

What is Youth Aliyah?

Youth Aliyah was originally founded (1933) by Henrietta Szold to rescue Jewish youth from Nazi Germany. Some 5,000 teenagers were brought to the country before & during World War II, educated at Youth Aliyah boarding schools & kibbutzim. After the war, an additional 15,000, survivors were absorbed through this program. Today Youth Aliyah villages continue to play a vital role in the absorption of young newcomers.

Where does the play take place?

The kibbutz Gat Ha'amakim is a fictional kibbutz located in the Jezreel valley, where the kibbutz movement blossomed. The Jezreel Valley is home to some of the most fertile farmland in Israel. The agricultural heartland of the country, it is an area rich in natural springs.



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**Navigating the
context of**

**He Walked
Through the
Fields**

by Moshe Shamir

What is Kibbutz?

The Kibbutz was originally a rural community built on the socio-economic system based on the principal of joint ownership of property, equality and cooperation of production, consumption and education. The Second Wave of Aliyah brought Jewish immigrants to Palestine from Russia between 1904-1914 following pogroms and outbreaks of anti-Semitism. Greatly influenced by Socialist ideals, they founded the first Kibbutzim and formed self defense organizations such as HaShomer—the Guard. The first Kibbutz, Degania, was established by the Sea of Galilee in 1909. General Moshe Dayan, born 1915, was the second child born on this Kibbutz and became a symbol of this new generation. Set in the early 40s, the play captures a snapshot of the Kibbutz as its first generation of children is reaching maturity.

What is the Palmach?

The Palmach were volunteer elite commando units of the Haganah, the underground military organization of the Jewish Settlement in Palestine pre-1948. Established in 1941, by 1948 it consisted of over 2000 men & women. The Palmach put great emphasis on training independent & broadminded field commanders who would take the initiative & set an example for their troops. Its members formed the backbone of the Israeli Defense Forces high command for many years & were prominent in Israeli politics, literature & culture. The Palmach was associated with socialist parties & its members trained & lived in Kibbutzim. The Palmach had a great influence over Israeli “Tzabar” culture. Traditional Palmach activities such as Kumzitz (sitting around the campfire) public singing & cross-country walking trips took on mythical proportions & became national pastimes. Notable Palmach members: Yehuda Amichai, Moshe Shamir, Hannah Senesh, Yigal Allon, Yitzhak Sadeh, Yitzhak Rabin & Moshe Dayan.

What is Illegal Aliyah?

Aliyah is the term for immigration to Israel. Literally “Going Up”

Five waves of immigration brought hundreds of thousands of Jews to Palestine from 1882-1936 at which point the British closed the doors to further immigration. Over 100,000 people attempted to illegally enter Palestine. There were 142 voyages by 120 ships. Over half were stopped by British patrols and intercepted immigrants sent to internment camps in Cyprus, some even returned to Europe. (*Exodus*) Over 1600 died at sea. Only a few thousand entered Palestine. While the success of this period of Aliyah was modest it proved to be a unifying force for both the Yishuv, the Jewish Community in Palestine, and the Holocaust Survivor Refugees in Europe. It also mobilized the Yishuv against the British.