

150.00

* Jerusalem
Thursday, July 24, 1968

This has been a gala day, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the cornerstone laying on Mount Scopus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on July 24, 1918. There was first of all an afternoon program of an artistic and academic nature, with the participation of the Kol Israel Symphony Orchestra and Choirs, conducted by Shalom Ronly-Riklis, and the singing by Richard Tucker of an aria from Halevy's "La Juive," and excerpts from Handel's "Judas Maccabaeus." Sarah Tucker had phoned me in the morning, and I went up to the Intercontinental Hotel on the Mount of Olives at about 3:30 p.m. to go with the Tuckers to the Mt. Scopus Amphitheatre and then sit with Mrs. Tucker during the afternoon's program. I get into a quiet rage every time I go to the Intercontinental Hotel, because somehow or other the bloody piety of the extreme Orthodox Jews does not seem to have been bothered by the fact that the hotel was built on top of a Jewish cemetery, ravaged parts of which are visible immediately below the west side of the roadway in front of the hotel. The remaining parts of the cemetery are being restored, with knocked-over tombstones being put back into place. Many of them, however, simply have to be under the foundations of the hotel. Yet I see some of the bearded gentry of unbridled fanaticism on the hotel grounds and in the hotel, and somehow the evil of the desecration seems to have been washed as white as snow, so far as they are concerned. I would hate to guess how their sensibilities have been assuaged.

* May not be published or excerpted without express permission of the author.

I have nothing against the Intercontinental Hotel. I am told the service is excellent, and the Tuckers tell me that the food is good. I have been in their room, and it is very modernly and comfortably furnished. Most of the people staying there are American Jews so far as I can make out from casual observance, or rather Jews from Europe who have lived in America for twenty or fifty years, and whose speech still reveals their native backgrounds. I hope this doesn't sound as if I were anti- them. It is just a report. I did grin a bit when I heard one fat Yente complain to an Arab waiter over a warm lemonade in a certain kind of New York English: "This is ah lemonade?"

However, I am off course. A special car came for the Tuckers, and we piled in about 4:00 p.m. Instead of crossing straight over the top of the hill, as we did on the way back, from the Mount of Olives to Mount Scopus, we had to go down to the bottom of the hill and take the long round about way up again to the old university grounds. They are still in shambles, but big plans are afoot to rebuild the campus there and have a number of departments of the university function there. The foundations of the Truman Peace Center are already in place and its walls are rising.

Getting to the amphitheatre, we were ushered to V.I.P. seats in the second row. Everybody, but everybody who was anybody and his cousin was there. Next to Mrs. Tucker sat Mrs. Sam Rothberg, whose husband is the Chairman of the American Friends of the Hebrew University, and next to her was a lady whom I thought I knew and did know, but misnamed. She was the wife of Hugo Bergman, who was sitting up on the platform with Dr. Helen Kagan and Dr. Benjamin Mazar, in their various capacities as former members

of the faculties or head of various activities (Helen Kagan is the recipient in previous years of an honorary degree from the Hebrew University). Hugo Bergman is the distinguished former Professor of Philosophy, and Mazar is the former President of the Hebrew University, who was elected to that position, after I had turned down the offer of the presidency from Ben Gurion. I had just taken on the presidency of the Hebrew Union College and told Ben Gurion that I couldn't back out of it, but that if he and his associates would do me the honor of inviting me five years hence, I would be glad to consider it. Ben Gurion answered that five years was practically the equivalent of forever in the speedy march of events in Israel. I had furthermore said I wouldn't take on the job, even if I were free to do so, unless I were clothed with practically dictatorial powers, because I had seen how over the years Judah L. Magnes, the first President of the University and my very dear friend, had been knocked about by the politicians inside and outside of the University.

Sitting with them were the Rector, Prof. Nathan Rotenstreich, the newly elected President of the University, Avraham Harmon, who is I believe going to be a wonderful President, the Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol, who spent most of the time on the platform going over the short speech he made, and the President of Israel, Zalman Shazar. At either end of that impressive lineup sat Arthur J. Goldberg and Joseph J. Schwartz, upon whom honorary degrees were conferred. The afternoon wore on, the speeches were long - (too few people around here know what terminal facilities mean), Richard Tucker was great and Goldberg gave a nice talk. Later on at dinner that evening I had a chance to talk to him for a moment and reminded him of the

first time I met him. Helen and I had been shown to our seats in the review stand of the Inaugural parade, with President-elect John F. Kennedy and his family and others, when Goldberg came over to us and introduced himself, and said that he had brought his rabbi with him, who was seated in the stands on the other side of the street, namely, one of our Hebrew Union College graduates, Rabbi Jacob J. Weinstein. I remember his telling me that before he took the oath of office as Secretary of Labor, he had asked Rabbi Weinstein to come to his room, and that they had prayed together. Mrs. Goldberg was seated in front of us, next to Zena Harmon. She told me she remembered being at our home in Cincinnati some years ago, when we conferred an honorary degree on Goldberg at the Hebrew Union College.

All in all, it was a very impressive afternoon, a little long, but as the sun began to go down, not too hot. Looking across the Wilderness of Judah, I could see the Mountains of Moab and Edom on the east side of the Dead Sea, and I thought of the many times during the five years of the World War II, when I was carrying out my archaeological explorations there and doing other things, I would often camp on the top of the hills and look towards the faintly glittering lights of Jerusalem, and wish I could be there or preferably be home.

After the program was over, we drove directly back to the Inter-continental Hotel, from where I drove with some other people back into town. We assembled again, all of us, about 8:15 p.m., at the King David Hotel, and drove up to the Wise Auditorium at the Hebrew University, where Dr. and Mrs. Harmon were giving a gala dinner in honor of Arthur J. Goldberg. There must have been some four hundred people present, and everybody seated very

carefully, husbands and wives separated. I was seated next to Mrs. Zvi Werblowsky, the wife of the brilliant professor of Comparative Religions. Across the way was our good friend, the Dean, or perhaps former Dean, of the Medical School, Professor Rachmilewitch. I remembered that Helen had bade me be sure to invite him again to stay at our home in Cincinnati when he comes there next September for a lecture at the Medical School or something like that. Also across the way was Mrs. Zeev Sharef, the wife of the Minister of Commerce, a most charming and intelligent woman, with whom I had a very enjoyable conversation. To mention all the other people I talked to during and after dinner would be to compile a list of names of an unusual group of awfully nice people. I talked to our U.S.A. Ambassador, Walworth Barbour, for awhile and asked him what he thought of during the nearly two hours of the afternoon program when everything was in Hebrew. He said that this had come up in a conversation between him and Yigael Yadin, who consoled him by saying that it was worse to understand than not to understand what was said - *cum grano salis*, of course.

By the time the dinner was over, the Tuckers had already left, so I drove downtown with Julian and Madeleine Venetzky in a taxi. Madeleine had never seen our building and asked to be taken through, so I gave them an 11:00 p.m. tour of the building, which of course they liked enormously, as does everybody. Our architect, Ruth Melamede, has now handed in all the corrected drawings, containing the various minute changes that the Jerusalem Municipal Building Office had demanded, and so I hope that before many more weeks pass by we shall finally receive the permit to enable us to go ahead with trying to get a contractor to erect the new building on our property,

for which a generous friend of the Hebrew Union College has already given us the money.

I thought a good deal yesterday afternoon of Judah L. Magnes. I saw Johnny and David and Havah Magnes yesterday afternoon and will shortly call on Beatrice (Mrs. Judah L. Magnes). Judah and I used to walk several times a week from his residence near the American School of Oriental Research to his office at the University on Mount Scopus, and then I would return via the Mount of Olives, reveling in the wonderful view over the Wilderness of Judah and the Dead Sea that can be obtained from that stretch of the road. I have taken serious umbrage at the fact that yesterday afternoon his name was not mentioned even once. He was after all the first president of the Hebrew University, did a tremendous amount in getting it established and raised personally most of the money for it during its first years. Weizmann's name was frequently mentioned yesterday afternoon in connection with the founding of the university, and it should have been, even as there was stressed the fact that he had been the first President of the State of Israel. Not to have referred to Judah Magnes, however, to have passed him over in complete silence, seems to me to have been strange, to put it mildly, and utterly unforgivable. I loved him. He was a great man, and his contributions to Israel and in particular to the Hebrew University were incalculably important. I must look up the talk I delivered on the tenth anniversary of his death at a meeting of the Friends of the Hebrew University in New York City. It was called "The Lion of Judah." I remember even then saying that it was surprising how little his name had been mentioned since his death. His memory will, however, live on. His work and person were too great to be expunged from memory and appreciation by passing forgetfulness or pettiness.