INTRODUCTION

MAN'S QUEST for a more perfect society is probably as old as man himself. This quest has, typically, taken two forms. On the one hand, there have been social theorists and philosophers who projected in literary form their visions of the ideal society, but who did not themselves attempt to establish one. On the other hand, there have been men and women, fired with conviction and purpose, who banded together in order to found utopian societies. Despite the many differences among and between the dreamers and the founders, a common premise underlies most of their dreams and their activities: raw human nature, if nourished in the "proper" social environment, can give rise to that kind of human being who approximates, at least, man's noblest image of himself. This premise, whether viewed as naive or as realistic, serves to remind us that man is not always concerned with the real and the given, but may, at times, be motivated by the ideal and the novel. Man's purposes, in other words, are not limited by fixed structures, whether biological or social, but may be directed towards the creation of emergent structures. This study is an attempt to describe a society which was founded by people whose level of aspiration involved the creation of such a structure. Where others were content to perpetuate the cul-
cultural heritage of the past, they were motivated to found a new culture—a kibbutz.

A kibbutz represents one of the three types of cooperative agricultural villages in Israel. These types differ in the extent of their communal living and in the degree of their collective ownership. The moshav ovdim, or worker’s settlement, is an agricultural village in which all land is owned by the Jewish National Fund, but in which each family works its own allotted plot and retains its income for itself. No family, however, is allowed to hire labor. The agricultural products of the moshav are marketed collectively, and consumer’s goods—personal and agricultural alike—are bought collectively. The moshav ovdim in short, represents an example of “segmental cooperation,” as Infield has termed it. “Segmental cooperation” is practiced “for the better attainment of specific economic ends . . . (only) when it promises economic benefits.”

The kibbutz, (plural, kibbutzim) or collective, as the name itself indicates, represents a much more drastic departure from traditional individualistic farming. It is an agricultural village in which all property, with minor exceptions, is collectively owned, in which work is collectively organized, and in which living arrangements—including the rearing of children—are, to a great degree, collective. The kibbutz, therefore, represents “comprehensive cooperation” because “all the essential interests of life are satisfied in a cooperative way . . . (Here) cooperation becomes a new way of life.”

1 The Jewish National Fund is an arm of the Jewish Agency. It buys land, which it holds in the name of the Jewish People, for settlement and rents it to settlers on long-term leases for a nominal fee.

2 For a description of the moshav, see Dayan, Moshav Ovdim.


4 Ibid.

5 These figures were kindly supplied by the Israel Office of Information in New York. It should be noted, too, that the moshav movement is much larger than the kibbutz movement; its membership totals 112,000.

6 In order to preserve the anonymity of this kibbutz, its name, as well as the names of the various groups with which it is affiliated, the names of its members, the names of books and authors, and any other information that might serve to identify it, have either been changed or rendered anonymous. Hence, the name of the kibbutz has been changed to Kiryat Yedidim; the kibbutz federation with which it is affiliated is termed, The Federation; the political party in which it is active is termed, The Party; and the youth movement from which it sprang is termed, The Movement. Scholars who are interested in the true names of these groups or who wish to check the bibliographic references may obtain such information from the author.
anti-Marxist and anti-Soviet, Kibbutz Yedidim is affiliated with a Federation which is Marxist in ideology and pro-Soviet in the current East-West conflict. This is probably the most important difference among the three major federations and is one of the most important impediments to inter-federation cooperation. (2) Although some type of collective rearing of children is to be found in all kibbutzim, the system of “collective education” which is found in Kibbutz Yedidim is atypical in its duration from infancy through high school. (3) Although all three of the large kibbutz federations are anti-clerical, Kibbutz Yedidim and its Federation are atypical in their hostility to any type of religious expression. (4) Unlike the other federations, the Federation is unique in its rule of “collective ideology,” with its insistence on ideological and political conformity. (5) Although all three federations have been under severe pressure to introduce changes in their social structures, the Federation is atypical in its extreme resistance to any innovations which might compromise its original values. Hence, the absence in Kibbutz Yedidim of “luxuries,” hired labor, and industry.

This monograph was originally conceived as an introduction to a detailed study of socialization and personality development in Kibbutz Yedidim. It was intended as a brief ethnographic chapter against which the development of the children could be projected. Since the founders of Kibbutz Yedidim, as well as its later settlers, were almost all European immigrants who had migrated to Palestine as mature persons, it was assumed that the culture of the kibbutz has had but little influence on their personality structure; their formative years had been spent in European culture. It was further assumed that they, and the kibbutz culture which they had created, were the primary determinants of the personality development of their children who were born and raised in Kibbutz Yedidim. Hence it was felt that the personality development of their children—the oldest of whom was twenty-eight at the time of the study—could be understood only in terms of the social and cultural history of their parents, of the new culture which the latter had created, and of the motives which had prompted them to create it. This monograph, therefore, is a study of the parental generation and of their kibbutz. The impact on Kibbutz Yedidim of their adult children, and of the young adults of the latter’s age who have become kibbutz members, has been considerable. But this impact, which has resulted in change, conflict, and tension, is not discussed here. It is restricted, rather, to a description of the cultural and psychological base-line from which cultural and psychological changes in the second generation may be measured.

Although intended as a brief historical and ethnographic introduction to the larger personality study, the author began to feel as it unfolded that the introduction had become an independent study—indeed, that is, of its function as an introduction to the personality study. Since the latter study will not be completed for several years, it was decided to publish this introduction as a separate monograph. Because of its original conception, however, it is difficult to classify this study within any of the scientific rubrics—community study, ethnography, ethno-history—if, indeed, it deserves the appellation of “science,” at all. Few of the materials presented here were collected by means of those techniques which have become de rigueur in the scientific investigation of society. The author employed neither schedules nor questionnaires; he used neither formal
interviews nor statistics; and he administered no tests, whether sociometric, psychometric, or projective. The absence of these traditional tools may be explained by the fact that these materials were collected only incidentally to the investigation of personality development in children.

I should not like to convey the impression, however, that this monograph represents the free associations of the author. If his associations have intruded themselves into the text, they are, for the most part, controlled associations—controlled, that is, by the data. Whether the data constitute "evidence," or are merely suggestive anecdotes, the author does not presume to judge. All the information, with the exception of that obtained from printed sources, was collected by the author and his wife in the course of their eleven-month residence in Kiryat Yedidim. During that eleven-month period, in which we were mainly preoccupied with our study of the kibbutz children, we became de facto members of Kiryat Yedidim. Like other kibbutz members we were called by our first names (Hebraized), and like them we were referred to as cheverim—comrades. We each had our daily work assignment which, like that of de jure members, was posted every evening on the bulletin board in the dining room. Unlike regular members, however, we worked only half days (four-and-one-half hours) and conducted our formal research on the children the other half. Our work assignments were varied, although the nature of the work was always the same—unskilled labor. We worked in the vegetable gardens, the grapefruit and olive orchards, the vineyards, the kitchen, and (in the case of the author's wife) the infants' house. Our participation in the economic life of the kibbutz was not only a prerequisite for permission to live in Kiryat Yedidim; it was the source of our most important information, and the primary basis for the gaining of rapport. It was only when we were perceived as fellow-workers that the people began to talk with us about those aspects of their lives that were relevant to our research interests.

We not only worked with the people, but also ate with them in the communal dining room; we bathed with them in the communal shower rooms; we attended their meetings and their celebrations; and we spent most of our evenings visiting in their rooms, or entertaining them in ours. Almost always, however, we were participant-observers, and our data, therefore, consist of conversations heard in the fields, speeches recorded at meetings, behavior observed in most situations, and direct information given us by many members who were willing to discuss with us their lives and thoughts.

This, then, is a kind of "clinical" study, in that it used the case-method rather than a statistically-controlled sample to obtain its data. If such a study possesses any merit, it consists in the merits of its defects. That is, since the data are not limited to information obtained by statistically-controlled techniques, they consist of much information that is usually not obtained through formal schedules—information that usually arises only in the context of living. Moreover, since most of our information on attitudes and values is based on inferences drawn from behavior or from statements made in the course of conversations, they were not screened through the defenses which subjects usually set up in a formal interviewing situation.
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The strength of the kibbutz lies in its essential social nature which strives for the complete harmony of the individual and the group in every sphere of life, for the maximum development of each individual... and for the constant deepening of human ethical relations.

From a kibbutz statement of principle

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To have begun this monograph in the usual fashion, with a description of the natural environment or of the subsistence economy of Kiryat Yedidim, would do violence to the inner meaning of its culture, as the above quotation indicates. Kiryat Yedidim, to be sure, is an agricultural village consisting of men and women who inhabit a common geographic area and who make their living by tilling the soil in a cooperative fashion. But Kiryat Yedidim is also—and primarily—a fellowship of those who share a common faith and who have banded together to implement that faith. To live in Kiryat Yedidim means to become a member of a kibbutz, and membership in a kibbutz entails more than voting at town meetings, or driving a tractor in the wheat fields, or living in a lovely village. It means, primarily, becoming a chaver kibbutz (a comrade of the kibbutz), that is, a person who is dedicated to the social, economic, and national ideals for which the kibbutz stands. These ideals were formulated before Kiryat Yedidim came into being and, indeed, it was founded with the purpose of bringing these ideals into being. Hence, these ideals must be understood, if Kiryat Yedidim is to be understood.

Probably the single most important ideal upon which the entire kibbutz culture is based is what might be termed the moral value of labor. It is no accident, for example, that today, when the entire kibbutz movement is experiencing a profound crisis, it is this principle of avodah azmim, or self-labor, which has become the measure of the devotion of a kibbutz to its original ideals. The founders of Kiryat Yedidim, in many instances, were intellectuals for whom labor was a "calling" rather than a habit. For them, labor was not merely a means for the satisfaction of human needs; rather, labor itself was viewed as a need—probably man's most important need—the satisfaction of which became an end in itself. Ki ha-avodah bi-chayenu is the way the kibbutz

1 All quotations from official kibbutz and Federation publications and speeches have been translated from their original Hebrew by the author.

2 A chaver (pl., chaverim) is a kibbutz member. The term, literally, means "companion" or "comrade."

3 In Cooperative Living in Palestine, Infield writes that, the kibbutz "unlike the utopian communities, did not originate in a deliberate attempt to mold a new form of social organization on the foundation of a preconceived theory. It came into being, rather, in much the same way as any other normal community. Basically, what shaped its character was the necessity for adaptation to the unusual conditions obtaining in Palestine. Hence, the peculiar social structure was necessary to ensure survival." (p. 25.) Although this statement may characterize the earliest kibbutzim, it does not apply to Kiryat Yedidim or to most of the other kibbutzim that were founded by members of the various European Zionist youth movements. In the case of Kiryat Yedidim, as we shall see, its ideals, and the social structure which was evolved to implement these ideals, took shape much before it was founded.
expresses it. "For labor is (the essence of) our life"; and this phrase may be said to be the leitmotif of kibbutz living.

This attitude toward labor did not, of course, originate with the vattikim, the founders, of Kiryat Yedidim. Emphasis on labor had long been integral to the chalutz, or pioneering, tradition in Zionism. As early as 1882, when one of the first contingents of Russian Jews migrated to Palestine, the ideal of labor on the land was already in process of formulation. As one pioneer put it:

Farmer! Be a free man among men, but a slave to the soil... Kneel and bow down to it every day. Nurse its furrows—and then even its stony clods will yield a blessing! And in this "slavery" remember that you are a tiller of the soil! A tiller of the soil in Palestine! This must become a badge of honor among our people.

But the most important influence came from the pioneers of the Second Aliya (1904–1914) and, specifically, from the seer of the Palestinian labor movement, A. D. Gordon (1856–1922). It was Gordon who invented the term, dat ba-avodah, "the religion of labor." For him labor was a uniquely creative act, as well as an ultimate value. Through labor, he taught, man became one with himself, society, and nature. But, he warned, it would not be easy:

A people that has become accustomed to every mode of life save the natural one—the life of self-conscious and self-supporting labor—such a people will never become a living, natural laboring people unless it strain every fibre of its will to attain that goal. Labor is not merely the factor which establishes man's contact with the land and his claim to the land; it is also the principle force in the building of a national civilization. Labor is a great human ideal for the future, and a great ideal is like the healing sun. We need fanatics of labor in the most exalted sense of the word.

Gordon's "religion of labor" not only influenced his own generation of Zionist pioneers, but it served to shape the subsequent history of Jewish labor enterprise in Palestine. Hence, the stress in Kiryat Yedidim on labor as a "calling" is an ideal which it shares, not only with other collective and cooperative settlements, but with the entire labor movement in Israel.

This attitude to labor is particularly significant and, in a profoundly psychological sense, explicable only in view of the petit bourgeois backgrounds of the vattikim. Before their immigration to Israel, they had not engaged in physical labor; moreover, they were reared in a culture that demeaned labor, as well as the laborer. The persons who were looked down upon in the shtetl, the Eastern European villages in which the vattikim were born, were the proste. Prost is the Yiddish equivalent of "crude" or "vulgar," and the attitude towards unskilled workers on the part of the shtetl is revealed most clearly in its appellation of these workers as the proste. In the shtetl:

*Kurland, p. 7.*

*ibid., p. 9.*
It is better... to be a salesman than to be an artisan. A salesman works with his brain, an artisan merely with his brawn.

For a man who "comes from yikhus" (a respected family) to engage in manual labor, even under stress of economic necessity, is a calamity for manual labor has come to symbolize the antithesis of the social ideal—a life devoted entirely to study.6

Hence, the ideal of work as an ultimate value—the dat ha-avodah—represents, in the case of the vattikim, a cultural revolution; to achieve it they had to overcome the resistance of both their trained values and their untrained muscles. It is little wonder that one of their first goals was kibbus ha-avodah, "the conquest of labor."7

Kiryat Yedidim, then, is not a worker's community in the same sense that many of the utopian societies of nineteenth-century America were. This is a community which was founded, for the most part, by middle-class intellectuals who deliberately chose to be workers; by so choosing, they reversed both the traditional prestige hierarchy and the historical aspiration of upward mobility. Instead of aspiring to "rise" in the social ladder, they aspired to "descend." For the chaverim, then, it is not business (as in European bourgeois culture) or scholarship (as in the shtetl culture), but labor which is the highest vocational goal. This goal, it must be stressed, is primarily a spiritual goal—it is a means to self-realization. As the chalutz folk-song has it: "To Palestine we have come, to build and to be built in it (the land)."

This Tolstoyan attitude toward work could be evolved, it is not hazardous to say, only by romantic, urban intellectuals.

The "moral value of labor" stresses not only the latter aspect of the principle of avodah atzmit, self-labor; the former aspect, which emphasizes self-labor, is equally important. This general principle of the labor movement, when applied to the kibbutz, means that no one may be employed from the outside to work in the kibbutz, and that all work must be performed by the members of the kibbutz. Exceptions might be made in certain kinds of labor for which chaverim may have had no training, such as house construction or language instruction in the high school, but no exception may be made in the case of other kinds of labor, no matter how difficult or repulsive they might be. The opposition to hired labor is based on three ethical considerations. First, there is the mystique of labor—already hinted at—which stresses the dignity and creativeness of labor and the need to strike roots in the soil. Then, there is the fear, which first arose when the Arabs were the majority group in Palestine, that the introduction of hired labor would open the way to the employment of cheap Arab fellah labor. If this happened, it was thought, the kibbutz would eventually become a plantation, worked by Arab labor for the benefit of (what would then become) the leisure class kibbutz owners. The socialist ideology of Kiryat Yedidim, with its abhorrence of "surplus value" and its notion that all wage labor entails exploitation, is the third ethical opposition to hired labor and the insistence on self-labor.8

6Zborowski and Herzog, p. 247.
7Kibbus ha-avodah had another meaning, in addition to the one attributed to it here. In the early days of Second Aliya, when Jewish landowners preferred to employ cheap Arab labor, a major aim of the Jewish labor movement was to gain a foothold in those sectors of the economy which were closed to them. And this was another sense in which the "conquest of labor" was used.
8The opposition to hired labor has created many tensions for Kiryat Yedidim, in both its intra- and extra-kibbutz relations. With the great movement of mass immigration into the country, the government of Israel has been hard pressed to find employment for the immigrants (the majority of whom do not wish to become members of kibbutzim), and
The chaverim, in short, constitute a class conscious proletariat, *par excellence*; and it is not surprising that one’s prestige in Kiryat Yedidim is determined primarily by excellence in and devotion to one’s work.

Not all work, however, is equally valued. Physical labor enjoys the greatest prestige. The further removed it is from physical labor, the less prestige a job confers. This means, of course, that pure intellectual work does not confer great prestige, despite the fact that Kiryat Yedidim is a highly cultured community, one which is devoted to intellectual and artistic experience. Of the various categories of physical labor, agricultural labor is valued the most. Even among the

has appealed to the kibbutzim to hire them. The refusal of many of the kibbutzim to comply with this request has created considerable resentment against them, and has led to charges of “anti-Zionism” and “irresponsibility.” Nevertheless, the Federation has remained firm in its opposition to the use of hired labor, insisting that the entire structure of the kibbutz would change as a result of this innovation; for the members of the kibbutz would then become a “leisure class” of experts and managers, who would supervise the work of others. This prediction has been confirmed in the case of those kibbutzim—members of the other two federations—who have adopted the policy of hiring workers.

But the use of hired labor would solve not only a governmental problem; it would solve an equally pressing kibbutz problem. The most acute economic problem of Kiryat Yedidim, for example, is a shortage of manpower. As its services have expanded, women have been removed from the agricultural branches of the economy, resulting in a critical labor shortage. The obvious solution to this problem is the hiring of workers, and there are some chaverim who openly advocate this solution. Thus far, the economy has not suffered too much, because of temporary solutions to the problem: (1) the drafting of high school students for special assignments, such as a special grapefruit or potato harvest; (2) the suspension of a sabbath for some special task that must be done immediately, and the drafting of the entire kibbutz for the job; (3) the work performed by the youth groups living in the kibbutz, as well as that performed by various training groups which are sent to the kibbutzim to work. If this third source of labor were to dry up, the kibbutz would have little alternative but to hire labor or to devise some compromise solution.

agricultural branches, however, differential stereotypes have arisen. Those who work in the orchards and vineyards are thought to be intellectual, easygoing people, who are not particularly energetic. Shepherds are supposedly romantic, and inclined to be a bit lazy. On the other hand, the *falachim*, those who work in the grain fields, are presumably hard, energetic workers. They enjoy a national reputation, moreover, for the stereotype has it that the *falachim* of the past have become the country’s leaders, and have built the important labor institutions. It is difficult to assess the relative physical difficulty of these various occupations. It is probably true that, in many respects, the *falach* has the hardest job, and there are certain periods—such as the harvest, when the combines work almost twenty-four hours a day—which demand almost superhuman effort. But there is another, and probably more cogent, reason for his prestige which has little to do with the difficulty of his work. The kibbutz, as will be noted in the discussion of economic organization, distinguishes between “productive” work and “services.” The former enjoys the greater prestige, and (or, perhaps, because) it yields a cash income. Hence, *falaka*—cereal crops—is the most important agricultural branch in the kibbutz economy, for it normally yields the highest economic return. The economic importance of the branch has been generalized to the social importance of the person who works in that branch.

The importance attached to work is in constant evidence in Kiryat Yedidim and almost everyone responds to it. Work has become almost a compulsive habit, so that absence from work, even for good cause, elicits feelings of guilt. For three months, for example, the author had been working in the fields with a chavera whose work was character-
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Since labor is of such great importance, it follows that the individual who shirks his work responsibilities, or who is inefficient in his work, does not enjoy the respect of his fellows. Regardless of his other talents, the batlan, or the lazy person, occupies the position of lowest prestige in the prestige hierarchy of Kiryat Yedidim.

A second moral principle of kibbutz culture is that the property used and produced by the entire community rightfully belongs to the entire community. Hence, the economy rests on the public ownership of property. The land inhabited and worked by the kibbutz is not owned by any individual or by any family, nor even by the kibbutz itself. It is owned, rather, by the entire nation, having been acquired by a national agency, the Keren Kayemet (Jewish National Fund), by funds raised through voluntary contributions. The Keren Kayemet rents the land to the kibbutz on a ninety-nine year renewable lease, for which the latter pays an annual rent (starting only after its fifth year) of 2 percent of the original cost of the land, plus improvements. National ownership of land is an ethical imperative, it is believed, because it precludes such “evils” as land speculation, absentee ownership, and “unearned” income through rent. Moreover, it prevents the rise of a society composed of a landed gentry and a disinheritied peasantry.

Although its land is owned by the nation, all other property in Kiryat Yedidim is owned collectively by the members of the kibbutz. Ideally, the individual owns nothing with the exception of small personal gifts and those personal experiences on another field trip. In a study of a Micronesian culture—also highly cooperative—the author spent full time at research, and though the people furnished him with food and other necessities, he did not pay them, nor did he work in the economy. It nevertheless did not occur to him to feel guilty, since leisure is important and labor is at a minimum in this society.
effects which he may buy with his annual “vacation allowance” of nine Israeli pounds (approximately nine dollars). Hence, the house in which he lives, the trucks and tractors he operates, the cattle he cares for, the clothes he wears, and the food he eats are owned by the kibbutz. Since private property has been abolished, the individual receives no wages for his work; since he lives in a house owned by the kibbutz, he pays no rent; and since he eats in the kibbutz dining room, he has no food bills. Moreover, he receives his clothes, like everyone else, from the kibbutz clothing room; smaller articles, like combs, toothbrushes, etc., he obtains at the kibbutz “store.” Should he be ill, his medical and hospital bills are taken care of by the kibbutz. In short, the individual has no money, nor does he need any, because his economic needs are satisfied by the kibbutz.

The principle of public ownership derives, of course, from the emphasis placed on the moral value of equality. Private property, it is felt, together with the profit motive and the competitiveness that accompany it, destroy the bonds of brotherhood. The kibbutz insists that only in the absence of private property is it possible to establish an economic system in which economic classes and economic inequalities are abolished and, consequently, in which greater brotherhood can be achieved.

Communal ownership, then, is related to another moral principle underlying kibbutz culture: the principle of social and economic equality. In the event that Kibbutz Yedidim does not have enough goods or services to supply all its members equally, distribution is regulated according to seniority of arrival in the country. For example, the new housing development, consisting of two-room, instead of the usual one-room apartments, is open only to those persons who have been in the country for at least thirty years. Except for such special cases, however, economic distribution is formally equal. In the distribution of clothes, for example, all women receive one good dress every two years, and a plain dress on alternate years. Men receive three pairs of shabbat (sabbath) pants and four shirts every year.\textsuperscript{12}

In the past the emphasis on formal economic equality was taken much more literally than it is today. Clothes, for example, were not marked in the laundry, on the principle that all clothes were publicly owned. Hence, a person did not receive from the laundry the same clean clothes that he had previously worn. Instead, he was given the first pair of pants, dress, or socks that happened to be on top of the laundry pile. This, of course, created highly ludicrous situations, such as tall persons having to wear short pants, or slender persons being forced to wear large dresses. This system, known as kommuna alef (first commune), was soon modified at the insistence of the women, who demanded that they be fitted for dresses. The sizes of the clothes were marked, so that a chaver, when he came for his weekly laundry, would not necessarily receive the same clothes he had worn the week before, but he would, at least, receive his own size.

In the middle 1930's kommuna bet (second commune) was instituted. It was becoming apparent that the chaverim were not entirely careful with the clothes they wore, and there was a high percentage of torn and soiled clothes. It was felt that if the clothes were marked, and if each chaver were to receive the same clothes from the laundry, he could

\textsuperscript{12} Dress clothes are called shabbat clothes, which, when they become worn, are used as work clothes.
then be held responsible for their care. This is the system that is still in operation. All clothing, like everything else, is technically owned by the kibbutz. But each chaver receives his clothing allowance for the year, and the clothes he receives are “his,” in the sense that they are marked with his name, he wears them, and he is responsible for them.\textsuperscript{13}

Despite this formal equality in the basic necessities, certain inequalities in luxuries have arisen due to conditions not provided for in the formal structure of the kibbutz. Some people receive presents of food, clothing, furniture, etc., from relatives who do not reside in Kiryat Yedidim, while others do not. Some individuals, moreover, work outside the kibbutz during their vacations, and purchase what they please with the money they earn. Some have relatives or friends outside the kibbutz with whom they can stay when they go to the cities, which enables them to save from their annual “vacation money” what others must pay in hotel and restaurant bills. This saving enables them to purchase small personal objects. As a result of all these factors, the complete economic equality that once characterized the kibbutz has been slightly qualified.

It may be stated as a general rule, however, that all individuals receive the same clothing allotment, eat the same food in the communal dining room, and enjoy the same (approximately) housing conditions, regardless of their economic skill, their economic importance to the kibbutz, their prestige, or their power. For, despite its awareness that persons differ greatly in ability or in skill—though it seems that it denied it, or at least ignored it, in its early

\textsuperscript{13} It is of interest to note that the negligence that was discovered in the care of clothing under kommuna alef was not discovered in the care of land, houses, or other capital goods.

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history—the kibbutz insists that such differences should not be used as a basis for differences in privileges. All individuals have an equal right to the good things of the community, although they do not contribute to it equally.

This observation serves to remind us that the equality principle of kibbutz culture is qualified by another ethical consideration—that of need. The kibbutz believes in the principle of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need,” a principle, which conflicts at times with its principle of equality. In resolving this conflict, it is usually the “need,” rather than the equality, that prevails.

A field hand, whose relative productivity is great, eats the common austerity fare of the dining room,\textsuperscript{14} though he has worked strenuously in the hot Israeli sun; but an office worker (of low prestige in the kibbutz value hierarchy), whose productivity is low, may receive a special diet, comparatively sumptuous, because of some physical condition. A man with children works no harder than a man without children; but the kibbutz provides not only for his wants, but also for the care of his children. In effect, those with no children, or with few children, subsidize those who do have children.

Not so obvious upon first arrival in Kiryat Yedidim, but just as important for an understanding of kibbutz culture, is the social equality which exists, and of which one becomes acutely aware whenever he leaves the kibbutz for even a short time. There is no class structure in Kiryat

\textsuperscript{14} Because of the mass immigration to Israel that accompanied the founding of the State, food was scarce before and during the period of this study. Hence the scarcity that characterized Kiryat Yedidim was a national, rather than a kibbutz, phenomenon. The author has been informed that the national, and presumably the kibbutz, situation has been considerably improved since that period.
Yedidim, and there is no differential reward system for different kinds of labor based on some ranking technique. Some kinds of work, as has already been observed, are valued more highly than others; but those who occupy the more highly valued jobs receive no greater reward than the others. The important psychological fact about kibbutz culture is that everyone, regardless of his work, is viewed as a worker, with the same privileges and responsibilities as anyone else. Menial work, which in capitalist society might mark one as a social inferior, does not carry that stigma in Kiryat Yedidim. The general manager—the highest elective officer in the kibbutz—is not the social superior of the cleaner of the latrines. Hence, there is no work which a person is ashamed to accept because it would demean him socially. There is, thus, little if any subordination of one group of individuals to another; there is no polarization of society into those who command and those who obey, those who are respected and those who respect. There is no need for some to be subservient before others, or to be "nice" to them, for fear of losing their jobs. In short, many of the social inequalities existing in a stratified society do not exist in Kiryat Yedidim.\textsuperscript{15}

This achievement can be illustrated by two examples. The recently arrived European physician, not a member of the kibbutz, asked one of the women for the name of the "maid" in the clinic. She did not understand to whom he was referring until he explained that he meant the woman who regularly cleaned the clinic. The woman then explained to him that there were no "maids" in Kiryat Yedidim, that this woman would probably be sitting next to him at dinner that evening, and, moreover, that this "maid" was an important official in the kibbutz. While making a survey of the various types of kibbutzim, we arrived at a certain kibbutz in order to interview a member of the Israeli Parliament. We were told, on our arrival, that he was to be found in the cemetery—for his job, when Parliament was not in session, consisted in caring for the graveyard. He came to greet us in his work clothes and kindly consented to grant us an interview in the meadow, for his wife, who worked nights in the dairy, was sleeping in their room.

It should be emphasized that the absence of social classes as conventionally conceived, does not imply the absence of either some type of ranking system in Kiryat Yedidim or of "horizontal" social groupings. The kibbutz is not a homogeneous concentration of persons, all of whom enjoy equal prestige and power, and each of whom interacts with all others with equal frequency. On the contrary, differential prestige and power as well as social cliques are to be found in Kiryat Yedidim; and it may be well to delineate their broad outlines at the very beginning.

Although the various kibbutz offices are held on a temporary and a rotation basis, those who happen to hold these offices do enjoy considerable power. Moreover, as is noted below, though the tenure of office is limited to two or three years, only a small number of chaverim possess the necessary skills required to cope with the complexities of such offices as general manager, secretary, treasurer, etc., so that in effect these offices rotate among a small core of twelve to fifteen persons.\textsuperscript{16} Hence, power within the kibbutz is not

\textsuperscript{15} Those kibbutzim that have introduced industry into their economy have, thereby, made possible the rise of a class system. See Rosenfeld, pp. 766–774.

\textsuperscript{16} For a discussion of these offices and of the problem of tenure, see below pp. 78–83, 94–96.
equally distributed; it is, rather, concentrated within this small core. It should nevertheless be emphasized that those who occupy these offices enjoy no special privileges and receive no material rewards. Their power, moreover, is limited by the fact that major decisions are made, not by them, but by the town meeting; and that they are under the constant surveillance of the town meeting, and subject to its power of recall. At the same time this core is not a united group, but is comprised of individuals and of sub-groups who disagree, and are often in conflict, with each other. Finally, this is neither a closed nor a self-appointed group. Rather, it is a group whose members are elected by the kibbutz on the basis of ability and demonstrated performance, and one which is always open to recruits chosen by the town meeting should it deem them capable of holding office.

Many of these same considerations apply to those who enjoy prestige. With one possible exception, prestige in Kibbutz Yedidim is a function of achieved, rather than of ascribed, status; and the persons of prestige constitute a social category rather than a social group. Prestige is achieved by being a productive and devoted worker, by implementing kibbutz ideals in one's daily life, by being a "synthetic personality," and by being a vattik, a founder of the kibbutz. The first three qualifications are, of course, attained only through achievement and they are open to all. The fourth, though not open to present achievement, was attained through past achievement. Moreover, it is not sufficient merely to be a vattik; to merit prestige, the vattik must constantly validate his status by his daily behavior rather than by resting on the glories of his past. Nor, it should be noted, is the prestige of the vattikim inherited by their children. The latter must achieve their own prestige through the same avenues that are open to children of other chaverim, and the status of their parents confers upon them no competitive advantage.

But Kibbutz Yedidim is not only stratified by power and prestige. It may be subdivided into "horizontal" groups, as well, that is, into friendship groups or cliques, based on at least four factors: age, occupation, residential contiguity, and interests. Usually these criteria overlap, for friendship groups—as measured by social visiting in the evening—usually consist of individuals of the same generation; the latter, in turn, usually share the same interests; and, as a result of the kibbutz system of distributing housing, they usually live in the same living area. The kibbutz itself recognizes what it calls, four age "layers," and it is rare that a clique consists of individuals from overlapping "layers." Not all members of the same layer, however, comprise a single clique. Within the layers cliques are formed on the basis of common interests—intellectual, political, discontent, etc.

This combination of age and residential contiguity does not account for all cliques, for it is sometimes overruled by occupational interests and by power position. Those who comprise the small core which holds power are not neces-

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17 See below, pp. 96–97.
18 See below, p. 153.
19 Housing in Kibbutz Yedidim expands by the addition of whole new developments, rather than by the addition of single units. Since the new developments usually represent considerable improvements over their predecessors, they are allocated according to a priority system, usually based on seniority. The vattikim, for example, are now living in the newly constructed housing project while their married children are living—on the other side of the village—in the wooden houses which have been successively occupied by the vattikim, by a later group of settlers, and now by the adult children.
20 See below, pp. 60–64.
sarily a friendship group, but they are, nevertheless, characterized by a high frequency of interaction, since it is they who must meet—frequently over a cup of tea in the evening—to solve the many problems that are constantly arising in the kibbutz; and they are not always of the same generation, nor do they live in spatial proximity.

Similarly, workers in some economic branches—the shepherds, for example—establish a strong esprit de corps which may carry over to their non-working hours. Hence, though not of the same generation and though they do not share a common living area, they constitute a clique based on personal friendship which had its origin in a common occupational interest. It should be noted, moreover, that to the extent that some economic branches are unisexual in character—as the shepherds—membership in the cliques is also unisexual, so that sex becomes a criterion for social grouping.

Another principle underlying the culture of Kiryat Yedidim is that of individual liberty; indeed, the kibbutz prides itself on being the freest society in the world. In the early history of Kiryat Yedidim, emphasis on freedom meant primarily freedom from the “artificial conventions” of an urban civilization. Once it was settled on its own land, however, and the necessity for some kind of social organization and authority arose, this earlier notion of freedom was expanded to include opposition to any system of authority. The kibbutz, it was assumed, was an “organic community,” and its work would somehow get accomplished without the necessity of investing any individual with power over their fellows. Hence, Kiryat Yedidim had no officers, and all decisions were made in informal group discussions that included neither a chair-

MORAL POSTULATES OF KIBBUTZ CULTURE

man nor an agenda. As it grew larger, however, and as its economy expanded, it became evident that some kind of formal organization was required and that it was necessary to delegate power. But in order to prevent any individual from acquiring personal power and/or to prevent the rise of an entrenched bureaucracy, it was decided that all offices—from the most menial to that of the general manager—should be held for a maximum of two or three years. This tenure limitation, it was hoped, would lead to a rotation of individuals in the various power positions, and would, therefore, ensure the maximum liberty of the kibbutz members.

This emphasis on freedom, it should be noted, is manifested not only in its formal structure, but in its freedom of expression as well. Any curtailment of freedom of speech or of reading is abhorrent to its members, and no censorship of any kind exists.

Finally, a discussion of the moral postulates of this culture must include the principle which might be termed the moral value of the group. The group, in kibbutz culture, is not only a means to the happiness of the individual; the group and group processes are moral ends in their own right. This has three aspects. It means, first, that the interests of the individual must be subordinate to the interests of the group. When the needs of the individual and those of the group come into conflict, the individual is expected to abdicate his needs in favor of the group’s. This applies to vocational interests, as well as to ideological convictions. A person’s vocational preferences are usually considered in deciding his work assignment; but if the kibbutz requires his labor or skill in some special branch, he is expected to recognize the paramount needs of the group. The same logic applies to
ideological matters. An individual is permitted complete freedom in the process of arriving at political decisions and in attempting to convince others of his point of view. But once a formal decision is reached by the kibbutz, he is expected to acquiesce in its decision and to support it, however much it conflicts with his personal views.\(^{21}\)

A second aspect of the emphasis on the ethical value of the group involves the assumption that the individual’s motivations will always be directed to the promotion of the group’s interests, as well as of his own. Behavior is expected to be characterized by Ezra Hadadit, or mutual aid. This means that every member of the kibbutz is responsible for the welfare of every other member and for the welfare of the kibbutz as a whole, just as the kibbutz is responsible for the welfare of each individual. The consequence of this principle is that no one is to suffer for lack of medical care, education for his children, food, shelter, clothing, or any other need, as long as the kibbutz can provide him with these requirements.

The emphasis on the moral value of the group means, finally, that group living and group experiences are valued more highly than their individual counterparts. Indeed, so important is the value of group experience that those chaverim who seek a great degree of privacy are viewed as “queer.” The kibbutz is interested in creating a chevra. The ultimate criterion of either a good kibbutz, a good high school, or a good kindergarten, is whether or not it has become a chevra. The term, chevra, literally, denotes a society; but its connotation—and its meaning for Kiryat Yedidim—is a group which is characterized by intimacy of

\(^{21}\) This entire paragraph serves to indicate that the individual’s freedom is restricted in many ways, despite the kibbutz emphasis of liberty.
shtetl. The following description of the shtetl applies, without qualification, to Kiryat Yedidim.

To insist on privacy if you are not sinning is a serious misdemeanor... One of the worst things you can say of a man is, "he keeps it for himself" or "he hides it from others" whether "it" is money or wisdom, clothes or news.

Locked doors, isolation, avoidance of community control, arouse suspicion... "Home people," beynisheh menschen... are free to come in whenever they like at any time of the day...

Withdrawal is felt as attack, whether physical or psychological, and isolation is intolerable. "Life is with people"...

Everywhere people cluster to talk, at home, in the market place, on the street. Everyone wants to pick up the latest news, the newest gossip...

The freedom to observe and to pass judgment on one's fellows, the need to communicate and share events and emotions is inseparable from a strong feeling that individuals are responsible to and for each other.23

These moral postulates constitute the social ethics of Kiryat Yedidim and represent, for them, the basic tenets of socialism. But socialism is only one of the twin principles on which kibbutz culture rests; the other principle is Zionism. For Kiryat Yedidim, the kibbutz is not only a means to social and personal liberation, it is a means to national liberation, as well. Socialism, as defined by the tenets described in this chapter, represents the universalistic principle of kibbutz culture; Zionism represents its particularistic, Jewish principle. It is no accident, therefore, that Kiryat Yedidim was founded in Palestine rather than in Eastern Europe, the birthplace of the founders.

The Zionist convictions of Kiryat Yedidim which, for

its national normalization—escape from a minority status and, hence, from antisemitism—will enable the Jews to take their rightful and normal place among the nations of the world. In short, Zionism, for Kibbutz Yedidim, although a particularistic movement, has as its ultimate aim a universalistic and humanistic goal. This goal is not the geographic segregation of Jews, with the intention of developing specific Jewish characteristics that will separate the Jews from the non-Jewish world. Its aim, rather, is the concentration of Jews in their homeland so that they may develop a “normal” national life which, in turn, will enable them to interact with the rest of the world as normal human beings, rather than as members of a dependent, parasitic, fearful minority. For Kibbutz Yedidim, then, national liberation is not only as important as social and personal liberation, it is a necessary condition for their existence.

This is not to say, however, that its conception of Zionism does not contain much of the ethnocentrism that characterizes other nationalistic philosophies. Like other Israelis, the chaverim polarize their world into Aretz, whose literal meaning is “country,” but which is used to refer to the country, Israel; and chutz la-aretz, which refers to the rest of the world (literally, “outside the country”). So, too, they polarize the peoples of the world into Yehudim, a term which includes Israeli and non-Israeli Jews alike, and Goyim (literally, nations), the rest of mankind. This distinction is rhetorical, inherited from an epoch in which the world was polarized into friend (Jews) and foe (the rest of mankind). Nevertheless, it does not take long for one to realize that this rhetoric expresses an important contemporary psychological attitude. The ethnocentrism of the chaverim is expressed, moreover, in their insistence that all Jews ought to settle in Israel, and in their expressed amazement that any Jew who has visited Israel should want to return to his native country.

The Zionist philosophy of Kibbutz Yedidim serves to explain some of its important characteristics and behavior. Its emphasis on physical labor and its choice of rural, rather than urban living, stems not only from its general social philosophy, but from its Zionist convictions: the “normalization” of Jewish national life requires that Jews return to physical labor and that they strike roots in the soil. Moreover, the very geographic location of the kibbutz was dictated by its Zionist conviction. Kibbutz Yedidim was founded on what was then swampland, in an area which was remote from Jewish settlement. This was part of deliberate Zionist settlement policy, whose aim was to drain the Palestinian swampland so that more acreage could be brought under cultivation, and to continuously extend the frontiers of Jewish colonization so that all of mandated Palestine would be dotted with Jewish settlements.

It is this same Zionist philosophy that today motivates Kibbutz Yedidim, together with other kibbutzim, to devote so much of its manpower and energies to non-kibbutz, nationalist goals. During, and immediately following, World War II kibbutz members were to be found in Europe in the vanguard of those who risked their lives in order to smuggle Jewish refugees out of Europe and into Palestine. Since the war, the kibbutzim have lent some of their members for work in the refugee camps that are scattered throughout Israel. Finally, since Kibbutz Yedidim views itself as a Zionist agency, it has opened its doors for the settlement and rehabilitation of refugee youth. When children from Hitler’s Europe and, more recently, from Moslem countries
arrived in Israel, the country was faced with the problem of how to provide for their care. The kibbutzim, in an agreement with the Jewish Agency, agreed to accept groups of adolescents who would live and be educated in a kibbutz until they were prepared to take their place in the life of the country. And when one group leaves, another takes its place. The kibbutzim provide them with food, shelter, and their entire education. This is not to say that their motivations were entirely altruistic. Kiryat Yedidim, for example, derives some benefit from this arrangement in the stipend it receives from the Agency for each child it accepts and in the work performed by the youths in the kibbutz economy. The fact is, however, that the financial gain is small, and is more than offset by the great inconveniences which this arrangement causes the kibbutz, all of whose facilities are already strained.

These, then, are the moral postulates of Kiryat Yedidim and, indeed, of all kibbutzim. They are important, not only because they constitute the basis for the social structure of the kibbutz, but because they provide a clue to an important premise of its living: the premise that life is serious. It is serious because the realization of these values, rather than immediate pleasure or self-seeking, is taken to be the purpose of living.

The feeling that life's primary meaning is to be sought in the realization of values that transcend one's own personal importance was best expressed by a chavera who had recently returned from a visit to the United States. When asked by the author how long it had taken her to become lonesome for Israel, she replied that she missed it almost at once. In America, she said,

... they have no values. Of course, in Israel we have austerity, but we have values: we are absorbing immigrants, building a new society. Hence, you feel that your life has meaning. But what meaning does it have in America?

The consciousness of the seriousness of existence which is characteristic not only of Kiryat Yedidim, but of the kibbutz movement as a whole, is emphasized at every opportunity, including festive occasions. The annual nation-wide dance festival, for example, is held at Kibbutz Dahlia, and is staged by various groups throughout the country, including the kibbutzim. The year of the author's attendance, the audience numbered more than 50,000 and the theme of the festival was the cultural contribution of each of the groups of immigrants to Israel; the dances and songs of the various countries of origin were presented by these groups which had migrated from every part of the world. But, amidst the spectacle of the colors and music of many cultures, arose the feature tableau of the evening, wherein was depicted the tragedy of Jewish life throughout the Diaspora and the struggle and eventual success of the return to the Homeland. The audience was reminded that there were still many Jews suffering in the Diaspora, and that the task of all was to work for their redemption and return. It seems that even an evening of folk art cannot be enjoyed simply and for itself without some message of social significance.

Our problem, now, is to discover how it was that the founders of Kiryat Yedidim—young Jews from the shtetls of Eastern Europe—left their middle-class homes and emigrated to Palestine in order to found a community based on the principles just described.
We have always been extreme. We were extreme in demanding hashkama (self-realization by immigration to Palestine), rather than remaining Zionists in the Diaspora. In Palestine we were extreme in demanding return to the land and to agriculture. In agriculture we were extreme in demanding kibbutz. In kibbutz we were extreme in demanding (geographical) border kibbutzim. Hence, there are deep psychological roots for our political extremism. We are always on the border.

Statement by a chaver

THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF KIRYAT YEDIDIM

The European Background

The founders of Kiryat Yedidim were predominantly of Polish origin, and although they migrated to Palestine at an early age—in their late teens or early twenties—their European experience has left its indelible influence on the kind of community they established. This European experience can be analyzed under five aspects, as far as its influence on the vattikim is concerned: (1) the status of Jewry in Poland, (2) the broader culture of the shtetl, (3) parent-child relationships in the shtetl, (4) the Zionist movement, and (5) Jewish and other European youth movements.

The Status of Polish Jewry. Eastern European Jews had long been the victims of a tradition of antisemitism, an antisemitism which included not only social discrimination, but also physical attacks and pogroms. Nevertheless, in the early years of the twentieth century, many Jews in Poland were beginning to think that Western Enlightenment and liberalism, which were slowly permeating Eastern Europe, would bring them the emancipation they were seeking. Some looked forward to eventual assimilation and identified themselves with Polish nationalism and with the Polish cultural renaissance. Their hopes were strengthened when Polish schools were opened to Jews, because they saw in this secular, national education the road to their eventual integration within the larger Polish society.

It soon became apparent, however, that these hopes were to be frustrated. Even after the schools were opened to Jews, "the Jewish students were made to feel at every point that they were strangers, and that they were not acceptable in the eyes of their Polish classmates." And even those who sought acceptance by complete assimilation were told that they "were not wanted in the Renaissance of the Polish national society." The realization that they were not wanted, in spite of their feelings of genuine Polish patriotism, came as a severe blow to many of these Jewish young people, and it served as a potent influence in their determination to seek their salvation in other ways. The crucial importance of this rejection is evident from the spontaneous references to specific rejection experiences on the part of the vattikim in the course of conversation. The Polish

1 See Dubnow, The History of the Jews in Russia and Poland.
2 From a book published by a Veteran Settler of Kiryat Yedidim.
3 Ibid.
schools, remarked one vattika, “were very patriotic in emphasis, and the Jewish students shared this Polish patriotism.” The latter considered themselves to be Poles, and were Jewish only in their homes; “otherwise we forgot that we were Jews.” But in the experience of this woman there occurred an event “which I shall never forget,” although she was only ten years old at the time; this experience was shared by many others. It was Polish Independence Day (May 3), and she was very excited as she prepared to go to school, because there was to be a celebration in her class. When the class was assembled the teacher announced that all the Jewish children could return home, because “this is our holiday, not yours.” This was a “terrible blow” to her, and it served as a psychological preparation for her entry into The Movement. This disillusionment with Polish education and with the possibilities of acceptance by Polish society was exacerbated by the outbreak of antisemitic pogroms after World War I, in which Jews were killed and their houses pillaged by Polish peasants, often with the active assistance of the Polish police and army. This proved to be the final blow for the educated youth, and The Movement organized a mass exodus from the Polish schools, and in their stead established Jewish gymnasia. “It became apparent,” said a vattika, “at least to the members of The Movement, that there was no solution to the ‘Jewish problem’ within Poland.”

4 The Movement exists today in two forms. It is the name of the youth movement, both in Israel and abroad, which prepares young people for kibbutz living. Even the children who are reared in the kibbutz become members of this youth movement before they become members of the kibbutz. But The Movement is also the name of the political party which was founded by the members of the European youth movement when they arrived in Israel. This party has since joined with two other small parties to form a new political alliance, but the members of the former party remain a faction within the larger group, known as The Movement.

The Culture of the Shtetl. Most of the vattikim lived either in shtetls or in city ghettos whose culture was that of the shtetl, or they were born of orthodox parents who continued to adhere to the culture of the shtetl. This culture, whatever may have been its objective merits,6 was viewed unfavorably by the new generation of Jewish youth. For them, the shtetl was a “poor and gloomy Galician village” in which people lived in “narrow alleys,”6 in both a physical and a psychological sense. It produced people who were but “caricatures” of what true human beings could become. The shtetl Jew, we read in an official publication of The Movement,

... is a caricature of a natural and normal man, both physically and spiritually. As an individual in the group he shirks responsibility, and does not know organization and discipline. It appears to him that he is wiser than all men, and they must discard their ideas for his. He especially excels in argumentation and “pilpul” (casuistry), that for him become ends in themselves.

The antagonism of the youth to traditional Jewish culture and to the personality type it had created, was extended to a dislike for the so-called Jewish physical type. Even today, adults in the kibbutz often point to their young, blonde sabras (native-born Israelis), and ask with pride, “would you ever guess that they are Jewish?” Or, to cite a typical reaction, a vattika commented that two young American Jews who were visiting the kibbutz were “so nice-looking you would never know that they were Jewish.” When the

6 For an ethnography of the shtetl, see Zborowski and Herzog.
6 Veteran Settler, op. cit.
6 From “Our Program,” published in 1917. This characterization of the Jew, points to an important aspect of Zionism which has seldom been commented upon—its antisemitic component. But compare Kaufman, “Anti-Semitic Stereotypes in Zionism.”
author pointed out the antisemitism implicit in her remark, she admitted that this was so, adding that she has always “hated” the “typical” Jewish physical characteristics.

This youth, then, although spurned by the non-Jewish world, could not find comfort in their Jewish world. They rejected the one, and were rejected by the other.

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION. Of considerable psychological importance for the understanding both of their opposition to the shtetl and of the system of “collective education” which they were later to establish in Kibbutz Yedidim was the opposition of this youth to its parents. “We were always opposed to the life of our parents,” was the comment of one vattika. “We always,” said a vattik, “stressed the necessity for rebellion against parents and the parent way of life.” A constant refrain which one hears in any discussion concerning kibbutz education is the importance of preventing the parent-child conflict that had characterized their own childhood and adolescence. This conflict between parents and children in the shtetl is summed up by a chaverim.

Not even in the midst of his family life did the Jewish youth find consolation or stimulation. The split between fathers and sons widened. The sons stood, as it were, at the crossroads. They had escaped from the world of yesterday, in which their fathers were still immersed, but the world of the future was still enveloped in fog.⁸

⁸ Veteran Settler, op. cit. It is of no small theoretical consequence to point out that many values and forms of their fathers’ lives are retained by the chaverim, many of which are indicated throughout this monograph. The most general and perhaps most significant continuity is in the degree to which the daily routine is regulated. The lives of their fathers were regulated in even their minutiae by the compendium of rabbinic law, known as the Shulchan Aruch. The daily lives of the chaverim are regulated to almost the same degree by the rules of The Federation. These rules govern such diverse aspects of their lives as the number of children permitted within a dormitory, the nurse-child ratio, the number of hours to be worked in a day, the length of the annual vacations, the minimum housing facilities, the minimum amount of furniture for each room, the leisure time to be provided a pregnant woman or nursing mother, and a host of others.

For the history of the Zionist movement, see Levenson, Outline of Zionist History.

⁹ From “Our Principles,” published in 1917. The last principle was interpreted to mean opposition to drinking, smoking, and sexual relationships.
This scouting emphasis was strengthened when a number of young Polish Jews who had fled to Vienna were exposed to the German youth movement immediately after World War I. This German youth movement left an indelible impression on them, for in their eyes

... the bright and modern images of the German youth were like magic. We, who had yearned for freedom and emancipation, saw in these young men and women, the prototype of emancipated youth. For many this vision was like a revelation, and they devoured the literature of this youth movement, and drank its words with great thirst; they were impressed and influenced by all its notions.11

The “notions” of these groups—particularly those of the Wandervögel, whose program most influenced The Movement—were simple. They included a revolt against tradition; love of nature; a love of nation, which seemed to consist of a vague mystique of the “folk”; self-expression; emphasis on the emotional aspect of life; the gospel of “joy in work.” This was a program which stressed the regeneration of the individual, and his emancipation from the bonds of urban mores and artificial convention. This meant, in both practical and psychological terms, a break with parents and the parental generation. As Becker puts it, they “... loathed and hated the world of their elders, and were ready to follow any Pied Piper whose mystery and power held promises of a new realm where longings found fruition.”12

Like other “primitivist” movements in history—and this was a “primitivist” movement, par excellence—the members of the German youth movement believed that all the pettiness and sordidness of human behavior were a function of city living and its concomitant luxuries and false conventions.13 Once emancipated from these evils of civilization, human nature would realize its full potentiality, and joy and camaraderie would characterize human social life. For this youth, then, The Movement represented

... the visible embodiment of rebellion against flabby school routine, insincere church attendance, flatulent concerts, boring parties designed for display and climbing, nauseous student jollifications laden with the sluggish ceremonial and spurious heartiness of the paternal stammtisch, well-meant but repellant counsel about ways of getting on in the world ... 14

This rebellion, however, did not take the form of political activity. The Movement did not develop a program for the destruction of these “false” values, nor, for that matter, any other political programs. Instead of advocating a change in contemporary society, it prescribed an escape from society into the world of nature, where “adventure was still possible.”

Trudging along with the beloved leader, came the new way of life: wandering at will through fields, forests, and hills, pitching camp in a ruined castle or under the lindens fringing a little cluster of peasant houses where the shams of the city were absent.15

For the Jewish youth, this escape into nature was particularly captivating. As a vattika, describing her experience in

12 Becker, p. 73. This book, particularly chapter 5, is a valuable description and analysis of the German youth movement.
13 “Primitivism” is used here in the meaning attributed to it in that excellent book by Lovejoy and Boas, A Documentary History of Primitivism and Related Ideas. It refers to the notion that man’s true excellence is to be found in those social conditions which correspond most exactly to a “state of nature.” This concept is, of course, closely related to the “Noble Savage” idea of the eighteenth century, and to certain aspects of nineteenth-century romanticism.
14 Becker, p. 75.
15 Ibid.
these outings, put it, "Jews don't know what nature is, what a tree is." Their hikes in the youth movement, she said, gave them "the peace of nature," which impelled them to settle on the land when they left for Palestine.

The "primitivism" of these groups was expressed not only in a return to nature, but in their emphasis on the ascetic life. At the very beginning

... there was rejection of comfort in favor of hard primitivism and later ... abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, refusal to participate in ballroom dancing, avoidance of motion pictures, and a host of other self-imposed inhibitions. These lent an ascetic quality to even the less rigorous contingents of the youth movement and helped to make the break with the adult world really evident to even the most obtuse parent, school teacher, or pastor.  

Some of the other more important "self-imposed inhibitions" which The Movement accepted included simple housing, simple clothing, and the avoidance of any make-up by women. This ascetic tradition is still very much alive in Kiryat Yedidim. At the same time one of the important factors contributing to the "crisis" in the kibbutz movement is the tension between this historic tradition of asceticism and the desire for luxury and comfort which has become a strong motive in the lives of many chaverim.

Though the German youth movement stressed the importance of individual freedom, self-expression, and emancipation from the group, it was not long before the group—that is, their own group—began to assume great importance. The group served two functions in the lives of German youth, and there is little question but that it served the same func-

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16 Ibid., p. 98.
17 See below, pp. 67-70 ff.
18 See Chapter 6.
19 Becker, p. 75.
20 The sect-like character of the kibbutz, which will be discussed below (see Chapter V), is one of the first impressions the author had of the kibbutz. It is of some interest to note that Becker, in his analysis of the German youth movements, can characterize them by no other term than by "sect." "Identification with the group . . . ," he writes, "came to be the way in which the initially random conventicles of dissenters were fused into sects of the like-minded and consciously elect." (Ibid., p. 83)
21 Ibid., p. 77. The "expedition" refers to the periodic hiking trips, and the "nest" was the meeting place of each local chapter. The latter (in Hebrew, ken) was adopted by The Movement while still in Europe. Today, however, the term refers to each chapter, rather than to its meeting place. Thus there is a ken Tel Aviv, a ken Kiryat Yedidim, etc.
seated is attested to by the spontaneous references to them on the part of the vattikim thirty years later. Indeed, they were so important that they served, according to a kibbutz leader, as the model for the communal form of living that they were to create in Palestine. “The ideology of work,” he said, “came from Russian Zionism and the early kibbutzim; communal living came from the hikes in the Movement.”

Since the Movement emphasized the regeneration of the individual and, consequently, the ultimate regeneration of society, it devoted much of its energies to the formulation of the “ideal” educational system. This, said a vattik, “was our main interest; it became an idée fixe with us. For three or four years thousands of our people struggled with this problem. It was then that the educational philosophy and structure which is found in the kibbutz today was formulated.”

Zionism. It can be observed from the foregoing discussion, as well as from the principles of the Movement, that the latter was primarily a continental youth movement, in which Zionism played a minor role. As late as 1917, in the article describing “Our Program,” nothing is said about Zionism as being integral to it. The three major emphases of this “program” were, with one exception, the three emphases of the German youth movements. The first emphasis was that of changing Jewish life, rather than of escaping from it. The change did not involve migration to Palestine, however, but a change in accordance with the values of the youth movement. The other emphases included the living in groups, the eschewal of formal education, and the turning to nature for instruction.

The important turning point in the Zionist career of
would enable the Jews to achieve a “normal” existence.  

Whatever their Zionist motivations, it is significant that, once the decision was made, it involved more than official affiliation with the Zionist movement or explicit endorsement of the Zionist cause. It involved, rather, the decision to migrate to Palestine. Only in Palestine, they believed, could they find self-realization. As a chaver has written, The Movement:  

... was not satisfied with an analysis of the national situation and with establishing the correct diagnosis, but it obliged its members to action, in order to turn the disaster into the road to emancipation. And from this followed its active attitude to the national problem, namely, acceptance of responsibility in the development of the history of the nation.  

Their decision to migrate, like so many other aspects of their history, becomes more intelligible within the general framework of the European youth movement. In general, youth movement experience it was discovered that, whereas no explicit membership criteria were required, any one with “tensions” could, and did, join. Eventually, this situation ... becomes intolerable for those of more intense persuasion and they begin to look for the outward sign of inward grace among their fellows—and these signs were not always evident ... (This sign came to be) ... the continuing sense of fusion acquired in and through the supreme test of the expedition.  

The Jewish movement was confronted with the same problem; but since its problems were more extreme than  

23 Whether one can achieve a “normal” national existence without some pride in one’s national past is questionable, and the ambivalence that marks the attitude of the sabras toward their Jewishness indicates that “normalcy” is not quite so simple as the early settlers had originally assumed.  
24 Veteran Settler, op. cit.  
25 Becker, p. 84.

those of its German counterpart, the “sign” it demanded was correspondingly more extreme. Instead of demanding an “expedition” into the country, it demanded one outside the country—alyya—to Palestine. The insistence on alyya, or migration, claims a very perceptive vattrik, ... was the real solution for us, since it was the final outlet, the culmination of the youth movement. Instead of collapsing like other youth movements, (ours) succeeded because it offered a final realization or culmination in Palestine. If it weren’t for Zionism, (The Movement) would have become just another episode in the life of those who did not want to continue the life of their fathers.  

In 1920, they left for Palestine.  

Aliyya  

In perspective this migration seems like an absurd adventure. The ninety or so immigrants who arrived in Palestine and who, one year later, were to found Kiryat Yedidim were still in their teens—eighteen and nineteen years old—with little conception of what the land or people were like. Their ignorance of the then current situation in Palestine was so marked that they did not know of the few existing

23 It should be noted, however, that their very rebellion against “the life of their fathers” included an important value of the latter’s life—Zionism. The Zionism of their fathers, to be sure, was of a different quality from their own. It was primarily a religious Zionism which looked to the Messiah for the Restoration of God’s People to His Holy Land, or it was a passive political Zionism which involved the support of Zionism without their own migration to Palestine. In both cases the parents objected to the emigration of their children. Nevertheless, this ultimate rejection of their fathers (physical separation) and of their way of life led, in an interesting psychological paradox, to a closing of the circle rather than to a widening of the gap. Indeed, one might speculate whether the choice of Palestine rather than Uganda, for example, was not motivated by an unconscious desire to identify with their fathers in the very process of rebelling against them.
collectives, such as Degania, which had been founded in 1909. They knew little, if anything, of the economic conditions of the country, and they were not even sure that they would be able to find employment. They knew neither where they would live nor how they would live. These middle-class, urban youths, whose only rural experience had been with "hikes" in the youth movement, had no plans, except for the nebulous one of working on the land. However fantastic and quixotic this adventure may seem to us, it is partially explicable in terms of their youth movement background. The youth movements were opposed to order, plans, goals, specified objectives. "It would be hard to find a 'purer' type of irrational social action in any society," writes Becker of the Wandervögel. 26

Wilhelm Stählin, a Wandervögel leader, stated the position most dramatically:

Where lively people are together no one needs a programme. Our happiest hours were those in which there was nothing planned beforehand, argued out, and finally fixed. Instead, words and songs quelled out of the living present and out of the deep bonds which wove every participant into an internalized unity. There is nothing more wonderful and fruitful than communion in a small group of confidants where no plan and no "order of the day" hems in spontaneous vitality and the spirit that "blowing where it listeth," unites and enthralls us. Every day is begun with eagerness and hope, and every hour brings forth our wandering gratitude for rich, overflow- ing experience. Poor in soul are those persons who because they always have "something laid out" and always know what must be done at this moment and talked about at (sic) that never get around to the joys of simply living and being together with friends—without any program. 27

26 Becker, p. 96–97.
27 ibid., p. 97.

The physical conditions in Palestine met by these new arrivals were so harsh that many found it impossible to adjust to the new environment and returned to Poland. At first they could not find work, and they had practically nothing to eat. Moreover, since they were not yet adapted to the physical environment, many became seriously ill. In one place all eighty contracted malaria and were hospitalized. Some of them, although not willing to return to Europe, left the group to try to make their own way in the cities. Those who remained with the group finally founded the kibbutz.

It was at this time that this small band of immigrants had an intense group experience that was to leave its mark on their future course, an experience which is remembered today as their "Golden Age." They were living in Nevei Gila, a spot in some then isolated mountains, and it was there that they first experienced the meaning of an important youth movement concept—the "organic community"—that is, a small community whose solidarity and integration are based on intimate personal relations. "Organic community," which connotes many of the same sentiments as the Bunderlebnis of the German youth movement, constituted one of the major goals of the European youth movements. Carl Blüher, the German youth movement theoretician whose thought was one of the important influences on the vattikim, taught that the Bunderlebnis was the important consequence of the "expedition."

Then began to come into being something that we had long felt but had never translated into living experience: we were an inseparably united fellowship. When at last we found the right path into the valley there was aroused a feeling of intense joy which grew out of the dangers we had triumphantly en-
dured, yes, but still more because we had stood a test proving that we were finally bound by friendly and comradely ties.  

The period which the vattikim spent in Nevei Gila not only bound them together in “friendly and comradely ties,” but it represented a uniquely “creative moment” in their history, as one of them put it. “It was as if the best we were capable of found its expression there.” He compared their intense emotional experiences, and their successful attempts to create an “organic community,” to the creativity of Jesus in those same mountains two thousand years before.

Since this period was to serve, as it were, as the prototype of the ideal kibbutz, it is important to understand the nature of this “creative moment.” These, it must be remembered, were a group of youngsters—“spoiled children,” as one chaver put it—who had left their homes and their families and had come to a strange country whose landscape was gaunt and forbidding, whose physical environment was difficult, and whose climate was harsh. They were alone, isolated, and friendless. Within this socio-psychological setting, they were, so to speak, thrown back on their psychological heels; and their strength and consolation—if they were to experience these at all—had to come from within their own group. The psychological bonds induced by this mutual dependency-security relationship were established in a physical environment of wild but beautiful mountains, and in a social environment free from conventional ties and responsibilities. These factors, combined with their freedom in sexual behavior and their consequent romantic-erotic attachments, conspired to create what one vattik termed, “a state of hysteria.” Given this psychological setting, it is little wonder that they experienced a sense of “organic community.”

The importance of this experience for the vattikim lay in the fact that it provided these young people with a vision of what their ideal society could be, and it was this vision that motivated the establishment of the kibbutz. But few of them realized then (as few realize even today) that this experience could probably not be recaptured. Nevertheless, this utopian vision serves today as the standard by which the chaverim evaluate the contemporary kibbutz. The resulting contrast has only served to create that tragic tension which is the inevitable result of the discrepancy between the real and the ideal.

Having captured this common vision, these pioneers realized that they must translate their vision into action, for, commented a chaver, if they did not “begin to create something, the vision would disappear or become fatuous.” Hence, he continued, they “went down to the valley to create.” They settled near a city, where they lived in a tent camp and attempted to eke out a living by road construction. This, too, was a period of intense emotional experience, as well as one of great hardship. For six months they had been unemployed, and had had little to eat. When they at last began to work on the highway, they soon realized how poorly equipped they were for manual labor. The transition from their life in Europe—a life of comfort and relative prosperity—to a life of strenuous physical labor and poverty—a life which provided them with scant rations and with mattresses of cardboard on which to sleep—was extremely difficult. “We were unprepared for it,” said a

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28 Ibid., pp. 82-83.

29 See Chapter 6 for the role played by this “tension” in the current “crisis.”
vattik. “We had no idea it would be that hard.” But hardship was the badge of a chalutz. “When I complained about the lack of mattresses,” recalled a vattika, “my husband said, ‘you are not a chalutz.’ And when I protested about the clothes which never fit me, he said, ‘you are not a chalutz!’” Then, half-sheepishly, she added, “the fact is, it was very hard for me.” “It was very romantic,” commented another vattika, “but it was very hard.” She added, as an afterthought, “but if one wants to live for an ideal, he can overcome hardships.”

Without depreciating the importance of this “ideal,” it should be emphasized that other factors, as well, enabled these pioneers to overcome their hardships. For them, as for their counterparts in the German youth movement, the ability to withstand and to transcend physical hardship—even to transmute it into an important spiritual experience—was a source of great ego satisfaction. Nature was not only to be enjoyed, but, like work, it was something to be conquered. The battle cry of these pioneers, it will be recalled, was kibbush ha-avodah, the conquest of labor, which implied the conquest of nature. Hence, it is probably not inaccurate to apply to them what has been written of the Wandervögel. They

... found a peculiar beauty and thrill in slogging through a rain-drenched countryside, laughing at torn and sodden clothing until they arrived at a shelter where they could slump and dry out before a roaring fire. Promethean defiance of nature because of success in becoming one with it was the essence of such elated experience.30

If the hard labor and the difficult conditions gave to the pioneers intense ego-gratification, the group experience—

30 Becker, p. 82.

such as the one in Nevei Gila—continued to provide them with deep-seated emotional satisfactions. Again, as in the latter case, the term, “hysteria” was used by a vattik to characterize the intensity of this emotion. To those conditions that had given rise to “hysteria” in Nevei Gila, and that obtained here as well, there was added one important new influence: Chassidism.31 Chassidism, according to the Veteran Settler, served to link these young Jews with their past.

We did not want to remain uprooted. We sought some bond to a cultural heritage of previous generations, and we found the treasure of Chassidic song and lore. In the evenings the kibbutz would assemble in the center of the camp and sing—an echo of the songs of generations concerning shechinta b'galuta and kisufei geula.32

The choice of Chassidism was not accidental. Both the Chassidim and the chalutzim, observed a vattik, had “broken the chains of the forms of traditional Judaism,” and both had “rebelled against their fathers.” Hence, “we found an intimate relationship between our lives and the Chassidic lives.” This relationship was so meaningful that, despite their meager physical sustenance, they found the energy to produce some Chassidic plays, which, writes the Veteran Settler, gave them “spiritual sustenance.” For, despite the intellectual and social chasm that separated the chalutzim from

31 Chassidism, a religious folk movement which had its origin among Eastern European Jews in the eighteenth century, stressed the mystical and emotional aspects of the religious life. The Chassidic emphasis on nature, joy, and dancing, would naturally appeal to these youths, despite their own indifference to religion.

32 Veteran Settler. The two Hebrew concepts may be translated respectively as “the exile of God (from the Holy Land)” and the “longing for redemption.”
the characters in these plays, the latter, says a vattik, “expressed much that was close to our hearts.”

They not only sang Chassidic songs and produced Chassidic plays, but they also danced in the manner of Chassidim; that is, they danced with kavvana, or “devotion.” “For months we had nothing to eat, but we danced all night,” recalls a vattik. This statement—for one who has seen the bora, their favorite folk dance, and who can visualize it danced with kavvana—expresses with supreme eloquence the intense emotionality of their group experience. Danced with kavvana, the hora can be both the cause and the expression of the group emotion which seems to have characterized that period. This is a group dance in which the participants, who are linked to one another arm-on-shoulder, are united in a large circle. The group thus becomes a unity, in which each individual faces the center and can see every other individual. The unity of the group is expressed not only spatially and physically, but kinesthetically, as well, for the momentum of the dance creates a centrifugal force which threatens to thrust the individual from the circle; but his centrifugality is counterbalanced by the centripetal force emanating from the entire group, and he is drawn again towards the center by the entwined arms of his fellows on either side. Thus the dancer experiences a sense of freedom and abandon, but it is a freedom checked at every step by the pressure of the group, whose sense of unity is enhanced all the more by the rhythmic beat of the feet and by the monotony of the never-ceasing repetition of the song. Thus can the group both create and express the hysteria of its individuals.

In addition to Chassidism, the vattikim came under another important influence: the ideas of Sigmund Freud. In looking for a “theory that could explain our feelings, our stress, and our turmoil,” explained a vattik, “we came upon psychoanalysis, and it was as if Freud had written especially for us.” This early emphasis on Freud is now a source of considerable regret for some of the vattikim. For as one of them put it: “Freud ruled in our society, and this postponed the acceptance of Marxism.” Psychoanalysis, however, did more than “explain” their own personal lives. Its theories contributed much to the educational system which they were later to establish.

This period was important not only for its psychological effects on the chaverim, however, but for the experience it gave them in the organization of communal living. It was at this time that most of the important institutions of the present kibbutz, such as public ownership, the town meeting, the committee system, and many others, were developed. It was at this time, too, that they decided to form a kibbutz, a community which would emphasize the primary value of labor. Because of this decision, many of the chaverim who did not share this labor orientation left the group. On the other hand, their lack of a truly crystallized philosophy and, more particularly, their lack of a political program, alienated those who demanded political activity; and they too left the group. Because of these defections, however, they had become an integrated group, with a strong sense of esprit de corps, and with confidence in their ability to create a new society. Hence, when they were invited by the Jewish Agency to settle on their own land, they were eager to begin.