

The Kibbutz; A Social Utopia

Unlike the Marxist principles of scientific socialism, the Kibbutz's socialism was, similar to that of Owen's experience, utopian in nature. But, contrary to Owen's experience, Kibbutzim were not created as anti-capitalist or non-exploitative societies. Nor were they created as safe or peaceful refuge for victims of wars and other forms of repression. On the contrary, the Kibbutz mission as perceived by its main "Zionist-socialist" pillars was mainly to build a generation of "fighters" (Ben Gurion, 1971; Tabenkin, 1983).

Socialism in the Marxist sense which is expressed in terms of socializing the means of production and creating a classless society was of very little importance for "Zionist-socialist" leaders. Classes and wage labour were always viewed as necessary for the development of the Kibbutz. In a speech addressed at the anniversary of one Kibbutz, Ben Gurion was quoted as saying:

The value of Kibbutz is in its collectivism rather than its struggle to achieve equality...equality is against human nature; men are not equal and therefore they have no equal rights. (cited in Tabenkin, 1985: 51)

Class inequality was bound to develop further with the industrialization of the Kibbutz which began as early as 1930s. The phenomenon of hiring outside labour in the Kibbutz or members hiring themselves out was present during the British rule (Golomb, 1974:181-195). Writing on this, Criden and Glebb said:

In the 1930s the rejection of hired labour was severely threatened... the industrialization of the Kibbutz has resulted in a shortage of Kibbutz labour. .. (Criden and Glebb, 1974: 13)

With the further development of the Kibbutzim, and especially