabbat the most. For the afternoon meal I was at the Guttman's. They told me the story of how they hid in a tunnel in the ground for over 20 days during the war. I believe this is the first time I have heard such a story told directly by the person. With the Eichmann case on now, it sure made an impression.

Last night we went to Gadara (near here) and saw a play "The Ketubbah" at the "Tent Theater". What I understood, was very funny.

From your questions about dressing up I realize I haven't explained to you the relationship between the kibbutz members and the Americans. They look upon the Americans as a little weak and spoiled. Really, this is true. We aren't used to such work and we usually make foolish mistakes – we aren't cultured – and we lack knowledge. With such opinions, we have to be careful. I think the best policy is "when in Rome do as the Romans"! They really do appreciate it if we are conservative in dress – not overdressing. It doesn't hurt us, in fact it is good. Still waiting for the call.

Love to all, Ruthie

P.S. It is now 6:30 A.M Tuesday. I still haven't reached Uncle Lou – but I'm sure I will today.



December 12, 1961 8:00 PM here, 1:00 PM Minneapolis

Dear All,

If I am not dreaming now I am now sitting in a luxurious heated room in the Sheraton hotel. This morning at work the מזכיר פנים of the kibbutz brought me a message that Mr. Louis Ziff would be coming in this evening. After work I hurried, got permission, packed, went to classes and at 4:00 began my journey. Never have I been soo excited and therefore the time went soo slowly. At 6:00 I arrived at the airport at Lod – after changing 3 buses. Waiting outside watching the passengers file out slowly, one by one, I wasn't even sure whether or not I had come early enough. As more people came out I felt quite depressed and was beginning to plan my way to Tel-Aviv when suddenly the door opened and that familiar face



Lod Airport - ELAL plane arriving

appeared at the door.

From that moment until now I am completely exhausted with excitement. We arrived at this hotel in a matter of a little time and for me this is quite a change – considering that 4 hours ago I was still in an un-heated shack צריף. Now I can relax and enjoy myself for a few days like a queen. Once we got to the hotel and Uncle Lou began bringing out the things for me I had to sit down and rest. I didn't know what to look at first. All I can say many many thanks. Everything was perfect! The letters I appreciated most of all – you can be sure they will all be read and re-read until the paper is worn and maybe even after. The pictures of the wedding were sure a surprise and I really love them. The pictures of the family certainly help, being away from home. I'm not going to start listing all the things I got, you know – all I can say again is many thanks. I hope it wasn't too much trouble!

Now I have until Monday morning free. For Shabbat we will be in Jerusalem. Then I will take one more day off when Uncle Lou leaves to see him off.

I hope this letter is comprehensible, if not it is only because I'm a little over excited. Will write more later this week.

Love Ruthie.

Dear All [from Lou], I came in at 5:40 PM and it was dark so the thrill of seeing the Homeland was taken away. It was more than made up seeing Ruthie waiting at the bus for me. Neither of us could talk fast enough. We are going out now for dinner in style. The hotel is excellent, toilet paper and all,

Love Lou



December 21, 1961

Dear All,

Please forgive me for not writing, but as you will soon hear from Uncle Lou we were very busy. I won't bother wasting paper telling you he'll explain it all to you, I'm sure, and show you the souvenirs. All I will say is that it was wonderful! You don't know how opportune it came. I really needed to get away from the kibbutz routine. Although it was hard to adjust back it was worth it. It gave me a chance to view life in kibbutz as one way of life of the world and see it in perspective to the rest of Israel.

One comment is interesting. You may be able to imagine the strange sensation I had as I walked into the Sheraton coming from kibbutz. Things like rugs, light over the bed, heating, indoor plumbing, etc., things that I never before thought of, made such an impression on me. Nevertheless I was glad to get back "home" [kibbutz] and see the kids.

Next I want to thank you for EVERYTHING. Everything just hit the spot and we all made use of the things. The pictures are wonderful. I was so pleasantly surprised to see the wedding pictures. I really appreciate it. It was so sweet of you. Uncle Joe – thanks for the "gift" – it was unnecessary really. Mom, you did send a picture of Aunt Lottie. I showed the pictures to Dov and he was very interested. Do you know that he may be in Cleveland for a few months next year?

The round robin letter was also greatly appreciated. It was wonderful to read it and I will go over it many times. Jerry, your letter really was nice. I hope to be able to answer you soon about it.

Thank you especially for the radio, especially since it is my Chanukah present. It is some improvement over the other. Right now, in fact, I am listening to some good classical music.

Before I forget, regards to you from a man who was at our house last year for Israel Bonds. I think his name is Shaar Yishuv Cohen.⁴² I met him at Mrs. Kopstein's

42 Rabbi Shaar Yishuv Cohen later became the Chief Rabbi of Haifa.

in Jerusalem. Sharon is friendly with her granddaughter and I was there with her. Now I have a more serious matter to discuss with you, at least one side. I realize that I must decide early what to do next September as far as college goes. In order to understand how I made a decision I want you to know how I feel and see if I am right. I have become aware of a deep feeling from inside me toward the Jewish way of life, but I cannot continue with it and be satisfied inside without further education. It is vital! So now a big problem is to find this opportunity. At Minnesota I certainly am most limited. Even in N.Y., other than Stern, as far as I know, my chances are limited. I'm not sure exactly what to do or where to turn. Since I will most probably be arriving home quite close to the day school starts and since I will need probably time to adjust anyway, I have come to the conclusion that it would be best for me to stay in Minnesota, at least the first year, and perhaps make arrangements for private instruction. What do you think about this? Maybe you have some other suggestion. Enclosed is the Minnesota form. Please find out when school starts and if I must register in Person.

I am not yet sure of my arrangements through Europe, but we are beginning to plan. By the way, perhaps you may be able to get some advice for us about where to go, where to stay, how to travel, etc. Any little bit of information will be greatly helpful, as we must plan it ourselves.

Now we are preparing for a change in program. In two weeks, the first week of January, we are going to another kibbutz, Sde Eliyahu,⁴³ for a religious seminar, we will have full days of classes and lectures on Bnei Akiva, religious kibbutz and other propaganda. Should prove to be quite interesting! After we will be in Haifa for 2 weeks and then Tel-Aviv.

Tonight I practiced my alto chalil with a girl from the kibbutz. I really enjoy playing. I just hope I have time to practice enough to be satisfied. I got the package of music, etc. Thanks, it is good, but I still didn't get the box of stuff.

I hope I don't sound "gluttony", but there are a few little things Mrs. Kaiser could bring if possible. (1) a little pencil sharpener (be sure it works); (2) if it's not in the box, a shower cap; (3) a few pairs of slacks.

One more request, this I hope you will consider carefully. Talking to the chalil teacher one night I realized that there are a number of kids here who want very

43 Sde Eliyahu is a religious kibbutz founded in 1939 by German olim, named after Rabbi Eiiyahu Gutmacher, one of the first religious Zionists. It is located in Israel's North east Beit Shan Valley, south of the Sea of Gallilee, near two other religious kibbutz: Tirat Tzvi and Ein Hanatziv.

much to learn flute, but it is very hard to buy one. Do you think it would be advisable to give them my old one? I'm sure it would be made good use of.

Well, it's getting late, very late, and I must get up early. Please use discretion on who reads this letter. Thanks

Love, Ruthie

P.S. David Intellegator has returned, I haven't spoken to him yet, however. Write soon.



December 25, 1961⁴⁴

Dear All,

This is probably quite a shock to hear so soon, but there are a number of things I forgot to do in the last letter.

First, I have my schedule for the rest of the year:

(Propaganda seminar (רעיוני) kibbutz Sde Eliyahu January 7-19

Haifa January 19-26

Trip to the Negev January 26-29

Tel Aviv, seminar February 4

Kibbutz Yavne full work days till March 9

Jerusalem seminar March 11 – April 9

Yavne full work days April 8 –

So that's that! As I said, you address letters, if you write, here and they will forward them.

I enclosed, if I don't forget, a list of pictures of the rolls of film I gave Uncle Lou. I'm anxious to know how they came out, so please write as soon as you find out.

Then, bad news. The jeans don't fit! My others are the same size, but they fit – oh, well. The skirt fits, in fact I'm wearing it right now, as well as the slippers. I

44 [according to postmark on envelope, not date on letter) written on stationery of Sheraton Tel Aviv Hotel]

would greatly appreciate it if you could send some bigger ones with the lady. Also deodorant.

Not much is new here. שיעורים are as usual. My Hebrew, I'm afraid is not improving too much, but although I don't feel change Dov in Jerusalem mentioned to me that he noticed improvement. I sure love to hear that!

Right now I am reading an article summarizing the book "Not as a Sheep to Slaughter", which Dov wrote. It is quite interesting about the resistance movement of the Kovno Jews during W.W.II.

Next week-end we have vacation, I wanted to go to [kibbutz] Sa'ad, but I found out there is no room there. So now I am not sure where I am going. I want very much to be at a different kibbutz. Perhaps I will go to כפר סבא, but I'll see what happens until then.

Dad, how was New York? Did you have time to see a play? Uncle Lou said you went to a dinner or something?

It is now orange season in Israel. They really are delicious. They are thick skin, and real big.

נו, אמא, איך את מתקדמת בעברית שלך? כמה שעות יש לך בשבוע. עוד לא שמעתי איך השבוע שלך באוניברסיטה הולך? אם יש לך זמן אולי את מעוניינת לכתוב לי בעברית. אני יודעת שזה דרך הכי טוב ללמד את השפה.

זה כבר מאוחר, ויש לנו מסיבה הערב לכבוד אלה מהמכון שבאו בדרום אפריקה ואוסטרליה ועוזבים את הקבוץ. לפעמים אני מקווה שגם אני יכול לחזור הביתה אולי רק לשבת לבקר לפחות אצלכם. שלום, באהבה וברכה רותי

P.S. I hope you don't find too many mistakes.

PPS – Tasted my first Sabra fruit tonight, not so fabulous.

PPSS – Got your letter today, Sunday.

I received the music, but not the box. If you would like to send something for the Guttman's they would appreciate it. Perhaps a table cloth or something not too expensive, for Hanukah. I gave them a thing of coffee.

I guess Dad really enjoyed himself in N.Y. Now I can really go to the Weitzman Institute!

We even here aren't missing Xmas. We hear carols singing every once and a while here to. Unusual, huh, No decorations, however.



December 31, 1961 (almost January 1, 1962) HAPPY NEW YEAR

Dear All,

No, although I am far from civilization I still haven't forgotten the date. How did you celebrate the New Year? I'm not sure yet what we are doing, but I think we also will be celebrating if we don't fall asleep before.

Today I finally got that long awaited box. Everything was wonderful and I didn't have to pay anything either. I'm already wearing the shoes and slacks. Thanks very much really appreciate it.

Last week Thursday night I played in a small recital for chalil. I really wasn't expecting so much, but it was quite good. Kids from grade 4 until 8th. Also there was a violin player, accordion and even a xylophone. I was expecting a recital like I'm used to, but this was similar but kibbutz style. I was impressed mostly by the informal but appreciative atmosphere. Between each act there was a switch of places, etc. but all in all it was very good. It's amazing what's being done in the line of music here.

Tonight I played with one of the men who also played in the concert. He works, by the way, on the water project near here, and on the side plays the violin. Really, I enjoyed myself so much.

Before I forget I want to talk (or write really) a little about plans for Europe. First I must know when I must be back to register etc. for school. Please find out for it is necessary for us to make reservations immediately. I made reservations (which I can cancel any time) on the Queen Elizabeth which leaves London on August 25. It is cheaper and takes 3 or 4 days. If I change my mind I can make plane reservations at any time. What do you think? Most of the kids are coming back that way, anyway.

Dad, thanks for your letter. It really is nice to hear from you. You really seemed to have quite a time in N.Y. I hope you didn't forget to do a little work. Did Uncle Lou tell you that we tried to see that Mizrachi man, I think his name is Gellman? Well, this is really a short one, but I have a *אסיפה* soon and must be on my way. Hope Joel had a good relaxing vacation.

Love and best to all, Love Ruthie

P.S. getting ready to leave for Sde Eliyahu. This week there is a wedding there.

P.P.S. please send me a signed notarized note granting permission for me to go through Europe.



January 8, 1962

Dear All,

I guess you are now also roughing a little while mother is away (too bad you don't have me for a cook!). I hope you are getting along well.

As for me. I have finally begun to move around a little. Last week we took a hike to a moshav shitufi whose name is Nirgalim. We were given a lecture, more of an informal talk about the principle of moshav and shown around. The moshav shitufi is different from kibbutz in that the family lives together and the women's job is primarily for her own family, no joint *איכל חדר* or laundry. The fields, however, are joint and each family gets money according to size. It was very satisfying to be able to see myself how much more I could understand of principles after seeing a kibbutz – comparing it to the numerous other times I have heard the differences explained.

Also last week there was a wedding of a girl who was on Hoch last year from South Africa and a boy also from South Africa who are going to stay at Yavne. Of course the kibbutz was very happy about this event and made a big party that night for everyone with skits and musical groups.

Now we have finished one part of the year and I sure feel it. I meet this point with mixed feelings. I am very happy to change positions and routine, I can say that I feel I really got something out of the *שיעורים* and also the work. Yet, I still realize that I have a long way to go, and I hope that I will not regret things done this year because of a lack of accomplishment. The more I see, however, the more I realize how wonderful an opportunity this year offers.

Right now I am sitting in a room very similar to my other room at Yavne in kibbutz *שדה אליהו*. We arrived here yesterday morning and now we have to get adjusted to

this place. The first thing we noticed was that this *מחנה נח"ל* (where we are staying. Army camps converted) is almost exactly like Yavne's *מחנה נח"ל*, also where we stay at Yavne. Here it is not as convenient as at Yavne, however. The toilet is not as convenient, looks somewhat like a tin can, only one shower with hot water, which is about 3 blocks from here. But its home. We made our beds and took out some stuff, so despite facilities we felt more at home and comfortable.

Our seminar is headed by Moshe Unna *משה אונא* (a chaver-member of the Knesset!)⁴⁵ and a chaver from Kibbutz Tirat Tzvi. We are hearing quite a bit of “propaganda” mostly on Hapoel Hamizrachi and the “union” of *הקבוץ הדתי*. Our lectures are held in a hall which is very nice and even has a fireside (heater). Our schedule runs like this:

6:00	get up
6:20	Shacharit
7:00	breakfast
8:00	classes
12:00	lunch
12:30-3:00	break
3:00-4:30	classes
4:30-5:00	Minchah and a snack
5:00-7:00	classes
7:00-7:30	Maariv
7:30-8:00	supper
8:00-9:30	classes

So you see we have quite a hard, full day. Monday night is usually a movie so we have free [time].

To add to this we have various visits to the other kibbutzim in the area. Today, despite heavy, constant, miserable, gloomy, wet! Rain we went to Shluchot *שלוחות* which really was beautiful. Now we have regular classes this afternoon. We really feel the rain and its influences – first clothes must be washed but take days to dry, while in summer a few hours is all that's needed. Everything is wet and a lack of sidewalks is felt. Wherever you go you take a pile of *ברץ* mud with you. My shoes will never be the same. I think I am going to buy boots. I can't last much longer. We will be here for two weeks and then go to Haifa.

45 Moshe Unna immigrated to Israel from Germany in 1927. He was a member of the Knesset representing the National Religious Parties from 1948-1969, one of the founders of the Mizrachi and religious kibbutz movement.

The shower cap was not in the package, but I will get one while in Haifa. Did you check about registration yet? It is very important for me to know as soon as possible. As far as the sleeping bag goes, I really only could have used it on our trip, but wasn't necessary. However, for our trip to the Negev we may sleep outside and it will be quite handy. I talked to the man from Bnei Akiva who comes once a week and he is trying (I hope) to get it.

As far as the flute, all is well (הכל בסדר). Glad you could read my Hebrew. Waiting for a reply. It was jeans that didn't fit. I could use both jeans and wool socks but it isn't worth it to send them by mail. I will buy them. I can buy, but until now we had little chance to get to the city.

P.S. Dov may come [on] a "scholarship" for a seminar for youth or social workers or something like that. They house him at someone's house and have tours, etc.



מוצאי שבת פ' בא 13, 1962

Dear Dad and Joel (and Mother, of course, if she's home),

How's life with only two people in the house? I imagine you were waiting to hear about our seminar and my stay here at another location.

Now that I have finally become used to this I can tell you that at first it was horrible. I never thought that I could live this way. The rooms are made as cheaply and as least work as possible. This means wooden floors (still haven't dried from the ערב שבת clean-up job) something similar to cardboard walls and ceiling, an electric (quite modern) bulb hanging from the ceiling – a table, stools – זהו! The toilets are outside, as I think I said before, and far away from our living quarters, 2 stalls no doors - an adventure in itself. The showers – only cold water, which force us to shower a few blocks away at a public shower house (for workers, etc.), but unfortunately has only one hot water spray – and it's quite amusing when 12 girls want to shower during the 1 1/2 hour time limit for hot water.

One more note, don't worry about me or feel sorry for me. When you see that I can make a joke about it you see that it really isn't so bad. One forgets even about the hardships that exist. Perhaps it's only because we know that next week we are leaving.



Living quarters on Kibbutz Yavneh



Ruth washing clothes outside her Kibbutz Yavneh living quarters



Ruth at outside kibbutz shower and toilet room

Anyway we now see how well off we are at Yavne and know why Yavne is the best off kibbutz of the קיבוץ הדתי.

As far as the seminar goes – it is not so bad. Of course my lack of Hebrew prevents me from accomplishing as much as I would like and much of the information never gets into my head. Dad, I think of you a lot during the speakers, because much of the information is about Hapoel Hamizrachi, etc. – you would be surprised how important your job is. We belong to quite an important תנועה. I want you to know. The speakers are all from kibbutzim. The real trouble is that we are being presented a very one sided picture and one feels very “propagandized” during the course of the day.

I wrote Atlanta about the subjects we are taught so I imagine you will hear about it. Shabbat here was the first real chance we had to become acquainted with the Chaverim [members] here. Shabbat evening the מרכז משק (= Administrator-Manager) spoke to us about the kibbutz. Today I had תורנות in the kitchen so I met some of the people and saw a little of the work. (By the way there is quite a noticeable lack of Yekki order here). In the afternoon בני משק gave us a tour of the kibbutz. After Minchah (4:45) I went to the home of the מרכז משק. You see I work with his sister-in-law at Yavne and she sent a cake for them with me, so they invited me. We had quite an interesting discussion and something is very interesting. Here the children sleep with the parents until the age of about 14. The houses have 1 room for parents, 1 for kids and a living room. Apparently there is a feeling of other kibbutznikim that this is anti-kibbutz. Here they resent that attitude. Also here they have a small store instead of each member receiving so much soap and so much toothpaste, he is given so much money to spend in whatever way he wishes. In response to criticism of these two things they are out to prove they are right.

After the discussion I have heard I am amazed that there is any unity among the religious Jews in Israel.

Tonight we were given a tour and explanation of the community school situated here. This is the same school for four kibbutzim in this area. They have new beautiful, modern buildings – with amazing chemistry, physics and biology labs and even a cooking room.

These kibbutznikim are not letting anyone [get] ahead of them if they can help it. Oh, forgot to mention another difference. At Yavne [on Shabbat] we eat breakfast after davening (10:00), then at 12:30 have lunch. The first is coffee and cake and the second is cold chicken, cholent, kugel and fruit. Friday night is some soup, chicken, rice, and fruit. Here lunch is served about an hour after davening, then

families have ארוחת ארבע at home and then supper after Havdalah.

So each kibbutz has worked out its own little system and customs, peculiar to its tradition.

I hope you all are well and enjoying the snow I miss sooooo much. Joel, make a snowman for me!

Love to all, Ruthie

P.S. Next letter from beautiful Haifa!

P.P.S. you'll never believe it but I got to shul before they started this morning!



ב"ה 1962, January 21

Dear All,

You can all sigh a sigh of relief – I made it through the two weeks at Sde Eliyahu. It wasn't too bad and I guess I did learn something. Among other lectures בנימין שחור a Mizrahi member of the Knesset, very boring I must confess! These guys are terrific filibusters!

The last days there we had טיולים. We walked the half hour to Tirat Tzvi and from there half hour to the Jordan river. How disappointed I was to see that narrow muddy creek – similar to the one by our house.

The morning we climbed aboard our truck and rode to Haifa. We toured the Dagon grain elevator on the port – walked up the 8 or so long stories to see the beautiful view. The walk was so tiring – I could hardly pick up my legs.

Then we came to our new home for a week. And what a home – especially in comparison to our last one. We live on top of the Carmel in a sort of youth hostel – I heard it was once a hospital. Clean and modern, surrounded by beautiful shrubbery. You can't imagine how wonderful it is. Almost as good as the Sheraton. We even have a sink and shower in our room.

For Shabbat we went to families from Bnei Akiva. Most of us were quite afraid to go as it is still rather hard to associate so much with Israelis, but it was arranged and

we had to go. I stayed with a family with 2 daughters and very nice people. Friday night we went to daven at that Bnei Akiva building and after supper again went to a מסיבה there. It was quite something to see so many religious kids with so much רוח שבת. We slept until 10:30 and after a light milk meal we climbed the Carmel and visited with a family who just came here from New York to live. At 3:00 we returned home and had (I guess it was) lunch. Then we again went to the Snif [branch] for the regular Shabbat day. Again never have seen so many lively kids. At night we had another מסיבה with Bnei Akiva and when we returned home ready to sleep in our own beds.

We eat here at Beit Rotenberg, the house of a wealthy man who started electricity in Haifa and gave the house to Israeli youth. It is used for a seminar and is beautiful. The food is delicious – real meat and today for kicks I asked for ketchup – and got it!! Now I'm in my glory.

Today we went to the beautiful Bahai Gardens, the cave of אליהו and the Technion. This afternoon we have vacation and besides shopping I want to try to visit some addresses I have gotten.

Friday we have vacation until Shabbat and I have written to the Fixlers⁴⁶ to see if I can go there. After this we have a tiyul to the Negev for four days and then are in Tel-Aviv for about 2 weeks.

It is most shocking when I realize again that I have come back to the city – at long last. We are free to go out to anything we can find. We have programs planned for us every day, tours, etc. and at night we are free. Tomorrow night we are going to see “The Emperor’s New Clothes”, a play in Hebrew. (Tickets paid by Hachshara!). Tonight we are visiting at the home of the Chief Rabbi of Haifa. What a life!

Has Daniel come home yet? Please tell him I'm waiting for a long letter and to describe what music he is interested in, choir, instrumental, etc.

When is the sweetheart dance, Joel? How was it? Where did you go after? Maybe you could send me the picture?

I didn't realize that I hadn't written you about my roommates. One girl is from New York – Brooklyn. She finished one year at Brooklyn College. She didn't come with us – she is at [kibbutz] Sa'ad working. She is a little unhappy with the group and wanted to get away. Her name is J.R. Perhaps you remember – she slept under me on the boat and her father was with her.

46 Family friends, young Israeli couple, who had been in Minneapolis for medical reasons and then returned to Israel.

The other girl, Suzie Bertman, is from Los Angeles. Her father is the Hebrew teacher. She also finished high school and we seem to be very compatible.

Regards to all, Love and kisses, Ruthie

When is Mom coming home?



February 6, 1962

Dear all “Ruthless” Ziffs,

Greetings once again from ‘home’ again. Despite everything it was (and is) nice to be back again to headquarters and be more or less permanent. Much to my disappointment our program was changed and we are not staying in Tel-Aviv, rather we are traveling to and around Tel-Aviv each day and at night return to Yavne.

Before I tell you about this let me go back and fill in a few things I left out. שבת after Haifa we had חופש so I went to Miron. The Fixlers were wonderful to me and I enjoyed myself so much. She has a new baby who had diphtheria (some people seem to have all the צרות) and is recovering now. Despite this they were most hospitable. She has parents, brothers and sisters (younger) on the moshav. Two brothers, 17 & 20 took me around it.

As far as Mrs. Rosin is concerned Jerry and I plan to go there Wednesday afternoon (to the Sheraton). Once again I will try to send film with her. I might as well tell you now that 2 rolls of film I just noticed were black and white. Since the A.S.A. was all for color etc., I doubt that they will come out. I am most disappointed because they were taken in Haifa, etc. and should have been quite interesting. Perhaps you could try to develop them anyway.

Back to our journey through the Land. The rest of the Tiyul was wonderful. The last night we stayed near ים המלח at the foot of Mount Masada at a most interesting youth hostel. First level people pitch tents; second level (where we stayed) walls and roof and cement floor, supplied mattresses and we used sleeping bags. Next level (Machon stayed) rooms with beds. The climb was really very hard – I thought



Touring Israel

I wouldn't make it but slowly (not surely) I succeeded the 2 hour climb. At the top is the most fascinating ruin of the battle between Jews and Romans.

After a long awaited brunch (climbed from 4:00 AM until about 10:00) we rode to Kibbutz Ein Gedi and there after days of seeing mile after mile (km after km) of brown, dry, desolate desert we climbed to the most amazing beautiful waterfall surrounded by beautiful (and most unbelievable) greenery.

Got back there late Thursday night and spent a most needed restful Shabbat here. Sunday morning we set out again for Tel-Aviv. We started out at the beautiful היכל התרבות (Mann auditorium and Habima). Then we walked to the Bnei Akiva office (hard to believe that Bnei Akiva has a whole building with many offices and meetings rooms) where a Chaver from [kibbutz] Sa'ad who works in the Movement talked to us.

We had a wonderful lunch at בית מזרחי (we also were at the Z.O.A. house and I noticed that our name is marked in a Minneapolis telephone book they have in their library). The afternoon was spent touring the old Arab city of Jaffa.

Today we started off at the beautiful Histadrut building. From there we went to the Haaretz Museum – most interesting display of development of glass products and art exhibits of remnants of a Chinese Jewish community.

In Petach-Tikvah we saw a museum in name of young soldiers who died fighting



The Hock group at a border while on a tour

for Israel. We had lunch at a Youth Aliyah מוסד which is located on the site of the former home of the first members of Yavne, then called קבוצת רודנס.⁴⁷ In the afternoon we toured Bar Ilan University, but since it is vacation time it seemed quite dead.

Being there made me realize how much I must admit I do miss going to school. I even find little time to read and write. I am slowly realizing how one must decide which extra activities to take on in free time – but still must learn to do it successfully.

Tomorrow we have 2 lessons here and at night we are going to see the play כנרת כנרת. ... From Wed afternoon we have vacation until 6:30 Sunday morning when we begin (I hate to think about it) working. Oh well, must do things one doesn't like too, I guess. At least I have the seminar in Jerusalem to think about.

Finally received Dan's letter and it was most happily shocked to hear from him. I guess me (or you Dan) seem to be settling down a little already. Mazel tov to you and Ellie. Can't believe you, my little brother!

About school – please find out if I must register in person. Perhaps under the

47 Mosad Aliyah in Petach Tikvah, founded by the German Zionist pioneers who later founded Kibbutz Yavne. See glossary.

circumstances you could do it for me or I can do it by mail. Mazel tov to Ricky and the Weisman's. I'm already beginning to feel like an old maid with all these wedding.

You really have been wonderful about Europe and I will certainly write Uncle Joe as soon as we make definite plans. I'm not certain yet who I'm travelling with. Much depends on where we go and when. I most certainly am going to Geneva and will write Debra soon.

Glad Zadie enjoyed my letter and happy to hear you notice improvement because I don't feel it so much.

Decided (temporarily) on water trip to U.S. because it is cheaper and therefore most kids are going that way and I want to be with them. This is still subject to change.

Wrote a letter to Rela – and of course Aunt Sylvia and Uncle Joel.⁴⁸ I will try to write again soon.

Also heard from Uncle Lou today. What's this about Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate coming? When? Again am running out of space

באהבה רות

p.s. finished crocheting covers for my חליל and alto and soprano חלילים

48 Rabbi Joel Geffen was Ruth's mother's brother, married to Sylvia.



February 12, 1962⁴⁹

Dear All,

Since I had no more air letters and am unable to get more until tomorrow and since I want to write home tonight [on toilet paper] I have decided to give you a taste of Israeli style toilet paper – גיר טוילט. So I hope you appreciate this kind gesture and I hope you can read this!

First and foremost – please see that you get the form parents' permission for Europe. If you haven't gotten it yet please write to the Bnei Akiva of North American, 80 5th Ave, N.Y.

Mazel Tov, I finally heard from Dan. His letter was most interesting, given he is really planning seriously to settle down. Can't believe that such a thing is already happening to my little big brother.

Since my last letter quite a lot has happened. I think I forgot to mention that I spent a Shabbat vacation in Miron with the Fixler's. It was quite interesting. She now has a 4 month old baby boy, but he was quite sick in the hospital and even had an operation already when I was there he was suffering after effects of a diphtheria shot. Yet they were very nice. Yafa has two brothers, 17 and 20 who came over to entertain me. Shabbat afternoon we went for a walk to the grave of Shimon Bar Yochai, which is right above them.

Last week we were in Tel-Aviv. Sunday and Monday we saw Hechal Hatarbut the concert hall, the Mizrahi office building, the Bnei Akiva branch, the Z.O.A. building, the Histadrut and Old Jaffa City. A most interesting museum, Haaretz, which had two displays, one of Chinese Jewry, and one of the development of glass products. Was most fascinating. Then we went in Petach Tikvah to a museum Yad Lebanim, in memory of the boys who fell in the War of Independence. It was here that we saw the original statue of דפנה from the "Exodus". We had lunch at a Youth Aliyah institution which is situated at the place where the original old timers were who are now at Yavne. At the end we visited Bar Ilan. It was vacation time so we missed something. I hope to get back.

49 [written on a long piece of toilet paper]



Train ride

Tuesday we had 2 classes here and at night we went to see a play, *כנרת כנרת* about the founding of kibbutz Daganian. Wednesday we had vacation so I went to the Sheraton and tried to see Mrs. Rozen. I feel so terrible that I didn't see her, but I couldn't just pick up and leave like this. I left some film for her to take home, I hope you get it alright. Thursday morning a few of us went to Beersheba to see a real Thursday שוק and it was so worthwhile. We saw the Arabs bargaining, buying and selling, just like in olden days. So hard to believe that something like this still exists today. Then we had a little camel ride – a little scary but was an unforgettable experience. There also we walked around the streets and saw the other שוק which also was something to see. Here, not as the Arab market, which had only camels, sheep, etc., this market had everything. We saw a number of women with nose rings selling eggs, etc. Then to again see the truth in the idea that Israel is a land of contrasts, we went to the new Hamashbir department store. In the afternoon I went to Tel-Aviv to visit Reva Guttman. At night we went to Sonia's, and I picked up the robe. Thanks, but I was surprised to see it. But it will keep me warm on these cold nights.



Laundry room at Kibbutz Yavneh

FLASH!! After cashing 2 traveler's checks I found the great announcement we now get 3 lira for every one American dollar.

This Shabbat Reva came here, she was sick and in the hospital, so for her vacation she will be here.

I had my first work with the children as my toranut Shabbat and really enjoyed it. Today was like the first day of school for us. After all our wanderings we are now back to a full day work. I am working Sunday and Friday full-day in the children's kitchen and the rest of the time 1/2 day in the children's kitchen and 1/2 day ironing in the warehouse. The day went quite fast, at least today, and after 2:30 we are completely free to do whatever we want! What a wonderful feeling, for the first time in my life.

I must close now, for I want to visit with Reva. Please give my love to everyone. The enclosed button is from my jacket and would like a few more as they are falling off.

Love and kisses Ruthie

P.S. I still am considering seriously flying home from Europe. Perhaps hitching up with the Machon.



February 18, 1962 ב"ה

Dear All,

I have before me 4 letters of yours, plus one [stolen-time]. I hit the jack-pot last week. 2 letters were delivered after being sent to Haifa too late. So if I didn't answer some of your questions or comments you'll understand why.

Dad, thanks loads for your letter. It's always good to hear from you. You all must be very happy to have Mom home again, especially after Dan's visit. Thanks for sending out the forms – now all I have to do is plan my trip and enjoy myself. It is so difficult to plan – who to go with, not to have too many in a group, where to go, how to go. We really have to begin thinking seriously about it. We have 4 girls who want to go, but after realizing that it is essential to have boys along also and not wanting 8 kids together – it is very hard to decide. I still am uncertain about coming home – how, I mean, I think that regardless of what the others do, I want to fly back. I'm quite certain that plane is not much more expensive than the boat, however, baggage may be expensive to ship. Is it all right with you? I won't have the patience to sit for 4 days on a ship – no matter how luxurious. As far as going with the מכון. I will not be able to know until April. One need not make plane reservations in advance so it is no problem.

The weather here has been quite nice. The sun shines almost every day, though at night it is cold. (The robe comes in handy). שבת it rained all day and was cold – makes a day most miserable. Yet, I miss the snow. George Jarvis sent me a plastic bag full of snow, I'm saving it.

Before I forget, I am most anxious to see the pictures myself. Do you think it possible to make pictures from the slides and either send them to me or have Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate bring them? I'm sure that the relatives and kids here will want copies of some anyway.

I wrote to Mrs. Jacobs⁵⁰ about my musical activities. They are still continuing, though it has died down a little. I try to get to it as often as possible, but there is no place where I can practice in private and I dislike to bother my roommate and neighbors with the noise.

⁵⁰ Ruth's flute teacher in Minneapolis.

Mother – congratulations on your Hebrew letter. It was brought to me at work and when everyone saw that my mother could write Hebrew they got so excited. I was so proud of you! Since you asked me a few things I noticed where

ללכת ולא ללחת -- טיול ולא תיול

Again, I'm very sorry that it took so much time for me to write. But I really didn't have a chance.

About Europe – most of the kids are going by boat. Perhaps a few will go with me on the plane. Nevertheless, I want to go by plane. Besides that I gain extra time for Europe.

I don't even want to think of what would have been without the sleeping bag. Don't worry about the shoes. My saddle shoes were perfect. I also wear them for work. I haven't found a real need for boots, if I do I will get.

I will try to have people on pictures. Am happy to hear they are coming out. As a critic of photography, Joel, how do you like them? Be honest!

Wonderful if Yankee⁵¹ could come. And now I want to thank Aunt Rose for the valentine (I received yours and hers the same day) and had forgotten all about the holiday. But most of all I am already excited about their trip. I will try to arrange vacation for myself. Please make hotel reservations as soon as possible – because they are very crowded at this time!! I would like to know their arrangements when they have it, so I can know when to get off.

I can smell the T.T. [Talmud Torah] Purim sale and wish I could taste it, too! Purim here should be quite spectacular, we will be able to see it both at Yavne and Jerusalem.

I have now worked in the פֶּעֶטוֹךְ with the kids for a few hours 5 times a day. Again I do clean up, bed making and dishwashing. I feel like a real cleaning lady

Love to all, Ruthie

Why don't you write the whole address in Hebrew?

I sure would like to hear from Joel

51 Dr. Jacob Wilensky, Ruth's cousin from New Orleans, who was spending a year in Israel after high school.



Thursday March 11, 1962

Dear All,

Surprised to get this extra letter? Well, after your last exciting letter I decided to write again because I have a lot to tell and ask you.

First and foremost – I can't resist your invitation for things. I guess I'm just weak along that line. So again here are some things I can use – none are urgent so send whatever is possible. Here goes! Blue moshava sweatshirt, tennis shoes (2 pairs, one for roommate 7 1/2 B, tell me price and she will pay me; for me 7M, white canvas preferably for both of us). Deodorant (roll on); gum (a lot, please); face soap; demi-stare pens; #12 crochet needle and average size knitting needles (everyone here has been doing a lot of handy work – even me). Also a girdle (not panty) – size you'll have to judge – the one I have from Naomi is "The Shape – Sandale" by Tru-Balance. I could also use a big (size 40 or so) crew neck sweater (you could perhaps get it from Uncle Cy); roll up sleeve sport blouse (not white, drip dry perhaps, [out] blouses – size 14 or so). Thinking of Europe I was wondering about luggage. All I have is my big case and that will be too hard to carry around just for 2 weeks. Could you perhaps send me stuff on a boat in an adequate size suitcase? Or should I buy one here?

I will probably be in Jerusalem when they (the Sprungs) come. I will stay at the San Ramo Hotel there. Don't get excited, it is not the Sheraton and from what I hear is far from it, at least it has hot water! Where are they staying? Wish them נסיעה טובה for me and I hope to hear from them soon.

By the way – the other day one of the girls got a cake sent air mail from N.Y. and it got here בסדר – so, if possible, I would not mind experimenting a little home-baking or even T.T. Purim food.

Heard about the Purim banquet, but it is on Saturday night and we will be in Jerusalem and it is too hard to get out. Would have been nice, however.

Glad Peter liked the card. It's really the least I can do for my cousins.

Excited about the Joshua's trips. I will write Michael a letter soon with suggestions – but Jerry being a boy can probably give better ones.

So Dan won't be at camp this summer? Wow, what a sacrifice! Also, what kind of job is he looking for? Also, - what type of music does he want? I can get it when



Ruth on left side, Purim at the Kibbutz. photo thanks to Atar Moreshet Kvutzat Yavneh

I am in Jerusalem. We had a שיחה with 2 of the organizers and it seems that we have quite a full day of לימודי קודש and חוגים at night. What's more, not much חופש. I hope to have enough time to shop and I plan, hope, to send out much of the stuff I do get.

I found out that Reva Gutman is anxious to get the old clothes left that I have at the end of the year for the immigration camps. Good place, huh!

Now, I have saved the biggest bomb for the end. I hope you won't laugh or think me a little out of my mind (Uncle Lou suggested it once when he was here and the more I think of it I am in favor of it).

First, I want to tell you that we are having quite a problem arranging our trip to Europe. There are 6 girls and 1 boy in the group and I want to go with a small group (2 boys – 2 girls). Without boys it is impossible to go. Of this group I'm not sure that there are any available boys even. This leaves us in quite a fix. So --- (Now sit down). Perhaps you (Mom and Dad) could take a little vacation – like as long as possible, in Israel, and then in August go with me through Europe. Please give it SERIOUS thought and don't say "no". It's not too late to decide. Well?

I think that's enough for one letter.

Love to all, hope to hear from you soon, Ruthie (your daughter and sister)

P.S. Sometime I could use nick knacks to give relatives and little dime store games, etc., for little kids I meet and relatives. Okay-okay לילה טוב

P.S. (on back of letter) If possible, slip in timetables for Reva Gutman, thanks



March 17, 1962

Dear All,

Please understand that it is now very hard to write. We have been in Jerusalem now since Thursday and I feel like a little girl with a new toy. I have no patience just to sit and I want to go, see and feel!

We are located in a hotel one block from the center of town. There are 50 some Bnei Akiva kids here from South America, Holland, Norway, and Sweden (from 2 Machon groups, one that came August and one that just came).

Here's our schedule: 6:00 get up; 6:30 7:30 שחרית; breakfast; 8:00-1:00 5 classes (with breaks), lunch; 3:15 2 -7:15 3:45 מנחה longer classes; supper, 8:30 ערבית; פעולה. Now Friday we learn half day, have prayer and supper here then we are free. Next week they hope to assign us to private homes for Shabbat evening. On Shabbat we went to Hechal Shlomo (the tourists that came in were absolutely sickening!) and after had a meeting with Rabbi Etamar, the aide to the Chief Rabbi, nice, eh!

In the afternoon we have free time (after lunch) until 3:15 (I went to Sharon Shulman). Motzei Shabbat we are free and I went to Dov's. In the afternoon we had פרשת השבוע, מנחה, שלוש סעודות, מעריב והבדלה.

This week we are off for Purim as I told you. Next week and the following week we have Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday night free. I hope I have time to do all the visiting, sightseeing and SHOPPING I want to. They want us to study as much as possible, not to run around too much.

So far the classes have been wonderful. The teachers are all younger men and very patient and willing and able to explain as much as necessary. So far the subjects are ירמיהו, ויקרא:קדושים (מקראות גדולות), תפילות (מדוע ומה), משנה-פסחים at last!

I could go on for days with my excitement but I'll save it for 4 months and you won't have to remind me!

First on my list of announcements. Dov is coming to Chicago for 4 months. He leaves here during Chul Hamoad Pesach. He wants very much to see you, but it

is hard for him to get away. If Zadie does come to Minneapolis, he perhaps could meet Dov when he stops in Chicago. He perhaps would even go to Atlanta at the end of this stay. He leaves at the beginning of September, so at least I will be free both ways. In Chicago he will be connected with the Univ. of Chicago and is very anxious to see the Pekarskys. They were so sweet and hospitable to me, really make me feel at home.

Secondly, very important that I get advice what to do about money. I have about 10 lira (\$30), no traveler's checks and some American money left. Now I should have saved the travelers checks for Europe and cashed the bond at the beginning (advice for Mike)⁵² but now I don't know if I need so much money. Can I cash the bond anyway and spend the money, should I change my American money and wait for a check from you from Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate and then what do I do about Europe?

Next, Europe, I have very tentatively considered going through Europe just with one other girl. We would go only to cities where we could have connections, etc. (she also has some names). What do you think? We would fly home about Sept. or so.

Last, for a while. For who am I חייב to get gifts, any suggestions for Zadie? I will see about a suitcase while I'm here, if possible.

Love to all, especially Mom on her birthday

[Sent with a birthday card that reads as follows:

איחולים לבביים ביום הולדתך לאמי היקרה, ליום חגך ברכות ואיחולים לשנים הבאות ולאוורך ימים,
בברכה ובאהבה, בתך היקרה, רות]

Sent from the San Ramo Hotel, 8 Strauss Street, Jerusalem

52 Ruth's neighbor Michael Joshua, who was about to spend a year in Israel after high school.



March 26, 1962 Monday

Dear All,

I have finally been able to tie myself down to write home. It really is especially hard here since we have such a full schedule and so much to do. So please forgive me and understand!

First to answer your letter, which I got yesterday. I will leave such things for Mike [Joshua], OK? And will give whatever possible to Reva. As for the flute, I meant the old one. So see what you can do.

Luckily the day I received your letter I cashed the bond. Now, my only problem is with money I have left over. I can't, as far as I understand, change this money into dollars before I leave. So I do need, at least, some traveler's checks to use in Europe. I doubt I can get dollar checks, so if you could get me some aunt Rose could bring them.

I wrote, I think, all about Dov's trip. I was there a week ago Motzie Shabbat. They were so nice to me and made me feel so at home. In fact I was so involved that I forgot to watch the time and missed the last bus back, so I slept there and came back the next morning just in time for classes. It was also an experience to see how a typical Israeli family lives through a typical week day. Any way he is coming (Dov) this April for 4 months. He will be in Chicago for four months under a scholarship program which he can fill you in on the detail. He will have, in seems, few free times to visit, but perhaps will come in during the times Zadi will be there. Also he leaves from N.Y. the beginning of September so perhaps at least we could meet in N.Y. He will probably get in touch with you later.

Glad to hear Aunt Rose heard and can make arrangements. I sure am waiting for their arrival. I'm not sure what is doing at Yavne. I guess they have supper outside and then a program.

Heard from Ester Sprung yesterday. They are in Tel Aviv now and I guess will be coming to Jerusalem soon. It sure is strange seeing Minneapolis people here in Israel.

I see that my little brother is really growing up. I guess you're keeping yourself quite busy with school, S.Y.O., and club activities but I would love to hear from you personally. Say, how's my clock radio. I sure do miss it. Take good care of it for me.

Now of my activities. We have classes from 8:00-1:00 with breaks and then from 3:45-7:00 with one break. Subjects are מחשבת ישראל, משנה-פסחים, תפילה-שחרית, ויקרא-קדושים, ירמיהו מצוות ישוב בארץ, תולדות ישראל etc. At nights we have had slides of the Old City (wow!), and tonight a talk on problems of absorption of immigrants to city life in Israel. They really are preparing us for עליה. We also had one class by an archaeologist on the connection between archaeology and the Bible.

All I want to tell you now is that it sure feels good to be learning again; but mostly that all teachers are religious, and relatively young, from Yeshiva Mercas Harav,⁵³ where Mike Joshua will be going. I sure have missed something like this until now and am happy that I finally can at least get a taste of it.



Ruth in Purim costume

53 Yeshiva Mercas Harav, founded in 1924 by the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael Rabbi Abraham Yitzchak Hacohen Kook, is generally considered the main Zionist yeshiva in Israel.



Purim at the Kibbutz

We have time off on Motzei Shabbat, Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday night. Last week we had time off for Purim. Already Sunday we saw kids dressed up for the holiday. Monday afternoon we tramped (hitchhiked) back to Yavne. That night after the Megillah and supper the older classes (and us) had parties. We walked around before ours began and saw how they all had costumes and decorated their party-rooms.

The next morning after שחרית we had a good breakfast, even אוני-המן. Back in the room we found 2 little bags of שלח מנות. Each family on kibbutz contributes something to the “pot”, everything is divided into bags and on Purim each family is given a bag. I also gave to the Guttman’s and Beit Arye (Intellagator).

That morning the little kids had a little parade in their costumes and then had a שוק which is similar to a miniature “Funntennial” (Minneapolis Hadassah Purim Carnival). Really darling with games relative to kibbutz theme like a green garden where they have to determine different vegetables and fruit blindfolded, etc.

Then we had a festive holiday meal together in the dining room. In the afternoon they had a soccer game between the teachers and the students; an annual event.

At night came the climax. The old dining room was decorated with dolls, stars, toys and even “potties” hanging from the walls. The topic for this year’s program

was "ארץ הפלאות" (fairyland). On one side was a father putting his young child to sleep in a crib, but he must tell her stories. Groups from the kibbutz gave skits on fairy tales. They did "המחלל מהמלין" which was really cute, if I say so myself.

Wednesday we came to Jerusalem for Shushan Purim, Only saw mobs of families with little kids dressed walking around the streets. Finally got the check to Diskin (Orphan Home), so wrote Zadie and told him.

Also happened to be at an Israeli blouse place [store] and asked if she knows Nell and she got all excited. She know them well, her name is Esther Zeitz. Small world!

Tomorrow night we have a chance to sit in on a session of the Knesset. Should be interesting.

Love to all, Hope all is well, Ruthie

(Hotel San Remo in Jerusalem until April 8)



April 1, 1962 "Happy April Fool's Day"

Dear All,

I got your letter addressed to here and it sure was good to hear because we haven't gotten mail from Yavne. Thanks.

Mom, I'm very happy that you liked it – I was most anxious to hear from you. I just didn't know for sure. Well. Wear it in the best of health.

Thanks for sending out the box. I heard from the Sprungs, they are in Hertzlia – but it is very difficult for me to get to them. I hope that perhaps they could visit with me at Yavne.

Please ask Rela about leaving the sleeping bag and let me know.⁵⁴

I hope to be going to Dov's this Wednesday afternoon to say farewell – so I will

⁵⁴ What to do with the sleeping bag which her first cousin Rela Geffen left with her after spending a year in Israel.

give him your messages. It really is something he is coming. They have been nice to me while [I am] here.

Since your letter I have been buying stuff like crazy! I hope you won't regret saying that. Please see what can be done about travelers cheques for me, I think I have to sign them. You don't realize how expensive things here are. The megillot are at least 100 lira (now some 30 dollars). But I'll see what to do.

Now about Europe. I want to tell you first (being honest) that perhaps you don't understand what traveling in Europe is like. I heard again from Debora Miller.⁵⁵ She is such a doll – she gave me 3 pages of real terrific advice. Anyway, she said that 2 girls could go together, but that many times we should have to take a cab, instead of walking, since we have no boys. Also she said that in Naples – under no circumstances are we to go out at night. I'm not trying to scare you, but just so you understand. By the way, we stopped in Athens on the way here and since there is already too much to see we probably aren't going there. Thanks anyway. There is some good news. We may have a charter plane from Israel to Naples and from Paris to N.Y. We are in the midst of making the arrangements now and I sure hope it works out. It would give us almost one month in Europe. I got the book from the Pekarskys and it is fabulous! It really will be a big help for all of us.

Did you ever find the book of kosher restaurants around the world? Also could you write the A.A.A. for stuff?

This past week was a whopper! I finally went to [the store] Klein's and picked out my suit. It is a royal blue skirt, sweater and jacket. Really lovely. I will wear it for Pesach and then probably put it away. While there I asked about your outfit and surprisingly they were most considerate. If you give Aunt Rose your measurements, including specific length, they will even fix up your outfit (I mean that you can exchange the one I picked out and if necessary fix the new one) and send it back. So, either send it or have Aunt Rose bring it.

Now, I have a few requests for a change. I would like a small roll of 3 ply white yarn (for a kippah) since here it is very expensive. Perhaps Aunt Rose could squeeze it in. Please don't forget American gum!

Enclosed is the list of pictures for roll #6 which I hope to give to Dov to bring back. How are the pictures coming out? What's my percentage?

Well, we have already reached our last week in Jerusalem. For me somehow I look with great sadness to leaving the city. Somehow kibbutz has little attraction for me. Perhaps it is because I'm a spoiled American city child who likes to wander in

55 Debora Miller is a Ziff family friend working for the Joint in Geneva.

the busy streets among the crowds or if not, stay in my room by myself. Perhaps I like the easy life of eating and sleeping and doing a little studying so as not to make my day a complete waste, and the hard work – dull as that of the kibbutz, is too hard. I'm not sure what it is but I do know that I regret going back to Yavne.

Well I guess I got off to a little side street there. Please forgive me. But it's hard when one has to get such things off one's chest and certainly Madrichim with Bnei Akiva who have the great ideals of the Tnua [Movement] flowing from their fingertips are not ones to discuss such things with.

Now that I have said this – please – I thought of tearing this up but I guess you my dear parents, have a right to know how I feel – so please don't publicize this letter. It's not important for anyone to know and perhaps even I won't realize how I really feel too, [when] I look back on the days when ...

One more thing, we are given 12 lira to spend on books from a list (לימודי קודש) with a real discount. With Aunt Rose I will send the list and perhaps from it (minus what I choose) you may see something you would want for the house, okay?

The books as well as some of these gifts I hope to send home soon. Well, I hope all is well. Say, how is Talmud Torah Joel? You, by now, are beginning that annual Pesach schlepping? When does Dan get home? I wrote both to him and to Zadie in Hebrew. Does Dan get home? When is Zadie coming?

Love to everyone, Ruthie.

P.S. This past week we went to the Eichmann trial ... and then that night we went to a movie on the story of Eichmann. I don't think I'll ever be the same.

Please tell Aunt Rose that one boy from Chicago Hoch asked me if his mother could send American money to her to bring to him. I hope it won't be too much bother.

Uncle Lou, I can't thank you enough!



April 8, 1962 Sunday

Dear All,

Well, the worst is over! I made it through the first full day of work back at Yavne – and it really wasn't so bad at all!

Looking back on the seminar all I can say now is that it was wonderful, but definitely too short! I guess that is a good sign.

Debby Kotatch, the girl whose mother you mentioned that Mrs. Manasewitz knows, is a very charming and sweet girl. She is a real leader here – you can sure see that she comes from a good family.

Our plans for Europe have just shattered. The girl I was to go with, Saralee Dolgin, from Los Angeles (her father graduated the Chicago Yeshiva) can't go with just 2 kids – she needs at least 4. Perhaps we can get another boy. Anyway, thanks to Debra for her fabulous letters and the Pekarskys for the marvelous book we have sort of looked into prices – going by coach train we figure transportation should be close to \$100. The kids here have to watch their budgets so we probably won't go to Copenhagen (which though beautiful, adds \$40 transportation). Anyway I would probably need as much as \$200 (or more) for Europe. Also I could use money for here. Following your orders I shopped – in fact, I used up that \$50 bond. I felt terrible when I realized what I had done, but there was no way out – to buy just the minimum amount of gifts still costs! Now I need money to buy a suitcase and a pair of summer dressyish shoes. I have the \$150 bond that perhaps I could cash into dollars just before I leave – would you check to see if that's possible? Otherwise please send “greens” [with] Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate. You should be getting my refund from my return trip home. They said they would send it to the parents so please tell me what you are doing. One more thing possibly they could bring, Royal Coconut cream instant pudding, one of the girls got some tonight and we made it, delicious! Again I remind you to send pictures I took if possible.

When in Jerusalem I tried to see Alice Joshua – she was out of town. Talked to Dr. Saltz's wife; saw Elchanan's brother in Beit Vegan. But I was at Dov's again to say

good bye (gave him 1 roll of film). Heard from the Sprungs, but don't know when I'll be able to see them?

Haven't seen Miriam [Rabinowitz] lately. She keeps asking me to come, but when I have vacation-chofesh I also have so much to do – I hope she understands.

Congrats Dad on your debut. I guess our family sure is making news this year. Say, that reminds me, how did Joel's world affairs turn out?

Also, please send batteries for the transistor radio. I found a lovely tallis and/or tephillin bags, anyone we know needs? Or could use? Zadie, Uncle Lou, Joel, Dad, Dan?

Just thought that by now Zadie is already visiting with you. I really miss seeing all of you together for פסח. Already our first day back here we felt preparations for Passover. As I worked in the children's dining room we began cleaning pots thoroughly for the holiday. I don't know how they will ever finish all the work that is to be done; but I guess that's what you and every other Jewish woman, whether in the States or in Israel, whether on kibbutz or in the city, feels each year as she begins the annual chores.

Flash, just verified with my Madricha about Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate's trip. She said I could have chofesh for Shabbat and ערב יום עצמאות. Independence Day here the children have a torch light parade and regular supper after the prayers. She said it was nice and they could certainly come. Would they have the tour driver wait with them here and leave to Tel-Aviv that same night? That day everyone here has vacation, so I can certainly get away. Everything is set – now all they have to do is come.

I hope to write again before פסח, the Sederim, but if not I hope you have wonderful Sederim and when you say לשנה הבאה think of me.

Love to all

P.S. please tell me if Dan wants the Tamim books he wrote about.



April 14, 1962 (8 months since we sailed)

Dear All,

Hope all is well. Received all 3 of your letters, one right after the other. So first of all I want to answer the urgent matters. Since I did not get the letter in Jerusalem – I have no way of getting there. But if plans work out and nothing unforeseen comes up before I can go to the travel agent in regard to the ticket for Independence Day the Shabbat when Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate come, which will already be May 4. Is this all right. Otherwise I'll have to see if perhaps someone from here can do it for me.

Thanks for your words of comfort. I myself admit that now after being here for a week of work, things aren't so bad. In fact, there is a bit of excitement in all the thorough cleaning and all as final climax to Passover evening comes. Everyone, even the children who are on vacation from school. Everything the synagogue, everyone's room, every spot is cleaned from top to top. We (I've been working in the children's dining room) have slowly been cleaning and scouring so that things are half-done already. We sat for hours with a needle scratching out hidden dirt around handles or pots and scouring them with steel wool and soap – do I miss good old Brillo!

Europe stands as one big confusion. The girl I have planned to go with has been told by her mother that she should preferable go with 4 kids and boys, so I don't know what choice is left me. The boys that are going from here have already paired off – Jerry and most of the others are not going. I still would think of going two girls, but ככה זה. I have thought of all possibilities you mentioned – and more, but I'm afraid it doesn't work. We're completely at a standstill. If worse comes to worse a few girls will go together, and what will be will be. About the money, I don't know what to do. Until our plans come out with the chartered plane, whatever happens I'm definitely flying home – whether by Machon (we have to write to them in May) or by ElAl. I'll write you when plans are definite. OK?

Now about the \$\$\$. Can I pick it up in Tel-Aviv? There, I can probably get it. I need

about \$150-200, if that's too much for money but I hope to pay you back for your "investment" in some way or other. I have the \$150 bond left, but I don't think I can cash it to dollars until I leave.

The AAA book is entitled "1962 Guide to Europe", please send it, it is important. I hope to wear the suit Pesach (if I don't have תורנות) and then have them send it home. I'm sorry to hear that you aren't getting a suit. I really wish you could get one, but in 2 years you can pick one of your own. They don't have a catalogue.

I have heard from the Sprungs and hope to see them soon. Glad that everyone got my cards.

I heard that someone who has been away for more than 12 days can bring in \$500 of stuff. Maybe you can check for me.

By now Zadie has been with you and perhaps you have had a Seder. I am thinking of you all!

Say, I have a question for Zadie. If there is chametz in the packages you sent, can I wait even if it wasn't included in the bill of sales?

Now, I have a few more requests. I need peds (the 1.00 kind with foam rubber head, if possible). Then for Europe I can use nylon (wash and wear) underpants, 3 pair is enough, drip dry skirt and blouse for travelling and if they are not expensive a travel iron board.

I hope this will be the end of the requests for this year. I really have asked for so much, of course, a lot of it I can live without; but with it things are much easier.

I want to wish you all a very, very חג פסח כשר ושמח

I'll miss you all especially as I experience my first Seder away from the lovingness security of my own family.

A special regards to Zadie, Love Ruthie

P.S. Say, big brother and little brother too, how about at least a few lines, you too Dad.

Zadie, did you get my Hebrew letter?



April 21, 1962 Sunday

Dear All – Gottstein's,

I hope you had a good Seder. I would describe my experiences here for Pesach but I will save it for my letter home. There is just too much to be described and I would rather write one good descriptions than 2 fair ones. All I can say is that it was (and really is and will be until the last day of

יום טוב גלויות a most unusual experience and certainly threw a new light over the Passover celebrations I have yet to experience.

I was most happy to hear that you are almost prepared for your coming trip. I just can't believe that the time has already passed so fast and Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate will soon be here.

Now for last minute information. First, I am very happy that you will be able to visit on Yavne. I assume that you will come about 3:00 (I usually work until then) or after – stay for supper and then return to Herzliya. I hope you have made arrangements to leave here because the last bus out of here leaves at 6:00 or so. I must inform you that for your day at Yavne you have to pay nothing. They hardly notice (at meals) if a few (or 25) mouths extra people eat and are glad to serve. Just don't expect hotel service. Basically it is a serve yourself ideal – not extra special food – but good. I understand for Independence Day they have a special meal. Anyway it will be an unusual experience to eat "kibbutz".

I plan (if I get off work) to leave here Thursday night (4:00) for Jerusalem. If I can't get hotel reservations I can easily stay with my relations. I will ride back to Tel-Aviv with you Sunday, but would like to get back to Yavne to put in at least 1/2 days' work. Has anyone suggested the train ride from Jerusalem to Tel-Aviv? I understand it is quite a beautiful ride and I haven't had a chance yet to do it yet either. Perhaps coming back Sunday we could do it?

One more thing. I would like to get back to Yavne Thursday morning after Independence Day for work. You see the vacation I take now takes off vacation I could have later. I will definitely need time to at least see relatives to say good bye.

Already I want to say thank-you for all you are doing for me. I really appreciate it but I hope that I am not causing you too much of an inconvenience. Please don't feel obligated to go out of your way on my account. It really isn't necessary. And I want this trip to be a wonderful and relaxing vacation for you both.

Jerry and Marley, a most hardy mazel tov on your T.T.[Talmud Torah] graduation. It must have been something to see Uncle and niece graduate together, much luck to both.

Regards to everyone. Have a good trip. Love Ruthie



April 23, 1962 Monday

Dear All,

Surprise, I just finished doing some typing on one of the kids typewriters and now since I do want to write anyway, and since I still am remembering how much I have been hearing about my illegible handwriting, now for once you will be able to easily read what I have to say and believe me ten air letters aren't enough to describe everything I have experienced this past week.

But first, I have some questions to answer, etc. I still am not disappointed about my Hoch decision. There just seems to be an atmosphere here which they do not get on Machon. More about this either in future letters or in a few months.

Still don't know what will be done about Europe, am still waiting for answers from other girl's parents. The traveler's checks, perhaps I could pick them up in Jerusalem when I'm there with Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate. I don't have much more to buy, really, I've done quite enough for one year, and I just can't do much more. Anyway not enough for the bond even with the suitcase and shoes. I could use about two hundred dollars for Europe, I'm not sure how much for the trip home, perhaps fifty for expenses here until August. Best to send small checks. One other thing I could use a collapsible or stretch clothesline (like in the bathroom there).

By the time you get this letter Pesach will already be over. How were your



Passover preparations kibbutz Yavneh. photos thanks to Atar Moreshet Kvutzat Yavneh

Sederim? It must have been wonderful having Zadie there! Did Peter come? I guess I'll never meet my cousin.

I want to describe our week of Pesach preparations, etc., but it is so hard to know where to begin and seemingly impossible to describe the whole atmosphere. I worked in the children's dining room and so I saw how, among other things, preparations are made there. You can be sure that in the main dining room and kitchen the work was twenty times as big. Of course mainly the same dishes are used, therefore there is a tremendous amount of koshering that has to be done – first shining with steel wool and soapy water, then cleaning out the excess clinging dirt with a pin. The last few days before Pesach one building is set aside for koshering dishes and all the dishes are brought over there from all over the kibbutz, really a job! The last few days, though now I don't know how we lived through it, slowly, gradually, the dishes were removed and the last day the kids ate breakfast out on the lawn – using the minimum of dishes, while inside a crew of kids were scrubbing the tables and chairs. Already the weeks before had been used for basic and fundamental thorough cleaning. Also there was a constant air of cleaning all over the kibbutz as every children's house, every private house, every corner of the synagogue (my roommate worked there and wow, was that a job!). The kids have vacation from school during Pesach so they also help with the big



kibbutz Yavneh dining room. photo thanks to Atar Moreshet Kvutzat Yavneh

job. I was sent to work for a few hours in the kitchen and to my surprise I found about ten kids, Kibbutznikim, Americans, and workers standing around a small table busily at work.

As I had to give the typewriter back so I'll have to finish by hand.

As I neared I saw them rolling balls for kneidlach for soup. Apparently this is a real Pesachdica custom here. Another custom is the 4:00 meal ערב פסח on the lawn – consisting of potato goulash, cooked carrots and whatever food is left over. Never before have had I felt what it is to clean up for Pesach like this year. Even after a busy day cleaning at work we had to come back and clean our own room – wash walls, dust, clean closets, etc. All I can say is that by the time the Seder came I needed a rest.

After the prayer we joined our families at the Seder. There were Seders in the children's dining room, the old dining room and the biggest one (about 150 people) in the new dining room, where I was. And I must say that at least it sure was different from the small family circle (20 is small now) I am used to. There were 2 leaders who added פירושים as the Seders progressed. Interesting how at the beginning, to get the children's attention, one compared the story of Pesach to two kibbutzim פטעום ורמסס and God as the מטפלת and so on.

The next morning I had work duty and I worked in the kitchen preparing breakfast

(which was after the prayer, dairy), and lunch, which was meat and served at 12:00.

Again we celebrated a second day of the holiday and this time I felt very strange and a little sad about it all. Yet the second Seder, of about 60 (there were also guests of the kibbutz) was more homey. Oh, the Chief Rabbi of Rumania visited Yavne for Pesach and of course was at our Seder. Quite a זכות, huh!

Motzei Shabbat (reminds me that you really had some work preparing for all the meals) we rode with the kibbutz to an annual affair at kibbutz Ein Tzurim. Yavne's Chalil group played, Ein Tzurim put on a skit and the famous Sa'ad group did a few short skits. It was very entertaining.

I hope I told you everything I wanted. If not I'll have to include it in a few months. Love to all, especially Zadie, Ruthie

P.S. Without details, now how much is the transistor radio worth (wholesale). How's the snow? Here it is beautiful weather. Received a money gift from [an aunt] and was most surprised. Still can't figure out what was the occasion?



April 28, 1962 Motzei Shabbat

Dear All,

Well, פסח is now over – all the cleaning episode has passed. All I can say is that the work NEVER went so fast. On the second day of the Holiday (and believe me the people made sure that we felt the day more as a punishment, then a “day of rest”) we had a lecture on Agnon (an Israeli author), which was also very interesting. After lunch (we had real meat for the second time this year!) we walked to Kfar Darom which is about 45 minutes from here. It was a kibbutz that changed to a Moshav Shitufi about 10 years ago. It was nice, but Yavne is better.

Friday another newspaper man was here from the States and took pictures of Jerry and I for a 15 picture article for the Minneapolis Sun Magazine. We took off 1/2 day and rode to Ashkelon. Quite strange to pick up and leave like that during a



Ruth at Ashkelon park beach

work day. The article should be in about three weeks from May 5 or so. Don't forget to send us a copy please.

I haven't heard from you for quite a while, but I imagine that with all the Passover holiday, etc. you have been quite busy, also the mail is most likely held up here.

Now I am beginning to get those butterflies of excitement of anticipation of Uncle Nate and Aunt Rose Monday. I have plans to meet them at the airport, though I have to leave them to be back here Tuesday morning – but will return to be with them Shabbat in Jerusalem (that reminds me – have you heard from Dov yet?)

I understand that Tuesday night here there is a nice celebration for Independence Day – a torch parade, a dance presentation and supper on the lawn. It really will be nice for them to see it.

Is Zadie still there? How long is he planning to stay?

Now that we are already beginning to make plans for our return trip – I want to ask you if you have any plans for the summer.

How was graduation at T.T? What else is new? Oh, I received papers from home. I (and the other Americans here) thank you. Just one question, was there something special in "The Nation" which was interesting?

This week I was listening to the radio one night (the Hashemite Kingdom from Jerusalem) when the music was over and a man began giving a speech about how

“Palestine” should be given back to its “rightful owners”. That all the Arab states must unite to fight Zionism and take Israel from the “immigrants” who came and conquered it. I was quite shocked and it took a while to get over the shock!

Tomorrow I am beginning work in the kitchen. I am quite scared, it is worse than playing a flute solo! I work every day from 7:00-11:00 and then from 5:00-8:30. Every day is a different time, so at least it won't be routine completely!

By now Michael Joshua must be getting really prepared for his big trip. I really hope to get a letter off to him sometime this week. When is Mrs. Joshua and family coming? And for how long?

I guess for now this is enough. Special regards to Zadie. Oh, I have a שאלה for him.

If any food (chametz) was sent by mail during Passover, is it permissible to eat?

Good night and to you Shabbat shalom,

Love Ruthie



May 7, 1962

Dear All,

Don't get alarmed I am just sick of writing the regular way.

So much has happened since my last letter. I can hardly believe it. All Monday I fixed my hours in the dining room so that I finished at 1:00 (I started at 5:00 AM) and caught a bus to Tel Aviv. I called the airport and found out that the plane was on time. I mention this item because it was a major event of the day, taking about 45 minutes. First I had to get a special coin for the phone. After finding the number and trying it a number of times I realized that probably it can't be dialed directly. I found out that I had to dial through the operator. I got to the operator (after trying a few phones which were out of order and waiting in line for a good one) and made him understand what I wanted, but I just couldn't understand how much money had to be put in. What with the pressures of the people outside banging on the door and the operator impatiently yelling at me, somehow I got the right amount in and got the connection.



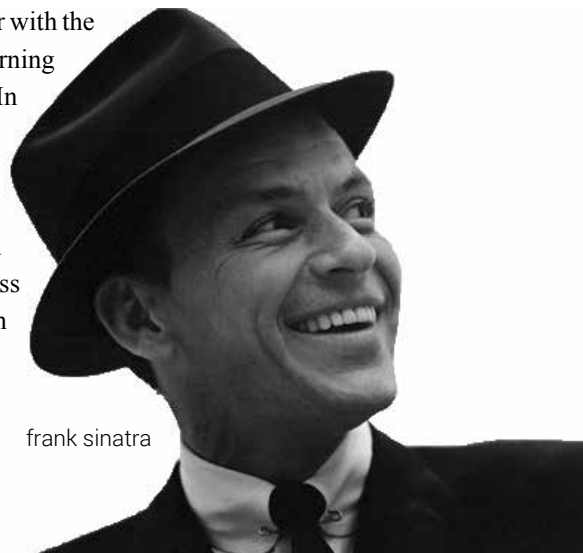


Nate and Rose Gottstein visit Ruth

I arrived at the airport about 1/2 hour early so I watched from the observation deck as the plane landed and anxiously watched both exits of the plane for the familiar faces. What a feeling when I saw them!

I met them after customs and they drove me in their car to Tel-Aviv, dropped me off at Sonia's and went on to Jerusalem. The next morning I got back to Yavne at 11:59 and worked from 12:00 to until 8:30 in the dining room – was I bushed! Thursday I worked from 7:00-3:20. After a shower (in some rush) I got on the bus at 4:00 to Rehovot. You have no idea the feeling one gets traveling alone to the big city like that.

Got to the hotel in Jerusalem and went to supper with the Gottsteins. We went to sleep early. Friday morning we went shopping. Aunt Rose bought a suit. In the afternoon as they went on a tour, I relaxed in the hotel. What a real pleasure it was! That night Lili, Aunt Nell's friend came to visit. She and her husband are very nice and show a warm affection for the Pekarskys. Miss them very much and hope sincerely to see them again soon!



frank sinatra

Shabbat we went to Hechal Shlomo. After lunch Aunt Rose and I took a long walk. It was a beautiful day and we lost track of time.

Motzei Shabbat we went to hear Frank Sinatra. It was wonderful and after we all visited with Bilhah [Dov's wife].

Sunday we drove to Tel-Aviv with a stop in Ramla for Uncle Nate's business. Their hotel in Herzliya is GORGEOUS!! Just exactly like Florida! We had lunch there and Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate went to Sonia's and I returned to Yavne. It sure was strange to find myself riding in a new white Chevy one minute (their guide's car) and the next minute riding in the back of a truck (with a boy I met on the way) to Yavne. It is a real change and requires adjustment. From 5:00 until 8:00 I gave supper to the 3 sick people in the sick room.

Now I am anxiously awaiting the visit of the Gottsteins tomorrow and then I return with them to the hotel. HEAVEN and will spend Independence Day with them.

Sure is wonderful of them to take me. It is marvelous for me. It is the first time I can see how much I have learned from this year because I can compare what I was like when I last talked to them and now. But more than that it gives me a feeling of home. Hearing the gossip, eating that DELICIOUS old familiar home baked kimish bread. It was almost still warm. Sonia and family had some and also the kids. You should hear the oohs and oohs!

I want to thank you for everything you send. Everything fits and is perfect. Here a thank you kiss XXX!

The letters with Aunt Rose were wonderful. Thanks everyone.

As far as \$\$ - I will cash the bond in \$50 sums at a time. This will last me I'm quite sure. Then you can send me traveler's checks later when I find out exactly what's what.

Can I sell one radio? How much is it worth? Hope all is well.

Love, Ruthie

P.S. Have to arrange a room later for the Golds.⁵⁶ Quite a good chance that one will be available.

Mom - Happy Mother's Day!

⁵⁶ Dr. Gold, a Minneapolis physician, who visited Israel, made Aliyah with his family, and lived in Ashkelon.



May 9, 1962

ב"ה

יום העצמאות תשכ"ב

להורי היקרים!

בהזדמנות הזאת, של יום העצמאות (שלמזלי וכבודי הרב בליתי בארץ ישראל עצמה) אני רוצה לכתוב לכם קצת בעברית.

אני יודעת (ואני מקווה שאתם תסלחו לי בעד השגיות הרב) שיש לי עוד המון ללמוד בשפה הקדש אבל טוב להשתמש בה בכל הזדמנות שיש.

אחרי כל הפתיחה הזאת אני רוצה לגשת לעניין החשוב של מכתבי, וזהו! אף-על-פי שאני נמצאת רחוק מכם אף פעם לא שכחתי אתכם. לא מעט חשבתי בלבי על מה שמתרחש שם באותו רגע.

כבר לפני כמה חדשים חשבתי על יום שנתכם (anniversary) ומה מטעים אני יכולה לשלח לכם. טוב, כבר ראיתי את כל השתויות שאפשר למצא בכל החנויות לתוריסטים וכו', ואף דבר לא בטא את הרגשתי לכם.

טוב, החלטתי שהדבר הכי טוב (אבל אולי לא הכה יפה) זה לעשות משהו ביד. עכשיו אתם רואים את התוצרת ואני מקווה שזה ימצא חן בעינכם. מכסה לכרית. נסע אותי לתל-אביב, לירושלים וכמובן היה גם קצת בקבוצ'י בנה. עם המתנה הקטנה הזאת אני שולחת לכם ברכות לשנות רבות, שמחות של שלום ומזל. וגם ביקור לארץ ישראל. אולי באותו מצב רוח טוב לי גם להודות לכם על זה שנתנו לי את האפשרות להיות כאן בארץ שנה, שזה דבר שבכל יום של חיי לא אשכח.

תסלחו לי על קיצור של מילים – אבל בעברית, זה עוד קשה לי לכתב. אולי בע"ה ובוא יום שדבר הזה ילך לי יותר קל.

בברכה ובאהבה, בתכם היקרה, רותי

לסבא היקר! רק שלום, מה שלומך? אני מקווה שאתה מרוצה בביתי עם הורי, אחי והקרובים וחברים שלנו. לפי מה שאני שומעת הכול שם בסדר. הסדרים שם היו יפים וכולם מקבלים תענוג ממך. חבל מאוד שלא היית שם אתך. או יותר נכון, חבל שכולכם לא היו כאן איתי.

עכשיו אני נמצאת עם דוד ודודה במלון. הבוקר היינו במצעד בתל-אביב לכבוד יום העצמאות. שני דברים עשו רושם עלי חוץ מהמצעד. אחד הוא לפני החגיגות של שמחת העצמאות עשו כאן יום זכרון לאלה שנפלו במלחמה. בעיני זה מאד מטעים שיהיה דבר כזה. השני זה שכמעט כל אחד שהוא אזרח בארץ הוא גם לחם במלחמת השחרור וגם

הרגיש את הצרות והזמן הקשה של התקופה וזה דבר מאד חדש בשבילי.
כל הפרטיים של החגיגה בטח תשמע ממני במכתבים וגם מהדוד ודודה. אז לא אבזז זמן
או מרץ לתאר אותם כאן.
אני מקווה שהפגישה שלך אם דוב היה טובה ואני מאוד שמחה שקבלת הזדמנות כזאת.
להתראות ובאהבה, נכדך היקרה, רות-מרים



May 12, 1962 Motzei Shabbat

Dear All,

It is certainly with rather mixed feelings that I write now. Seeing and being with Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate was like a hint of home for me! I enjoyed myself thoroughly with them – it was a needed and appreciated vacation for me! All the details I'm sure you are yet to hear so I won't waste the space.

We visited one day with the Sprungs. It is very hard for them to get started – adjusting and finding a place, etc. They miss you all and send regards. Mrs. Sprung asked if perhaps the Joshua's have room it would be a big help if they could bring paper napkins, waxed paper, tin foil, etc. She has really been terribly busy running looking for a place, etc. so please forgive her for not writing. She will try to write as soon as they can begin to get settled.

Also suggest to Michael that he bring some roll-on shoe polish (I found it real handy, thanks); a small chess set. Maybe even something like badminton or some similar game if room and interest permits. By the way, who is coming and for how long?

I am anxious to hear about Dov's visit? What do you think of him? What language did you speak with him? How is he adjusting to the States?

What's with the newspaper strike? Your strikes are almost as bad as here!

I'm thrilled to hear that all of you will be in N.Y. Just don't forget my license. I hope you can find it! I hope I still can drive. It really would be nice to perhaps make a little trip to Washington, D.C or something – if I don't come back too late.

Perhaps you could, if time permits, find out what courses are offered to me my first quarter so that as soon as I get back I can register. Though I guess if possible I would really like a sort of light load this first time to get used to it all again.

Mother, how is your U. course? What have you been reading?

I also wanted to ask you if you have heard whether Mr. Kaiser ever got in touch with David Beit Arye in connection with new teachers for the Talmud Torah. What are they doing without Ben-dov?

And also what's this I read in the Jewish World that the Lubavichers are moving in?

Oh, I want to talk to you how Independence Day was celebrated here on the kibbutz. I left early with Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate, but I understand it was most impressive. After Minchah (before there was a ceremony in memory of those that fell during the war at the cemetery) there was a *מפקד* by the flagpole with torches – the names of those that fell were read.

After the children were put to bed an 8:30 supper was served outside. Very festive and enjoyable. Then there was dancing where groups performed – a group of Americans did square dancing!

The next morning after a special Morning Service and breakfast, everyone had vacation. They were four different trips for the members. They say it's quite a sight to be here about 2:00 in the afternoon and hardly a person can be found.

It was a wonderful feeling to celebrate Independence Day in Israel and I'll never forget it!

Oh, the other day I heard my flute concerto on the radio. Was I proud! And I sure better play my flute!

Again let me thank you for the stuff you sent me with the Gottsteins. We finished the kimmish bread. De-licious.

How's Zadie? How long is he staying? Maybe he'll stay until I get back.

Jerry, I imagine that as the days go by excitement is growing. I can't believe that it has already been a year since I graduated and now it is your turn.

Say, Joel, how does it feel to finish Lincoln Jr. Have you had any special activities?

Love to all, Ruthie

P.S. this is a little crazy, I'm writing lying in bed and am half or 3/4 asleep

נו מה נשמע.



May 19, 1962 Motzei Shabbat

I wasn't going to write tonight because I had to do washing dishes from Shabbat and I was supposed to work outside tomorrow; but since I first found out that I have to work in the children's dining room until one of the girls gets well I just sat down to write and someone came in, we began talking and now it is already almost 1 A.M. and I didn't even start, so I'll finish this tomorrow.

Good night

Sunday May 20,

Hello again. After a day's work, a shower and supper I'm ready to finish this letter. First of all, before I explode with joy let me relay the good news. We have gotten places on the Machon chartered plane from Lod, August 5, to Rome and on August 20 from Paris to N.Y., U.S.A.!! There will be 8 or 9 of us from Hoch who will go together and it just seems to solve all problems. Best of all, the complete fare is \$250!! I'm very happy. Now, please, if this idea is satisfactory, please send a statement signed by my parents that they will permit me to go with the Machon plane and please send me the present mentioned amount of two hundred and fifty dollars; whether it is a check or traveler's check is not so important I guess, whichever you think will be easiest.

Moreover, this gives us a chance, I hope, also to do a little touring in the East before returning to the drudge of routine city/college life!

One question – is it best for me to send my luggage by Zim – Jerry is returning by boat and perhaps if he has excess space, he can take my baggage – if not I would still like to send it in that boat anyway. Would you be able to get my stuff from the customs? The boat leaves here about August 5 or so.

One more question and please answer it soon. Dan, since most of the pocket books I took are yours, do you want them back or not? I have "Rally Round the Flag, Stories to be told in the dark, what makes Sammy Run," etc. Nu?

It is quite funny that the same Shabbat that Dov was there [in the U.S.], Aunt Rose, Uncle Nate and I went to visit [his wife] Bilha [in Jerusalem]. I'm glad you got to see him. Perhaps we will all meet in N.Y.

Please, at least tell me more about the letters from U. of M. Which English do I have to take? Do I have a registering date sent to me?

I hope Yankee⁵⁷ will be able to spend a Shabbat here before I leave. Where will he be at an ulpan? Jerusalem?

Now we are making plans for tomorrow. Erev Lag Be'Omer. So far it seems that for 7 Lira (\$2.50) we get a round trip fare to Meiron. I wrote to Yaffa [Fixler] and she said we could come. 4 of us are going from Hoch. The bus that's taking us is from all the settlements in the area; just that should be interesting. We come back Tuesday night. Sharon Shulman is also to be there.

Here on the kibbutz work is as usual. I understand that there is to be a good supper – cake or something! Already on the radio, signs on the bus stations, etc. that special buses will be going to Meiron. I'm anxious to see what all the fuss is about. I just received a set of 8 books of Agnon for 18 Lira (\$6) in Hebrew. I just got the urge and it was a special deal. Perhaps it will be an incentive for all of us!

Well, I now have a meeting here so please forgive me, Anyway I'm out of paper.

Love to all, Ruthie

P.S I still haven't gotten any of the packages yet. Should I check them? When were they sent? If possible. Send with Michael or someone, I could use another shirt and blouse, drip dry, also anything but white. Perhaps a semi full skirt. Thanks.



May 27, 1962 Sunday

Dear All,

The first thing that I must say is a little comment about the last letter which I received where you mentioned that Esther Sprung had written that I wasn't tan and why I don't work outside! Well this letter hit hard as I read it lying on my bed completely exhausted after a morning of דילול קוטנה – thinning out cotton plants which is done standing bent over from the waist, when that gets too painful one

57 Jacob Wilensky, Ruth's first cousin from New Orleans, who was to be in Israel after graduating high school.

tries crawling but after a few layers of the knee cap wear out one turns again, pain and all, to the standing position. Amazing this is my third day outside – it is hard but perhaps I will still be able to continue. Anyway, even if I come back tanless perhaps kibbutz is not only חלוצים, but indoor work does exist and is also very important – the majority of women still do domestic (housework) work.

Before I forget – if nothing else is taken care of I want very much to see the slides myself. Perhaps Mike Joshua could bring them in June. Such curiosity and anxiety, cannot wait till August, so PLEASE and I will try to get more pictures of kids and myself.

How was the opera? I heard from Aunt Bessie that Yankee is going to be on the same boat Mike Joshua is going on, I think. The S.S. Jerusalem which arrives June 21. I sure hope I get to see him before I leave. One way or another our relatives seem to get together.

I would like (if Mike or someone else could bring it) a college catalog with information about courses I have to take, etc. so that when I get back it won't be all rush. By the way when do I have to register?

Batteries for the radio are fine. I also got the packages. I had to pay 5 lirot (\$1.65 approx.) [Customs levy] for the one with the blouses, etc. All is well – thanks.

I'm not sure what I'll do with the toys, but I'm sure I'll find good use for them somewhere. The sweaters are actually a little late, now that it is so hot, but לא נורא! The other package is still in customs. I'm supposed to pay 15 lira (\$5) [customs levy] for it and I'm still trying to decide whether to pay or not, though I probably will.

I talked to him for arrangements for Dr. Gold, but I must know exactly how many want to come. So please tell them to write me or you ask them. There is no room the week-end of Shavuot.

Mazel tov to all about Heschel.⁵⁸ I guess things will work out all right [for me to attend the wedding] with the plane arriving August 20. What will we do from there? Will we be able to sightsee a little? I would like to but I think that I do need a little rest at home before I go to St. Louis. You know, it isn't so easy to adjust after an independent life here in Israel for 12 months and it will take a little time. I can't understand the T.T.[Talmud Torah] Here they have a chance for a religious teacher from Israel and they seem to pass over it like nothing. With all the millions leaving I hope something is added!

58 Ruth's first cousin Heshel Raskes, son of Annette Geffen Raskas, became engaged to Adina. See glossary.

Does Mr. Kaiser intend to write to David Beit Aryeh or not? I certainly cannot take care of it for him.

This Shabbat we were at kibbutz Sa'ad and I was most impressed. I visited with Yedidya,⁵⁹ his wife and children. They are a lovely family and I enjoyed seeing them. I also met Judy Nahshon's cousin Drory who are also very nice.

Love to all, Ruthie

I need the permission and \$ for the Machon [flight] by June 15 – so please try to send it immediately. If you won't, send it directly to the Institute for Youth Leaders Abroad at

רח' חזקיהו המלך 15, קטמון ירושלים



May 31, 1962

Dear All,

Okay, now some fabulous news. Zackie Shapiro just told us that there is this man, who was a Bnei Akiva sheliach in England for 1/2 year. Anyway, he has a Volkswagen (room for 8 passengers) and is interested in touring Europe with some others. He is willing for \$100 to take 8 of us with him. He has been through Europe and is apparently willing to guide us. He will also arrange for hotel and food for us which will approximately be \$50. This is his schedule:

August 5-7 Rome, 8 Florence, 9 Venice, 10-11 Lugano, Switzerland, Shabbat, 12 Interlaken, 13 Calais France, 14-15 London Shabbat, 16-19 Paris.

We will meet with him yet and decide definitely. Thought there are some disadvantages it is worthwhile to have the security of a car, guide and housing. . What do you think?

Love, Ruthie

Excuse my briefness, but it is very late and work calls tomorrow.

59 Yedidiya Cohen, a Joshua relative and member of Kibbutz Sa'ad.



Lag Be'omer celebration at Miron



June 2, 1962 Motzei Shabbat ב"ה מוצאי שבת

Dear All,

Nu, here's the next chapter in the year's adventures of your favorite daughter, and sister; cousin, niece or friend, depending upon the reader.

How's that for opening. I'm not sure where it came from. Anyway I have some real news for you. First about the Machon plans. I received the \$250 check and permission, thanks, but I think it would be easier for you to send a check, as previously mentioned to David Brodsky in N.Y., I will tear up the check you sent. Okay? I'm really sorry to cause you all this trouble.

Now for the flash! My roommate casually mentioned to the representative from Bnei Akiva in Israel who comes every week that we would love to have a guide



Lag Be'omer celebration at Miron, at Tomb of the Rashbi: Simeon bar Yochai

through Europe. Thursday night a boy (about 28) from Scotland who came here on Aliyah came and we discussed the possibility of 8 of us going with him by car through Europe. He has been through Europe, and knows! He will have a rented 8 seated car and will go where we want, but he has good suggestions. Our Madricha knows him and with the two recommendations and talking to him I feel he is trustworthy, not wanting to cheat, but to be sure that we get the most out of the trip. He wants \$100 from each of us and hotel and food would be extra, he estimated about \$50. It seems to be that this is ideal, takes the worry out of the 15 day trip and we can sit back and enjoy it. He knows that we don't want the most expensive hotels and fanciest restaurants so he takes that into consideration. I wrote to Deborah and asked if it sounds good to her. Here's the schedule:

August 5-7: Rome – leave late afternoon on the 7th

8 Florence – leave about 4:00

Shabbat 10-11 – Lugano Switzerland at a kosher hotel and restaurant

12- Interlaken, cable car up Jungfrau

13- Drive to Calais Paris, leave for England

14-16- London, leave 16th for Europe

Shabbat 17-20 Paris, we will stay at a pension near the kosher restaurant

The 20th we leave for N.Y. and from there it's up to you to plan my schedule.

I guess to my sorrow we won't be able to tour, perhaps we could sort of leisurely drive back and be home for that Shabbat.

Enough about going home, it's all too much for me to think about. I'm not sure how to feel. I received the packages, one I paid 5 lira (about \$1.60) and the other I get tomorrow and I paid 15 lira (\$5) the latter must be the shoes, wow!. No more packages. As far as the trunk, I will send it with Jerry, from N.Y. how do I arrange for R.E.A. Is that the best way?

Did I write you about Miron? The Fixlirs were wonderful to us though the celebrations were obnoxious!

I'm anxious to see Yankee, I sure hope he can come here at least for a Shabbat.

Oh, one request if you could possibly send pamphlets on courses at the U. of M. I could begin making plans, Jerry could advise me.

I have looked for a suitcase and I can get one here, not too expensive. So I will get one soon in Tel Aviv on my next vacation.

Mom, today after the next man had already successfully circled the Earth, I read reports from the first space man, it was interesting and I'll bring it home.⁶⁰ How's Joel doing now at the end of his last days at Lincoln Jr. High? Maybe now I'll hear from him?

This week I began working outside and I am happy to inform you that I will return home with proof of my kibbutz life, not only a tan, but a body full of mosquito bites, and do they itch. Remind Mike to bring Calamine!

Love to all, especially Zadie, Love Ruthie

P.S. Does anyone have information about tipping in Europe?

PPS. Do you think it is advisable to send some the gifts, considering what happened to Uncle Lou?

60 This is a reference to the reports in Israel of the American space program. On May 5, 1961 Rear Admiral Alan Shepard became the first American and person to be launched into space for a short flight. In early May President John F. Kennedy also announced America's intent to send a man to the moon within the next ten years. John Glen was the first American and person to be launched into orbit in space in February 1962.



June 11, 1962 Monday

Dear All,

Time passes so quickly, it seems like yesterday that I wrote home and now it's already time for another letter. I have begun again to learn to work inside in the children's kitchen, it's just too hot and tiring to work outside. Perhaps I will go out a few more times before I leave, the work is much more interesting, then the usual scrubbing floors and washing dishes, if you know what I mean.

First let me wish you all a hearty mazel tov for your son and brother with that and with Joel's graduating Jr. High, I guess we all must realize that our family is really growing up! Please relay my best to the fiancée and fiancé!

Time out for a swim, its scorching hot, will finish this later.

It is now later, I have had a most refreshing swim in the kibbutz pool (which after hours [the water] is used for irrigation) a shower and supper. I'm now sitting outside my room, inside is too hot, though outside there are swarms of bugs, such is life.

I guess I was right about the slides, but I have one favor to ask. Pictures with people in them, make regular pictures from them. I'm sure kids and people will want them.

Now about when Mike and Yankee come, I would love to meet them at the boat, so when exactly do they come? Thursday or Friday? Where will they be for Shabbat? Who's meeting them? I'll try writing to Yankee.

Got both packages. Thanks loads. The sweaters and sweatshirt are smallish, besides it is so hot I can't look at them. I'll probably give them away too, okay?

The Golds came here Erev Shavuot by surprise. Luckily Sharon and Arnie Dudowitz were also here so we had a real Minneapolis reunion.

I received the catalogues and hope to start trying to figure them out soon.

I have just begun to realize that my letters have sure changed. At the beginning of the year my letters must have been filled with experiences, impressions, etc., now I guess our plans etc. are filling the letters. But we are now really beginning to feel the strains of the pre-home coming and ארץ leaving sensations.

I've been even practicing flute a little. Just for myself, with another girl from Hoch on the piano.

Last week we had two important people here at Yavne, one Dov Ani who's head of the Aliyah department of the Jewish Agency and Rav Goren, Chief Chaplain of the Army. Like a fool I only went to the last one, and understood absolutely nothing! But at least I saw him.

About the clothes to bring, both skirt and blouse, light weight, please, the blouse short or roll up sleeves and possible to wear out. Also I could use a slip also light weight.

Is Zadie still there? [With] Joel and Jerry graduating, time is really passing, huh. Any further plans for N.Y. will Dan and Ellie be there also, Joel congratulations on graduation, believe me you have a lot of the best years of life to look forward to. Love Ruthie



June 15, 1962 motzei Shabbat

Dear All,

You gave me a real scare this week. I received the letter you wrote ערב שבת a day before the letter you wrote Monday and I didn't know what you had done with the money. (I guess it wasn't such a scare actually!) As to the \$250 check it is actually too difficult for me to cash the whole check and it would be much better if I can get travelers checks. So I will see if I can get travelers checks in dollars here – if not I will write you to cancel this check and wire me money. Actually \$150 is too much but it's up to you.

This boy who is driving us to Europe talked to us and it seems that really the major expense is for insurance and it works this way. The car is insured by the company and we buy insurance if he hits someone else. Now the only thing left is me. Am I covered enough by your insurance? My Madricha knew him when she

was on שליחות in England and she feels that he is very [knowledgeable] and has a good plan. He is reliable and has been thru Europe before and knows what he's talking about. His name, if it means anything to you, is Raymond Kershner. He is on Aliyah [now] and teaching school in Ramat Gan. He is leaving here June 24 and will get a car and drive – then our plan to see exactly how long it will take to drive, etc. He seems to be very honest and reliable – truly wanting the best for us! As far as letting you know where we will be it will probably be hard since we will be staying in pensions most of the time without reservations – but what I can I will write before.

You can't imagine how strange it was for me standing in the middle of work in the children's kitchen, to read about a big hotel wedding and especially wearing real work clothes to think about wearing such fancy clothes again. It has been so far from me, but I will try.

About the luggage. I send it on his [Jerry Goldstein, the other Hoch member from Minneapolis] name and depending upon how much luggage he has in the hold I pay for excess baggage – but it is still cheaper than sending it by plane. But the customs [expense] will still be mine. He is taking the Zim boat which leaves August 5 and arrives August 19 or 20th. Now I'm waiting for information about from NY to Minneapolis.

Well I guess it has really been a year since that eventful day of graduation last year. All I can say is that that sure is a difference from what I was doing this year and last.

I talked with דוד בית אריה about teachers. His department deals only with דתי and if Mr. Kaiser wrote to the סכנות then it was probably turned to the general department. If he does really want a religious teacher he has to write the religious department or something like that.

I wrote to Debra asking her about our Europe plans and seeing if it is possible to spend time with her. I also asked her where to buy an Italian sweater and a Swiss watch.

That's all for now.

Is Zadie still there? ד"ש from the Guttmans and a Mazel Tov on your son's engagement.

Say, how do you folks feel now that your son is grown up?

Regards to all.

Love, Me



June 19, 1962

Dear Mom and Dad,

Though I can't be there with you (though I will be soon) I want to wish you a very happy anniversary and mazal tov. I'm glad you got my gift and like it. (I hope you find a place to put it!) So how are you celebrating?

I suppose the first thing I should explain is the fancy envelope (Near East International Fair, Tel Aviv). Last week I went to the Middle Trade Fair outside of Tel-Aviv. It was fascinating. The Israeli exhibits were of course the biggest, covering all areas of progress from machines to food products. There was also a sort of "Excelsior" with Ferris wheel, drag races, airplanes, house of horrors, etc. There were also exhibits from about 20 other countries, even from grand old "uncle Sam". It was small, dealing mostly with products of soybeans. There was a model American farm (did I feel like home!) and also a model place setting for a President's (in the White House) dinner. Quite extraordinary. We rode in a model Swiss Cable Car (getting ready for Switzerland) and then we saw a real ice show. Later we saw the Philippine Ballet at an outdoor amphitheater. This was absolutely beautiful. If you get a chance, don't miss it! Well, anyway, this is a special envelope and stamp for this, so מכבד! I imagine Joel would like it!

As long as I started I may as well answer your last letter. I think it is worthwhile to develop all pictures with people in them, especially relatives. I am sure kids, etc. would want them. Is it very expensive? Even in black and white prints?

Riva Guttman was here last night. I gave her the dolls that my kvutzah [group] made to take to her place. She seemed to like it. She also expressed a real desire for any and all old clothes, etc. possible. There is a real need for them here, so spread the word, please.

I began looking at the U. of Minnesota books and have become quite frustrated. It's worse than Greek! I'm so uncertain still but I guess I can be safest in preparing to continue towards elementary education. I will try to talk to Jerry about it, yet.

This Shabbat I am going to kibbutz Lavi.⁶¹ I hope to be in Tel-Aviv Sunday to take care of the traveler's checks and getting a suitcase. By the time you get this letter Michael [Joshua] will be on his way here. Did the Joshuas go to see him off?

We finally got our books from the מדורי הדתי and I am very happy with them. Do you have a book "Meditations on the Torah" by Jacobsen? Anyway I got one, so I hope not. If I read all the books I got here I will be a real scholar.

Mother, again I beg of you to give me a suggestion of something for Zadie. A book suggestion, or something for the house, a tallis clip, a tie clip, an Etrog box – at least tell me yes or no for a Havdalah set with a cup, a בסמים box, a cup and a candle holder.

Again, are there any books you can think of there, in particular sifrai kodesh⁶² that you want me to get here? It is very inexpensive and without customs!

Well, all your children gone, you will have a real vacation this summer. I hope you really relax, all of you. How is Aunt Rose and Uncle Nate? By now you have probably heard their whole story. It is so strange to think that I only saw them a few weeks ago and now they are already home.

Well – I am sitting here in a wet bathing suit and I hear the shower calling. So, until the next letter, again best wishes to you my dear parents,

Love, Ruthie,

P.S. Please excuse the inappropriate paper (Acadia Grand Hotel) but it is all I am left with for the time. The thought is still there anyway.

61 Kibbutz Lavi, founded in 1949, by olim from England and later the United States, is located in Northern Israel, near the Sea of Gallilee.

62 Religious, literally "Holy" books.



Sunday July 1, 1962

Dear All,

Happy New Month! This was really quite a week. First I got so much mail from home since my last letter. So much has happened here. Suddenly last Monday we heard that a few boys were planning to rent a jeep and take a trip for three days to the Gallil. We asked to come along – but were refused. Resigned to our fate we continued our regular activities. Along about 9:00 we hear a knock on the door, one of the boys walks in, tells us to pack and be ready in half an hour. Well at 9:30 we were on our way 5 boys and 3 girls. We had a wonderful time. We were gone from Monday night until Thursday night. Now that we are home safe I can tell you about it – and you don't have to worry! It was just the little umph I needed and we really saw some beautiful parts of the country. Jerry was one of the kids – he drove most of the way and he really did a fabulous job. The rest of the details I'll tell you later when I get home. Just don't worry or scold me!

As far as meeting the boat this Thursday I plan to go. One of the boys is going officially and a truck will meet them so I hope א"י to go to the port. On the way I hope to be with the Sprungs one night. Mother, they are very lonesome. It would be a real מצויה to keep up a correspondence with them, really.

I am expecting so much company now. It is really exciting. They are all welcome. It's nice to have company. I heard from Joni and wrote her. I had the letter of hers and just didn't get around to answer.

I enjoyed Joel's note and am glad he likes the kippah. I'm afraid I can't get ahold of the book – such things are very expensive here. The pictures you sent went over big. The Guttman's would like to have the negatives of their ten pictures.

As far as clothes for Reva she can use anything and old clothes are without duty. I'll begin looking around for a Gemorrah.⁶³ If you would have told me before I could have gotten it in Jerusalem. But I'll see what I can do.

63 Hebrew for a set of the Talmud.



Jeep trip towards end of the year in Israel

Our cousins will really be spread all over the States and Israel this summer. Not bad – such times we live in.

I wrote Yankee from the boat. I hope he got my letter.

Dad, thanks a lot for your letter. I'm really glad you liked the book. I fell in love with it when I saw it. I had a choice between English and Hebrew but being so inspired in Hebrew during this year – the choice was a natural one. I hope it is okay.

I checked with the American embassy here and found out that Jerry can take my luggage and I declare it when I come in. He leaves it at the port and I pick it up.

I think I will definitely cash the \$250 check for traveler check at a Bank L'eumi. It's easiest thing to do. I meant in each letter to tell you what I did with the bonds. I cashed them both. One is gone already. The other I cashed into a sort of travelers

check which can be exchanged when I get back into bonds again, whatever is left of them. Anyway, I haven't found out anything more about insurance. I hope you can arrange it there.

Today one of the girls from Chicago left for home. This really brings the end close. It is so strange to think that by now she is almost home and just this morning she was here,

Regards to all, Love and kisses, Ruthie



ב"ה 1962, July 7

Dear All,

This was quite an interesting week. Tuesday night I went to Herzliya and stayed with the Sprungs. They were very happy to see me finally and I must admit it sure was nice being in a home again. They are still having quite a difficult time. I hope my visit helped somewhat. Wednesday morning we went to the city of Herzliya (they live outside the city). I bought a suitcase for Europe and had my hair cut. In the afternoon while Esther was at the Philippine Ballet, I did a little more shopping and then we went back and spent a leisure evening.

The next morning I rode to Haifa and got there as the boat came in and after schlepping around for over 2 hours trying to find someone I recognized I luckily spotted a few of Mike's group and since they were leaving I was too pooped to stick around. The kids had a good trip over. It sure is strange seeing the newcomers because now we know how we were and how much we have changed. I got the stuff from Mike. It is beautiful and fits well! Can't thank you enough.

Anyway, the excitement isn't over yet. I was practicing flute with another girl when someone came in and called my name. Who was it? My first cousin [Yankee] from New Orleans. He came with a boy he met and stayed at the Yeshiva here. He ate here last night and for lunch today. Next Shabbat we hope to go to Miriam Rabinowitz's.

Please excuse the messy letter (not only in appearance, but also in thought), but there are so many kids running around here that I can't think straight at all.

Better that I close now.

Ok, I was at Sprungs when they got your letter and they were very happy to hear from you. Keep it up! If Mrs. Joshua – or anyone else who's coming has room Mrs. Sprung could really use tin foil, wax paper, etc. It is non-existing here and very useful.

Hope all is well, love, Ruthie



July 15, 1962

Dear All,

I received both letters and will try to answer all your questions. I was really shocked to hear about Uncle Maurice [Pekarsky's sudden death]. It is so hard for me to understand and comprehend such things, especially when they hit so close to me. I hope and pray that all will be well with them. I meant to write tonight, but as usual the time has flown by and it's already late. I will try to do it tomorrow.

As far as the check from 5/2/62 I cannot use it – so please cancel it and I will tear it up. Please tell me and I will dispose of it. For that \$250 check I am having travelers checks made at the bank.

As to U. registration – I think it would pay for me to go in between August 25-29th. After a year without classes it will be hard enough to start again and the better classes I can get the better. That extra week end won't help much. Also perhaps I could enjoy myself more knowing that the U. is taken care of.

I was thrilled to hear about Rachel.⁶⁴ Would you please send me her address at Tanglewood?

64 Rachael Brudnoy, Ruth's high school friend, neighbor and fellow musician, who was playing at Tanglewood.

I guess our family has just about had its share of simchas. Like a chain reaction – one gets engaged and all the rest follow. It sure must be good for Zadie.

The kibbutz sure will be excited about the flute, but please let me know about paying for it. Won't Mrs. Joshua have to pay duty on it?

Dad, what did you find out about insurance for Europe? I am not covered at all – so if at all possible could you get me the necessary insurance.

This Shabbat we had חופש so Yankee and I both went to כפר-ספא and spent a very pleasant time with Miriam and Chaim. I gave them the pink tablecloth Aunt Rose brought. It matches their room perfectly (the walls are also pink and fits into their table). She wants me to thank you for it.

Now, one more thing – Chaim just finished 4 years at the Technion last week. It would be nice, Mom, to drop him a line. He already went out today looking for a job. He majored in electrical engineering, if I'm not mistaken.

Last Thursday night we put on a מסיבת סיום for the kibbutz. It turned out extremely well – the audience was almost rolling in the aisles as we imitated and mocked people and events of the year.

Seeing the new Hochniks arriving and now that our מסיבת סיום is over we really begin to feel the change during the year.

I also heard from the Sprungs and unless something surprising turns up they will be coming back to the States in September. It really is a shame, they have had a really hard time here.

Sonia Ben-tzvi⁶⁵ also wrote last week. Her daughter [Nira] just finished school this year and will soon join the ranks of the Israeli army. I hope to be able to see her before she leaves.

So far as it stands now [let me] know who all is planning to be at the wedding in September? And what about David's [Geffen's] wedding?

Give my best to everyone. I hope all is as good as possible in Chicago.

Love, Ruthie

P.S. Joel, now you have no excuse not to write and you better hurry, there is not much time left!

Here's some details of Europe: Aug. 5, arrive in Rome; Aug 19 leave Paris to NY. [On back of letter] I wrote this sloppily on the inside so I'm writing it over. Our plane schedule leaves Lod Aug 5 for Rome. Leaves Paris Aug 19 for NY.

65 A Geffen relative.



Tuesday July 17, 1962

Dear all,

Surprised to hear so soon. Well, I'm surprised to write so soon. But I have something special and urgent. Today I was at the bank and found out that I can't exchange money to traveler's checks until I have my return ticket in hand. And since they don't like to cash old-dated checks I would appreciate it if you could immediately void the old \$250 check and write me a new one. This money business is really making me crazy. I wish we could finish it soon! Every time I walk into that bank I think the guy is going to kill me. I won't be going to the bank until August 1 or so, so try to get me the check by then, please. I hope this will be the last time for such requests.

Other than that not much is new. Today I heard from Marcie⁶⁶ and she wants to come next *שבט*. Really like old-home weeks.

Tell Mr. Kutoff⁶⁷ that he has regards from Irwin Schatz, son of Molly and Lewis Schatz, presently of Los Angeles, formerly of Chicago. Mr. Kutoff was at his *ברית*. He's on Hoch this year, in fact he's a neighbor.

I received today the "junk" from the U. of M. you sent. Will try, however hard it is, to look it over. As far as the reading – I'll try to get ahold of the books [from] someone to read, but...

You once mentioned that my English course for next year arrived. What is it? Or is it so bad that you didn't want to disappoint me?

I suppose by now you have returned from Chicago. It must have been very hard for them and I hope and pray *ה'* will give them strength and comfort in their sorrow.

I have loads to do yet – and tonight is movie night.

Regards to all.

Love, Sister and daughter Ruthie

PS Don't forget that you must get adequate insurance for me please. I'm not doing a thing about it. Call me lazy if you want. Soon it will all be over.

⁶⁶ Friend from Minneapolis.

⁶⁷ Member of Ruth's family's synagogue and family friend.



Sunday July 19, 1962

Dear All,

For reasons you'll understand later, please keep this letter for only a select number. I would appreciate it.

Mrs. Joshua was here this past week with Mrs. Sprung and the boys. It was wonderful to see them. The boys really shot up so that at first I honestly didn't recognize them.

I can imagine what has happened to my "little" brother.

The flute has been given to the kibbutz and they are thrilled with it.

This past week starting Wednesday we began our final seminar. I guess this was the real sign of the end of the year drawing near. It was hard to believe. In this seminar besides some לימודי קודש and leadership training we have been given a blunt true view of the ideals and goals of Bnei Akiva and Kibbutz, as well as Hochshara. This past שבת was set aside for a discussion of our opinions of Hochshara and as usual I learned a great deal. I, as a Hochnik, was not sent here, and you may as well hear it from me now this was to לרגל הארץ אם טוב היא או לא, but to make a serious decision for myself on עליה and kibbutz. This is Bnei Akiva and not a שבת club as mistakenly it has come to seem.

Well, all this for me was, you can be sure, quite a shock, though I must admit that unconsciously I have been rather prepared for it. Well, after a full day of enlightening discussion it was decided to wait one day for the decisions.

And today the decisions were received. The plan was adopted to form two groups of kids: One would declare itself interested but not obligated. In forming a more serious compatible group, at a later date (this group called a גרעין) who would plan to go together to kibbutz; and the second group would declare itself being interested in a גרעין for עליה.

So I wonder what your daughter decided. Now remember that we were not forced into this – not everyone had to give a decision. Well, after this year I felt strongly the importance of עליה for every Jew. I don't want to lecture now, but I joined חוג עליה. I'm of course not sure of my choice and I realize that it could easily

change and I realize that being here has a big influence on me and after being in the States a while I could possible change. But I feel that at least this way I am making an effort to fulfill an ideal, coming back with a decision behind me will make the future easier. I wasn't sure if to write you this or not, but I feel it was good to let you know what to expect of me when you do see me (and it's good to get it out of my chest).

Love Ruthie

P.S. I sent a small package of gifts under Dad's name. Please don't open it if it comes.

[You will not be able to use the address of kibbutz Yavne any more]



July 22, 1962 Sunday

Dear All,

First let me say that if this letter ends up rather confused and incongruous, etc. please understand that it just reflects my state of mind. After a weekend of almost no sleep (I'll tell you about it later) and a hard day at work we decided to begin pre-packing preparations. So the rest of the afternoon and early evening were spent taking everything out of my trunk (which we have used all year as a "closet") and trying mentally to decide where to pack what. We ended up with a number of trunks and suitcases airing out in front of our cabin, one bed piled all over. So until I get it back into the trunk my head is swirling. I guess you can comprehend the feeling.

I spoke with Mrs. Joshua Friday. It sure was strange hearing such a familiar voice again. She and Mrs. Sprung are planning to come Monday or Tuesday. I'm anxiously awaiting their arrival.

Joni came for Shabbat. She looks very good – the country seems to agree with her. It was fun talking about old times together – hearing what was in store for me next year. That reminds me, Mom, she said also that it is advisable to register as early

as possible so that courses are still open. She left this morning and perhaps we will meet again in Paris (sounds exciting, huh! Real ladies of the world).

I received a letter from Chaim today. He got a job as an electric computer [engineer] (or something like that) so that will be a relief for him. He wants to come for Shabbat.

As requested I wrote to Marty.⁶⁸ I had sent him (or at least I thought I had sent him) a card once before and was still hoping for a reply.

Hearing that Aviva is in Mossad [summer camp] makes me realize how fast times goes by – everyone is growing up, I guess. Does she see any of the Raskas family? Mother, I asked for the address to send clothes and Shoshana Guttman (my mother here, Reva's sister-in-law) said to send anything here. (Address). She gives them to Reva and I'm telling you they really appreciate getting them. I have already a pile of stuff to give.

You wrote about the sandals. There are some here, brown with two straps which can only be used for around the house; but there are all different styles which are very nice which can be worn like flats. I guess the latter must be what she wants and I will get you a pair also if you think you could wear them. As I remember you always prefer a heel of some kind. But what size for you?

Well, time has really flown. Two more days of work and that's all. I feel like I am walking in a dream; and I will soon wake up in my own bed and that all this never really did happen. Well, enough romantic thoughts. (Four weeks from today I'll be climbing down the El-Al stairs in the New York airport).

Regards to all, Love and kisses, Ruthie

68 Marty Fiterman, a classmate of Ruth's from North High School.



August 5, 1962

Dear All,

I am now sitting in a restaurant in the airport at Lod (Israel). We were driven here at 7:00 this morning and now we are trying to idle the time away until 1:00 when our plane leaves.

Well, to the point – I guess you got my wish about sending money. So here's the full story. I went to the bank in Rehovot last week especially to cash the checks into traveler's checks – but was advised to wait and do it at the airport. So I did – and as soon as we got here we headed straight for the bank and I was informed that I couldn't cash the check here, but in Tel-Aviv where they have the bank's signature. Well this got me pretty upset, I must admit but as soon as I got my head back I realized that I had \$40 and someone would loan me \$50 and if I wire home before I leave perhaps all will be okay. The address I gave you in London is the Bnei Akiva office, so I figured that the bank could send me a reply card c/o there. I hope all will be settled. Anyway, if worse comes to worse they will all help me. Besides that we are all under a lot of pressure. It is quite an emotional experience leaving Israel. I may even say more than coming here. It has been a strain for a few days already. But it has been quite unusual the way, not until today, saying a last real good-bye, did I begin to realize and feel what was happening.

The last few days we had חופש a few of us spent one day at the beach in Ashdod. Then I went to בן-צבי in Tel-Aviv and Rabinowitz in Kfar Saba to say a last farewell. Last night the בית אריה s came to say good-bye. They were really so considerate and thoughtful. They even gave me a good-bye gift.

Please excuse this messy letter, but it is hard to think now.

I hope the two weeks in Europe go fast and that we will soon ב"ה meet again in N.Y.

Love to all, נסיעה טובה גם לכם

Ruthie



August 14, 1962 Tuesday

Dear All,

Am having a wonderful time and all's well. We arrived last night from Lugano and this morning we stopped at the Bnei Akiva office and I found your letter plus two notes from the American Express all saying that money was cabled. Tomorrow morning we plan to pick it up. I'll mail this letter after I pick it up to let you know for sure all is well. In the meantime all is well, by being with a group I've managed quite well. But now all will be settled.

I think so far for everything I've seen, London appeals to me most. We are staying in the B.A. house, it costs us 35 cents, we have a kitchen and this morning we had our first good breakfast in a year: Kellogg's, milk, coffee and sweet rolls and bread, butter and jelly, all of this cost us each about 25 cents. Then we began our touring, beginning at the British Museum and what a marvelous exhibit, just like the movies! But no point in expounding here, might as well do it when I land. Then after a good fish 'n chips lunch at a Jewish vegetarian restaurant, in the afternoon we went to the wax museum. What life-like figures. Fantastic!

Tomorrow night we have tickets for a real English play and the weather changed today, it was cold and raining, quite a change from the sunny dry climate we have been used to, we will go to Stratford, Oxford and Cambridge. And then we will be on our way to Paris for Shabbat. Now we are really getting more and more excited about coming home. These two weeks are fantastic, but there is so much to do and so little time that it is rather wearing but well worth it, mind you. Just that I'll appreciate a good hot shower and a good bed and a good home-cooked meal (Mom, that a blunt little hint!)

These two weeks are really an experience to remember. Living out of a suitcase, sleeping in a different bed almost every night. Please forgive me for not writing more detailed about the trip before, but you all see the way we travelled, we didn't know until we found a place where we would stay. We found mostly cheap hotels which were very nice and the only difference was that there were 4 or so in a room, sharing a bathroom with a few rooms.

We stayed in Rome Sunday with a few rooms. Rome was unbelievable, then we drove to Florence (I did buy heels there) and after the next day to Venice, it is a filthy city but different to see canals and since it was תשעה באב, so we also saw the Jewish Ghetto and broke the fast at a kosher restaurant.

We are now on our way to the American Express, so I want to finish this letter and mail it, Hope you had a wonderful vacation, See you soon! Love Ruthie,

P.S. all is well, received money and cashed the check, whew!!!



packed and ready to be shipped back to the U.S.A.

ADDENDUM: RUTH'S NEXT SIXTY FIVE YEARS

RUTH:

After returning from Israel RUTH attended the University of Minnesota (1962-1963); transferred to Stern College for Women at Yeshiva University (1963-1964); then transferred to New York University, (1964-1966), where she received a BA. We met in April, 1965, were engaged in February 1966, married June 28, 1966 and settled in Washington D.C., where I was an attorney for the National Labor Relations Board. Ruth studied social work at Howard University for one year, till we moved to Los Angeles. In 1967 our first son, Jay (Yacov) was born and in May 1968 we decided to spend a year in Israel, until I was to go into private practice in Los Angeles. We never returned. Four more children were born in Jerusalem: Eitan, Noam, Chanan and Shmuel.

RUTH received a degree in social work from Hebrew University and, after a period as a loving mother, she also worked as a social worker. After retiring from her position as a social worker at a day-care center for elderly disabled she does volunteer work in the field of social work and much baby sitting for our grandchildren.

In 2010 Ruth edited a book in Hebrew: "Biography: Rabbi Tobias Geffen: 1870-1970", published by the family: "תר"ל-תש"ל".

Steve (Ruth's husband):

I (Steve) was born in Philadelphia in 1941 to Rhoda Silver (April 5, 1916 – January 24, 2015) and Saul Adler and following their divorce moved to Brooklyn with my mother. We lived in a two family house with us and her parents Jacob (Jake) and Miriam in one apartment and in the other apartment my mother's sister Pearl, her husband Maury and their children Susan and David. I graduated with a BS from Cornell University and a Juris Doctor degree from Columbia University, became a member of the New York and California Bar Associations and worked for the National Labor Relations Board for three years, first in Washington, D.C. and

then in Los Angeles. In 1968 I decided to leave the NLRB and go into private law practice. Ruth and I decided to spend a year in Israel while I was between jobs. In Israel I worked a year for the State Comptroller, while preparing for the Israeli Bar, then did the required legal apprenticeship at the Ministry of Labor, working at the same time as Director of Research and Development at the newly formed National Labor Court. After being admitted to the Israeli Bar Association I was in private practice for five years. In December 1975 I was appointed a judge of the Regional Labor Court, the trial court of the Labor Court system. I served in the Jerusalem court for a few years, then was the Chief Judge of the Tel Aviv Regional Labor Court, then a judge of the National Labor Court, the appeals court of the Labor Court system, then the Deputy President and then the President (Chief Judge) for 14 years, until my retirement in November, 2010. I also taught at the Tel Aviv and Jerusalem law faculties, the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations and since retirement have continued teaching at Hebrew University and Cornell and have been doing mediation and arbitration. See also:

https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/סטיב_אדלר

CHILDREN OF RUTH AND STEVE:

Our five sons, all of whom reside in Israel with their families:

JAY (YACOV) is married to MICHAL (nee Zederbaum), has four children (Erez, Moriah, Hallel and Josef), was ordained as a Rabbi, and has a BA and MA degree from Bar Ilan University. He worked for years as a high school teacher and now is beginning a career as an attorney. Michal does freelance educational projects. They reside in Tel Aviv.

EITAN is married to EINAT (nee Shachor), has a BA from Hebrew University and they both work in hi-tech. They have five children: Ziv, Maya, Dana, Ori and Nir. They have resided in Givat Shmuel, near Tel Aviv and are building a house in Mitzpe Ilan, in Northern Israel.

NOAM is married to NOGA (nee Stern). He has a BA from Hebrew University in archaeology and a MA in business administration. He currently works in finance and she is a social worker. They have three girls: Yaelah, Almah and Hallel and live in Mazkeret Batya.

CHANAN is married to JULIA (nee Rentz). He has a BS in engineering from Beersheva University and she has a PhD from Hebrew University in Linguistics. They have four children: Shani, Avital, Oriah and Matan and reside in Jerusalem.

SHMUEL is married to DAFNA (Dafi) (nee Glatzer). They both have BA's from Beersheba University and she is studying for an MA in education counselling.

They have two children: Shaked and Maayan. They reside in a pioneer town south of Beersheba called Shezaf.

CONNECTIONS WITH MEMBERS OF THE HOCH GROUP:

Ruth is still friendly and in contact with some of her Hochshara group, especially Saralee (Dolgin) Glasser and Suzie (Berman) Stefen, who both reside in Israel.

BUT SATISFYING *Touch Nov. 7*

Teeners From City Find Israel Farm Life Hard

By WILLMAR THORKELSON
Minneapolis Star Staff Writer

YAVNEH, Israel—Two Minneapolis teen-agers, testing life in an Israeli kibbutz, are finding it arduous but satisfying.

The communal agricultural settlement where Ruth Ziff, 18, 1210 N. Washburn Av., and Gerald Goldstein, 19, 1020 N. Upton Av., are working and studying has a religious bias.

A memorial, or holy candle, is lit atop a grain elevator symbolizing the return to the soil of some 650 orthodox Jews in the kibbutz here in a modern-day counterpart to the ancient Israelites.

Altogether, 85,000 Jews live in some 500 similar kibbutzim over Israel, although only a handful are religiously operated settlements.

In them, property is owned collectively and everyone works for a common treasury.

Ruth and Gerald and 24 other young American Jews are spending a year at the Yavneh kibbutz through arrangements made by the Bnei Akiva, a religious Zionist youth organization.

They are undergoing Hachshara, a preparatory period,

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7



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which the kibbutz hopes may induce them to spend the rest of their lives here.

Attached to the kibbutz only two months, Ruth and Gerald are not yet ready to talk about future plans, but are most impressed with the devotion and efficiency of the mostly German Jews who operate the settlement.

Gerald had no previous farm experience, but he can now inoculate baby chicks and work in the fields like a veteran farmhand.

Works in Kitchen

Ruth works in the kitchen preparing meals for young children. The children of the kibbutz live apart from their parents, sleeping in separate quarters designated for each age group. The evening meal is eaten with father and mother, either in their apartment or the communal dining hall.

On the Sabbath, some accompany their fathers to the kibbutz synagogue, sitting in the front pews. The women sit in the partitioned-off section in the rear.

The men and boys wear skullcaps constantly.

Gerald and the other men in the kibbutz begin their day at 5 a.m. At 5:30 a.m., they go to prayers, and, after breakfast, are at work by 6:30 a.m.

They work until 11:30 a.m.,

then have a two-hour break. Afternoons are devoted to study, although full days of work will come later.

A slightly shorter schedule is followed by the women.

Gerald is studying Hebrew while Ruth is studying the Bible and the Talmud as well.

The year's schedule calls for Ruth and Gerald to spend a month in study in Jerusalem and to attend shorter seminars in Tel Aviv and Jaffa while they are attached to the kibbutz.

During a recent four-day period, all the American youth at the kibbutz toured Israel in an army truck, sleeping in youth hostels, in an orientation to the Jewish state.

The Yavneh kibbutz is one of the biggest producers of chickens and eggs in the Middle East. Its incubators hatch some 250,000 eggs monthly.

Many baby chicks are sold, but there are usually at least 30,000 to 40,000 chickens being raised on the 900-acre settlement at any one time.

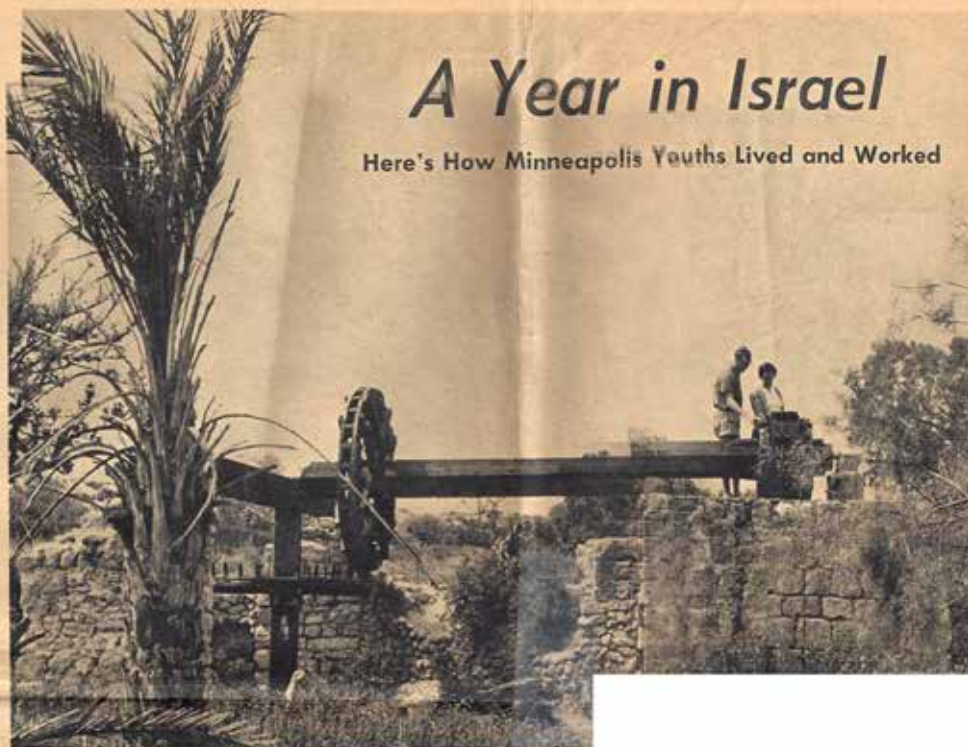
Other Crops, Too

The kibbutz also raises cattle, cotton, sugar beets, wheat, bananas, apples and other fruit. It has its own bakery, canning factory and laundry.

Caring for livestock on the Sabbath presents some problems since strict orthodox Jewish law prohibits unnecessary work. This is avoided by turning on the electricity for the milking machines before the Sabbath begins and leaving it on until the day is over. The chickens are fed on the Sabbath, but the eggs are not picked.

David Halarski, a former Polish Jew who has lived in the kibbutz 18 years and is a member of its executive board, explained that general meetings of the 240 voting members of the kibbutz are usually held weekly. They name the council and committees that govern the kibbutz.

He said the kibbutz aims to create the nucleus of a



A Year in Israel

Here's How Minneapolis Youths Lived and Worked

In the ancient city of Ashkelon, Gerald Goldstein and Ruth Ziff visited a well said to be very much like the one Samson drank from after destroying Philistine fields. Since Ashkelon was a Philistine center in the Holy Land, it could have been the place where Delilah plotted Samson's ruin and also the location of the large temple destroyed by the might of Samson.

TWO MINNEAPOLIS youths recently concluded a year of close study of life in the young democracy of Israel.

Ruth Ziff, 18, and Gerald Goldstein, 20, both of whom went to North High School, joined 27 other members of a religious Zionist organization called Bnei Akiva Institute of North America in working, studying and traveling in Israel.

The program, which the Institute began in 1956, is aimed at giving young men and women a firsthand taste of life in Israel by living and working in a kibbutz, a religious farming community. The program included lectures on communal living and religion. Home base for the group was the collective settlement of Kibbutz Yavneh.

Ruth, Gerald and the others did considerable agricultural work. They helped tend sugar-beet and cotton fields, olive groves, apple orchards and banana plantations maintained by the kibbutz.

They also worked in the poultry and dairy portions of the diversified kibbutz enterprise. Kibbutz Yavneh is one of 225 collective settlements dotting the Israeli landscape. Members share both work and profits. The miniature democracies are said to be the core of the country's pioneering spirit and many of Israel's leaders are members of the kibbutz movement.

Among trips that Ruth, Gerald and their colleagues enjoyed was one to the ancient city of Ashkelon, once a major harbor site of the Philistines and later a Roman city about 5,000 years ago. The youths also spent three weeks in the capital city of Jerusalem at a special study seminar arranged for them. Hebrew, the Bible, Jewish religious law and modern Israeli history were among their subjects.

This fall, Ruth will be a freshman at the University of Minnesota and Gerald will be a sophomore there.



Ruth, Steve, sons and their families, 2015



Ruth, Steve and grandchildren, 2015