Some of those who make up

THE PULSE OF ISRAEL

Portraits by Bern Schwartz
PORTRAITS
by Bern Schwartz
We had tried many times to arrange to photograph Golda Meir, with no success. But suddenly, when we were in London a cable arrived from our good friend Teddy Kollek, saying that an appointment had been set up three days later, November 24, 1976.

Shortly thereafter I received a cable from a friend in Israel that Golda was ill and had cancelled all appointments. You can well imagine my disappointment. I had waited for two years for this chance! I called Teddy Kollek who said even though she had been ill, she would see me.

I was so excited at the prospect, I arrived at the airport and found I’d forgotten my camera. Fortunately the hotel hall porter saved the day and brought it to me in time for my flight.

In Tel Aviv I received word that I would only be allowed about fifteen minutes to set up my equipment and fifteen minutes with her. Again my heart sank, but I determined to go and try for more time.

I talked and took pictures constantly. Golda had mentioned at the start that there was nothing she hated more than to pose for pictures and sculptures. During my trip from London, I had read her book, My Life, and kept the conversation off politics and on the kibbutz. I told her of Ronny and my happy visit at Kibbutz Kabri, and we had an extremely interesting discussion on kibbutz life in general. I asked her if she were starting life all over again whether she would have stayed on a kibbutz rather than go into politics. “Politics is so full of problems,” she indicated. It was as she contemplated on this that I got the thoughtful, pensive portrait.

Despite the prior warning of the time limit, we visited for over an hour and a quarter and the pleasure seemed mutual.

I felt very emotional about this sitting. I’ve always had a tremendous admiration for Golda Meir, and this was buttressed after reading her book. Our visit had been so pleasant, she was so cooperative and so warm that at the end I put both my arms around her and kissed her on both cheeks. I was delighted to be rewarded by a warm hug from her in return.
The ubiquitous “Teddy”, as everyone calls him, was the one responsible for my first visit to Israel.

He had heard of some portraits I’d done in London and asked a mutual friend in Beverly Hills to introduce us. I went there, camera equipment in tow, not sure he would sit for me. The super-charged energetic Teddy asked if I couldn’t snap away while he completed some important phone calls. I told him firmly but politely “no”, that I wanted his undivided attention.

Previously I had roamed this luxurious home looking for the right simple setting for him, and finally found it. In the basement hung a painting depicting the procession of the return of the Ark of the Covenant by King David, who had retrieved it from the Philistines. In the background the city of Jerusalem may be seen. What a setting for its modern-day mayor!

It is to Teddy and his Jerusalem Foundation that the world owes thanks for the repair, reconstruction and careful maintenance of the Old City. And it is to Teddy and his hard-working, dedicated Jerusalem Foundation staff that I owe deep thanks for the opportunity to meet and photograph this group, as well as luminaries in various parts of the world.
If there is one face in the world that probably needs no identification, it is that of Moshe Dayan. He and his wife, Rahel, were both present and were hospitable and kind to Ronny and me.

I subsequently did her portrait as well. The four of us have become friends and we see them in different parts of the world when we happen to be in the same place.
Dr. Helena Kagan

Dr. Kagan came to Israel 65 years ago at the age of 25. She entered medical school in Switzerland at 17 and has spent her life as a pediatrician. An inordinately high percentage of the population—Jew, Moslem and Christian—have been her patients. Respected and loved by all, even during the 1948 siege, the Arabs regularly brought her fresh fruits and other food.

She is devoid of vanity and at first resisted being photographed. Dr. Kagan is a vital, forceful, active woman of extremely high intellect as well as wonderful humour. Her husband was one of the founders and first violinist of the Budapest String Quartet.

La Mère Bernès

A recipient of the Jerusalem Person of the Year Award for public service, La Révérende Mère Bernès came to Israel from France in 1953. She runs a home for the Order of St. Vincent de Paul, for severely retarded children of all creeds and religions. There are 85 children, and she is assisted by 5 nuns and a few volunteers. It is a never-ending, backbreaking job, but she is always serene and happy. Now somewhere in her middle 70s, she is vital, intelligent and charming, with a delightful sense of humour, and she positively exudes goodness.
Both the Spighels were doctors. He died recently, but Dr. Malka Spighel continues their work. In 1928, just prior to their move to Israel, Mrs. Spighel had a serious automobile accident which resulted in permanent injury to her and the birth of a retarded son. As a result of that tragedy, they have devoted their lives to retarded children and have aided many. They have three institutions in Jerusalem: a kindergarten for retarded children, a vocational workshop for the retarded, and a hospital for retarded youths. As a result of their activities similar institutions for the retarded have sprung up throughout Israel, and they have shared their information and know-how in this field with similar organizations throughout the world.
His Beatitude, Archpatriarch Derderian, Armenian Archpatriarchate

Archbishop Shahe Ajamian

There are about six million followers of the Armenian Church, and a good part of his time is spent visiting them in various parts of the world. One of the largest concentrations of followers is that of three million in Russia.

The Archbishop is extremely interested in archeology and has an enviable collection of small vases, oil lamps and statuettes, in his quarters in the Patriarchate. He also does a considerable amount of photography in connection with his archeological work.

Sheikh Hilmi El-Muhtarsib

Sheikh Hilmi is a fair-skinned, blue-eyed Moslem, an intelligent, traditional kind of man. He is Chief of the Supreme Arab Council on the West Bank. He speaks no English, so communication was entirely through an interpreter. On a subsequent visit with him, he had his son present as an interpreter and it was evident that he is a man of warmth and very family-minded. He was most pleased with his portrait when Ronny and I presented him with it and asked how he could possibly repay us. I replied that anything that improved relations was all the repayment required. Although we have never discussed politics, he has on occasion apologized that he could not accept any invitations we have extended to him to public places in Jerusalem, and said he trusted we understood. He has, however, invited us to his home, which we take as a mark of friendship.

At our photographic visit the first time, he asked that I also do two visiting members of the Council, Sheikh Rajab Tamimi and Sheikh Sufyan Khalidy, whose portraits also appear here.

Sheikh Sufyan Khalidy, Sheikh Rajab Tamimi, Sheikh Hilmi El-Muhtarsib

Avraham Harmon, President, Hebrew University

Dr. Ephraim Katzir, President, State of Israel
Shimon Peres, Minister of Defense

Yitzhak Rabin

Mr. Rabin was Prime Minister at the time this portrait was taken, and as might be expected, the security checks I had to go through (and minute examination of my cameras and equipment) were considerable. He and I discussed politics and the economic situation, but this pleasant expression on the portrait only came about when we discussed his grandchild and his hobby of photography!

Professor Gershon Scholem

Professor Scholem left Germany in 1923 and joined Hebrew University in Jerusalem as Professor of Mysticism and Kabbalah. An outstanding philosopher and witty conversationalist, since 1968 he has been president of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

Dr. Yoel Sussman, President, Supreme Court

Joseph Tekoah, President, Ben Gurion University of the Negev

Archbishop Vassilios, Greek Orthodox Archpatriarchate

Professor Yigael Yadin

Yadin was the first Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army (age approximately 32) and was one of their top military men. In addition he is one of their outstanding archeologists. He is responsible for recognizing the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as the Massada development and excavations. Yadin has set up a new political party, the DMC (Democratic Movement for Change), which polled exceedingly well in the recent elections.

Yadin is also an avid photographer, and uses photography extensively in his archeological work, exploration and mountain climbing.

Yisrael Yeshayahu

Mr. Yeshayahu, a Sephardic from Yemen, is the former Speaker of the Knesset.
Bern Schwartz is a portrait photographer of international reputation whose present success follows hard on the heels of a successful industrial career.

His portraits record their subjects in poses and settings natural to them. Because of careful research before a sitting as well as technical ability and psychological insight, Mr. Schwartz's portraits seem to reveal moments when the personality of the sitter is interpreting itself uninterrupted by an outsider. His portraits have included royalty, statesmen, industrialists, religious leaders, scholars, musicians, dancers, actors, sculptors. His most recent exhibition is in London at the Colnaghi Gallery (October 11 through October 31, 1977).

Mr. Schwartz is married to Rosalyn Ravitch Schwartz, a graduate of Bryn Mawr and a Trustee of the College. He attended Lehigh University and received an Honorary Doctor of Laws from Widener College. Mr. Schwartz is Chairman of the Board of Sherman Clay & Company, a century-old chain of music stores based in California.
An Exhibition
11 October - 31 October, 1977
Great Hall of Thomas Library
Bryn Mawr College
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania