

here that the use of hired labour was also a part of the structure of the Kibbutz, yet its popularity was never harmed. The real reasons behind the popularity of the Kibbutz, it will be demonstrated, was not its socialist traits, nor the lack of exploitation. It was the geographical and military services which the Kibbutz and not the Moshav was able to provide to the Zionist colonial project which in fact accounted for its importance.

To begin with, two widely held misconceptions about the Kibbutz experience must be discussed. The first is the claim that this experience was uniquely Jewish or Zionist and the second is the belief that its success was due to the strong belief in socialism brought by the Zionist settlers.

1) The "Uniqueness" of the Kibbutz

Most authors see the Kibbutz as a unique Zionist or Jewish phenomenon. In "Organizational Behaviour and Community Development" William Foot White writes:

The Kibbutz is a unique experience which provides democratic governance and egalitarian management".
(preface in Rosen, et. al., 1983)

Tabenkin who was considered 'one of the founding fathers of modern Israel and among the pillars of socialist Zionism' described the Kibbutz as "the apex of human experience, the only commune in the world which has not been founded by the social democracies nor by Bolshevism." (Tabenkin, 1985: 44)

There is some truth in maintaining that the Kibbutz was different from the collective experience in the Soviet economy. Since, at least in theory, the Soviet economy was socialist while the European Jewish one was pre-dominantly capitalist.