

# The Cornell Daily Sun

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## Israel's 13th Birthday [ARTICLE]

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### Guest Room

## Israel's 13th Birthday

by Florence I. Faerstein

On April 9, 1961, Israel marked the 13th anniversary of its independence. This event merits the attention of all those concerned with developments in the Middle East, and with the "new nations" in general. For Israel has come to grips with a question that faces all such developing nations. Is democracy essentially compatible with programs of rapid development? Can a "backward" nation approximate a Western standard of living, without sacrificing the Western ideal of freedom? Israel's achievements during these 13 years furnish a substantial argument to the proponents of the democratic system, in the continuing debate over which system will bury which.

In 13 years this state, left a shambles by a retreating mandatory power, has not only established its own healthy foundations (but has also become an active partner in the development of 46 other nations — 20 in Africa, 9 in Asia, 9 in Latin America, and 8 in the Mediterranean Basin and other areas. Last year more than 150 technical experts, instructors and advisors were sent abroad, and 400 more will be sent in Israel's "Peace Corps" this year. The number of trainees coming to Israel from developing countries has increased from a few score in 1959 to over 750 in 1960, while the current program should raise the number to 1000.

Israel's attitude in providing such aid, as explained by Foreign Minister Mrs. Golda Meir, deserves the attention of our own State Department. "The aid which a more-developed nation renders a less-developed one should not express itself by shipments of rice and wheat, but by providing the knowledge on how to grow the rice and the wheat." At this moment, for example, the first houses of a cooperative village on the Israeli model are now going up in Burma, while its prospective settlers are being trained at a farm community in Israel — one of many such projects. And significantly, the first "International Conference on the Role of Science in the New States" was held in Israel, this past summer. The hand of friendship is extended to all "men of good will"; Israelis think that peace with the Arabs is fully as possible as it is with Burma and Ethiopia, with Ghana and Cyprus.

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While Israel is proving an inspiration to the developing nations by its outward look, it is con-

for both agriculture and industry have been surpassed. Agricultural production — on a land ravaged by centuries of neglect — now fully meets the needs of the growing population, except for meat and cereals; while in vegetable and dairy farming, Israel faces the problem of surpluses! The expansion and increasing efficiency of Israel's industry is reflected in the annual rate of production increase — a staggering 15%.

Significantly, all this has not been achieved at the cost of economic totalitarianism, by rigid centralized controls. Instead, with its special combination of free enterprise and Labor- or Government-owned industries, Israel has afforded steadily-growing opportunities for free enterprise and individual initiative, within the framework of a welfare state.

But these statistics, impressive as they are, do not tell the whole story. Any visitor to Israel will speak of the spirit of creative pioneering that so forcibly asserts itself. He will tell of boundless energy, of a willingness to experiment, of healthy pragmatism and stern idealism. He will reflect on the Israelis' reverence for the past and their impatience to break "New Frontiers," best symbolized by two dramatic achievements of the past year: An archaeological expedition unearthed finds dating back to 135 A.D. And Israel began the construction of an atomic reactor for scientific research.

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Israel's scientists are working on extracting fresh water from salt water, of transforming the sun's heat into power, of finding plants that will grow in the arid Negev region. Israel's educators are occupied with teaching the Hebrew language to the immigrants — and with "higher studies" at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Technion of Haifa, the Weitzmann Institute of Science at Rehovoth, and the two universities in Tel Aviv. And Israel's artists have been developing a distinctive folkculture, drawing on European and Oriental traditions. This Saturday evening an Israeli troupe, "The Dudaim," will perform some of these songs and dances at the 13th birthday celebration, which is open to the public.

Let us remember that all this is taking place in a tiny nation — 2,200,000 strong — surrounded by hostile neighbors, who regard the status quo as little more than an uneasy truce. Those of us who view with apprehension the growing sphere of

firming the hope it offers by its inward achievement. In 13 years, Israel has absorbed and integrated some one million immigrants from 72 lands, forging from this melange of ethnic types a united people with a viable economy. Goals set

Soviet domination in the world arena can take heart at the sturdy independence of Israel. Those of us who are thrilled by the advances of the new nations can heartily salute the achievements of this nation, now 13 years old.

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