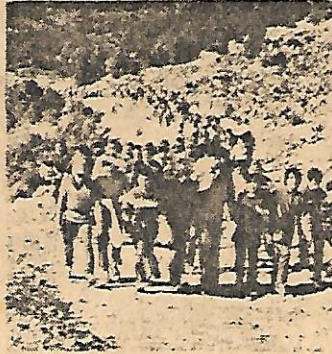


Rural Settlements in Galilee Depend on U.S. Support

Today Har Chalutz is an isolated mountain-top in the Galilee. Over the next two years it will become the new home for 45 American families seeking fulfillment in a totally Jewish environment. Steve and Marilyn Hoffman of St. Louis are leaving in April to settle as members of the *garin*, or nucleus, of Har Chalutz.

"We love the Galilee," Steve Hoffman said in a telephone interview, "and there is a vital need for more Jewish settlements in that area." The Galilee is one of several areas in Israel in which the Arab population — and the number of Arab villages — outweigh Jewish population 10 to one. The Galilee has also been a part of Israel since the State was founded in 1948.

In 1976, Israel perceived the need to expand the Jewish population in the Galilee, as Arab villages in the area be-



Israeli youngsters hike a rocky trail to a *mitzpeh* in the Galilee.

gan to spread out into land owned by the government. In order to establish a strategic network of Jewish enclaves, the *mitzpeh*, or presettlement concept, was developed. The *mitzpim* plan is a vast pioneering project in the Galilee that will include settlements on hilltops and slopes throughout the region. Tracing its his-

tory to the Bible, a *mitzpeh* was a lookout post. Today it is the name given to the site of a future settlement.

The *mitzpim* eventually will be similar to the small suburban "bedroom communities" surrounding major cities throughout the world. But for years now, many presettlements have been limited to a "first stage" number of seven or eight families. The "second stage," doubling their number to help them endure the hard, lonely winters and pave the way for completion of the settlement, has been denied for lack of funds for housing new families. According to Haim Sharett, *shaliach* (emissary) for the Har Chalutz settlement group, initially, young Israeli families were urged to move to the Galilee for the good of Israel, but many families resettled in the "Galil" because they liked the environment. The beauty and relative isolation of the mountains, and major financial support from the Jewish Agency has kept the program expanding — albeit slowly — for the past eight years.

The 1983-84 Jewish Agency budget of \$360 million is a balanced budget, limiting expenditures for its human-support programs to expected income. Expected income is to a large extent derived from Jewish Federation campaigns such as St. Louis.

In order to balance its budget, the Jewish Agency has had to cut \$25 million from vital programs. Major cuts have been made in construction and development of rural settlements in the Negev, Arava and the Galilee.

The settlers of Har Chalutz have many difficult years ahead of them. But because of advance planning from a base in the United States, they already have recruited 45 families and have established a strong financial foundation. Even with these advantages, no residential construction on Har Chalutz will be completed before 1986.

In a letter to her future neighbors on Har Chalutz, Chaya Burstein writes, "The view from this mountain-top is not only breathtakingly beautiful, but it also makes one think of history, of eternity. Stubborn, patriotic Galilean Jews once lived on these green, rock hills and now, after centuries, we Jews from America are coming to live here again."

The Jewish Agency "wishlist" cites the need for \$100 million for the construction of 200 additional housing units for existing *mitzpim* in the Galilee. These funds would make it possible for hundreds of Israeli families now waiting to move from crowded urban areas to the beautiful hills of Galilee. "The continued development of *mitzpim* in the Galilee can only happen if the American Jewish community makes a commitment to increase its support," according to Michael Suffian, 1983 general campaign chairman.