

**THE KIBBUTZIM : A
SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY*

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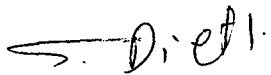
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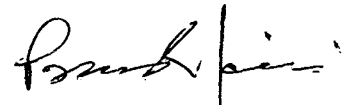
C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that this dissertation entitled, "**THE KIBBUT-ZIM : A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**", submitted by Harsh Pati Dobhal in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, is an original work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university to the best of our knowledge.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.



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(Chairperson)



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Harsh Dobhal

FOR MY GRANDMOTHER,
who taught me respect for tradition

PREFACE

Co-operation and mutual aid form a crucial cornerstone in the great building of human nature. And the vision of utopia has always lent directions to efforts to create more desirable communities. Cultures which have no such utopian visions remain imprisoned in the present. Underlying these utopian visions is the human urge towards cooperation and feeling of social solidarity especially when contrasted with the cruel and selfish struggle for the survival on the part of the individual group or class. Cooperation is the dominant trait of social behaviour and from the biological point of view it is the most important one.

In the midst of current events, anyone is prone to get discouraged about the possibility for a communal model to produce and sustain democratic socialism. History is replete with an extensive catalogue of attempts, usually on a limited scale and in simple fashion, to implement the vision, but all have failed because the ideals quickly became perverted or because the practical problems encountered were too great to overcome. The powerful forces of elitism, authoritarianism, capitalism and globalization pose major constraints

against the emergence of genuine alternatives.

While most of the experiments have failed, certain societies and communal experiments continue to offer the promise of new modes of social organization and social consciousness. Within the last eighty five years - the Kibbutz society in Israel based on the principles of collectivism, egalitarianism and mutual aid, aiming at the maximum equality among its own people, is an experiment which did not fail.

The Kibbutz can no longer be regarded as an experiment; for about 115, 000 people of Israel it has been a way of life for over eighty five years, which its members regard desirable and important.

Some of the ideological principles of the Kibbutz have been qualified; some issues once regarded difficult to resolve for ideological reasons have been settled; some desired results have not materialized and some new, unanticipated or neglected problems have emerged. And since there are no permanent solutions for the problems of man and society, Kibbutzim have changed accordingly.

Much has already been written about the Kibbutz and its problems from diverse points of view. This study attempts to contribute towards the sociological understanding of the Kibbutz as a community, a society. While focussing on its origin, history, social, political and economic structure, the study also takes into account larger opposing cultures and the consequent changes. How opening up of kibbutzim to a larger society outside indicates that small-scale socialist experiments can not creatively grow or be sustained within a larger opposing culture without, at minimum, suffering major limitations in their ideological thrust which was envisioned initially. At the same time, inspite of, or because of these changes, how the kibbutz has exemplified in practice the hopes of a desirable life in a collaborative and democratic setting.

The first chapter is mainly descriptive; it deals with the context and origin of the Kibbutz : its history, population, etc. The second and third chapters while depicting the day-to-day mechanisms of social, economic and political activity of the kibbutz: organization of production, the planning of work, consumption on the democratic basis of the kibbutz; economic planning; collective education; the rela-

tionship between the collective and its members; the family, women, etc., also examine the efficiency and the relevance of these institutions, continuity and change within these.

The specific contribution of the Kibbutz in the field of economy, military, politics and nation-building and other solutions to the problems of modern Israeli society shall be highlighted simultaneously in relevant chapter.

The fourth chapter summarises the previous chapters and, in the same context, examines the relationship between the Kibbutz and the external forces; to what extent the Kibbutz has integrated into the surrounding society, and how it has managed to survive creatively with a continuum of promising options, clear limitations, certain contradictions, many unanswered questions and possibilities of achieving some of the finest human values.

Chapter I

HISTORY AND IDEOLOGY OF THE KIBBUTZ

The KIBBUTZ - Hebrew for "group" is a social and economic phenomenon of a distinctly original pattern of life. It has very unusual characteristics, and differs in many respects from other forms of social life found in Israel or elsewhere. But, despite its original or even unique character, it cannot be viewed as a phenomenon alien to human society. The Kibbutz belongs to an important historical movement, which during the ages has produced various forms of mutual help or community life, including the communes.

History of Commune :

Ever since the advent of civilization the "commune" has been a universal human vision. The communes grew out of basic human yearnings for a just and egalitarian society. This striving found its expression in a chain of social struggles. These begin in written history with the slave revolts in the ancient world, continue with the present revolts in the middle ages and the French Revolution, and end with the fight of the modern socialist labour movement and the strug-

gle of the Asian, African and other peoples in our own day struggling for complete freedom and equality which have no place for the exploiters and the exploited.

But all this does not fully explain the growth of communes. Historical experience teaches that only in exceptional cases were communes founded in times of relative of peace and quiet. Exceptional circumstances, urgent needs and revolutionary changes in society are necessary to shock men out of their usual routine and help them to overcome their doubts about collective life. Thus primitive communism, whether complete or fragmentary, sprang mainly from economic causes. In prehistoric times the obstacles to survival were overwhelming, while tools were very primitive. Without communal life it was impossible to ensure the necessary means of subsistence; hunting wild animals, clearing forests etc. In communes established during later periods the principle of economic necessity also appears, mainly during the first stages of settlement.

Lack of security and the threat of physical extinction alongwith other reasons prompted the appearance of communal forms of life in the dawn of history, when man was engaged

in a fierce daily struggle with his natural environment, and also with certain differences, during the Middle Ages and during the period when the new countries were being settled.

The communal idea made headway during the peasant revolts and the Reformation, the French Revolution, and the many revolutions of the nineteenth century. These social upheavals raised tensions and caused ideological ferment, increased the consciousness of dissatisfaction with existing social regimes, and encouraged the striving for new and juster forms of social life. In these periods the fighters for new ideas often formed communes either because they wanted to show the masses an example of improved social life, or because they saw in the commune a framework of life suitable for people who were able to rise above personal interests and devote their lives wholly to one sacred idea, or because they were exposed to cruel persecutions and sought a heaven of refuge within the collective.

In our century communes appeared against a new and different background. In a number of countries today public movements or government authorities have established collective settlements on a large scale as part of an all embracing

ing plan achieved at modernizing society and developing the villages both economically and culturally. Different models of these programmes were initiated in China, former USSR, India, Mexico, Israel and other lands. Not all of them could achieve desirable goals.

Much depends, of course, on the mentality of the different people and their national traditions. This has a considerable influence on the scope and quality of the tasks to be tackled. Obviously a people accustomed to collective work and communal forms of living - whether because of the need to defend themselves against natural disasters or because of their cultural heritage - will show greater readiness for communal life than a people used to individual hierarchies and private property. Cultures in which materialistic leanings are weak and communal inclinations strong (as, for instance, in the Far East) will form a more favourable background for communal enterprises than United States or Western Europe. The history of the commune shows that it tends to spread in times of great stress and tension, owing to social upheavals or the need to tackle formidable economic or political tasks.

From the Essene to the Kibbutz :

In ancient times the Essene communities attained fame in Palestine. "Essene tradition had a strong influence on Christianity. Through Christianity it handed down its ideas to the communal movements during the Middle Ages and in present times. When the Roman Empire clashed with the crumbling Hellenistic civilization during the second Temple period, the small, predominantly rural Jewish people tried to defend themselves against the inroads of alien cultures."¹ In the time of external danger and internal stress there arose "extremist revolutionary forces which had a message for the nation and for the whole world. Among these were the Essenes, who laid the foundation of the commune".²

In our century the Jewish pioneers in Israel laid the foundation of an important communal enterprise - the Kibbutz. Against the background of the great national movements

1. D. H. Darin, *The Other Society*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1962, p.55.

2. Ibid. p.59.

of the nineteenth century, a national movement began to emerge among the Jewish people, particularly the Jews of Eastern Europe. Jewish pioneers went to Palestine in order to build a new homeland for their people. Here they encountered harsh conditions. The country was backward, and the European immigrants found it difficult to take root. "The pioneers lacked agriculture experience. They possessed little land and sparsh financial means. The construction of the Suez Canal made Palestine an important crossroad once more. Mighty powers contented for it, and this sharpened the conflict between the Jewish settler and the Arab population".¹

The settlement of Palestine was so formidable that only extraordinary efforts could succeed. It was under the stimulus of this solution that the pioneers started on the way to communal life and founded Kibbutz.

In co-operative 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 -----"

1. D. H. Darin, *The Other Society*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1962, p.56.

social organization on the foundation of a preconceived theory. It came into being, rather, in much the same way as only 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".¹

Thus the founders of the communes were concerned not so much with social experiments as with their own survival and the most suitable methods of organizing Jewish villages. The founders' main object, however, was to find a form of settlement for Jews which was both practical and efficient. After the bitter experiences of the early, privately owned individualistic settlements, the pioneers turned to collective living, believing that the collectivity built on mutual aid would succeed where individual enterprises had failed.

Conditions in the Arab villages of Palestine at the turn of the century were still feudal. The average income was as low as in other underdeveloped countries. As immigra-

1. Henrik F. Infield, *Co-operative Living in Palestine*, New York, Dryden, 1944, p.25.

tion to Palestine increased, more and more workers found themselves unemployed. In 1900 there were only about 80,000 Jewish settlers in Palestine. A large proportion lived on gifts from abroad; these were donated by pious Jews who thought it their duty to help their brethren in the Holy Land.

"In 1904-1914 approximately 35,000 Jewish immigrants came to Palestine, among them were approximately 10,000 young people from Eastern Europe who wanted to do manual work".¹ Very few who wanted to become workers succeeded in doing so while many left the country. In this almost desperate situation the Jewish workers began to unite themselves in groups. Suppressing their individualistic leanings they tried to overcome their difficulties by mutual aid. The newly formed workers groups soon displayed distinct advantages. The groups established new enterprises and found employment for their members.

Several kinds of workers groups were found in these

1. D. H. Darin, *The Other Society*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1962, p.60.

early days. There were communes whose members had separate jobs but pooled their resources for collective consumption. They lived together and maintained a common kitchen. Their earnings went into a pool from which everything was paid. Several of these communes became well known. Other workers' groups joined together to contract for jobs; this gave them greater bargaining power than the individual workers. Such groups were formed from time to time as jobs appeared; some obtained land from the Jewish national fund, which they cultivated or guarded before it was settled.

A co-operative movement was launched at about the same time. Co-operative laundries and kitchens sprang up in many places. By the time the World War I began, the idea of co-operative enterprises had already taken roots.

From small farms the thrust gradually shifted to large publicly owned farms which would serve as a sort of school for inexperienced new immigrants. Although the project of large farms under public ownership was intrinsically sound, its execution proved faulty. One method used was to establish estates under the ownership of the Zionist Organization, which employed hired labour. Another was the founding

of agricultural co-operatives.

Neither of these schemes succeeded. The estates were not managed efficiently because the directors came from abroad and were not familiar with the conditions of Jewish settlement in Palestine.

However, the large public farm, although itself a failure, was of great importance as the breeding place of the first Kibbutz. "When conflict between management and the labour force increased and deficits piled up owing to inefficient management, the settlement authorities agreed to transfer one such farm (at Kinneret) to the workers, to manage for themselves. Thus the first collect farm (Degania) was established".¹ The first Kibbutz held its ground and developed. It was the first type of large farm under public ownership which was adapted to the special conditions of Jewish settlement in Palestine.

When the Kibbutz were first organized there were no long-range plans for the establishment of communes. The idea

1. D. H. Darin, *The Other Society*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1962, p.65.

of communes was formed under the pressure of subsequent events which the founders did not force. The collective idea grew up out of two sources : a world trend towards collective principles, and conditions among Jewish masses in the Diaspora, which proved a fruitful breeding ground for the idea.

The second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the 20th century witnessed coming of age of the labour movement and rising disappointment with capitalism particularly in East Europe. The authoritarian rule dominating Eastern Europe gave rise to generations of revolutionaries. These in turn, deeply influenced the founders of the Kibbutzim, who also came from Eastern Europe and hoped to build in Palestine a new society free from exploitation, on the basis of equality and social justice.

The Zionism and The Kibbutz :

By the turn of the century it became obvious in Eastern Europe that the rise of capitalism and quickening of economic progress and higher education did not bring the Jews the equal rights of which they had dreamed. Economic progress

and higher education did not put an end to prejudices against them, nor did they erase national discrimination.

With the rise of capitalism there appeared a strong and educated middle class, which saw the Jews as their competitors and wanted to squeeze them out of their economic positions. This led to increased anti-Semitism. Hundreds of thousands of Jews sought a way out of their plight by migration. The majority found their way to United States, to Western Europe and to South America. Some turned to Zionism, which aimed at the building of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. The young Jewish intellectuals formed an idealistic, well educated pioneer group ready to experiment with new path, the idea of commune as the most suitable settlement method for Palestine.

"The Kibbutzim, as collectivist colonizing communities, were the historical vanguard of Socialist-Zionism in Palestine A crucial question confronting the early Kibbutzim was whether a successful synthesis of socialism and nationalism was possible. Socialist-Zionism rests on a blending of various formulations in political and economic thought. Its iconoclastic perspective includes elements of

Russian anarchism, Bolshevism and social democratic Marxism. Zionist roots incorporated elements from a religious spiritual Zionism, but Kibbutzim have been primarily linked to political Zionism and the foundation of a nation-state".¹

Private capitalist endeavors allowed Jewish landowners in Palestine to rely on Palestinian - Arab labour. However, the harshness of conditions and political - military resistance by the Palestinian Arab population, called for unified, mass action. Socialist Zionism was a response to these needs of nation building.

The main function of the Kibbutz was to create a material base for a Jewish state in Palestine. "Land had to be reclaimed, new migrants had to be supported and frontiers had to be guarded. The ideological goal of the Kibbutz was to establish as part of the effort to create a Jewish proletariat class that would ensure Jewish control of the means of production. Only through the direct Jewish control of the land in Palestine could the hope of a Jewish state be realized. This implied transfer of land settlement from Pales-

1. Paula Rayman, *The Kibbutz Community and Nation Building*, New Jersey, Princeton, 1981, p.9.

tinian Arab to Jewish hands".¹

Socialist Zionism was thus an "ideology of materialistic idealism".² It was part of the Kibbutz development from its earliest days, approaching socialism from the pragmatism of national need. Socialist-Zionist ideological formulations resounded directly to the material conditions posing a threat to Jewish colonization in Palestine. In terms of the Kibbutz, the most significant of these formulations were "collective ownership, the religion of labour, and the principle of self-labour".³

The Developments from 1909-1980's :

Thus various factors contributed to the origin of the idea of Kibbutz and subsequent formations of communes, of which references have been made.

The first Kibbutz, Degania, was founded in 1909. The

1. Paula Rayman, *The Kibbutz Community and Nation Building*, New Jersey, Princeton, 1981, p.11.

2. Yonina Talmon, *The Family and Community in the Kibbutz*, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1972.

3. Paula Rayman, *The Kibbutz Community and Nation Building*, Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1981, p.12.

first year proved completely successful. "while the national estates were generally at a loss, the Kibbutz showed a profit of approximately 160 starlings."¹

However, the Kibbutz underwent many ups and down ever since 1909. The 1920's proved an important turning point in the development of the Kibbutzim. Although their number did not rise greatly during this period, the Kibbutzim succeeded in working out a distinct structural pattern. There were only twenty-four permanent settlements in 1931 and thirty-four workers' group waiting for their turn to be settled by Zionist Organization.

During the 1930's the population of Kibbutzim swelled as more and more young people who had been educated in the Zionist youth movement of Eastern Europe came to Palestine and entered collective settlements.

During the years 1936-47 the collective settlements made a big leap forward. In ten years the population of the Kibbutzim doubled their share of the Jewish population. "In

1. D. H. Darin, *The Other Society*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1962, p.69.

1936 there were forty seven Kibbutzim; in 1948, when the state of Israel was founded there were 115."¹

After the inception of the Israeli state in 1948, the Kibbutzim had to adjust to new conditions. The kibbutzim which had reached a peak of 7.5% of the population in 1947, dropped to 5% in 1945 and 4.4% in 1959. The decline occurred mainly in the years 1949-1952, that is, during the period of mass immigration. To most of the immigration the idea of the Kibbutz was very strange and they opted out of it.

Demographic Structure in 80s

By the end of the 1983 the Israeli Bureau of Statistics listed 267 Kibbutzim with a total population of about 115,000. (1) The average number of the inhabitants per kibbutz was thus about 430, of whom close to 260 were adults and about 170 children and teenagers. The adult population itself is composed of three major groups [a] members; [b] candidates for membership; [c] others. The first two groups

1. D. H. Darin, *The Other Society*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1962, p.79.

comprise the permanent adult population while the third one includes mainly temporary residents. The age composition of the kibbutz population is almost identical to that of the Israeli population, and the average age in the kibbutz is slightly lower than that of the Jewish population in Israel. Age composition in the kibbutz compared to the Jewish and the total population is summed up in the Table 1.1.

Age composition differences become more apparent, though still statistically insignificant, if age groups are divided as follows:

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Kibbutz</u>	<u>Israel Jews</u>	<u>Israel Total</u>
0-9	40.2	38.2	41.4
20-44	37.4	34.4	33.8
45+	22.4	27.4	24.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 1.1¹

 1. Yehuda Don, *Industrialization of a Rural Collective*, Vermont, Gower House, 1988, p.2.

Age Composition in the Kibbutz
and in Israel (in 1983, in per cents)

<u>Age</u>	<u>Kibbutz</u>	<u>Israel Jews</u>	<u>Israel Total</u>
0- 19	40.2	38.2	41.4
20-29	16.7	15.6	15.8
30-44	20.7	18.8	18.0
45-64	13.1	17.3	15.9
65+	09.3	10.1	08.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average age in years	29.52	31.19	29.66

The ratio of children and adult in the Kibbutzim is higher by 5.2% and the ratio of the younger segment in the labour force, the age group of 20-44 years, is higher by 9.5% than among the Jewish population at large. These statistics may create the impression that in the Kibbutzim population is younger than in the non-collective Jewish localities in Israel. Though this is the situation with respect to the overall averages, in most veteran kibbutzim, the ratio of the aged members, those over 65 years, reaches the staggering figure of 25 to 35 per cent.

Sex composition of the adults in the kibbutz is quite similar to that of the Jewish population, though the differences between the males and females in the older age groups

(50 years or more) are milder in the kibbutzim, as indicated in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2¹
Sex composition of Adults in the Kibbutzim
among the Jewish Population, in 1983, in per cents

<u>AGE</u>	<u>KIBBUTZ</u>			<u>JEWISH POPULATION</u>		
	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
19-29	51.1	48.9	100	50.7	49.3	100
30-49	49.1	50.9	100	49.4	50.6	100
50-69	47.2	52.8	100	46.6	53.4	100
70+	47.7	52.3	100	46.9	53.1	100
All Ages	49.3	50.7	100	49.9	50.1	100

The reported rate of participation in the civilian labour force in the Kibbutzim is exceedingly high, reaching 86.5 per cent of the adult population (14 years of age or more). This ratio is well above that of any other segment of the Israeli society. As a result, though the share of the kibbutz population in Israel, as per the latest data, is only 2.9 per cent, its labour force comprises 5.2 per cent of the total civilian labour force.

After carefully analyzing the above mentioned data and

1. Yehuda Don, *Industrialization of a Rural Collective*, Vermont, Gower House, 1988, p.3.

the historical evolution of the kibbutz community we can conclusively say that despite many rough phases the kibbutz movement has survived many onslaughts and ravages of time. The movement was a historical event under the stimulus of certain situations that led the pioneers to start the way to the communal life and found the Kibbutzim.

Of course, there were other factors which have been mentioned above chronologically in detail. The Jewish tradition in Diaspora, idealistic trends in the different parts of the globe, economic compulsions, cultural heritage, developments in Eastern Europe, Russia and other countries and also universal human vision for utopia, etc. contributed to the emergence of the commune, the Kibbutz. The attraction still remains and thus remains the hope.

Chapter II

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The unique character of the Kibbutz community is reflected, first and foremost, in its complete, indeed, even extreme, collectivist nature. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", in accordance with the community's means, is the principle underlying the unique socio-economic form called the Kibbutz. Thus it is fundamentally different from other co-operative enterprises in Israel or anywhere else in the world.

In Kibbutz no private property or private economic activity is allowed. Moreover, the collectivism includes the cultural, social and educational spheres, no less than the various economic aspects of the Kibbutz life.

This all embracing collectivism was not, however, the result of a rigid dogmatic approach nor did its organizational forms stem from theoretical assumptions or blue prints prepared in advance. It grew and developed out of the concrete needs and demands of Jewish settlement in Israel. The organizational framework and social structure

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evolved from practice, empirically, through endless search and from lessons learned by the trial and error. The Kibbutz's present social structure has emerged out of its own dynamic development, following unceasing experiment and discussion.

The Voluntary Basis:

Kibbutz society is based on the voluntary desire of the member, and not on any form of compulsion by the state or any other institution. The voluntary basis is evident, first and foremost, in the admittance of new members to the Kibbutz. The members join a Kibbutz voluntarily, out of personal conviction alone. The Kibbutz on the other hand decides whether to admit him or not by the free vote of its society. Thus admittance is based solely on the voluntary desire of both, the individual and the community. No limitations are placed on people who want to leave the Kibbutz.

This is also characteristic of the internal life of the Kibbutz. No internal compulsion is practised, and no punishment is inflicted for the breach of customs or rules.

Only when relations between a member and the society reach untenable state does public opinion force the person involved to leave the Kibbutz. In extremely rare cases, when the person refuses to leave on his own accord, the general assembly may be forced to adopt a decision that he or she must do so.

However, free choice and voluntary action does not necessarily mean anarchy. Despite the absence of punishment, Kibbutz life excels in the maintenance of order and self discipline. It has its own system of rules and regulation, including both formal decisions and accepted customs, partly written and partly oral traditions.

The Democratic-Organisational Structure:

The democratic character is inherent to the emergence of the Kibbutz community. However, it was not the nature of the Kibbutz as a form of communal life which moulded its democratic structure but the rules of democracy in the fact that Kibbutz life is fundamentally based on idealism and

free will¹ There are other factors also. The human material which formed the Kibbutz was marked by a relatively high educational and intellectual standard. Experience has proved that such human material does not easily submit to the dictate of autocracy.

Democratic principles must be given dynamic expression in order to prevent them from deteriorating into a mere formal concept. There have been organizations in which the ordinary member was afforded no outlet for his initiative and no scope for his activity despite the democratic manner in which these institutions were elected. Suitable steps were taken to avoid these dangers and to endow the Kibbutz democracy with a dynamic and concrete purpose. Even though the solutions and measures adopted are not perfect, they have been part of a sincere endeavour to solve the problems of primary democracy which arise in modern society as well as in a society of small dimension. An important safeguard of this democratic purpose consists in the frequent meetings of the general assembly, which constitute the supreme insti-

1. D. H. Darin, *The Other Society*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1962, p.95.

tution of the Kibbutz and is attended by all members over the age of eighteen. The people can voice their opinions in weekly meeting of this general assembly.

Most activities in the Kibbutz community are monitored by elected committees whose responsibilities are to initiate and to implement programmes within their domains in accordance with the Kibbutz's goals¹. The administrative institution of the Kibbutz can be divided into four categories:

1. The General Assembly of Members: The supreme institution of the Kibbutz in many respect serving the purposes of local governments.
2. The Secretariat: The operational administrative body.
3. The Committees : These committees form the framework within which the various economic and social activities are carried out. They ensure the participation of a large number of members in the various branches of management and the sharing of responsibilities.

1. Yehuda Don, Industrialization of a Rural Collective, Vermont, Gower House, 1988, p.3.

4. Circles of Branch Workers: Their activities are restricted to their respective branches and routine operations.

Office holders are elected to these committees and circles for periods ranging from one to five years. A typical Kibbutz may operate upto 30 different committees, with upto 150 elected committee members being responsible for the Kibbutz affairs in matters such as economic, education, culture, environmental planning, sport, consumption, health care, absorption of new comers, the youth and the aged. For example in the Kibbutz Har....

"the secretary's functions included maintaining social order, arbitrating personal disagreements, and administering daily affairs. The role thus involved administrative and interpersonal skills. The Secretariat, or the Management committee, was both an advisory and coordinating body that helped in the selection of committees dealing with various aspects of Kibbutz life such as health issue, cultural affairs and children's education.¹

1. Paula Rayman, *The Kibbutz Community and Nation Building*, New Jersey, Princeton, 1981, p.51.

The members of these committees should be a part of the Kibbutz community life for some years (specific left to discretion of each Kibbutz). In Kibbutz Har "The Committee of Management shall consist of not less than members of the Kibbutz who have completed their twenty-first year".¹

The Kibbutz constitution sets forth the objectives and purposes of the Kibbutz, qualifications for membership, financial provisions, obligations of members, and administrative structure.

As mentioned above the supreme institution in the Kibbutz constitution is The Secretariat. The chairpersons of the central committees, together with a few additional elected members, form the Kibbutz's secretariat, which is coordinated by the secretary general. The secretariat is, as a rule, the supreme elected organ, and only the general assembly of all members can over rule its decisions. Notwithstanding, each committee enjoys a significant measure of autonomy vis-a-vis the secretariat. Admittedly, the secre-

1. Paula Rayman, *The Kibbutz Community and Nation Building*, New Jersey, Princeton, 1981, p.49.

tariat is considered the supreme committee, however, in case of disagreement between the committee and the secretariat, the latter can not impose its views upon the committee, and so the conflict is brought to the general assembly, which is the ultimate authority to decide on unresolved conflicts. The committee can interchange members or appoint new members. Leviatan found that during the time span of five years about seventy percent of all the members served on at least one committee.¹

The organizational structure of the Kibbutz is based on a number of ideological inspired postulates, such as :

- 1) Rotation in office holding is common to all the Kibbutzim. Office holders are expected to return to the rank and file level after having served in managerial duties.
- 2) Relationship and communication between office holder and rank and file members is direct and strictly informal.
- 3) One person will never assume responsibility at the same time in sphere of production and income generation, and

1. U. Leviatan, "Work and Age : Centrality of Work in the Life of Older Kibbutz Members", in U. Leviatan, and M. Rosner, (eds.) *Work and Organization in Kibbutz Industry*, Norwood Press, 1980, p.48.

social activities, to avoid situations of incongruity.

4) The cooperation among members is based solely on voluntary motivations. Consequently office had at the disposal, virtually, no tools of enforcement to cause members to comply with the decisions of the community or its officers.

Political Affiliation :

The Kibbutzim is generally affiliated with political parties and ideological movements. The Kibbutz movements have played central roles in the political parties with which they are affiliated.¹ Individual Kibbutzim are grouped in four major inter-Kibbutz federations identified with the political parties. Thus membership in these federations implies, as a rule, political compliance with the views the federations stand for. The largest federation Takam incorporates close to 60 % of all Kibbutzim and 58 % of overall Kibbutz population. The second largest federation, Artzi, politically to the left of Takam, incorporates 31 % of all settlements and 33 % of the Kibbutz population. Other small-

1. A. Aaron and A. Arian, *Hopes and Fears of Israel*, Jerusalem Academic Press, 1972, p.128.

er federations accomodate the remaining settlements.¹

The Kibbutz federation affiliated with the party Mapam, Artzi has earned a reputation for being the most orthodox of the Kibbutz federations. In both, principle and practice, in internationalist policy and in internal organizational and social arrangements, Artzi interprets and implements social pronouncements most strictly. While it is easy to overstress the importance of ideological differences among federations, since the Kibbutz ideology, as a whole, is shared by all of the individual federations, Artzi comes closest to being the vanguard of a party dedicated to the socialist principles. As evidence of this, it is instructive to note that Mapam relies more heavily on the Kibbutz movements for political support than do other parties. In the 1961 elections, Artzi votes accounted for 18.7 percent of the Mapam total. Even so, of nine Knesset members Mapam chose, six came from Artzi.²

1. Yehuda Don, *Industrialization of a Rural Collective*, Vermont, Gower House, 1988, p.4.

2. A. Aaron and A. Arian, *Hopes and Fears of Israel*, Jerusalem Academic Press, 1972, p.140.

The Kibbutzim belonging to the Artzi federation tend to be more populous than those belonging either to Takam or to the smaller federations. Kibbutzim which had been founded before 1948 tend to be significantly more populous than those established after the foundation of the state of Israel.

The Kibbutz federation imposes upon its individual kibbutzim demands for mutual help, and for contribution to joint efforts towards the pursuit of its political and national goals. It also creates expected norms of conduct for the member Kibbutzim in consumption, education and regulations in all walks of life. The central organ of each federation also offers help in extensive financial planning and representation of the Kibbutzim at the governmental level as well as in matters of marketing, finance and supplies. Each Kibbutz is obliged to contribute to its federation at headquarters, a certain percentage of its manpower. It is also taxed by the federation, progressively, for financing objectives of mutual interest.

Thus, having a look at the political structure of the Kibbutzim, we can say that while maintaining their basic

ideological principles and retaining the unique character of commune, the Kibbutzim also adhere to different political ideologies. The election of six Artzi members out of nine members of Mapam party proves that Kibbutz politicians are more political, more honest and committed to ideologies, political and ideal.

Family, Marriage and Women :

The Kibbutz offers a unique and invaluable test case for the study of family organization in revolutionary and collective movements. The family in the Kibbutz presents a possible exception to Murdock's claim for the universality of the nuclear family.¹ The family in the Kibbutz has been shaped by a number of ideological and economic factors. During the early days all adults were needed to get settlements off the ground which left little time for intimate relationship between mother and children. The Kibbutz ideology emphasized sexual equality and rejected the Western pattern of parental roles, especially the mother role. In -----

1. For detail see G.P. Mudock, *Social Structure*, Macmillan, New York, 1949.

particular there was reaction against the traditional 'Jewish mamma', the supposedly overprotective Jewish mother, a well known figure in folklore and humour.

Over the past hundred years, the structure and functions of the modern European and American family have undergone fundamental change, a change so great that radical reformation of family structure is inevitable and its existence even occasionally questioned. Where as once family life concerned with the fulfilment of objective functions, now, in present times, its main interest lies in fulfilment of individual needs.

The specific features which distinguish Kibbutz family from other forms of modern family life, the approach to parent child relations was established in the early 1920s at a time when the Kibbutz movement was still young and most members were still single.¹ These features of family and parent-child relations still persist, although many changes are taking place.

1. Menachem Gerson, *Family, Women and Socialization in the Kibbutz*, Toronto Lexington Books, 1978, p.45.

The status of the women is, to a large extent, decided by the role of the women in family. One of the original sociological features of Kibbutz society in its early phase was its radical commitment to maximum equality between men and women.¹ The central means of achieving this end was to free women from their traditional tasks in conventional bourgeoisie society, most of which had to do with child-care and day-to-day running of the household. The institutional innovations of the Kibbutz in this respect included the establishment, among others, communal kitchen, communal dining room, communal laundry, and the series of age-graded children's houses in which the children slept, played and learned under the guidance of trained house mothers, caretakers and educators. These arrangements were meant not only to free women from the household and child-care cores, but also and specially to free them to participate fully, shoulder to shoulder with the men in the productive activities of the Kibbutz, and to find fulfilment in these activities.

1. R.K. Shazar, *The Ploughwomen*, New York, Herzl Press, 1975, p.72.

This does not mean that the Kibbutz set out to eliminate the family altogether. What it did, rather, was to try and prevent it from establishing itself as a significant autonomous unit within the Kibbutz, in the name of which member could stake claims and demands of the communal institutions. In practice this meant that Kibbutz sought to transfer many of the family's traditional functions to specialized communal institutions, thus freeing the family, as it were, concentrate on its socio-emotional functions. Romantic attachment, for example, with their emphasis on privacy, exclusivity, intensity, and undivided mutual commitment 'forever', were tolerated, but then so was sexual freedom, in the sense of sexual relations between consenting adults, including extra-marital sexual relations. Marriage was condoned, but there was some institutionalized reluctance with which the consent was made. Marriage ceremony was formerly short and married couples were normally allowed to live in a modest room of their own, but this was met with more or less benign forms of opposition. Once married, couple referred to each other not as 'husband' and 'wife', but as 'young man', and 'young woman' or 'comrade'.

In the present period the development related to the status of the family are moving in slightly different directions (see Talmon, Garber 1972; Gerson 1978; Spiro 1980). Today Kibbutz society no longer opposes marriage. Quite the contrary, it exerts (informal) pressure on its members to marry. Since "the Kibbutz is a non familistic revolutionary society, kinship affiliations are irrelevant in most institutional spheres and there is no institutionalized normative regulation of mate selection."¹

Though there is no strict rule of mate selection, free sexual relations between the unmarried are still tolerated, but the sexual infidelities of the married are now severely frowned upon. Now married couples refer to each other as husbands and wives. Although the process of the reconstitution of family in the Kibbutz is in the process, and there are differences in various Kibbutzim, the general pattern of the family life can be described as follows.

First, unlike the most other forms of modern family life, the Kibbutz family is not a self-interested economic

1. Yonina Talmon, *Family and Community in the Kibbutz*, Harvard, p. 163.

unit. In its social structure, the Kibbutz is not a federation of self contained family units.¹ Hence the economic standard of the family in the Kibbutz is not dependent on the endeavour and economic achievement and social outlook of the Kibbutz as a whole. For the member of a Kibbutz the family is not the basic unit in the struggle for existence; every individual is directly affiliated to the Kibbutz economy. The wife is not economically dependent on husband, nor are the children economically dependent on the parents. These two factors have brought about such a radical change in the structure of the Kibbutz family and the status of women that outside observers have sometimes called into question the very existence of family in the Kibbutz.

Second, unlike the situation which is found in other countries, where professional educated cooperate with parents mainly from the nursery school onward, in the Kibbutz such cooperation exists from the very first days of the infant's life. Mother's and Father's share in socialization is limited. Right from the beginning, the children live in

1. Menachem Gerson, *Family, Women and Socialization in the Kibbutz*, Toronto Lexington Books, 1978, p.48.

the children's house, where every thing is tailored according to child's needs and capacities. The children's house is regarded as their home. Bruno Bettelheim, carried out his research on child rearing practices in a Kibbutz. His study shows that in Kibbutz parents have transferred their power to their community. All children are viewed and cared for as "children of the Kibbutz".¹

Third, the social framework of the Kibbutz family is different from that of other modern family units. Unlike in the western world where husband works outside and wife at home, both spouses live and work in the same social framework in Kibbutz. The intense and all embracing character of Kibbutz life make for a greater number of shared concerns and much shared interests.

The change is taking place in the sphere of the Kibbutz family also, as in society generally. The familistic tendencies have been greatly encouraged by the consumer orientation which is typical of present day capitalist societies,

1. Bruno Bettelheim, *The Childern of the Dream*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1969, p.53.

and attitude which looks on the raising of the standard of living as the natural trend of every family and as an aim worthy in itself. In her research, Yonina Talmon shows that familistic tendencies are greatly reinforced by consumer orientation; both share an orientation to be individual family as the sole centre of life.¹ Nonetheless, the family maintains its unique character even today.

Education :

From earliest infancy onward there is a structural division in education duties. The community and the family share duties of the growing children. The first step towards communal education was taken in Degania while some of the bachelors in the small group were still not prepared to share responsibility for the upbringing of children. The young mothers not only had to cope with all the problems and anxieties involved in raising infants far from the social and medical facilities of the town but also had to resolve an immediate, inner conflict. In 1916 the members of Degania

1. Yonina Talmon, *Family and Community in the Kibbutz*, Harvard p. 134.

Kibbutz agreed to the principles formulated by Joseph Bus-
sel, their main spokesman on ideological matters. They
agreed that the financial responsibility for the children
had to be shared by all the members, parents and the single
members alike, and that the children should be raised col-
lectively. However, not hardship or economic necessity have
moulded communal education; the form and content of communal
education crystallized under the aegis of educational ideas
and the image of a community longed for.¹ A brief structure
of the Kibbutz upbringing is following.

Kibbutz education creates two centres in the life of
the child-the parents' home and the children's house. Both
have a deep impact on child's life. The close cooperation
between the two gives the psychological advantage to the
child. In various periods of Kibbutz education, the impor-
tance attributed to parents in contrast to that of metaplot
(caregivers) and teachers has varied. But at no time has
there been an all out attempt to exclude parental influence

1. Menachem Gerson, *Family, Women and Socialization in the
Kibbutz*, Toronto Lexington Books, 1978, p.21.

(as has been made in certain communes).¹

At all ages a group of peers is considered an important factor in the socializing processes of the child. Children grow up in peer groups from infancy onward. The Kibbutz understands that only the existence of children can perpetuate the new social experiment and only a willingness to invest time, thought and finance in education can prevent a small and rather homogeneous community from becoming an isolated and narrow-minded village.

Kibbutz education is anti-authoritarian. Modern educational trend with their criticism of class-conditioned authority in the family have made a major contribution to this approach.

The children's house plays an important role, especially at the infant stage, in the continuous process of identification with the values of the Kibbutz world.² The house is

1. Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Commitment and Community*, Cambridge, Mass; Harvard University Press, 1972, pp. 12-14, 45-91.

2. Yona Ben-Yakov, "Methods of Kibbutz Collective education During Early Childhood", in *Growing up in groups*, (ed.) J. Marcos, New York, Gordon and Breach, 1972.

well equipped with child's need of every age group for all round personality development.

Two different forms of nursery schools are conducted in Kibbutzim. One comprises the children of the same age; the other prefers mixed age groups as a matter of pedagogic principle. The administration in Kibbutz school is originally governed by the idea of a range of youthful activities and not just teaching and learning. The school is organized as a children's community, not as an institute of learning run only by teachers. Education towards physical work, the child-educator interaction in many institutions are some of the other features of the Kibbutz educational system. Although there have always been differences to the extent to which any given school has managed to realize its principles in practice, the Kibbutz system of education and bringing up permits the rearing of normal children showing an ample diversity of personality patterns, all of which are certainly covered by the wide concept of normalcy.

Thus, we can conclude that the Kibbutz social structure, in every sphere reflects the basic principles of Kibbutz ideology. The various institutions of the Kibbutz

social structure turned the Kibbutz into an organic cell based on a close and even intimate relationship between the individual and the community. Collectivism is still held high. The Kibbutz political structure is based on basic values of democracy which is reflected in the mechanism of political structure, its bodies, committees, the process of decision making and implementing it. Various Kibbutz federations are affiliated to many political parties, thus reflecting the freedom of political choice and yet holding the values of equalitarianism, equality and non-exploitation at the top. The family is an exception in its character, constitution and radical orientation. The status of women is equal, with women being active agents of self sufficiency, participation and freedom in all walks of life. Communal rearing and distinct education system have proved that the children of Kibbutz are absolutely healthy, normal and ahead in many spheres of life.

But the Kibbutz social structure has not remained static since its inception. Its constantly changing, innovating, making errors and improving. In its fight against outside world the Kibbutz has always found strength in its faith. The individualistic and capitalistic tendencies are

developing in its political sphere, family, economy etc. But it is not new. The Kibbutz has still been developing and surviving, maintaining some of the finest values of human kind even today.

Chapter III

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Farming : The Means of Self Sufficiency

Till several years ago, farming was the sole source of income for most of the Kibbutzim. The farm was the basic factor which had brought the pioneers of the movement together. Now many kibbutzim, during the last few years have undergone a revolutionary change in their economic structure.

Before independence, the Kibbutz grew food for its members and sold the rest (through cooperatives) to urban Jewish families. But the type of food produced depended largely on what best suited the social philosophy of the kibbutz movement. Of course, soil and climate were major determinants. Jewish farmers, whether in Kibbutzim or not, adopted irrigated agriculture wherever possible in order to reach an adequate standard of living. But, the important thing in Kibbutz, with its rationalization of labour, is to ensure enough work for everyone, during all seasons of the year. It wants no slack season and no season (such as for

planting or harvesting a single crop) that requires additional hand. It is also important to have a suitable work for women and for the aged and disabled. Hence all Kibbutzim have adopted mixed farming. An exact balance has been worked out between the seasonal labour demands of the several branches. Because, by and large, membership is static, the type of farming has had to conform to work force available, and not the reverse.

The Kibbutz in the National Economy

There are several methods of assessing the economic weight of the Kibbutzim in Israeli society. The most important is by ascertaining the contribution to production in agriculture and industry. However, it is important to know that the Kibbutzim, primarily agrarian communes, began to industrialize when Israel achieved independence in 1948. Agricultural products were the sole source of the Kibbutzim economy prior to that. For the kibbutzim it became necessary to grow as much industrial raw materials as possible, thus saving the foreign exchange need to buy imported raw materials.

"Thus, Israel had to grow beets for the sugar industry, cotton for the textile industry and tobacco for the cigarette industry."¹ It is difficult to mechanize the handling of these crops. However, they require cheap labour at the peak periods. Such an operation is totally unsuited to the Kibbutz, wedded as it is to a community agriculture instead of to a national agriculture. Hence, it was Moshave in - the co-operative small-holding villages - and the new immigrant towns that provided most of the labour required for the new industrial crops.

Thus, in 1958 the Kibbutzim contributed 26.4% of Israel's agricultural produce and 5.8% of her industrial production. The contribution of the Kibbutzim amounted to 12.1%, taking agricultural and industrial production together. As the Kibbutzim in 1958 made up 4% of the Israeli population, or 4.4% of the country's Jewish population, their contribution to production is three times as high as their demographic weight. Even if we take only industrial production - 5.8% - it is still higher than there demograph-

1. E. Samuel, *The Structure of Society in Israel*, New York, Random House, 1969, p. 80.

ic percentage.¹

The contribution of the Kibbutzim to the national economy as a whole - including building, trade, finance and government services - is naturally lower than in agriculture and industry. But, one can conclusively say that it is not as low as it looks. If we analyze the percentage of the weight of the Kibbutzim in the population and in the economy, we can say that in 50's the economic importance of the Kibbutzim was far greater than their demographic weight. It is summarized in the following Table:²

	Year	Weight
Entire Israeli Population	1959	4.0%
Jewish Population	1959	4.4%
Agricultural and Industrial Production	1958	12.1%

1. D. H. Darin, *The Other Society*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1962, p.281.

2. D. H. Darin, *The Other Society*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1962, p.283.

Earners (without personal services)	1958	7.2%
Net National Income	1953	6.4%
National Assets	1956	7.1%

In the development of Jewish agriculture in Israel the Kibbutzim have an important role. Between 1937 and 1958 the population of the Kibbutzim did not rise perceptibly in relation to the Jewish population, and the number of their agricultural employees even declined. Nevertheless, their share in Jewish agricultural production increased from 11% to 28%, or by 155%. They produced 50% to 60% of barley, maize and fodder, and 67% of the wheat grown by Jews in Israel.¹

The share of the Kibbutzim in industrial production rose from 3.1% in 1951 to 5.8% in 1959. In 1945 only 1,600 Kibbutz members were employed in industry. In 1959 there

1. D. H. Darin, *The Other Society*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1962, p.284.

were 10,800 or 6.8 times as many. The percentage of industrial workers in the kibbutzim rose from 2.4% of all industrial workers in Israel in 1945 to 3.3% in 1951 and 7.2% in 1959.¹

The combination of industry and agriculture in the Kibbutzim is an accomplished fact, and this had an important influence on their stability and development. As a result, they were able to settle outlying regions which have little water and can therefore only develop agriculture on a restricted scale. In these cases, industry increased the collective's income and made it partially independent of outside supplies. In some industries, especially those processing agricultural produce, the Kibbutzim have played a pioneering role. They helped to establish canning industry, later took the initiative in processing locally grown cotton and sugar beet.

The impressive rise in the Kibbutzim's agricultural and industrial production in late 40's and 50's was due partly to the rise in the productivity in the collectives,

1. D. H. Darin, *The Other Society*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1962, p.286.

and partly to the employment of more people on the farms. During the 1950s the Kibbutzim still had to send one-third of their members outside to earn their living, as the farms were not yet developed.

The Kibbutz is influenced by developments in Israel. It is in constant touch with other economic bodies through buying and selling and financial contacts. To some extent, styles and modes of life in the Kibbutz are also influenced by what happens outside the border. The consumption habits among the richer classes in the towns leave their marks on other sections of the society, and also on the Kibbutzim. Rise in consumption and changes in the types of the consumption in the towns do not leave the Kibbutzim unscathed.

For example, the following Tables reflect these trends in one of the Kibbutzim, Kibbutz Har.

Economic Report of the kibbutz Har of 1975: Income and Expenses (figures in thousand of lira according to devaluation rates of 1974).

Income	21,479
Expenses	20,620
Profit	859
Income Tax	400
Profit for Investment	459

Source : (Har 1975 Annual Economic Report, Har Economic Management Office)¹

What is evident from the Table is the fact that despite high going expenses of the Kibbutz Har, its income is still higher than expenses and even after paying the income tax there is substantial profit for investment.

Standard of Living:

The Kibbutz not only improved its economic standing in comparison with its own history but also in comparison with the larger society. The higher standard of living achieved

1. Puala Rayman, *The Kibbutz Community and Nation Building*, Princeton, Princeton University Press 1981, p.207.

by the Kibbutzim during the 1948-67 period clearly moved the community away from subsistence economy. The movement towards affluence was achieved at the cost of a weakening of its ideological tradition as well as an increase in internal satisfaction. The newly attained economic status needs to be considered both in relation to the losses and to achievements.

Kibbutz Har's experience of a major improvement in the standard of living in beginning of 1950 was common to Kibbutzim in general. A study of consumption expenditure between 1953 and 1957 showed an increase in income of about 20 per cent, bringing the income level of the individual kibbutz equal to that of the average skilled urban worker in Israel.¹ Taking into account the collective provision for its member that an urban family must individually purchase, the kibbutz budget for a family came to 3,263 lira annually compared to 3,583 for the urban family of the same average size.

1. Eliyahu Kamovsky, *The Economy of Israeli Kibbutz*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1972. p.69.

By 1962 the average kibbutz budget for a family unit came to between 4,200 and 4,3300 lira.¹ The average urban family by 1960 was expending 5,143 lira, with immigrants from America averaging 6,151 lira.

Economist Kanovsky explains that the pressure for the Kibbutzim to compete with the larger Israeli society adversely affects their long-term viability. It pushes the Kibbutzim to raise their labour costs in the income producing branches. The pressure for the Kibbutzim to keep with the 5 to 6.5% annual rise in consumption between 1955 and 1964 encouraged the Kibbutzim to live beyond their means and the trend is following. The Kibbutz had already become accustomed to its standard of living; in spite of the desire of some of the members to uphold traditional ideology, most members would not opt for reducing material gains. This can be interpreted as an influence of a larger opposing culture.

From Mixed Farming to Industrialization :

The ideology of the Kibbutz also meant a system of

1. Eliyahu Kamovsky, *The Economy of Israeli Kibbutz*, Cambridge, Harverd University Press, 1972, p.69.

mixed farming, which would provide self sufficiency, allow rotation of work and not require hired labour. Also the primary aim of the Kibbutzim has never been the greatest possible economic return. Of course now there is a greater interest in collective success and profit. A rising standard of living, industrialization, efficient organization and regular agriculture surpluses constitute a solution far different from the days of dependence on long term low interest loans and aid from Jewish Agency, Histadrut and the government.

The Kibbutz is constantly troubled by the tension within itself between socialist ideology and the requirements of economic growth as well as by the tension between the individual and the communal. Critics have speculated that the style of life of the Kibbutz and the personality of its members would be adversely affected by growing affluence and security. Efficiency and better co-ordination of work have perhaps reduced the more exuberant behaviour of members and the legendary spontaneous dancing and singing, though it has not brought an accompanying resurgence of the property instinct.

The Kibbutz has struggled to accommodate itself to the increasing degree of industrialization that has been logical development of the physical limits of land and irrigation, the increasing mechanization of agriculture, the need to provide strenuous work for an aging group, the desire to provide more technologically oriented work for the second and the third generation and the necessity of employing labor and absorbing immigrants for national reasons.¹

One important point to be noticed is that there are some Kibbutzim, although very few, who did not adopt industry. For example, Kibbutz "Kiryat Yedidim has resisted the introduction of industry, so that its sole source of income is agricultural, with the exception of the small amount it receives from the wages of those few who work outside the Kibbutz in non-agricultural jobs. For the most part, however, even these jobs are undertaken, not for their income value, but for the contributions they make to the Kibbutz agriculture economy. Hence, these men work in an olive

1. Michael Curtis, "Utopia and the Kibbutz" in M. Curtis and S. Chertoff (ed.) *Israel : Social Structure and Change*, New Jersey, Transaction Books, 1973, p.109.

press, a bus line, a trucking line, or a garage all regional co-operatives which serve to promote the agricultural interests of the Kibbutz".¹

But, by and large, the Kibbutzim have taken to the process of industrialization. The following table shows the branch composition of the Kibbutz industry in 1983 in per cent.

Branch composition of the Kibbutz Industry in 1983 in per cent (absolute numbers of totals in brackets)².1sl

Branch	Plants	Employees	Sales
	I	II	III
Metal & Printing	29.2	31.7	24.4
Electronics	8.9	6.8	5.9
Wood & Products	5.2	12.0	8.1

1. Melford E. Spiro, *Kibbutz : Venture in Utopia*, New York, Harverd University Press, 1971, p.71.

2. Yehuda Don, *Industrialization of a Rural Collective*, Vermont, Gower Publishing House, 1988, p.78.

Plastics & Rubber	24.0	22.1	30.3
Textiles & Leather	5.8	4.6	3.4
Mining & Building Mat.	3.4	4.2	6.1
Food & Products	5.6	10.1	15.0
Chemicals	4.0	2.9	4.1
Miscellaneous	13.8	5.4	2.5
Total	100	100	100
	(325)	(13, 174)	(39, 574)

The increasing concentration of industrial efforts in a gradually narrowing segment of branches, in which the overall comparative advantage of the Kibbutz organization seemed to crystallize, continued during the seventies. About two thirds of all new plants close to 100 percent of the new addition to labor force entered establishments of metals and plastics. In contrast, the two major branches, wood and food processing, contracted sharply, losing well over one quarter

of their overall labor force. At the same time, the desire to accommodate individuals employment aspirations and talents led to the establishment of about twenty very small artifact workshops. A process of branch composition restructuring was already observed in 1972. However, the nature of that process was different in the sixties from that in the seventies. The tendency in the course of the seventies was the reverse of that during the sixties. The aggregate concentration of new industrial initiative in metal products, electronics and plastics as the percentage of new industrial initiative was the following in 60s and 70s.

	1960-72	1972-83
Plants	79.2 %	66 %
Labour	66 %	113 %

The pattern of plant size changes in the late seventies and early eighties was exactly the opposite of what had happened in this respect from the sixties to the early seventies. All these changes explain the evolution and changes in the pattern of the Kibbutz industrialization.

Is the Kibbutz industrialization as a socio-economic reality an inherent part of the world wide phenomenon of rural industrialization ? For the promotion of rural industrialization the prominent reason suggested is the need to reduce excessive urbanization in order to maintain a reasonably balanced population between rural and metropolitan localities and to maintain as inter-regional equilibrium. In Israel too, most experimentations with rural industrialization accurately reflect the above mentioned universal tendencies.

Whether to bring manufacture into any particular Kibbutz which industries are suitable and which should be avoided, what are the optimal factor proportions in the unique, circumstances of each Kibbutz that emerge in each Kibbutz from within, and are based solely on the specific conditions of each Kibbutz. Industrial initiatives are induced by introspective motivations and do not depend on macro-economic or macro-social considerations of inter-regional imbalances of the national disequilibrium. Obviously Kibbutzim will contemplate the establishment of industrial plants in order to counterveil tendencies of immigration of their own members, since leaving the Kibbutz is still

considered in Kibbutz terminology as reneging. However, policy making authorities designated specifically to promote industrial activity in the Kibbutzim. The sole source of incentive and entrepreneurship for the establishment of manufacturing plants in Kibbutzim are the Kibbutzim themselves.

What have thus been the objectives of the Kibbutz in introducing industry into its fundamentally agricultural economy? As pointed out above, the objectives have been of an introspective nature, and in each Kibbutz they have been related to situations that have emerged in the course of development of each particular Kibbutz settlement. The approach has been thoroughly pragmatic as two cases of the Kibbutz Har and the Kibbutz Kiryat Yedidim have been pointed above with their different situations, developments and priorities.

The Kibbutzim in general have experimented with manufacturing either as remedies to problems that they had to encounter or as tools to exploit specific opportunities that may have arisen. Such an attitude is probably contradictory to the conventionally acknowledged inclinations of the Kib-

butz movement, what apparently contain strong elements of altruism and awareness to national goals. But it becomes important to analyze this phenomenon from all sociological points of view to understand the changes, the crisis, the growth and the contradictions between the initial ideology and subsequent developments without losing sight that the Kibbutzim are an integral part of the larger society, national and international.

One of the major controversies in the literature about rural industrialization pertains to the issue of optimum location. In the case of the Kibbutzim, this dilemma is solved, or was considered until very recently to be solved. Disregarding rare exceptions of joint ventures each Kibbutz has built its own industrial plants within its own boundaries, and has sacrificed the advantages of large scale for preservation of the specific interests of the single collective and its members.

The primary motives, which can be argued on the basis of social developments, internal and external to the Kibbutzim, are many. During the first decade after independence, from 1948 to 1958, Israeli agriculture enjoyed exceptional

prosperity. As a result of the massive immigration and the destruction of a great deal of the agricultural infrastructure during the war of liberation, great pressures were exerted on the agricultural sector to increase production to provide both for the increasing population and for higher standard nutrition.¹

During the sixties, however, there was a slowdown in the growth of demand for food, mainly due to the decline in immigration, and the only way to maintain profitability in agriculture was to increase output/Labour ratio.

In early 60s the attention shifted from agriculture to industry. The rate of growth of industrial production accelerated until the mid sixties, and stood in sharp contrast to the declining growth rates in agriculture, as indicated in the table below.

Average Annual rates of Growth of Agriculture and of

1. U. Leviatan, "Industrial Process in Israeli Kibbutzim: Problems and Their Solutions" in M. Curtis and M. Chertoff (ed.), *Israel : Social Structure and Change*, Transaction Books, 1973, p.166.

Industrial output in Israel, 1955-60, 1960-65 (in per cent)¹

Years	1955-1960	1960-1965
Agriculture	13.02	7.58
Industry	9.70	13.40
Agriculture/Industry	1.34	0.57

The Kibbutzim responded eagerly to the challenges presented by the new national priorities, and massively increased capital investment in industry. "Between 1960 and 1970 the number of industrial plants in Kibbutzim increased from 108 to 170. The Kibbutz contributed to total Israeli industrial output which grew from 3.1% in 1955 to 6.2 percent in 1966. Kibbutz industry is concentrated mainly in limited number of branches. Of the 157 industrial plants in Kibbutzim in 1968, 117 were in four industries : 43 - metal works, 23 - plastics, 29 - food, 18 furniture and wood.²

1. Yehuda Don, "Industrialization of a Rural Collective" Vermont, Gower Publishing House, 1988, p.11.

2. Menahem Rosnar, "Worker Participation in Decision Making in Kibbutz Industry" in M. Curtis and M. Cheroff (ed.), *Israel : Social Structure and Change*, New Jersey, Transaction Books, p.146.

Economic Crisis :

Thus we can conclusively say that several conditions made it necessary for the Kibbutzim to go industrialized. Since the Kibbutz community is a part of larger socio-economic realities of Israel, the economic reality that is harming Israeli industry as a whole, is also showing its impact on the Kibbutz, the drastic steps taken to combat inflation have been damaging the productive sector in general and the Kibbutz industry in particular. Interest rates reached dimensions unparalleled throughout the world, impairing the ability to compete and jeopardizing the existence of entire factories. The present crisis in Israeli economic policies present two dangers. The first is the further collapse of industry, which, even if unprofitable has to pay high real wages unconnected to labour productivity. Second, the frozen exchange rate continues to erode the profitability and equity of many industries especially those involved in export.

But the Kibbutz movement has reacted to the government's new economic policies very sharply. Because, of the Kibbutzim social and ideological outlook (which differs

from that in the private sector where the only criterion is profitability), their timely launched mutual aid programme ensured that no Kibbutz or enterprise will be left to its fate. As far as possible, the strong helped the weak. Some of the blames for current crisis, of course, should be placed at their doorsteps.

There are the other reasons also, for example, shortage of capital for investments mainly provided by the government in the past. Too much of dependence on the market also led to the slow down of production. Introduction of new technologies by the Kibbutzim depended mainly on the number and professional knowledge of engineers and other technical personal available in the Kibbutz community. This phenomenon resulted in surplus of technical personnel in some plants and shortage in others, thus creating imbalance and affecting the industry negatively.¹ Despite severe economic crisis the Kibbutzim have tried to solve it out through the principles of mutual aid and co-operation, to some extent quite successfully.

1. Menachem Rosner, "New Technologies in the Kibbutzim", *The Jerusalem Quaterly*, Number Thirty Nine, 1986, pp.86-87.

Apart from the farming industry and other sectors the Kibbutzim have produced some of the finest soldiers for the army. Their contribution has been remarkable. The war of independence showed that a close chain of agricultural settlements, especially of the Kibbutzim, helped the army to repel the invaders. This chain turned itself into a row of fortresses which could stand firm against the attackers until the army arrived. Moreover, since the Israeli economy was unable to maintain a big army and has lengthy frontiers, the existence of border settlement has proved to be of vital importance.

Thus we can summarize that the Kibbutzim underwent many phases of economic ups and downs, nevertheless they sustained, evolved and changed according to the needs of time. The initial thrust on farming was inherent in their ideology and origin. And even while farmers they have produced sufficiently for themselves and for others. In view of the findings mentioned above, one can also argue that they led the pressure of the capitalistic environment and have to keep with it but they also enjoy a considerable measure of independence. Phenomenal industrial growth in 50s and 60s

and yet the attention paid to the human needs of its workers, and the employment of organizational principles based on Kibbutz values convince us sufficiently that the Kibbutz value system has contributed to their economic success.

Extraordinary success of their farming economy, as mentioned in the chapter, is one of the greatest achievements in its leading role in promoting Israeli agriculture to the level of other developed countries.

Another conclusion that may be drawn is that could never remain at a standstill, and since potential for further progress in agriculture was diminishing due to several factors, limited land and water resources, the time was ripe for industry. However, broader ideological values of the Kibbutzim were not lost sight of, though, in some cases, the minimum compromises were made.

Kibbutz industry has already overtaken agriculture within the Kibbutz economy, a change which brings its own problems that have been discussed. The breakthrough of Kibbutz industry is expressed principally in high work productivity.

This also becomes clear that many Kibbutzim differ from each other in the application of organizational principles and in their adherence to Kibbutz values and norms. There exists great variation in Kibbutz industrial plants in all areas.

The most optimistic conclusion is that the Kibbutz society is aware of the problems that the industrialization brings and it has reacted sharply to solve out the problems and contradictions. Even while adapting to the environment of market and capitalistic growth, being a part of it at different levels, the position of the Kibbutzim, and then ability to withstand absolute external influences is noticeable. Adapting to surrounding conditions, the Kibbutzim are still a distinct economic entity, with a character of its own which possesses a dynamic force. Their economic weight has always been more than their demographic weight.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As has already been mentioned the basic purpose of this study attempts to understand the Kibbutz sociologically, as a community; its socio-political and economic structure, its history and ideology, and its creative survival in the midst of larger opposing cultures of society; the external forces of modernization, industrialization and the internal forces of nationalism and individualism. How within the quest for a new economic and political order the Kibbutz presents us with a continuum of promising options, clear limitations, many contradictions, several unanswered questions and crucial survival of much desired utopian values.

We have started with the history of the commune, formation of the Kibbutz ideology and a brief history of the Kibbutz movement. It becomes discernible that the Kibbutz movement did not erupt in isolation; it belongs to an important historical location and context. The history of commune with a purpose of implementing a vision of society based on man's highest ideals of equality, justice, and humanity, is

quite long. But what is disappointing is that one of the characteristics of the utopian communities has been that they have short-lived, most of them, coming to an end, shortly after, if not during, the life time of their founders. Right from the primitive form of communism, utopian communities existed during the ancient times, the middle ages, and upto the modern times. Various communities attained fame during these times. The periods of crisis and struggles have given birth to utopian thinking.

The Kibbutz movement started at such a time of crisis and stress. Various factors have contributed to the emergence of the Kibbutzim in Israel. The Socialist-Zionist ideology, The Jewish Tradition in Diaspora, socio economic compulsions, various forms of developments in Eastern Europe, Russia and other parts of the globe, the new trends of thinking emerging in various part of the world as opposed to societal crisis and a universal human vision for utopia-all these factors have shaped the emergence of this unique commune in Israel.

Ever since its emergence the Kibbutz has gone through many phases of transition and stagnation in the wake of

various developments in the surrounding environment, the larger society. Despite many odds against, 2.9 per cent (1983) population of Israel still lives in collective settlements called the Kibbutz. The Kibbutz has always encouraged decentralization of power, a sense of mutual interdependence, and opportunity for individual creation.

The first Kibbutz was founded in 1909 with a few score members. Today the Kibbutz movement comprises of nearly 1,15000 members. More important, although a minority of those born and brought up in the Kibbutzim have since made their lives in the outside world, the majority have remained. The Kibbutz movement, moreover, has not only survived, but by any criterion one would use, it has achieved a creative survival. Comprising only 2.9 per cent of Israel population, its contribution to the economic, political, military, cultural and artistic life of the country has been entirely disproportionate to its numbers.

The Kibbutz is a socialist community. Whatever the origin of its members, size, age, location or measure of success of any Kibbutz, whatever its affiliation to one of the federations and political parties, certain fundamental

principles guide its operations. The social responsibility of the individual, basic commitment to the values and the voluntary nature of the organization are sufficient to ensure a high level of social order without the need of strict internal rules or a police force or courts to impose control from outside.

In accordance with the highest principles of social justice, the Kibbutz manages its affairs by direct, democratic control. There is no permanent governing body. The means of production are collectively owned and are operated by the labour force of the Kibbutz according to a plan of production and consumption which is worked out every year by the economic committee of the Kibbutz. In order to ensure the smooth operation of a planned economy, there has to be an assignment of duties in both production and service areas. This assignment is determined by communal bodies whose members are not permanent officials but are elected for periods of two to three years by the general assembly, which meets weekly. A proper political and social structure of the Kibbutzim has been discussed in previous chapters.

In accordance with socialist principles, all forms of

work are of equal values in the eyes of the Kibbutz members. The needs of all members' - food, housing, education, culture, health, service etc. are provided in equal measure to all by the community. Children are educated and brought up communally by caregivers and educators. The parental role of socialization is limited. The family maintains its unique character. In its social structure the Kibbutz is not a federation of self contained family units. For Kibbutz members the family is not the basic unit in the struggle for existence. Every individual is directly affiliated to the Kibbutz economy. The wife does not economically depend on husband and the children do not depend on their parents. The status of women, which is largely decided by their role in the family, is equal to their male counterparts. The Kibbutz has sought to transfer many of the family's traditional functions to specialized communal institutions, thus freeing the family on its socio-emotional functions. The Kibbutz ideology has emphasized sexual equality and rejected the western pattern of parental role, especially the mother role. Thus, the various institutions of the Kibbutz social structure have turned the Kibbutz into an organic cell based on intimate relationship between the individual and the

community as a whole, although the Kibbutz social structure is constantly subject to change, at times bringing forth the images of stress and crisis.

In the economic sphere, it has contributed greatly to the high degree of economic efficiency and success. Previously the sole source of the Kibbutz economy was agriculture and they produced surplus food for urban centres also. Working very hard on arid land, the community's extraordinary success of their farming economy lies in its role towards promoting Israeli agriculture to the level of other developed countries. The community attained fame in greening the deserts.

Towards fifties, in the midst of capitalistic environment the Kibbutz went for industrialization. This process was also marked by remarkable success. But industrialization brought its own problems and the Kibbutz industry today is in a crisis, of which the mention has already been made in the chapter on economy. Yet one important point to be noticed is that the Kibbutz has always played an important role in the national economy of Israel. Its economic weight has always been more than its demographic proportion.

On the basis of gathered informations we can conclusively say that despite its unique character, a critical survey of socio-economic structure of the Kibbutz brings the images of crisis and decline to the fore.

Since Kibbutz has never considered itself to be an isolated unit and has always been continuously attached to the national programmes and policies, and has received external socio-economic and political support, socialist values and structures have been undermined while evolving national policies of Israel. As has already been mentioned in the first chapter, before the state's foundation, the Kibbutz played a leading role in efforts to build the nation covering a wide range of colonizing efforts.

With the establishment of the Israeli state the relationship of the Kibbutz towards the nation significantly altered and its central nation building functions diminished. The vision of making the Israeli society into one general network of Kibbutzim quickly disappeared. In its place was the modern reality of small, local socialist communities existing within a nation-state, oriented towards

a western model of development, technology and industrial organization.

The imperatives of the prevailing model of industrialization, including needs for military production, have caused many changes in the social structure of the Kibbutz.

Industrialization process of the Kibbutz since 1950s has had significant effects on the meaning of work. As the community as a whole has become more materially successful and as more leisure time is created, industrialization limits a worker's sense of time and space. A direct fallout of this new process was Kibbutz's constantly moving from self sufficiency farming to cash-crop farming. Also, the industrialization has greatly furthered the existence of hired labour, caused a great division of labour, and substituted exchange value for use values in work. A managerial and industrial bureaucratic form has entered the communities' organization that threatens the socialist concept of worker-controlled enterprise.

There are sign of changes in the family also. The children of the Kibbutz usually remain as Kibbutz members; however, in the light of new models of developments, attrac-

tion to urban life has increased. The ability of the Kibbutz to attract new members from the rest of Israel and abroad has decreased since the 1960s.

The institution of the family has undergone many changes since then. It has taken on new significance. Children are more attached to their parents and spend more time with their parents; women push for more family privacy, partly in response to increasing dissatisfaction at work in the wake of new socio-economic dynamics. The institution of marriage has also changed substantially. The couples now call each other as "husband" and "wife" in place of "young man" and "young woman" or "comrade".

Individualism is taking over collectivism and individual desires of family members are on the rise. The new strength of family ties reflects the sexual division of labour and the fact that while women have been "masculanized", men have not been "feminized".

Leadership is still rotated quite democratically but among a small group. Authority remain in the formal structure, rather in the individual personality. However, as in

many social movements, charismatic leadership also has had an impact.

The Kibbutz still controls its elementary and high school systems. Education philosophy based on basic principles of communal education has remained fairly consistent but, more and more youth are willing to attend higher education not under Kibbutz jurisdiction. As more students enter outside institutions, the Kibbutz educational programmes are modified. One could argue that if the internal Kibbutz educational policies are diluted, the consequences may be severe for the younger Kibbutz generation.

Finally, relationship between the individual and the community has elements of both, continuity and change. There is more and more personal privacy, less communal time, and less of an organic sense of togetherness. But communal solidarity at large and communal rituals are still present. The greatest threat to the continuance of collective patterns of interaction appears to be the emerging individualism and materialist value system. There are both possibilities and difficulties for further socialist experimentation.

However, the Kibbutz has shown resistance to external forces in the past, although, one can conclusively argue that it has not remained untouched. Yet it has always found strength in its faith and dealt with dual aspects of different situations. But, like any other society, the Kibbutz is not static and unchanging. It does not offer any final model of social change.

The mode of modernization stands in opposition to Kibbutz utopian ideology and the Kibbutz socialist-communal practices. As the state moved along the path of modernization, the impact is discernible on the Kibbutz.

This shows that no ideological movements exist in isolation, they are developed in the context of social forces that shape them, mould them and move them towards desired and undesired directions. Larger opposing cultures of society do affect these movements.

Yet, seeds for change and the human vision for utopia in the Kibbutz has remained alive. What is needed is new modes of thinking to maintain a delicate balance between individuality and collectivity. Although sounding very

distant, the Kibbutzim in neighbouring Israel do indicate possibilities of a new thinking, different modes of life. The contribution of the Kibbutz is to be found not so much in how many people practice collectivism there, but in indicating the possibilities of solutions to some of the basic problems of humankind.

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