

Statement on the Project's Relevance to Past Work at Swarthmore:

Zachary Lockman in "Labor Zionism and the Arab Working Class 1920-1929" challenged the dominant academic and social discourse on the kibbutz movement. Kibbutzim did not, he argued, spring from an unadulterated ideological dream of utopian, insular socialist communities. Lockman explains how the original *chalutzim* dreamed of becoming the Marxist proletariat in a new Jewish homeland. They arrived in a land that was neither Marxist nor without a cheap and plentiful labor source. When these young Marxists were undercut by even poorer Arab laborers, they altered their ideological vision to what became the kibbutz. Intrigued by Lockman's article assigned for "History of the Modern Middle East", I wrote a term paper on how early kibbutzim were influenced by larger economic and political circumstances.

In tandem I was auditing Research Design for Sociology/Anthropology. As I learned about various research methods, I wondered what field research on the contemporary kibbutz movement—and the issues facing modern Israelis who still hold Labor Zionist ideologies—would look like. I hope to use a Summer Research Grant to study the new Urban Kibbutz Movement, and to turn that study into my senior thesis in Sociology/Anthropology.

Statement of Rationale and Goals:

Since the first half of the 20th century the kibbutz movement has once again gone through radical alteration in response to changing economic and political circumstances within Israel. Most kibbutzim have privatized, in a sense rescinding their early socialist ideology to an economic environment that made their operation difficult if not impossible.

In reaction to the decline of the traditional kibbutz, groups of young people—who are the same age as the original *chalutzim*—have held on to aspects of kibbutz ideology. These young people have become the pioneers of a new, urban kibbutz (*irbutz*) movement, spearheaded in 1987 by Kibbutz Tamuz. In recent years more and more members of the old Labor Zionist Youth Movements have taken part in this trend: living in Israeli city centers in collective groups with one bank account. These groups have strong ideological commitments to education and social justice, outgrowths from the original kibbutz ideology.

To date, this new movement has not been seriously studied in academic circles. The new *chalutzim* themselves have written several articles for small publications, but they have not yet been rigorously studied in any manner.

The goal of my project is to study the transfer of ideology from the old kibbutz movement to the new urban kibbutz movement. The new, ideologically motivated, *chalutzim* see their activities as a direct continuation from their agrarian predecessors. I wonder how ideologies rooted in large, rural and fairly insular agrarian communities have been reshaped to fit small urban communities that are embedded in larger Israeli society.

By the time I have finished my research I hope to have answered the following questions:

- Which aspects of kibbutz ideology has the *irbutz* movement kept and which pieces have they discarded? What is the rationale for these choices?
- To what extent is the structure of the *irbutz* and the daily activities of its members guided by ideology? How much of this ideology is rooted in Labor Zionism and how much of it comes from other sources?
- What is daily life on the *irbutz* like, and how does it compare to life on the kibbutz?
- Is an urban kibbutz truly a new type of kibbutz, or is it more similar to collectivist living arrangements outside of Israel than its Israeli predecessor?

The answers to these questions speak more broadly to the question of how ideology is affected by practical (specifically economic) circumstance, and how individuals retain ideology despite practical challenges. These questions also speak to the large body of literature on the kibbutz experience. Once heralded as a utopian paradise, the kibbutz has now been relegated to the histories of failed pipe-dreams by academics and laypeople alike. My senior thesis research will examine how the children of the failed pipe-dream address challenges to their parents' world.

The ideology of these children and their parents has evolved from Marxist social theory. All too often, the postulations of theorists and academics stays relegated to the land of academic journals and ivory towers. When ideology enters the real world, things tend to get messy. My project is a study of ideology's interaction with organizational structure. I am hopeful that my conclusion will shed light on the practical consequences of academic discourse and the value of theory and ideology in the real world.

Description of Anticipated Activities:

May 14th- June 7th : Time at Swarthmore spent doing a thorough literature review, and planning out on-site research (designing interview schedules and questionnaires, etc.), as well as analyzing primary sources, such as the literature put out by *irbutzim*

June 8th-June 21st: Administer questionnaires and interviews to American Labor Zionists who are planning to join *irbutzim* within the next five years. I plan to visit a Labor Zionist summer camp in Michigan in order to meet with these individuals.

June 22nd- August 22nd: Time spent in Israel doing participant observation as well administering interviews and surveys.

During this time I will be based at *Kvutsat Zeeq*. This is an urban kibbutz in Haifa whose members are graduates of a North American Labor Zionist Youth Movement. Most of my participant observation will be done with this group. However, while in Israel I plan to study a variety of *irbutzim* by doing short participant observations and interviews. These other *irbutzim* include:

- Kibbutz Tamuz, Beit Shemesh: the first urban kibbutz
- Kvutsat Adom, Migdal Ha Emek: a commune of Israeli members of a Labor Zionist Youth Movement
- Kvutsat Hemshech, Harish: an *irbutz* with North American, Israeli, and Mexican members.

For participant observation, I plan to attend these group's internal meetings, spend leisure time with them, and accompany them on some of their structured group activities, such as informal education and community service.

Because I know members of Kvutsat Zeeq, Kvutsat Adom, and Kvutsat Hemshech gaining access to these institutions should not be problematic. I expect that because the urban kibbutz movement is tight-knit, I will be able to gain access to Kibbutz Tamuz through these connections. I have chosen to spend time primarily with Kvutsat Zeeq because they speak English, which is imperative for me to be able to be an effective participant observer.

Bibliography of Relevant Work:

Sociology/Anthropology

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Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective. Cambridge, 1972.

Leviatan, Uriel ed. Crisis in the Israeli Kibbutz: Meeting the Challenge of Changing Times. Westport CT: Praeger, 1998.

Rabin, A.I. and Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi. Twenty Years Later: Kibbutz Children Grown Up. New York: Springer, 1982

Rosenfeld, Eva. "Institutional Change in the Kibbutz." *Social Problems*, Vol. 5, No.2, Special Issue on the Kibbutz. (Autumn, 1957).

Rosner, Menachem. "The Second Generation: Continuity and Change in the Kibbutz." *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (May, 1992), pp.360-361.

Spiro, Melford E. Kibbutz: Venture in Utopia. New York: Schocken Books, 1956.

Spiro, Melford E. "Utopia and Its Discontents: The Kibbutz and Its Historical Vicissitudes." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 106, No. 3 (Sep., 2004), pp. 556-558.

History

Gorny, Yosef. Zionism and the Arabs 1882-1948: A Study of Ideology. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

Halpern, Ben, and Jehuda Reinharz. Zionism and the Creation of a New Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Near, Henry. The Kibbutz Movement: A History. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Rubinstein, Amnon. The Zionist Dream Revisited: From Herzl to Gush Emunim and Back. New York: Schocken Books, 1984.

Shafir, Gershon. Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 1882-1914. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

General Information

Fedler, Jon: Kibbutz: What, When, When, Where, Israel Information Center: Focus on Israel, Jerusalem, 2002. (Available from Israeli diplomatic missions and on <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0gal0>).

Primary Sources

Golan, Patricia. "Kibbutzim and the City." <http://www.boker.org.il/english/migvan.htm>. August 21, 2005.

"Kibbutz Trends," formerly Kibbutz Currents and Kibbutz Studies, (quarterly), Ramat Efal: Yad Tabenkin, 1991-2004.

"The Communal Scene in Israel" : <http://www.communa.org.il/comisrael.htm>

"Ha'noar Ha'Oved" : <http://www.noal.co.il/eng.htm>

"Habonim Dror- North America: The Labor Zionist Youth Movement" : www.habonimdror.org

"Kvutzat Hemshech [Habonim Dror Tnuat Bogrim]": hemshech.habonimdror.org.il

"Kibbutz Tamuz" : <http://tamuz.org.il>

Proposed Budget:

Housing at Swarthmore: \$250

Food at Swarthmore: (\$50/week) \$200

Plane Ticket to Israel: \$1500

Travel within Israel: \$150

Housing in Israel: \$500

Food in Israel: (\$60/ week) \$480

Cell Phone in Israel: (\$69/month + \$69 SIM Card + .17/minute) \$241

Notebooks: \$12

Pens: \$5

Tape Recorder: \$25

Mini-Cassette Tapes: \$20

Translation: (five one page documents and two interviews, 15 hours @ \$8/hr) \$120

TOTAL: \$3503