CHAPTER SEVEN

The Collective Village

INTRODUCTION

A kibbutz (from the Hebrew for "gathering") is a collective community. The first kibbutz—Degania—was established in 1910; as of 2010, there were some 270 kibbutzim in Israel. During the first years after its establishment, until it achieved economic viability, each kibbutz was usually supported financially by the Zionist movement. As a central part of the Zionist endeavor of settling the land, kibbutzim were at first based almost exclusively on agriculture. Currently their economic base includes industrial plants and high-tech businesses, as well as services such as those connected with tourism.

The kibbutzim were ideologically based on a combination of Zionism and socialism. Establishing a Jewish settlement in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Palestine was almost impossible for an individual family; such pioneering demanded a high level of cooperation within a group.

Many of the settlers came from European youth movements and organizations that had socialist orientations. The internal organization of the community was based on the concept of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." (The latter slogan was coined by Louis Blanc in 1851 and was common to socialist movements in general; its first use was mistakenly attributed to Karl Marx.) All property was owned communally; all income was pooled and divided according to individual/family needs; the community provided many of the basic services

traditionally provided by the individual family. Meals were prepared and eaten in a communal dining room; a communal clothing shop and laundry provided, mended, and laundered clothing; healthcare was provided for all; children were cared for in communal children's homes.

The decision in most kibbutzim to house and raise the children in communal children's homes was based on a number of considerations. Kibbutz members believed in gender equality and wished to enable women to have professions other than housekeeping, cooking, teaching, and childcare. The early kibbutzim were often very poor and aimed to provide their children with better living conditions than could be provided to adults; better security for the children was also a consideration. It should be noted that the communal children's homes were not meant to "replace" the family; indeed, every afternoon and evening the children spent three to four hours of quality time with their parents and siblings.

By the 1970s in many kibbutzim the children lived under the same roof as their parents; now all do. The children's homes still provide year-round quality childcare six days a week, usually from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.; the children attend local schools.

Since the 1990s most kibbutzim have chosen to undergo a process of "privatization." Property, including means of production, is still owned communally; members' income is still pooled. There is a high level of mutual assistance in areas such as healthcare and children's education. There is a connection, however, between the individual income of the family unit and the financial "allowance" that each unit receives.

A moshav (Hebrew for "settlement") is a cooperative agricultural community composed of individual small farms. The first moshav—Nahalal—was founded in 1921. As of the 1990s there are some 450 moshavim. As was the case with the kibbutzim, the establishment of moshavim was central to the Zionist project of settling the land and, of course, enabling the Yishuv to feed itself. From the beginning each family farm was individually owned, although the farms were of an equal, fixed size. Each family produced crops such as vegetables, fruits, grains—and other agricultural goods such as dairy products, meat, etc.—via individual labor, although labor and other resources, such as heavy agricultural equipment, were often shared within the community, and agricultural produce was often marketed together. Each family was an individual economic unit, providing for its own needs via the profits of its farm, other small businesses belonging to family members, and work done outside the village.

The years when Kahn Bar-Adon was an active journalist saw great international interest in the Jewish cooperative and collective movements that flourished in the form of the kibbutz and moshav. To this day, these forms of community and the changes that they have undergone are widely studied. Kahn Bar-Adon wrote at length on both as a result of her extensive personal experience: prior to her marriage, she was a resident of Givat Brenner kibbutz and "covered" life in the cooperative and collective villages for *The Palestine Post*. After her marriage and the birth of her son, she and her family resided in the Merhavia moshav, and her son was cared for (during the day) in the children's homes of the Merhavia kibbutz (the two settlements of the same name are contiguous). Bar-Adon was thus uniquely qualified to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these forms of settlement, both as to their contributions to the Zionist project of settling the land and from the point of view of a mother raising a child.

GOD COMES TO THE COMMUNE

No date; probably written when Bar-Adon lived in Kibbutz Givat Brenner (1936–1939)
An article from Bar-Adon's personal archive
Earlier version in *Palestine Review*, "Town and Country" section

Most of the kibbutzim were established by non-religious young people. Many of these idealists had been raised in orthodox religious homes in Central and Eastern Europe, but before their immigration to Palestine, they had "lost their religion." The kibbutzim and moshavim were, however, committed to giving expression to their sense of belonging to the Jewish people via the creation of a secular expression of Jewish holidays, memorial days, and the Sabbath. In this article, Kahn describes the first communal Sabbath program in an unnamed kibbutz as well as the arguments among the kibbutz members that preceded the Sabbath celebration.

In one of the larger communal settlements of the country, the Sabbath queen is standing before the gates. But whether or not she will be invited to enter, and in what guise, is a question under heated dispute.

The subject was raised some weeks ago when the cultural committee introduced a Sabbath program on Friday evening. This action was

revolutionary in a communal settlement belonging neither to the Mizrachi [Zionist religious political party] nor to Agudat Israel [orthodox religious political party]. True, the Sabbath spirit has always prevailed, expressed by rest from labor, white tablecloths and flowers on the table, special Friday night entertainment and a general atmosphere of relaxation. But this new program was a distinct departure. Among other innovations, there were Sabbath candles on the children's table and passages were read from the Bible, which contained the word God.

The members attended the initial Sabbath ceremony with mingled curiosity and astonishment. The children were delighted to be allowed to eat in the general dining room, to sing songs and to stay up late. The old parents were beside themselves with joy. They would not venture into the non-kosher dining hall, but the reflection of the Sabbath candles reached their little synagogue. They said to each other in Yiddish, "At last our children are beginning to be sensible."

But the communal settlements are democracies. Even in matters of culture, the cultural committee is not the final word. After the quiet of the Sabbath had passed and the tallow of the Sabbath candles had cooled, a storm broke loose among the members.

God, in the accepted, familiar form has thus far been eliminated from the communal settlements. The words "labor," "soil" and "equality for all men" have been substituted by these pioneers while treading new ways of life. With God, the traditional observances in their orthodox forms disappeared. Other forms were introduced, but only in a provisional, experimental spirit.

During these three weeks, the judgment of the cultural committee has been weighed, measured, and torn to shreds. There are those who are opposed to any formal Sabbath ceremony. There are those who favor the ceremony, minus God. And there are a few—a very few—who favor the ceremony plus God. Between these distinct camps are hundreds of varying shades of opinions and theories. During the recent troubled years, the major discussions have centered, perforce, around practical problems. How to make both ends meet when the orange crop brings a loss? How many parents will the budget allow us to accept from Germany, Poland, Austria? How dare we not accept all? How can we afford to build new living quarters—and how can we afford not to build them?

But since the Sabbath candles were lit, practical considerations and budget deficits have been relegated to the background. Everyone—including

the harassed treasurer himself—has been discussing philosophy, ethics, theology, mythology and psychology. There was no corner of the settlement immune from these discussions. Philosophy and theology stalked into the vineyards, the tomato patch, the laundry, the barn, the sewing room and the orchard. Determined souls continued with their tea at 5:45 a.m. and with the argument that they had begrudgingly interrupted at 11:45 p.m. the night before.

The fullest debates occur during the evening meal. The dining room workers are annoyed when, long after 8:00, members still sit over plates of half-finished food while they expound to their neighbors, "If we teach our children about fairies and gnomes, why can't we teach them about God?"

The arguments rage in the shower baths. Someone turns off the tap long enough to question through the soapsuds, "Why are you all so afraid of the word 'God'? You remind me of the man who said, 'At last, blessed be the holy Name, we have finished with God.'" The shoemaker nails a heel where a toe ought to be while he points out, "I have devoted my whole life to this revolution. Now the cultural committee gives us a Sabbath program with passages about God. Before I know it, my son will be growing sidecurls and wearing a skullcap!"

"I came from a religious Lithuanian home," comments a worker in the vineyard as he ties up a branch heavy with unripe fruit. "I never heard a lie in my home. Whether or not I agree with my father is beside the point. What he told me, he believed. With all his heart. We must do the same for our children. We cannot teach them things that we do not believe."

"You're right" comes from the other side of the vine. "If we are going to read on the Sabbath, let us read from Brenner or from Shakespeare or from anything that has a bearing on our life and our problems. But nothing in which we do not believe."

During these hectic three weeks, one learned that one hadn't really known one's own comrades. Rachel, the delicate little girl from the tree nursery who looks as though she had never quite stopped believing in elves, proves to be a fierce and uncompromising rationalist. Naphtali, the husky six-footer who rumbles through the orange grove on a tractor admits unblushingly that while he is reading the Bible, he believes every word of it. Rachel laughs condescendingly. Naphtali stands his ground. For an hour, while their tea and beans grow cold, they are at daggers' ends.

"You can't deprive children of God," argues Naphtali. "It's an instinctive hunger. Besides, if we eliminate the word God, then we must eliminate the Bible."

"Not at all," retorts Rachel. "The Bible can be taught scientifically. The children can be taught that once upon a time people believed in many gods. Later, they believed in one God. And now we have gone beyond this. It can be taught in the same way as Greek mythology."

"I am not prepared to rank the Bible with Greek mythology. You are too poor. You believe in nothing," flings back Naphtali and leaves the table.

"You are too rich. You believe in everything," Rachel calls after him.

This week a general meeting was held with the Sabbath as the sole subject for discussion. "On the first Sabbath there were no seats to be had in the dining room and many of us were standing. But in the third week there were plenty of empty places," states a member as conclusive proof that the present ceremony is not popular.

"That's because we added more tables and benches in the third week," interrupts a rabid "pro."

The chairman raps for order. Numerous pros and cons are heard. And then the discussion is ended in order to give the floor to Dr. Mordecai Kaplan [founder of the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism], now at the Hebrew University, who happened to be spending the weekend in the settlement. After his summary, the meeting is adjourned until next Wednesday. But after the formal adjournment, the meeting begins again. Excited groups gather in knots to declaim in Hyde Park fashion.

"Standing on a bench talking about 'science' and we can't tell the children that what they see in the …by the worker and the Histadrut!…that those who are most opposed to the singing on Friday nights are the very ones who sing Hasidic [Jewish religious] songs the loudest in the shower. I've even heard the Kol Nidre [declaration recited in the synagogue before the beginning the evening service of Yom Kippur, the day of atonement] around the New Year. It's simple psychology. When a man is divested of his clothes, he becomes his natural self."

MISHMAR HAEMEK

Zif Zif, pp. 177–182
Unpublished manuscript from Bar-Adon's personal archive
Earlier version in *A Journal of Jewish Life and Letters*, December 1935, pp. 18–19

Kibbutz Mishmar Haemek was established in 1926; it was the first kibbutz in the western part of the Jezreel Valley. Life was hard during the first years, both physically and emotionally; the assumption was that

the young members were motivated by their commitment to communal living and devotion to the cause of settling the land. Bar-Adon's article, written less than a decade later, celebrates the signs of individuality that began to make themselves felt: the desire to dress festively after work and to decorate one's personal living space.

The settlements in Palestine have come to be blanketed under the term kvutzoth. About this blanket term has sprung up a definite hypothesis. This hypothesis includes certain accepted equations: that the motivating idea and ideal behind all the settlements is communal living; that the struggle with the stony soil and the aridity is terrific whether they are cultivating citrus fruit, stone fruit, or wheat; that the children are beautiful and live on the fat of the land; that the adults live on the lean, and many of them suffer from ailments engendered by undernourishment; that their moral codes are confusing; that they dance the hora even after an excruciatingly hard day's work; that their religious beliefs are rather unorthodox and that they have transcended material needs.

These equations are dramatic and easy to grasp. Therefore they are apt to shut out from the casual observer the less dramatic but equally important lights and shadows that distinguish one colony from the other. For the chalutzim have not been taken in by the blanket term. They are not content to be merely members of another kvutzah. Unlike experimental settlements in other countries, each group here fights an individual battle to achieve what it believes to be the "life abundant."

After the observer has become familiar with the accepted fundamental equations of kvutzah life, he is apt to turn to these lights and shadows to find that distinguishing spark that in the end is to spell out the immortality of the Palestine experiment.

This spark, this gesture in the direction of perfection, should, I suppose, be something imposing and high-sounding. I am therefore abashed to admit to having found what I believe to be of tremendous value lurking in a pair of polka-dotted curtains, a cracked vase of anemones and a rather poor watercolor of a tree. I remember that the first day I encountered these commonplace things in a hut in the colony of Mishmar Haemek [the first kibbutz established in the western part of the Jezreel Valley, in 1926]. I wanted to shout from the very summit of the hills, "Eureka." It seems that in this pair of curtains, the members of the Mishmar Haemek colony have linked the sacredness of privacy with the sacredness of communal living,

and thereby have overcome that morbid "mass living" that, to many, would seem to preclude the possibility of a rich life in a kvutzah.

Not that you will not find curtains and a vase in other kvutzoth. You will. But they have happened in passing. In Mishmar Haemek they are not casual. They are part of a definite kvutzah philosophy of remembering where communal life ends and privacy begins.

Mishmar Haemek, located in the Haifa district, is not as widely known as other groups since it is comparatively young, little more than six years old.

Its history is a repetition of past experiences in the settling of Palestine. Six years ago, this spot that is now one of the healthiest in the country, was malaria infested. In the early days there were three shifts of workers; one was hired out to help in neighboring settlements, thus bringing income to the Mishmar Haemek budget; one worked in Mishmar Haemek; the other was in a hospital.

There is a fine school now. And cow sheds. And an incubating room in which four thousand chicks were to be hatched several days after I left. There is a forest in embryo which, although the trees will not be full-grown for twenty-five years, is already proudly referred to as "our forest." There is the machinery house in which are three giant tractors, a baler and a thrasher.

I remember one night being invited to see what they termed "the changing of the Buckingham Palace guards." Since the soil was still damp from the rains, it was necessary for the plowing to continue day and night. Therefore the chalutzim work in three shifts. Three laborers, who were to man the tractors at 10:00, piled into the truck with us and we started out to bring back those who had been in the fields since 5:00. Bumping over the narrow road with the moon casting eerie shadows, the plowed fields appeared like a "no-man's land." In the distance were the small lights of the tractors. After a half hour's ride, we reached the appointed spot and the tractors pushed through the soil like war tanks, in our direction. Tired workers emerged from the machine, exchanged greetings, and piled into our truck. The workers who had come with us slipped into their places on the machine, and again the tractors were off, plowing through the soil.

When we returned, I expected to find the laborers in bed, as they must rise at 5:30 in the morning. But through the doorway of the communal hall, serious faces were outlined in the flickering oil lamp. One of the meetings, which take place three times weekly, was still in progress. There is much to be discussed since everything from the purchase of a tractor to the minute detail of kitchen management concerns everyone.

It was at one such meeting, in the early beginnings of the colony, that the settlers decided to purchase barracks that had been used by some soldiers in Haifa. The budget was small. Every piaster counted. The purchase involved a momentous decision. It meant allocating money for which there were numerous other uses. Other colonies had constructed large dormitories, delaying the luxury of individual abodes for more prosperous days. But Mishmar Haemek decided that, regardless of the pinch in other directions, individual houses were not a luxury but a necessity. They had come here to share their food, their labor, their hopes, their dreams. But the indefinable "I" faced in an hour of meditation they will not share. And so they bought the barracks and have added other barracks to them as the colony grew. One person, or a couple, occupies each.

They have surrounded the "I" with a few things of stark simplicity and yet amazing charm. So the visitors cannot—as in some other colonies—visit one house and have seen all. If you would really know Mishmar Haemek, you must get a glimpse of the interior of each of these externally ugly shacks, for no two are alike. The furnishings have been made literally from scraps, as the budget does not provide for such luxury. There are desks, tables, and smoking stands of charming design, in the wood and iron combination that is the choice of the modernistic furniture maker. What is the secret? They were fashioned from discarded beds, the iron rods of which now form borders and knobs for these pieces that could stand without apology in any home.

The furniture had been made during rest hours and on the Sabbath. Sometimes exchanges had been effected: a man who knew carpentry working on the furniture when it was his turn to work in the fields on the Sabbath, while the prospective owner of the furniture did his stint in the fields.

Some of the houses have small flower gardens. Others have climbing vines. Another has a walk outlined with carefully chosen stones. Most of them have doorknockers. And they are used. For calling, in Mishmar Haemek, is a formal event. These people retreat into their modest "palaces" to read or to work, and their comrades are most careful not to overstep the bounds of intimacy. In other words, they have taken with them into this little outpost those social amenities that enrich but do not encumber civilization, but they are indeed rare specimens of youth in revolt because they show discrimination. They have had the wisdom not to revolt blindly against everything the outside world accepts.

Mishmar Haemek has a "music room." This too is a barrack and, I suspect, a luxury. They might, as in other colonies, have been content with

a piano in the dining room. But somehow they have managed to scrape up an extra piano where the chalutz musician may be alone. The room is unfurnished except for the white bust of a chalutz who was drowned in the Jordan. At the base of the bust, the work of a comrade, is a medicine bottle filled with flowers.

The girls in Mishmar Haemek also have revolted wisely against society. They have slyly retained a bit of vanity for which they make no apology. The majority of them had a few clothes when they entered the colony. Others have relatives who send them things from time to time. So the majority of them "dress" for dinner. By "dressing" I mean a blouse with a frill or a perky red bow at the neck. So simple is the wardrobe that it in no way interferes with their communal creed. But somehow it adds a dignity—a variation to their evening meal of fruit, soup and thick bread. You are less aware—and I think they are too—of the backbreaking task to which they have dedicated themselves. There is something magnificent in this gesture to brush aside the morbidity of peasant life. A girl will plow the soil under a cruel sun all day; she will help to reforest the land; she will live on the simplest fare. But in the evening she wants to put a blue ribbon on her hair because it matches her eyes and nobody else's eyes. Then she becomes Rachel of the blue ribbon—a very different person from Ruth of the pink ribbon who is eating cucumbers at her elbow.

Such tiny things—a pair of polka-dotted curtains—a path outlined with stones—a blue ribbon. Mishmar Haemek achieved them by sacrifice in the beginning. But already she has reaped and reaped again the seeds she sowed in the name of the irrevocable "I" in all of us.

BUILT IN A DAY

Probably written in July 1937
An article from Bar-Adon's personal archive
Unclear where the article was published

The British Mandatory authorities severely monitored and restricted new Jewish settlement in Palestine. During the 1936–1939 Arab Revolt, however, the Mandatory authorities agreed tacitly to the establishment of fifty-seven Jewish settlements: fifty-two kibbutzim and five moshavim. These settlements were established on land that had officially been purchased by the Jewish National Fund. The legal basis

for the authorities' turning a blind eye was a Turkish Ottoman law, still in effect under the Mandate, according to which a new building, even if illegal, cannot be demolished after its roof is completed. For this reason the new settlements were each set up in one day. Building materials were brought, as well as all necessary equipment for living on the site and beginning to work the land. This method of settlement was known as "tower and stockade." In this article Bar-Adon describes the first day—the actual establishment—of Kibbutz Kfar Menahem.

"Three o'clock. Three o'clock."

The darkness and deep morning silence is broken by the voice of the shomer [night guard]. He makes his rounds, calling the hour into the tents and shacks of the twenty men and two women who have been chosen to represent Givat Brenner [kibbutz founded in 1928; Kahn lived there for three years] today at the establishing of Kfar Menahem [originally founded in 1935; during the Arab Revolt in 1936, it was abandoned by Jews and destroyed by Arabs; a kibbutz was reestablished in the same location as part of the Tower and Stockade method in 1937], named for Menachem Ussishkin [Russian-born Zionist leader and head of the Jewish National Fund]. At the same time, a discordant chorus of alarm clocks issues from the dwellings of those who feared that the shomer might forget to awaken them. Almost all of the 450 workers would have liked to lend a hand in the founding of this new kibbutz. Like the recent settlements in the valley of Beit She'an, the walls, watchtower, and dining hall must be built in a day. There is, however, too much work now in the fields of Givat Brenner to permit a general exodus. The chosen few could not risk being left behind.

The shomer and the alarm clocks do their work and, in a few minutes, shadowy forms, some carrying lanterns, quietly make their way through the sleeping settlement to the dining room. It is an odd hour. There is little conversation. All partake of their bread, tea and tomatoes in silence.

Gathered around the table in the eerie light, it is a motley little crew. There are the *ghaffirim* [Jewish police unit that protected Jewish settlements] in their uniforms and tall brown hats, carrying rifles. The others, in all manner of working clothes, are carrying all manner of tools and implements: saws, spades and hammers.

At the appointed hour, four o'clock, we are all waiting on the main road for the contingents of workers from Rehovot, Na'an, and Kfar Bilu. It is not yet dawn. Workers, ghaffirim and tools are sprawled on the ground,

taking queer shapes in the uncertain grayness. A few snatch catnaps, their heads nestled on the asphalt road. The majority listens anxiously for the sound of approaching wheels. They have a long day's work ahead of them and are eager to be well under way with it before the sun climbs too high.

Wheels, coming from the direction of Kfar Bilu. They speed along the empty road. Almost as soon as we hear the lorries, we see them. They draw up and are greeted with shouts and cheers. It is an exciting procession! Five lorries, led by a small car, the Pathfinder. The lorries are filled to overflowing with building materials, tools and workers. The wooden walls that are to encircle Kfar Menahem, as well as parts of the dining room, were constructed in Kfar Bilu. Now they are being transported to the site of the settlement. Arms and heads emerge from the closely packed segment of the wall. The workers of Givat Brenner pile into one of the lorries and the procession moves on.

At Gedera [one of the first Jewish colonies in Israel—founded 1884—today a city] our members are increased. Once again, the ribbon of vehicles moves on. Ahead of us and behind us are queer pyramids of building materials and workers. A few kilometers after Gedera we leave the asphalt highway and turn into a dirt road.

From now on, most of our energy is devoted to trying to maintain our balance. We are packed into the lorry like sardines. With every lurch (and there is lurching every foot of the way) we fall backward and forward like a pack of cards. Each one clutches the shoulder and belt of the man in from of him, as though for dear life. Now the lorries in front of us and behind us look like a caravan of camels, their passengers and loads swaying precariously.

We pass through Arab villages, which are still half asleep. The women, in their brightly colored dresses, have just come to the well for water, earthen jugs on their heads. The camels look lazier and sleepier and haughtier than usual. A villager peers out from under a black umbrella and rubs his eyes several times as though fearing that he were still asleep and dreaming. But the children, who are surprised at nothing and pleased by everything, wave their hands and shout "shalom." The drivers wedge the lorries like shoehorns through the narrow alleys.

But now we have even left the uncomfortable dirt road. There is no road at all. We go forward through untracked wilderness. The lorries navigate ruts and hills as though they were tanks. Yes, we are going forward to Kfar Menahem. But where is Kfar Menahem? We have lost the way.

For a while the lorries stand in the middle of nowhere while the small car endeavors to find our destination. Someone remarks, "No wonder it

took us forty years to get to Palestine from Egypt." We cannot inquire of passing bedouins, "Where is Kfar Menahem?" because we are carrying Kfar Menahem on the lorries.

After some search, the settlers who are awaiting our arrival are found. The sun is just coming up over the horizon as our strange caravan approaches its destination. We know that we are twenty-eight kilometers from Rehovot and that the nearest Jewish settlements are Gedera on one hand and Be'er Tuvia on the other. But except for this knowledge, we might be on the edge of the moon. There is nothing as far as the eye can see but stubble and stone—stone and stubble.

Even before we reach the spot where the prospective Kfar Menahem settlers are gesticulating a welcome, work begins. There is a small impassable wadi that must be filled in before the lorries can cross. The workers alight, construct a temporary road, and we pass over.

The men are measuring off the ground with a tape. This is the only sign we have that we are standing near the site of Kfar Menahem. Within a few minutes other lorries arrive. Now the place is suddenly as alive as circus grounds. Vehicles are moving about. Workers are alighting. Building materials are being unloaded. The ghaffirim are lined up for inspection.

Then comes the shouted command, "Carpenters and iron workers, here!" Work has begun.

The women are given sacks and are directed to a nearby wadi to gather the stones needed to fill in the walls. The sun is still low. We work quickly. One sack is filled up after another sack. About every half hour a wagon comes to collect them. It is unfriendly country. The briars stick to your legs and your fingers. But one sack is quickly filled up after another sack.

Now the air is filled with the sounds of hammering. What seemed like a wasteland of the moon a half hour ago begins to simulate civilization. The sound of men hammering in the wilderness to make their abode—probably the first sound that ever burst on the ears of the world.

Squatting in the wadi, picking up stones, we can see nothing. But the sound of the hammering is like music, goading us on. We pick stones in time to the hammering. Another sack. Quickly, another sack. Soon the wagon will make its rounds again.

It is 8:30. The overseer of the work appears. "You must be hungry and thirsty. Come back to the settlement for breakfast." Settlement? Who said there was a settlement? We clamber up and look back to the spot where we left two men measuring the ground with a tape.

The long wooden walls stand in impertinent triumph. So we walk back to the settlement for breakfast.

We find the settlement convulsed with movement. A booth has already been constructed, and women sit on the mat floor dispensing food. A truck has arrived from Rehovot filled with purple grapes. The workers refresh themselves. The base of the water tower and a goodly part of the dining hall is already finished.

"Back to work!" comes the command. In a moment the air is filled again with the rat-tat-tat of the hammers. Workers fitting on the roof of the dining hall, constructing the walls, piecing together the water tower. Work goes on at high pressure. Not a minute to lose. Hammer. Hammer. Hammer. Lorries lumber in and out of the walls, replenishing the building materials. Hammer. Hammer. Hammer. Men building their abode. And the sounds of their building floats out over the wilderness like a symphony.

There are wagons of grapes and bread—and even bologna from Rehovot. But no water! There is no water in the vicinity of Kfar Menahem, and it must be hauled in trucks. The supply of water had been sent in a tank that formerly contained oil. It is undrinkable.

All morning and until early afternoon the workers suffer from thirst. The sun is scorching. The activity within the walls stirs the dry yellow sands until it seemed like the desert in a windstorm and chokes one worker. By the time the water supply arrives, the tongues of the workers are literally hanging out. No, life in Kfar Menahem will not be easy.

Toward noon, a triumphant shout goes up. Slowly, very slowly, the watchtower is raised from the ground to an upright position. Now the settlement is even more of a settlement.

After lunch comes the official inauguration. Everyone gathers within the four walls. A number of workers clamber up the watchtower, which is already strong enough to serve as a gallery. Others are perched on the skeleton of the dining room. One of the settlers of Kfar Menahem speaks. This is the second time that this group has tried to settle here. During the disturbances, their holdings had been destroyed. He was followed by a member of the BILU who had settled in Gedera fifty-five years ago, before Gedera was Gedera. He stands on the water tank, which serves as a platform, sturdy as an old olive tree, and punctuates his words of hope and encouragement with vigorous taps of his walking stick.

A rousing song, and then comes the command, "Back to the roof!" The workers go back to the roof of the dining hall. Hammer. Hammer. Hammer. Kfar Menahem has been inaugurated.

It is late afternoon. The dining room has been completed. Some of the workers are resting in one of the rooms. Others are eating in the other room. The wall is being completed. The stones must be filled in between the two layers of board to serve as a barricade against attack. The women stand in line and relay the baskets of stones from the lorry to the man who is lowering them into the wall.

Rows of hands reach out and rhythmically the baskets are passed from one hand to another hand. The overseer is without mercy. "Tempo! Tempo!" he shouts and the baskets pass along as though they were moving on an electric belt. Quickly. Quickly. The sun is setting. Tempo. Tempo. The baskets pass from hand to hand. There is no sound but the crunching of the stones as they are shoveled from the lorries to the baskets. Tempo! Tempo! Baskets passing from one hand to another hand. Your arms begin to ache. But no time to stop. Soon the wall will be filled up. Tempo! No sound but the crunch of the stones and the shout of the overseer. Tempo! Filled baskets. Empty baskets. Hands. Hands. Tempo!

It is time to return home. We clamber back into the lorry, except several of the ghaffirim who will remain for the night. Now we ride back in state over the wadi that we filled in the morning. Once again we are packed in like sardines and frantically grab hold of shoulders, belts, and even necks as the lorry careens over the pathless wilderness.

When we are a kilometer away, someone raises the cry, "Kfar Menahem." We look back. There it stands—four wooden walls and a watchtower. And inside the walls, the twenty men and three women who are determined to water this forbidding wilderness, after they have found water with which to water it.

Four wooden walls and a watchtower. Kfar Menahem fades out of sight.

FOREWORD

From the book *The Twin Villages of Merhavia*, 1948, pp. 5–7

Bar-Adon's explains the differences between the two different forms of collective settlements: kibbutz and moshav.

"Despite wide divergence in practice, they are twin branches growing out of a common trunk," wrote a settler of Nahalal regarding the kibbutz (collective settlement) and the moshav (cooperative settlement).

The collective twin, because it is more drastic and more dramatic (having eliminated the family as an economic unit and all private possessions), has been more talked about then the conservative cooperative twin. When you enter a kibbutz and see the communal dinning hall, the children's house, and the communal wardrobe, you realize that this is something new under the sun and warrants study. Many questions are aroused. What of spending money? What of the lazy member? What is the relation between husband and wife, between mother and child? This fascinating laboratory for human relations can hold your attention for years because it is never static. This collective movement to make new men as well as new farmers is one of the prime achievements of modern Palestine.

The cooperative twin is less spectacular. When you enter a moshav and see the individual houses and farm buildings, it reminds you of a village anywhere. You may admire the tree-lined streets and vine-covered cottages. Then you may dismiss the settlement with the vague knowledge that there's some sort of mutual assistance here. But there are fewer questions. The setup is more familiar, less provocative and less apt to inspire lyricism. The accepted romantic picture of the Palestinian chalutz (pioneer), plowing a furrow or dancing the hora, usually has a kibbutz background.

In this comparison between life in the kibbutz and the moshav, I wish to show the moshavnikim (moshav members) plowing their furrows and dancing the hora to the same rhythms as the kibbutznikim, although the arrangement is so different. I have made no effort to be objective or impartial because I believe the effort unnecessary. I have lived in a kibbutz and I have lived in a moshav. I see no question at all of which form of society is better. They are different. But both have raised a generation of sons and daughters rooted in the soil of the Homeland on the honorable basis of self-labor.

In comparing the two systems and the people, I have had to skip over many of the individual persons, and each is a story in himself. It was difficult to pass over the two streets of the moshav without stopping at the houses to tell the stories within.

And how can one write of the kibbutz without introducing T., the tractor driver who is generally inarticulate but talks poetry in prose when he describes his fields or the rounds of the seasons. And S., the baker with

whom the children can arrange for pita (Arab flat bread) to be especially baked and be told with all ceremony when to call for it. And Z., the teacher who has taught a generation. And T., the driver of the lorry who can be gruff as a bear but is adored by the children, most of whom pass through the stage of wanting to be T. "when I grow up" Or C., the metapelet (nurse) [caregiver for kibbutz children] who swims through the currents of a collective kindergarten, talking psychology when necessary but remaining at core as warm and loveable as your old comfy slippers or a cinnamon bun, and washing fifteen sets of necks and behind-the-ears with as much deftness and heart as most mothers can wash one. Or Y., the carpenter who makes mandolins trimmed with butterflies and birds, as a hobby. And Y., the dentist who tends his lawn with the goldfish pond after working hours and still has time for art and dramatics; and his wife H., who combines being a children's doctor with being a member of the settlement. And S., the builder who dreams in stone and concrete and makes dovecotes as well. And Husha, master of Aza the dog, who loves the collective and the people in it so deeply that he can criticize them both, keep his sense of humor and perspective, and understand everything in spite of everything.

A word of safeguard. I have tried not to limit this comparison to Merhavia. But treating kibbutzim and moshavim in a general way has pitfalls. It would be easier, I imagine, to make a blanket statement about thousands of main streets in America than about a few moshavim in Palestine. Despite general similar lines, each moshav has its distinct personality depending upon the land of origin of the settlers, how long they've been here, whether the soil is rocky and whether water is scarce or plentiful. These differences are even more marked in the kibbutzim where political parties come into the picture. I happened to find myself next door to a kibbutz of the Hashomer Hatzair [Socialist–Zionist secular Jewish youth movement founded in 1913 in Galicia; was one of the four kibbutz movements in Israel]. This was by chance not by choice, for party differences are not of particular interest to me where the issue of collective living is concerned and I would have felt equally good had kibbutz Merhavia belonged to Hever Hakvutzot [one of the four kibbutz movements, founded in 1925; favored small kibbutzim], Hakibbutz Hameuhad [one of the four kibbutz movements, founded in 1927; favored large, unselective kibbutzim] or the orthodox Hapoel Hamizrachi Zionists [religious pioneers who founded collective settlements in Israel and were the smallest kibbutz and moshav movement; founded in 1935].

But it happened to be Hashomer Hatzair, and so it should be borne in mind that they are the most radical group and that this expresses itself, aside from political beliefs, in many small ways in day-to-day life. I have tried not to dwell on things specific to this group that would add nothing to the general comparison of kibbutz-moshav. But characteristics of Hashomer Hatzair were bound to creep in.

So this isn't a blanket main street of kibbutz and moshav. It is just one collective and one cooperative main street as I've seen them.

CHILDREN

From the book, *The Twin Villages of Merhavia*, 1948, pp. 57–70

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, in the kibbutzim, children were cared for in communal children's homes. Kibbutz members believed in gender equality and wished to enable women to have professions other than housekeeping, cooking, teaching, and childcare. The early kibbutzim were often very poor and wished to provide their children with better living conditions than could be provided to adults. It should be noted that the communal children's homes were not meant to "replace" the family; indeed, every afternoon and evening the children spent three to four hours of quality time with their parents and siblings.

The moshavim, on the other hand, were cooperative villages composed of individual family farms. As such, children were raised at home, attended local schools, and often took part in the work of the family farm.

In the booklet, The Twin Villages of Merchavia, Bar-Adon compares and contrasts the two forms of settlement. We have reprinted Bar-Adon's foreword, followed by her chapter devoted to raising children.

A group of children from the moshav and the kibbutz were traveling to a sports meet by train. At noon one of the kibbutznikim opened a neat cardboard container and distributed sandwiches and fruit, packed in waxed paper. Then the moshavnikim opened their individual lunches; some had more and some had less; some were well packed and some were in paper bags, damp from mayonnaise or mustard. The kibbutz lunches were well balanced and carefully thought out by the one woman who had the job to

do. The moshav lunches depended upon the personality, mood and time at the disposal of each mother and on the individual likes of the child—pickles, hotdogs, a wing of chicken, even an indigestible piece of fried fish. One of the young moshavnikim eyed the opposite row and remarked deprecatingly, "Look, they're all eating the same thing! That's the kibbutz for you." The retorts pelted from the communal side of the coach included a resume of collectivism, brotherhood, sharing and equal sandwiches for all, ending with a triumphant, "Now that's the kibbutz for you."

The little scene stuck in my mind as a simple portrayal of two sets of children. The kibbutz child is reared intelligently, rationally, even luxuriously, although he may lack at times the personal touch implied in that fried fish. The moshav child is reared according to the intelligence and means of his parents for better or for worse. The kibbutz children, being reared in a group, have advantages and luxuries of which no moshav home can ever dream. On the other hand, the moshav child has free access to his parents.

When the kibbutz children go for walks with the metapelet, they are models of what the well-cared-for child should look like; and when they come from the children's house after their afternoon naps, they look as though each had stepped from a bandbox. Visitors to the kibbutzim are always impressed by these children, glowing with health and cleanliness, who are the supreme achievement of the kibbutz system.

When the moshav children come to play with my son, I am reminded of that juvenile film, *The Gang*, for they are a motley assortment of the well-cared-for and the neglected. Each child carries the imprint of his home environment. His manners or lack of them, his haircut or lack of one, his apple-red cheeks or his pallor despite the farm fare, tell us whether the mother has managed to keep her head above water in her sea of tasks. One child has a shiny new bicycle. His little pal, whose father doesn't believe in bought toys or can't afford them, is eaten by envy and must content himself with a discarded wagon wheel.

But when I remind them to go home for supper, they have a traditional breaking-up song that runs, "Habeitah b'simcha, simcha (going home with joy, with joy)." Despite their discordant voices, this is celestial music to my ears, for it means peace and quiet descends on my home and on my son. And as I watch them trailing down the road to their respective homes, this seems the greatest compensation for the moshav child—this "going home" after play to supper and bed in his parents' home. At sunset, the moshav child leaves "the gang" while the kibbutz child even goes to

greet the sandman as one of a group. I should add that there is one little boy who is always loathe to go home because, "there won't be supper ready anyhow." His is a long story of a broken family—a stepmother—a home that isn't a home. He is neglected in a way that the cooperative system can't help. This wouldn't happen to a kibbutz child.

In many respects the moshav children can be compared to farm children anywhere. They live at home and attend the village school, which is supported by all moshav members whether or not they have children of school age. Starting in kindergarten, usually at the age of three, they complete high school when they are eighteen. During the last two years they study half a day and work on the farm half a day. There are clubs, choirs, drama circles and the village library. Still, the children are simpler and the cultural life less intensive than in the kibbutzim, for farming in an undiluted form is the dominant factor of their lives. They are closer to the traditional forms and holidays of Jewish life than the kibbutz child for whom there are now interpretations.

After graduation from high school, their education at the expense of the moshav ends. A large number continue their education, usually at agricultural schools, the girls going to Nahalal, and boys to Mikvey Israel or Kadoorie.

The moshav child's education is directed first and foremost to cultivation of the land, which he regards as the highest pursuit and the only sound foundation for the upbuilding of the Jewish Homeland. The farm tasks are not supplementary to schooling, as in the kibbutz, but are an integral part of the child's life. He doesn't give specified hours to a certain branch, as does the kibbutz child. But from a very early age—usually when he is ten—he has tasks on the farm that he already feels depend in part on him. At the age of fourteen or fifteen, he is an all-around farmer who can turn his hand to anything.

I recall when youth from the kibbutz and the moshav went to give a hand to a nearby settlement in need of help. Asked in which farm branch they were proficient, the moshav youth were vastly amused. They could work in any branch and handle any agricultural machine, providing it hadn't arrived from America just today. This opportunity to see them working together, showed that the moshav youth could work harder, quicker and with more initiative than the kibbutz youth. Later, the kibbutz youth overtakes him, but then usually as a specialist in his chosen branch.

The moshav child is less pampered than the kibbutz child—in fact, he's not pampered at all. True, in the moshav, as everywhere in Palestine, the child is regarded as the standard bearer of the Hebrew renaissance and no sacrifice on the part of the parents is considered too much for the child's welfare. Sending their children off to agricultural schools at the age of eighteen, when they could be most useful at home, is not easy for the farmers. But otherwise, the life of a moshav child is without the frills, comforts and luxuries enjoyed in the kibbutz. The moshav path is straight and one track—to produce farmers.

The moshav children share the accommodations and food of their parents, as compared to the kibbutz where the children's quarters sometimes make the rest of the settlement look shabby in comparison. If the moshav children appear to work hard and at an early age, they are proud of their independence. One of them, a husky lad of thirteen told me, "When the kibbutz children are still being cared for by nurses, we're helping to run the farm." And another told me triumphantly that the kibbutz had telephoned that day to inquire if there was anyone who could operate a certain farming machine, because they were shorthanded. "Why, any boy on any moshav farm could run it," he exclaimed. The kibbutz child, on the other hand, is inclined to regard his moshav neighbor as a boor.

Naturally, the moshav girls help their mothers and are efficient "little women" in their early teens. These duties are spared the kibbutz child whose work in the branches is less drudgery. The other moshav children have a hand in caring for the younger ones; while in the kibbutz, each child of the family lives in the House of his age group. Frequently, the kibbutzim "retreat forward." I saw this in a young kibbutz that was experimenting with mixing the ages in a group, thereby approximating a family. In this way the older children help the nurse to take care of the younger ones and, I was told, they develop responsibility and a certain softness in their nature. This, of course, is achieved in the moshav by force of circumstances minus theory.

The life of the kibbutz child is always different from life "outside"—an oasis of sharing in a world of grabbing. From the time when he makes his first trip to town and wonders why shopkeepers sell their wares instead of giving them away, or is puzzled by a private kitchen in his aunt's house, he senses that he is "different." The moshav child is at home in the world since the fact that he is a "cooperative specimen" makes no perceptible difference in his routine life. He learns early—and takes it for granted—that fellow members are helped in time of need and that often his father must

wait impatiently for a needed machine until his slower neighbor finishes with it. Since there is no talk or possibility of accumulating riches, his mind simply doesn't work in that direction. So he becomes a "cooperative child" and grows into a cooperative man more naturally than the kibbutz child who has higher hurdles to jump.

In summing up the moshav child, it seems to me that the real peasant class—that is, a specific type of well-educated, aware peasant—will come from among their ranks. In fact when I watch them pass by our house on the way to the fields, it seems that the peasant has already been created in this generation.

The education of the kibbutz child—and the child himself—is far more complicated and provocative. He cannot be pigeonholed as a peasant; he cannot be pigeonholed at all. Since the kibbutzim have dared more with their children, they have accomplished more in some directions and laid themselves open to more mistakes in others. In the older settlements, the founders have the supreme satisfaction of seeing their children's children rooted in the collective systems.

However, the kibbutzim are showing themselves extremely wise in not considering the Children's House as a finished institution. There is constant revaluation. Whether or not you believe that communal rearing is a success in its present form, it is a vastly important experiment in which practically every accepted theory for child training was thrown overboard. Some theories have been permanently discarded and some retrieved on afterthought. To observe this child laboratory first hand (as I did when my child was there for a few years) is a stimulating experience. Certain phases will fill you with admiration and certain phases may make you say, "Perhaps I'm becoming stodgy—but I like the old-fashioned way better."

The life of the kibbutz child is passed in the House, which he is usually taught to call "home," although I believe he considers his parents' room where he has his private toy corner as his real home. He begins in the Baby House, then progresses to the Toddler House and the Children House, and then ends in the Mossad (dormitory high school). After graduation he became a full-fledged working member of his settlement with perhaps a year's interval in town or in another kibbutz.

The Houses are usually models of beauty and comfort, a real children's world in which even the washbasins are scaled down. In some, artists are commissioned to do the nursery murals. Here, with their plentiful toys, lawns, flowerbeds, shade trees, reed booths and seesaws, they grow up in a

little Garden of Eden, probably never before achieved anywhere by workers for their children. They live perfectly regulated lives with meals, naps and sleep on schedule. They are tended by metapelets, except for during the afternoon hours and the Sabbaths, which they spend with their parents. It is estimated that there is one worker for every three children (including the laundry, cooking, etc.). This makes the system very expensive when one considers that many moshav women care for three children in addition to all their other duties. Now that some kibbutz families are reaching four children, it seems that a change will have to be made if the budget is to be balanced, for at the present rate a woman would not be doing work equal to the caring of her own brood. Of course, there is no individual accounting in the kibbutz, but the accepted "one worker to three children" figure seems too high to survive an increasing birth rate.

The collective conditioning begins practically in the cradle when another baby snatches a rattle and his nurse coos into uncomprehending ears, "Let Jacob have the rattle for a while." This groundwork in rattle sharing doesn't help a few years later when Jacob also wants the building blocks or the automobile just when little Isaac is engrossed in playing with it. It is admitted that children are born with a deep-rooted ego and instinct for self-preservation, even in a kibbutz. Therefore the first years are the hardest because the child is constantly called upon to share and doesn't understand why. The most numerous and elaborate toys don't seem to solve the problem because Isaac always wants a particular automobile just when Jacob has it and no cavalcade of other automobiles will appease him.

In this respect, the child in a moshav, playing with a spool or an automobile made of matchboxes which he can call "mine," has the easier time of it. These clashes could occur in any kindergarten or day nursery, but there it is only for a few hours. Here he must fight for his rights from the time he opens his eyes until he closes them. Sometimes it is a fight for an automobile, sometimes for first place in the shower queue, sometimes just for the nurse's attention or affection.

As time goes on, he learns to substitute *shelanu* (our) for *shli* (mine) and knows why this means the creating of a better society. In fact, the very idea of underprivileged children is vague, known to them mostly from *David Copperfield*. It is taken for granted that the child of the widow or broken family has the same advantages as everyone else. For some years their attitude toward money and commerce is quite refreshing and utopian. I remember with what charming naiveté my son, during his kibbutz days,

addressed an Arab in a train who had extracted some bread from folds of his cloak, "Comrade, give me some." And to this day he is puzzled and even hurt when I pay Esther for our month's food supply. "But she's a friend of ours—and she has more milk and eggs than she can use." Explaining the high cost of chicken feed doesn't combat the deep-rooted *kibbutz* idea that those who have should simply give to those who haven't. It's a splendid character basis. But unfortunately, the child must learn later that his is a private little paradise whose graciousness cannot extend beyond its own boundaries, and that he, too, as a kibbutz member, will be selling milk.

After his early lessons in sharing, the child learns the dignity of labor. Whether his mother works in the kitchen or in the secretariat, she has the same standing, and besides, her position may be changed next month. At an early age, he learns to revere productive labor, which will be one of the foundations of his future life.

The borderline between classroom and home life is rather hazy because the children are always under supervision. Book-learning and living-learning are wisely intermingled. They have a children's society conducted, insofar as possible, by themselves, along the lines of the larger society. The children mete out punishment to each other when required, and the desire for the good opinion of the society deters misbehavior.

School days are full and intensive. The children learn according to the "project system." All subjects (chemistry, physics, economics, geography, drawing, and history) are learned in relation to the project. Three months are devoted to each project, and there are three in the course of the year. Two sample projects used last year were "sheep" and "olives." They begin to study Bible at the age of nine. Outside of the curriculum, there is music, drama, swimming and other sports. There are numerous hikes, camping out and sometimes summer camps at the seashore. From an early age they cultivate school farms, and by the time they reach high school, they operate their school farm on a paying basis, selling their produce to the kibbutz.

The festivals play a large part in the life of the child, and most particularly the agricultural festivals. While the bar mitzvah is not observed in the traditional way, it is marked by a gift from the kibbutz, and in some settlements by special ceremonies of one kind or another.

Some of the settlements send their children to central high schools such as the Mishmar Haemek Mossad [a boarding school for Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim teenagers], which is one of the showplaces. However, as the number of children increases, the kibbutzim are gradually acquiring

their own high schools, such as the beautiful one opened last year in Merhavia and a few years ago in Beit Alpha. By this time, their days and evenings are so full that there seems, unfortunately, no time to "sit or stare" or for practically any free pursuit. At all events the life is highly stimulating, and it is plain that a new type will emerge, and obviously not the moshav peasant type.

What is the relation between the parents—the children—the House? In some kibbutzim, the House is regarded as an end in itself, creating a children's society that is the preparation for the larger collective society. In others, it is regarded as a means to an end, namely to give the woman an opportunity to work and to participate in the cultural life of the settlement unhindered. In the latter class, we may mention Degania (the oldest collective in the country), where children sleep in their parents' quarters, and Ein Harod, where they sleep with their parents from the age of six. In Degania the parents have a separate room for the children, while in Ein Harod, there is a sleeping porch. In my opinion, these two settlements have found the golden road: collective life during the day and quiet, security and parent's influence at night. Of course, the groups that look upon the House as an end in itself are against emphasizing parental influence since it might detract from group influence.

Ten years ago when I picked up courage to ask kibbutznikim, "What about Degania's system?" I was regarded at best as a heretic and at worst as a rank outsider who simply didn't understand. This group-sleeping was regarded as a pillar of the system. Today, there seems to be an increasing interest in the workings of Degania and Ein Harod. I believe that only two factors prevent some settlements from taking their lead. First, it would mean admitting an error in a very fundamental phase of the system. Secondly, the change would be technically difficult and expensive to the point of being almost impossible at the moment, involving the giving of another room to each member.

What are the failings of the House, which is so aesthetically attractive? Fifteen years ago, Joseph Baratz of Degania wrote, "To this very day, the attitude of a woman toward the common nursery is still the touchstone of her fitness for life in the settlement. She can be judged as soon as her first child is born, and not every mother measures up to the test. Age long habit holds the young mother in its clutches. She has all sorts of fears and suspicions that her child will not receive proper care. These bugbears can be dispelled only by a well-equipped and hygienic nursery in the charge

of experienced nurses who are very patient and discreet in dealing with the mothers." This was written about Degania, where the children sleep with the parents. How much more pronounced are these "bugbears" when the children do not [sleep with their parents]? Then, too, the number of experienced children's nurses has lagged behind the growth of the child population, and it would be unreal to expect that every nurse in a large settlement today will be as "very patient and discreet" as in the little Degania family of fifteen years ago.

Generalization is dangerous, and it must be said plainly that the system is ideal for many kibbutz women who believe strongly in it, or are not the maternal type, or who are engaged in creative or public work. But the average woman—and I believe they form the majority—will go as far as you like in pioneering sacrifice and hard work, but regarding her child, she is as old-fashioned as lavender and old lace. Among the very young women who don't feel obliged to defend an ideology, you sometimes hear frank admissions like the following from a young mother in a new settlement, "No, I try not to be put on committees. Most of the women would rather leave these things to the men so that we can be fresh for our children." Another young kibbutz mother—age six to be exact—was heard to say to her friend while playing, "You can be the doll's mother. I'll be the nurse, so I can take care of her."

In actual time, the kibbutz parents are with their children a great deal more than the moshav parents, or perhaps than any parent anywhere. Where else do parents have hours on end to play games and read stories? So where is the hitch? Because children are human and not clocks, you can't measure the satisfaction they derive from their parents in hours. When they come from the House at four o'clock, there is a joyous reunion. But after half an hour they may be enticed by the 101 diversions that the farm offers—it is lambing time, or haying time, or older boys are playing basketball. Before they realize what has happened, the precious "family hours" have flown, and they go back to the House. When they grow older, say eleven or twelve, it is assumed that they are busy with "activities," and mothers will say with mixed pride and pang, "My son is so busy that I've not seen him for more than an hour all week." She says this with pride because, obviously, they are the most popular, vigorous and well-adjusted children who only have time to say hello and goodbye to their parents.

Assuming that the child does spend three or four hours with the parents, it doesn't seem to solve the problem. There is something primeval

about the relationship between child and parent in that magic dusk hour before he drifts off to sleep. He is a combination of drowsiness and keen awareness. He is filled with impressions and confessions. He is simply a different being than he was at four o'clock in the afternoon when he wants to watch the silo working. I believe that this delicate detail is overlooked when we say glibly, "Kibbutz parents and children are together so-and-so many hours." Which hours? Can they be measured by mathematics or minutes? Can that first morning smile of the child happen at any other time of the day? By contrast, the moshav woman has no free "hours" for her children. But she has those moments here and there—the natural intercourse of a mother who, at her busiest, must feed her brood and put them to bed. And the children have that deep security, which seems to come from a mother's mere presence, even when she's too worn out to tell a story or play checkers.

The kibbutzim recognize this bedtime problem. There are two methods in use; advocates of either will usually say, "Ours has its faults—but it's the better of the two." In the Hakibbutz Hameuhad groups, the parents bathe and put their children to bed. This allows for a story or lullaby at the bedside. But with fifteen children and about thirty parents milling around, the ensuing bedlam can be imagined. And all this takes place just when the child should be relaxing. Then, too, the orphan is most keenly aware of his lack at this hour.

Hashomer Hatzair has done away with all this by having the children leave their parents at the door of the House, the nurse putting them to bed. This is more orderly and more cold. When you stand outside the House window to eavesdrop (which we did on many evenings, although no self-respecting kibbutznik would) you can hear the metapelet singing a wholesale lullaby for all, and for a long time afterward, you hear the children exchanging those precious "impressions and confessions" that might better fall on older, more appreciative ears. For instance, when one of them asked, "Who is stronger: Samson, Trumpledor, or Amanayahu (the oldest son of Merhavia)?" there is no one to give the proper answer.

Against this background, we need to consider only briefly the other "bugbears" of the average kibbutz parents, and especially of the mother. In many respects, the House remains an "unknown quantity" despite the closest contact between parents, metapelets, and teachers. I doubt if children anywhere are so much talked about or thought about. If they are too shy, or too aggressive, or too thin, or wet their beds, or have nightmares, or suck

their fingers—it may become a problem. This is because of the Unknown Quantity. Perhaps there is some undiscovered cause for his behavior, reasons the worried mother can only conjecture or be told secondhand, concerning his life during twenty hours of the day. On the other hand, the metapelet may wonder about the influence of the parents, which is admittedly strong. Perhaps they are paying too much attention to a newborn baby and the older one takes revenge by wetting his bed? The approach to each problem is serious and intelligent, with due attention to Freud. One would not ask for a reversion to the simpler whipping method. Still, when everything from reflexes to lack of appetite is considered against the Freudian background (and not always by experts), many children become appallingly complicated. This, of course, is quite different from the oversimplification of the moshav where he may get a cookie when he's good and a heavy hand on his little backside when he's bad. There should be some middle path.

This little glimpse behind the exterior of the architecturally beautiful Houses should not blur the larger picture of thousands of splendid collective children growing into a society that will be one of the strongest sections of the future Palestine. I still carry with me the memory of Tel Yosef's twenty-fifth anniversary when we saw the youth three hundred strong gathered in the dining hall. One forgot to listen to the speeches, becoming engrossed in studying the faces of this fine youth, the fruit of complete equality and opportunity for all.

"Do the children ever leave their settlements?" This question is often asked. It is estimated that ninety percent of the moshav children remain in their home villages while a majority of the other ten percent remain in agriculture elsewhere. If a kibbutz child has ever left his home settlement (except when he marries into another kibbutz), I have never heard of it. The lodestar of their lives is to carry on the great work begun by their parents—and this they do. They are carrying on deep love for this collective country that they are building together and readiness for self-defense when necessary. Both in the kibbutz and the moshav, those of age were quick to join up during the war.

Visiting a new settlement, 1938

At the wedding of Trans Jordanian Prince Talal, 1934

On the ship Polonia on the way to Poland, 1937

Bar Adon pregnant with her son, 1940

Journalist's ID card from *The Palestine Post*, 1933

Building of *The Palestine Post*

With her son Doron and his godmother, Henrietta Szold, 1940

Dorothy with husband son and sister in law, 1940

The Bar Adon family in front of their home in Merhavia, 1947