

Palestine at the New York World's Fair

A Vivid Description of the Pavilion to be Opened May 15

By Bernard Postal

WHEN the idea of the 1939 World's Fair was first mooted, Jews began discussing whether Jewish achievement should be represented. Out of a great variety of schemes grew the concrete idea for the Palestine Pavilion, and it was converted into reality by a committee representing a cross-section of American Jewish leadership. This committee contracted for space at the Fair, engaged architects and artists, and mobilised nationwide Jewish support. It was this committee, too, that decided that while the Jewish exhibit at the World's Fair should take the form of a Palestine Pavilion, it should also express the building urge of the Jewish people, its ideals of peace and human brotherhood and the universal values of Jewish traditions and hopes.

The cornerstone of the Pavilion was laid last May. The chief architect-designer is Arieh El-Hanani, and the exhibits were constructed in Palestine under his personal supervision.

Old and New.

CONCEIVED in the age-old tradition of the Mediterranean lands, but executed in the construction idiom of to-day with materials simple in design, the Pavilion is a long low building covering an area of 21,000 square feet right off the

main artery of the Fair grounds. The approach is through a gateway flanked by a high pylon, symbolic of the towers guarding the water supply and the lives of the Palestinian colonists. A stone-flagged court leading to the Pavilion building, the entrance to which is surmounted by three figures representing Learning, Agriculture and Crafts, immediately conveys the spirit of Palestine, for its pergola is paved with mosaics from the ancient synagogue of Beth Alpha. The three sections of the Pavilion lead onto this patio.

Passing through doors of red eucalyptus wood, the visitor enters a long hall, with a statue symbolising the Jewish pioneer at the head. This hall leads to a small historical rotunda, with panels of raised metal lettering on the left summarising the outstanding dates in the history of Jewish Palestine. On the right a basalt tablet commemorates the men and women who gave their lives toward the building of Palestine.

The visitor then moves into the Hall of Transformation. One wall is lined with a 24-foot map of

Palestine, executed in olive wood, indicating all the Jewish territory and settlements. The opposite wall has three pylons labelled Swamps, Hills, Sand, and beside each a large composite photomural showing the transformation of swamps into fertile, agricultural country; barren hills re-forested; and the city of Tel-Aviv grown out of the sands.

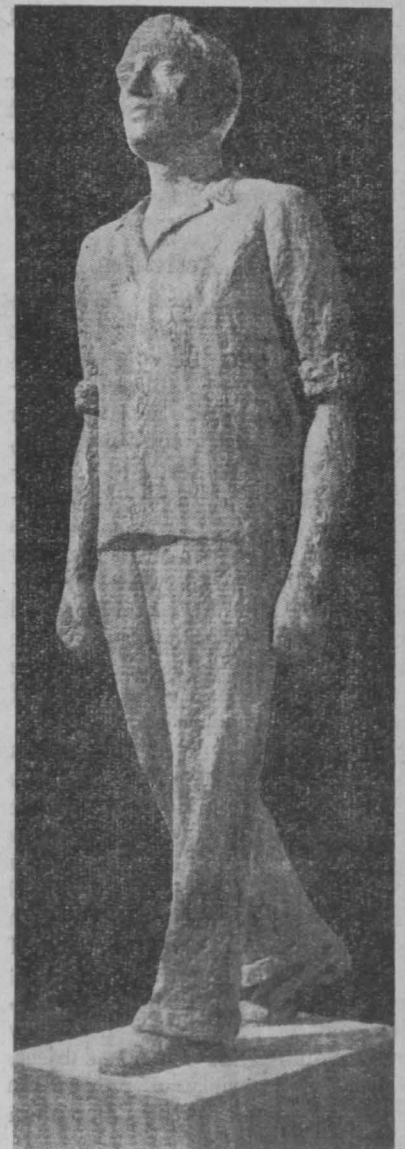
Agriculture and Resettlement.

NEARBY is the entrance to the Hall of Agriculture and Resettlement. The left wall is divided into three sections of murals. One depicts how many dunams of swamp have been drained; the second, planters terracing the hills and setting out trees; the third, the borers of artesian wells and their machinery. Below these murals a cross-section model of the geographic structure of Palestine shows reserves of sub-surface water.

On the south wall, against the silhouette of a water tower, water flows in a constant stream down the face of a wall having a photomural of the agricultural workers of the country, the tractor mechanic, the Shomer (guard), the girl gardener and the chassid ploughing. A chart indicates the rise in agricultural production and contrasts the percentage of Jews engaged in agricultural pursuits in Palestine with the Diaspora.

Two windows are devoted to the Keren Kayemeth and the Keren Hayesod. On the west, below the balcony, a large panoramic view of the Emek Jezreel reveals its fields and settlements. Below this there are twelve panels, one for each month of the year, and each supporting a basket filled with the produce of that month. At the foot of the stairs a column supporting a metal spiral tells the story of the development of the colonies.

On the balcony a mural recalls the agricultural activities of ancient Palestine, while a long table divided into sections represents the outstanding departments of Palestine agriculture.



"THE UNKNOWN PIONEER," an over-life-size sculpture in the entrance hall of the Palestine Pavilion. The work is by a Palestinian artist, M. Zipper.

There are also models of the ports of Haifa, Tel-Aviv, and Jaffa, and the airports at Lydda and Tel-Aviv, suspended on stainless steel columns.

The west well is devoted to models of Palestine's three chief cities: Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel-Aviv. Jerusalem has the place of honour, with a view of the old city and Mt. Scopus mounted on glass and illuminated from behind.

Industrial Development.

THE Hall of Industry is also on the balcony, and displays Palestine's foodstuff industries. A photo air mural depicts the Rutenberg hydro-electric plant on the Jordan with a super-imposed diagram of the country's electrification. A grille of illuminated glass tubes is filled with the chemical products of the Palestine Potash Company. Below it diagrams and graphs show the utilisation of Dead Sea products. In front of this stands a figure of Lot's wife in salt sculpture, symbolic of the Dead Sea products.

The rear wall, above the stairs, is devoted to an air mural of the salt drying pans of the Dead Sea. Wall cabinets for products of other industries, such as fabrics, perfumery, leather, clothing and metal

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ARIEH EL HANANI, chief architect of the Palestine Pavilion at the New York World's Fair, is shown here with his wife on their arrival recently in New York.

