

A FIG



FROM THE FIG TREE

BY AMIR TEYNEE AND PAULETTE DRIVER

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Message from the co-authors:

I dedicate the book to the memory of the founder members of Kibbutz Ein Hamifratz including my mother and father – and to my special sister Tamar, too soon departed this world!

Amir

This book is dedicated to the unique Amir, for being its reason, motivation and inspiration. Thank you for sharing some of yourself with me – and the world!

Paulette

Special thanks go to:

Nahum and Genia Manor, Amir's classmates, especially Osnat Doron, Ora Spigner, posthumously: Levi Tzur [Ein Hamifratz] and Elikah Ilan [Amir's cousin].

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Part one of Amir Teynee's life story captures the atmosphere of a turbulent era.

Spanning the period just prior to WWII, it takes in the inception of the state of Israel and catalogues the social history of the times up to the Sinai war.

It portrays what it was like to be raised on a radical socialist kibbutz and expands on the implications of such an upbringing and the huge influence these "kibbutzniks" had on the state of Israel.



An excerpt from "Beginnings"

Couples and marriage

Yosek and Pelah met at Bat Galim and were not married when Tamar came into the world in 1935. This unmarried state was not uncommon initially amongst the new arrivals to Israel's shores. It is interesting to note that they, like many immigrants, were too poor to pay a rabbi for a marriage ceremony at that time [it should be noted that they placed no import on the religious implications of being unwed]. However, when Amir was conceived, it seems, they had managed to scrape together the necessary funds to marry. One of the more amusing phenomena of that era was that often couples wanting to marry, where the woman was already pregnant, sent a substitute female to go through the wedding ceremony on her behalf, to save embarrassment in front of the rabbi!

Levi Tzur [one of the founders of Ein Hamifratz] recalls that this substitute matrimonial duty sometimes brought extra income into a kibbutz, since kibbutzim that were too far away from a rabbi had to pay somebody to replace the bride or the groom. Finances were so scant, that a kibbutz would send only one member of a couple to the ceremony, usually the one that didn't have outside employment so as not to lose a days income for their kibbutz.

Levi told Amir with a broad grin on his face, that, while he was kibbutz secretary, he stood in for a groom at just such wedding ceremonies a few times. Ein Hamifratz at Kiryat Khaim [being in close proximity to many local rabbis] often provided these "special services" of the necessary stand-in!

An excerpt from "Kibbutz Karzeys and Smoke Bombs!"...

If you had approached the wooden shack / tin hut [which provided the toileting facilities for the kibbutz in the early days] at dawn on a winter's morning, you would have seen steam arising into the ether and have smelt the aroma that only a latrine pit can conjure. Thus Amir described his earliest memories of the kibbutz lavatories.



A typical primitive toilet facility at the early stages of the kibbutz

They were a crude affair. The wooden or corrugated iron shack was placed over a deep pit which when full, had to be moved to a different location for obvious reasons! In summer, this shack became as high as a kite and was not the sort of place in which a person would wish to stay one moment longer than necessary. There were no seats, just a hole in which to empty out your bladder or bowels.

The “toilet paper” used was old pieces of newspaper cut into squares, skewered on a long nail hammered into the wall of the shack.

One person’s “Siddur Avodah” [order of work] when cleaning the latrine, was to take old newspapers and cut them into 10cm x 10cm square.

Newspaper was used for this purpose at least until the end of the mossad and national service in the armed forces for Kvuzat Alumah.

Nurit, one of Amir’s classmates, recalls that, when serving in the army, a girl arrived armed with her own toilet roll to the surprise of the other recruits. She proudly announced: “My father is not ready to see my arse turned into a printing house”!

Amir states it was not a pleasant experience to look down whilst in the toilet. There was all manner of U.F.O’s [unidentified floating objects] lying in wait

"Kibbutz Karzeys and Smoke Bombs" contd...

for the unsuspecting observer! He remembers how puzzled he and his classmates were at the deflated blonde balloons that were floating there. Now he realises that they were used condoms, but back then it was an unsolved mystery which intrigued the children. He guesses that he was about 11 or 12 before he realised what these objects were. This would have coincided with the first sex education lessons meted out by Munjew.

It is amusing to note that he probably learned what a condom was before he knew what was a bar mitzvah!

An excerpt from "1948 and all that!"

It was my task to discover how the people of Ein Hamifratz coped during the British Mandate and the War of Independence in 1948.

Amir was not as forthcoming as usual on this subject, not particularly because he had many bad memories, but that, in truth, the children were mostly shielded from the sight and sounds of the hostilities. In a day and age of no television, with hardly any access to radio and newspapers, the children knew very little of the dramatic events taking place on their doorstep.

Indeed, those outside of the kibbutzim said that they were living in a bubble. In contrast, youngsters living outside kibbutzim were in close proximity to the British Forces and were exposed to turbulent political clashes in the streets and throughout the land.

The kibbutzim youngsters were nicknamed "Tnuvah Children" yelday tnuvah ילדי תנובה. [Tnuvah was the main distributor of dairy, agricultural and fish products in Israel]. This was because; living on an agricultural settlement, there was always a plentiful supply of milk, eggs, cheese, sour cream etc. Not for them was the strict rationing which the city kids endured following the founding of the new state of Israel.

This "Tnuvah" expression came to be known as a derogatory term for the kibbutz children – they were jealously looked upon as "spoiled brats"! Seemingly, it appeared that they had been born with a silver spoon in their mouths.

Many kibbutzim were "outposts" isolated in remote places such as the desert, along the borders and often amidst hostile Arab neighbours. So naturally, due to their positioning, they were living in that bubble – disconnected from the rest of the nation!

As far as he can recollect, Amir says that they saw very little of the British troops. It is true that on other kibbutzim the "red berets" were imposing a curfew and carrying out room to room searches, sometimes in a very cruel

"1948 and all that!" contd....

manner in order to uncover a prohibited sliq [סליק], cache of weapons hidden somewhere.

These excerpts are a forerunner of the complete book which will be available to download from this web site shortly.

The book is some 400 pages in length and contains a glossary to assist the reader in understanding some of the Hebrew language and terminology.

There will be a charge of £5.00 [Sterling] payable through PayPal and Credit Card.

We hope that you will enjoy reading it!

Amir & Paulette