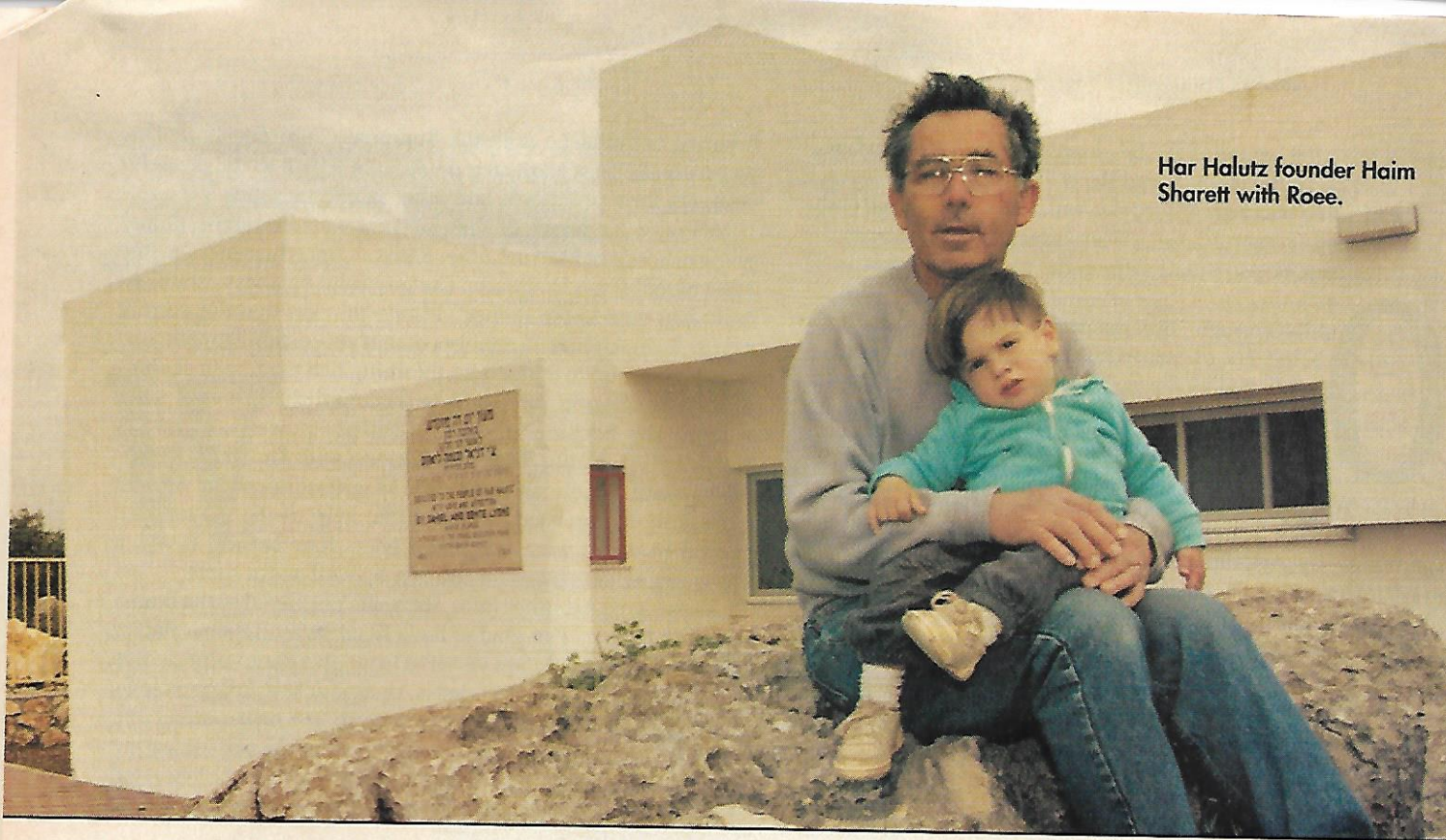


Har Halutz founder Haim Sharett with Roe.



# Why We Remain on the Mountain

The kids were finally asleep. Jason and Shlomit settled back on the couch with the electric heater blowing on their ankles and watched TV. Suddenly the screen went blank, then a chilling string of Hebrew code words was broadcast. A moment later the siren howled over our mountain-top village of Har Halutz in northern Israel. Scuds were on the way! Jason pulled the children out of bed, Shlomit grabbed the masks, and they dashed out to join the stream of dark figures carrying sleepy children through the night to the air raid shelter.

As they ran, a strange, white light raced silently, swiftly across the night sky. In seconds, Patriot missiles boomed up out of Haifa, met the Scud and destroyed it, showering the landscape with burning fragments.

Another Scud flew overhead early Friday evening as we walked to our

small community synagogue. Everyone dashed for their gas masks and piled into the shelters. In the long wait for the all-clear, somebody started singing "Shabbat Shalom." Others joined in and went on singing and clapping with "Shalom Aleichem," "L'cha Dodi," "Adon Olam," and even "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." The kids got up and danced, bouncing against each other in the cramped space. It was a prayer service without a siddur or a sermon; an expression of faith that Israel and Har Halutz were going to make it.

The community village of Har Halutz has only twenty-five families. More than half are of American origin. The nucleus of the settlement was formed in the U.S. in 1983 when a *shaliach* (Israeli emissary) to the Re-

form movement, Haim Sharett, began to gather candidates to settle a new community in Israel. The site was to be a rocky mountain top, thick with thistle and prickly scrub oak, with pure air and a sweeping view of northern Israel from the Kinneret Sea to the Mediterranean.

The first group (*garin*) came to meetings at the UAHC's Kutz and Eisner camps. They sang Israeli songs, danced, and held endless discussions about Zionism, jobs, and housing in Israel. In 1984 the first families packed their crates and came to the absorption center in the central Galilee town of Karmiel. One year later eight optimistic families moved up to the mountain top and into trailers on a muddy tract that had been scraped out of the scrub oak.

More than five years have passed. Children have been born, flowers and fruit trees planted, and the first perma-

**BY CHAYA BURSTEIN**