The Crisis in the Kibbutz Movement, 1949–1961

The crisis in which the kibbutz movement found itself shortly after the War of Independence was compounded of four or five interlinked dilemmas. During the 1950s some of these problems were wholly or partially resolved, while others remain unsolved to this very day—some because the kibbutzim lacked the strength or the determination to deal with them, others because they are a reflection of basic predicaments immanent in the relationship between the kibbutz and the Israeli society.

PROBLEMS

Recruitment

Throughout the history of the kibbutz one major factor has determined its capacity to meet the challenges of the time: the availability of manpower. This can be seen very clearly in the postwar crisis, which was in many respects simply a reflection of the lack of men and women to perform the tasks which the kibbutzim were, in principle, prepared to take on themselves. There were several reasons for this.

After the war, the kibbutz movements resuscitated the European youth movements more or less in their prewar form. However, in the historical circumstances of the mass exodus from Europe, they became little more than a convenient framework for organizing the new immigrants and channelling them into the kibbutz movements, Youth Aliyah, the Haganah/IDF, and other existing sectors.¹ Once the great wave of European refugees had arrived in Israel, this source of manpower dried up almost completely.² Israeli youth movements were small compared with the prewar European movements, and most members were of an age and social background which enabled them to take advantage of the opportunities for social mobility afforded by the new state. The halutz movements in the Western countries were also numerically small, and the proportion of their graduates who reached the kibbutz was tiny.

Moreover, the kibbutz movement was one of the few sectors of the Israeli public which aimed to absorb new immigrants "into its homes, its work force, its children's houses."³ In other parts of Israeli society—for example, the veteran moshavot, in many of which the local authorities refused to provide municipal services for the neighboring ma'abarot—absorption took place alongside the existing sectors rather than within them.⁴ As a result, the
demands made both of kibbutz society and of the new immigrants led to tensions which proved in many cases to be intolerable. This applies both to the survivors of the Holocaust—including many of those who were recruited through the resurrected youth movements—and to the Jews of the Middle Eastern countries who by 1953 formed half of the new immigration. Thus, a great many new immigrants passed through the kibbutzim, but only a small proportion stayed.

Underlying all these factors was the change in possibilities and methods of recruitment to the kibbutz which resulted from the Holocaust. Before the second world war the existence of the European youth movements had ensured a constant replenishment of the kibbutzim by young people who had undergone a high degree of selection and training. In the first year of the existence of the state these elements were paralleled to some degree: in the camps of the *Briha*, Youth Aliya groups, and the relatively large number of graduates of the pioneering youth movements of the Jewish communities of the Western world, the Palestinian youth movements and the Palmach. As a result, the kibbutz movements were able to accomplish a burst of settlement unprecedented in the whole of their previous history: between May 1948 and June 1949, fifty-eight kibbutzim were established—more than three times the greatest previous rate of settlement, during the tower and stockade period.6

Within a year from the end of the War of Independence these conditions no longer obtained. Between the world wars the youth movements of Europe and the Yishuv had been minorities within their respective communities: their membership embraced no more than 6–8 percent of the potential recruits.7 Those who reached the kibbutz were minorities within their movements, thinned out further by a process of selection and training—an elite within an elite. With the beginning of mass immigration, those who began to reach the country were no longer elite groups, but whole communities—tragically thinned by the war and the Holocaust, but in circumstances which were very far indeed from the selective processes of the youth movements and the Palmach. It was inevitable that any attempt to recruit directly from among them would attract a very much smaller proportion. The relationship between the kibbutz and the outside world had entered a new, and very much more unfavorable, dimension. The next decade was to see a slow and reluctant process of adjustment to this new situation.

The kibbutz movements' deliberations in the early 1950s show little consciousness of this problem. The crisis appears, more often than not, as a crisis of attrition rather than of failure to recruit new members. A great number of members, many of them key figures in their communities, left the kibbutzim at this time. This was in great part the result of the opportunities and challenges offered by the creation of the state, particularly in the army and in various branches of public service. But these in themselves would not have been so tempting—or, in many cases, could have been combined with continued kib-
The trend in New Settlements, 1948–1960

The outbreak of the 1948 war caused a sharp increase in the number of new settlements, from 7 in 1949 to 14 in 1950. This was due to the fact that the previous year, 1949, was characterized by a relative lull, with only a few new settlements established. The situation in 1950, however, was quite different as a result of the war and the need for new settlements to accommodate the influx of immigrants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>KM</th>
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<th>Other</th>
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1. After 1951: Ibid.
2. He refers to those new settlements that have not been included in the table, though usually not in the year of their foundation.
3. Some of the kibbutzim appear against their name in the name of their movement and in this column.
4. Most of these were "experimental villages," in which the Jewish Agency employed new immigrants in agricultural work. Thirteen subsequently became moshavim, and therefore added to the ninety-five in this table.

The table above shows the number of new settlements established in Israel from 1948 to 1960. The data is provided by A. Bein and R. Pechman in their book "Immigration and Settlement in the State of Israel." The table includes the number of kibbutzim (KM), kibbutzim (KA), Hebron (HK), other (Other), all (All K'm), Hebron (He), Meshakim Shitufim (MS), Moshavim (Mosh), and other rural (Other rural) settlements.

The table shows a steady increase in the number of new settlements over the years, with a peak in 1950 and a decline thereafter. The data also indicates the importance of kibbutzim in the establishment of new settlements, as they account for a significant portion of the total number of new settlements established.

As the table shows, the number of new settlements established in 1950 was significantly higher than in any other year, with 32 new settlements established. The data also shows a decline in the number of new settlements established in subsequent years, with a peak in 1950 and a decline thereafter.

The table also shows the importance of kibbutzim in the establishment of new settlements, as they account for a significant portion of the total number of new settlements established. The data also indicates the importance of kibbutzim in the establishment of new settlements, as they account for a significant portion of the total number of new settlements established.
change of policy. For many years the Jewish Agency's settlement policy had been based on the vision of Jewish Palestine as a largely rural country. A radical change in planning policy came about in 1950 with the adoption of the Sharon report, which envisaged no more than 20 percent of the population in the rural sector. But this approach had, in effect, already been adopted by Ben-Gurion and his advisers by the mid-1940s. The public statements of leaders of all the kibbutz movements in 1949–1951 are replete with complaints that the movements are not allocated sufficient resources for absorption and settlement; and it seems that there was a good deal of truth in their contentions. It was only during the coming year that they began to realize the limitations imposed by their new situation.

Defense

Since 1937 the kibbutz movement had been active in the defense of the Yishuv: the role of the kibbutzim in the Haganah and the Palmach, their settlement in strategic areas, and the defense of their own land and homes had become part of history and legend. The theme of the spokesmen of the kibbutz movement in the early postwar period was simple: nothing has changed.

If the kibbutz had not existed, it would have had to be created in order to defend the State of Israel. . . . [The] combination of settlement and military defence turns this country into one of the best defended states in the world, for every valley and every hill is a stronghold on permanent alert.

In themselves, these arguments were incorporated in military-strategic conceptions and influenced the concept of "decentralizing the population." But, as a result of the recruitment crisis, the kibbutz was unable to carry out this task. Between 1952 and 1954 only thirteen new kibbutzim were founded, as against fifty-three moshavim of various types and five development towns, many of them in strategically important locations.

Another aspect of military preparedness was the readiness of the individual kibbutz members to volunteer for tasks in the army, the Ministry of Defense, and so forth. There were specific areas, such as recruitment for various elite formations, where the military authorities showed a marked preference for young people from the kibbutzim (and the veteran moshavim), often directly approaching individual kibbutzim with demands to release specific individuals. But during this decade—and, indeed, until the mid-sixties when considerable numbers of kibbutz-born children reached military age—this element was numerically negligible. The chief sense in which it could be said that the kibbutz was a vital element in the defense of the state was in the existence of those kibbutzim which had been founded in strategic locations in previous periods. And many of them were themselves in urgent need of reinforcement. The most that could be hoped for was adequate maintenance of the existing network of kibbutzim—certainly not any significant measure of expansion.

Politics

By the late 1940s most of the issues which had once been central in the ideology of the kibbutz movements were no longer considered vital, as is evidenced by the ease with which the minority of the Kibbutz Me'uhad united with Hever Hakvutzot in 1951. The real issue, as widely agreed, concerned political content: support for Mapai or Mapam. The differences between these parties, grave as they were for the State of Israel, impinged on the kibbutzim in special ways.

Both of the largest kibbutz movements—the Kibbutz Me'uhad and Kibbutz Artzi—viewed party allegiance as a central component of their ideology. This had long been the case in the Kibbutz Artzi. The leadership of Kibbutz Me'uhad had been moving in a similar direction since 1939. This trend, together with the reaction of the Mapai minority, eventually brought the movement to the split of 1951. From 1945, each faction within the Kibbutz Me'uhad trained and developed cadres of young people for work in the camps of the briha, youth movements and the like. These young men and women created groups with personal loyalty to themselves, and an ideological attachment to their faction within the Kibbutz Me'uhad. The existence of two such sets of people, all chosen as being the most active, loyal, and articulate supporters of their respective parties, meant the creation of a new generation of leaders who tended to be far more extreme than their elders.

The growing influence of Moshe Sneh within Mapam ensured wide support for his doctrine that war between the two great power blocs was inevitable, and that the labor movement should be aligned with the Red Army if Israel were to be invaded. Since the kibbutzim were an important element in the country's defense system, this doctrine potentially involved the personal loyalty of every kibbutz member.

The ideological issue was reflected within the Kibbutz Me'uhad in the educational system particularly at the level of adolescents and young adults. These groups tended to support Mapam as against their parents' generation which contained most of the pro-Mapai faction. This put a strain on the system which proved to be intolerable.

Since the great majority of the kibbutz movement supported a party which was viewed by Ben-Gurion and his supporters as potentially, if not actually, subversive, he often attacked the kibbutz movement as a whole, and not only the Mapam majority within it. His actions led to suspicions—some of them apparently well-founded—that the Mapai establishment was discriminating against the kibbutz movement, and not only those movements which supported Mapam, in such matters as financial support for development and housing.

In short, both the political commitment of the kibbutz movements and the support of the great majority of their members for Mapam were problematic in themselves, and cost the kibbutz movement dear. Moreover, the widespread
impression that the leaders of the kibbutz movement were occupying themselves with politics rather than the central issues of the period, such as the absorption of immigrants, did considerable damage to their public image; and, indeed, there can be no doubt that they expended on the party political struggle a great deal of thought and energy which could well have been devoted to these issues.

SOLUTIONS

In this section I shall describe the methods adopted by the kibbutz movements to deal with the problems outlined above.

Recruitment

The kibbutz movements adopted four main strategies for enlisting or attracting new members.

First, all kibbutz movements continued to work in the traditional frameworks of pioneering youth movements and Youth Aliya. On the whole, the latter groups made for more successful absorption, and remained one of the main methods of recruitment throughout the period under discussion. There was a gradual change in their composition towards the end of the decade, as the number of underprivileged youths from Israeli towns increased steadily.

Second, each movement continued to develop its youth movements in the “Western” countries, including Israel. The Ihud, which enjoyed the support of the Mapai-controlled establishment in the government and the Histadrut, was more successful than the other movements. Nevertheless, despite considerable investment of manpower and other resources, none managed to maintain its numbers in relation to the increase in the general population (see table 11.2).

Third, there were several attempts to use “unconventional” methods of absorption: in particular, havurot, groups of families who were absorbed in the kibbutzim for a year with the promise of a lump sum in payment for their work if they decided to leave at the end of that time. There were also attempts to recruit families directly from the immigrant camps and ma’abarot. Moreover, in the mid-1950s the Histadrut sponsored a movement “from town to country.”

Although some of these schemes enjoyed limited success, they made little difference to the general trend of a relative decline in numbers. The cause is to be sought in the social trends described above; the difficulties in absorbing immigrants of contrasting cultural background—not infrequently combined with the reluctance and lack of adaptability of the kibbutz members themselves; and lukewarm support from the governmental authorities.

Finally, the most important source of new recruits was the Nahal (No’ar HaLuzi Lohem: the agricultural corps of the Israeli army). Introduced by Ben-Gurion in 1948 as a substitute for the Palmach, the Nahal was granted permanent legal status in 1949. In the long run, it turned out to be the salvation of the
tled in moshavim, a significant proportion might have stayed, perhaps adapting the social structure of the kibbutz to their own needs and propensities. In view of the social and historical forces at work, this seems unlikely. But the fact that this and other imaginative solutions were never tried was partly the result of the kibbutz movements' conservatism and preoccupation with political questions, but even more of government policy.

In the event, although the population of the kibbutzim grew steadily, its proportion in the Israeli population declined steadily, from 6.3 in 1949 to 5.6 in 1950, 4 in 1955, and 3.6 in 1960. The historical verdict has to be that none of the solutions to the recruitment crisis, with the very partial exceptions of the Nahal and the absorption of Youth Aliyah groups, was really successful.

On the other hand, the final historical assessment must make a distinction which was scarcely raised, and certainly not emphasized, at the time, between recruitment and absorption. Although the efforts of the kibbutzim to recruit a high proportion of the new immigrants must be judged a failure, there can be no doubt that even a short period of education in a youth movement, and/or a few months or years in a kibbutz eased the process of absorption and acculturation in Israeli society. These experiences afforded the newcomer something of the social ethic of the new state. There is no way of measuring how many people underwent this process, or estimating exactly how it influenced them. But it can scarcely be doubted that the kibbutz made a serious, though partly involuntary, contribution to immigrant absorption. Similarly, the very existence of the Nahal was a function of the support given by the kibbutzim to the youth movements. Their influence on several generations of young people, from Israel and the Diaspora, extended far beyond those who joined kibbutzim and remained in them permanently.

Economics and Living Standards

The rise in the physical standard of living of the kibbutzim during this decade was partly a result of the decrease in “pioneering tension” noted above. But it was also a spin-off of the increase in the productivity—and, consequently, the profitability of the kibbutz economy. This was the result of a combination of factors. The veterans of the kibbutz movement had accumulated a great deal of experience and know-how over the years, and they were able to pass much of it on to those who founded new kibbutzim, during their period of training before settlement or through the help and advice provided by each of the kibbutz movements and the Histadrut's Agriculture Center. Compared with the founders of the immigrants' moshavim, old and young kibbutz members alike had a high degree of motivation, and were able to accustom themselves with relative ease to the frequent changes involved in modernized farming. No less important than all these were the great expansion of irrigation which took place during this period, and the vast increase in land holdings as a result of the War of Independence and the flight of the Arabs (see table 11.3). Moreover, the kibbutzim with industrial enterprises were mostly engaged in the food-processing industries, and there was a wide demand for their products. Thus, although the scarcity of working capital and high costs of production inhibited their progress, most kibbutzim gradually increased their efficiency and profitability. Under such circumstances, the demand for a rise in the standard of living could not be denied.

Raising the standard of living did not necessarily mean changing the organizational arrangements for the distribution of goods and services, though they were often seen to be connected. In such matters as the introduction of “personal” budgets (according to a monetary allocation) and arrangements for children's accommodation, Hever Hakivutzot (after 1951, Ihud Hakivutzot Vehakibutzim—hereinafter the Ihud) was more flexible than the other two movements. In the “classical” period of the kibbutz society, during the 1930s, these and other aspects of kibbutz society emphasized the role of the collective as against the needs and desires of the individual. The leaders of the Kibbutz Me'uhad and the Kibbutz Artzi continued to demand stringent allegiance to these principles and practices.

In their eyes—and, indeed, in the eyes of a significant number within the Ihud—the changes which now began to introduced with increasing frequency in the Ihud were rank heresy; and indeed, they can certainly be interpreted as a weakening of kibbutz ideology. But they can also be seen as an alternative to the elitist attitude of the Mapam-oriented movements, whose leaders were prepared to sacrifice the comfort of their members—and, thereby, to lose many of them—for the sake of ideological purity. The Ihud, on the other hand, was prepared to give more consideration to its members' desires, and thus continue to enlarge its numbers. In a new context, and with much more modest pretensions, the Ihud had inherited the Kibbutz Me'uhad's principle of the "great and growing kibbutz."

In terms of overall social trends, however, the differences between the movements are less significant than the fact that each of them enjoyed a steady rise in its standard of living, as evidenced in the figures quoted above. Moreover, although kibbutz members were still materially well off than many townspeople or moshav members of similar social origins, their standards were certainly higher than those of the development towns, the ma'abarot, and most of the new moshavim. On the other hand, the kibbutz was presented in their ideology and rhetoric as a working-class society by definition, though the reference group of most ordinary kibbutz members was precisely those social strata in the towns who were now becoming prosperous with the development of the country. All these factors led them to ignore or play down their relative affluence. It was only during the sixties that kibbutz members began to see themselves as part of the affluent, mainly Ashkenazi, sector of Israeli society.

On the whole, therefore, the standard of living crisis was solved by the gradual modification of the widely accepted image (and self-image) of the kib-
butznik as an ascetic by choice. But this was accompanied by the development of differentials in standards of living which put in doubt the traditional claim of the kibbutz to be part of the working class.

Settlement and Defense

Table 11.1 tells its own story: from 1952 onwards there was a general slowdown of agricultural settlement. It was generally acknowledged that the failure to expand the number of kibbutzim was a reflection of the unsolved recruitment crisis, and from 1952 onward complaints of lack of government support for kibbutz settlement were heard much more rarely. More typical was the remark of one of the leaders of the Ihud in 1953 that "this is no time for new settlement." In fact, all the movements were fully engaged with the problem of their small kibbutzim, mostly founded in the early years of the state, which were crying out for reinforcement.

As we have seen, questions of settlement were intimately bound up with those of defence, and it was again the Nahal which enabled the kibbutz to claim that it had a distinctive role to play in terms of actual military operations and of strategic settlement. The foundation of Nahal Oz in July 1951 was the beginning of a modest renewal of settlement through the establishment of *he'ahzuyot* (small settlements in strategic locations in which soldiers of the Nahal engaged in military activities and agricultural work), some of which eventually became kibbutzim (8 out of 34 during this period). Some 30 percent of the *garinim* formed at this time were graduates of Youth Aliyah who joined the Nahal as groups, 35 percent were graduates of Israeli pioneering movements, and several more of youth movements in the Diaspora. Thus, the background of the overwhelming majority was connected with the kibbutz movement; and so was the general spirit of the corps, and its civilian and military administration.32

The Nahal appears, therefore, as a significant but far from perfect solution to three of the problems which plagued the kibbutz movement from 1949 onward—defense, manpower and settlement. It should be added, however, that its existence was far from unquestioned. From a very early stage the military authorities had reservations about its value; and, indeed, the original intention to use it as an educational tool which would apply to the whole of the army was frustrated by the military establishment almost from its inception. The kibbutz movements (and particularly the Ihud) had to exercise constant vigilance, and often to exert considerable political pressure, in order to ensure its continued existence.33

### VARIETIES OF SERVICE

One of the sources of strength of the kibbutz movement throughout its history had been its ability to serve the Yishuv and the Zionist movement in the areas which seemed most vital at the time. We have seen that in some of the central
industry and building work, grew apace. It was estimated that in 1952 the kibbutzim employed more than six thousand workers—an addition of some 20 percent to their work force.\(^{39}\) Ideological revisionism, guilt feelings at the kibbutz movement’s failure to absorb very large numbers of immigrants, and economic self-interest combined to create a problem which is still plaguing the kibbutz movement.

The Mapam-oriented movements rejected the notion of hired labor in principle—though not always in practice—\(^{40}\) as a deviation from the pristine kibbutz ideology. In the Ihud, although the immediate reaction of the leadership was no different, the movement adopted Ben-Gurion’s ideas at the level of the movement, rather of the individual kibbutz, by establishing *Yizkor Uptu'ali* (Production and Development), an agency which ran a number of farms administered by kibbutz members, but worked by hired laborers. This was both a response to Ben-Gurion’s challenge and a method of retaining the rights to soil and water which the lack of manpower prevented the Ihud from exploiting. The system proved successful in both: its aims. The workers were gradually absorbed into the expanding economies of the absorption towns, and the land and water rights became the basis for the creation of new kibbutzim and the expansion of existing ones during the sixties.

**IDEOLOGICAL REVISIONISM**

Each of the kibbutz movements reacted in its own way to the growing realization that, despite the expectations of the immediate pre- and post-state period, they would remain in a minority for the foreseeable future, and that some of the functions which they had fulfilled until 1948 had been taken over by governmental agencies of various sorts. The first, and most general reaction, was of ostinate conservatism: “despite all appearances, nothing has changed.”\(^{41}\)

Over the coming few years, however, the new circumstances called forth more pointed reactions. In both the Kibbutz Me’uhad and the Kibbutz Artzi, Ben-Gurion’s and others’ criticisms of the role of the kibbutz movements were shrugged off as politically motivated—which, to a large degree, they certainly were. These movements responded to their new situation with an attempt to retain their “pioneering” values, and justify their small numbers by the purity of their ideas and actions. Their ideological stance—including their interpretation of the idea of *halutzut* (pioneering)—was increasingly avantgardist in the political sense, at any rate until the implications of the Prague trials and the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1955 were fully realized.\(^{42}\)

The Ihud drew different conclusions from its new position. The first was a redefinition of the place of the kibbutz in Israeli society. Beginning with Levi Eshkol’s demand, in 1949, that the kibbutzim should play a major part in saving the young state from starvation,\(^{43}\) economic—particularly agricultural—productivity began to be seen as one of the central objectives of the kibbutz:
not simply as a way of making a living, or solving the problems raised by the standard of living crisis, but as a moral and political imperative. This tendency was marked throughout the fifties. It expressed itself in the weight given to economic and technical subjects in the periodical literature of the Ihud, and in many other ways. And it enabled the kibbutzim to justify their rising standard of living as one facet of the undeniable success of their new pioneering task.

Within the Ihud there was also a revival of ideas which had been pronounced many years earlier, and abandoned as impractical: the proposal for cooperation (in fact, economic amalgamation) between neighboring kibbutzim originally proposed by Kadish Luz (Luzinsky) in 1933; the concept of a "republic of kibbutzim" which would eventually embrace the whole of the state; and the idea of regional cooperation as a step on the way to this end. Here again there was a newer version of the idea of one of the classical ideas of the Kibbutz Me'uhad—what I have elsewhere called "kibbutz holism"—though this final goal was viewed in a very distant perspective. This aim was presented as a vision of a socialist Israel, and the kibbutz was seen as a model for the future socialist society. Parallel to this came two other developments, a reconception of interest in other communal societies, and the beginnings of sociological analysis of kibbutz society. Both of these can be seen as attempts to view the kibbutz as a universal phenomenon, in opposition to the supposed universalism of the other movements' Marxist ideologies.

As a result, there is an increasing emphasis in the ideological writings of the time on analysis and advocacy of the kibbutz as a way of life, in itself representing socialist values, rather than the values of halutzut in the sense of service to the larger community which had hitherto been prominent in kibbutz ideology. In this respect, the Ihud inherited the values of Hever Hakvutzot, which had always claimed to emphasize the needs of the individual, no less than those of the Kibbutz Me'uhad, with its aim of constant, unselective expansion.

POLITICS

The political division of the kibbutz movement was in itself a source of weakness. In this sense, despite its cost in human suffering and economic resources, the split in the Kibbutz Me'uhad in 1951 was at least a partial solution to the crisis. Each movement was now free to pursue its own path, politically, socially and economically, without the interparty wrangling which marked the pre-1951 period.

Each movement drew its own conclusions from the split. For the Kibbutz Artzi it was merely a confirmation of the correctness of the principle of ideological collectivism. The Kibbutz Me'uhad soon developed a very similar approach, though in the rather different circumstances of the developments during and after the Prague trials. The Ihud, by contrast, pursued a pragmatic and somewhat paradoxical course.

From its very inception, one of the cornerstones of the Ihud's political ideology was the separation between the social and economic functions of the individual kibbutz and the political dealings of its members, which were to take place only in the local branch of the party. On the other hand, there was no doubt either in Mapai or in the central bodies of the Ihud that the movement had a vital connection with the party. Whether measured by the number of Ihud members of the Knesset and the central council of the Histadrut, or the demands for activity at election times, or the ideological statements in the movement's literature, all indications pointed in the same direction.

This combination of formal separation from the party with propinquity to the seat of power was to characterize the Ihud throughout its existence. It enabled the movement to pursue a politics of interest through its formal and informal contacts with the Mapai and governmental establishment; and it avoided the danger of its becoming a faction within the party. On the other hand, it is hard to see that its representatives pursued any special policies in the government or the Knesset other than their individual contributions to policy-making and executive functions within the framework of Mapai. In this sense, the Ihud pursued a politics of service to the party rather than of influence within it. This stance was later adopted by the United Kibbutz movement and to a large measure, though tacitly, by the Kibbutz Artzi.

In effect, this process may be seen as a paradigm of the developments within the kibbutz movements in general. The changes pointed out here—reliance on the Nahal as a major source of growth, employment of hired labor, the focus on economic success in kibbutz ideology and practice, the emphasis on the kibbutz as a way of life rather than a means to attaining national objectives, and a liberalization of the internal mechanism of kibbutz society—were all adopted, at various intervals of time, by the other kibbutz movements. These tendencies did not all come to fruition during the period we are discussing. Indeed, some of them lay dormant for many decades. But, in retrospect, it seems that the Ihud set the pace for the whole of the kibbutz movement—whether for better or for worse is a matter of current debate. And the beginnings of this process can be seen clearly during the first decade of the existence of the State of Israel.

NOTES


2. The bulk of the mass immigration from Europe, as from the countries of the Middle East, had arrived in Israel by the end of 1951. But there were significant additions, particularly from Poland and Romania, in the following two years. M. Sizron, Immigration to Israel: 1948–1953 (Jerusalem 1957) (Hebrew).
3. Ya’akov Hazan, at the 28th Council of the Kibbutz Artzi.


6. Most of these were founded by groups from the resuscitated European youth movements; but nineteen were established by graduates of the Israeli movements, and four by former members of movements in the Middle Eastern countries, founded by the emissaries of the kibbutz movements in the course of the previous five or six years. E. Shoshany, The Kibbutz and the Kibbutz in Israel (Tel Aviv 1973) (Hebrew). For statistics of settlement in this and subsequent years, see table 11.1 below.


15. Aharon Tsizling, in his pamphlet Humiliated and Ashamed (Tel Aviv 1950) (Hebrew), written in reply to Ben-Gurion’s attacks on the kibbutz movement for its ineffectiveness in absorbing immigrants, produced a formidable set of statistics, and quotations from Mapai supporters, to show that the government did not give sufficient support to the kibbutzim, particularly in matters of housing.


17. See table 11.1. Of the thirteen kibbutzim five were mishkei shikum—new settlements of the Mapai faction in the split kibbutzim of the Kibbutz Me’uhad— which played no part in the settlement of the borders.

18. For example, the release of Mordechai Hod from Degania Aleph to return to service in the Air Force, and recruitment to the first paratroop units.


20. E. Karkafi, "Ideological Development in the Kibbutz Me’uhad during the Period of the Cold War" (Hebrew), Ph.D thesis, Tel Aviv: University of Tel Aviv 1986, pp. 150–54.

21. Ibid., pp. 140–47.

22. See, for instance, his speech in the Knesset (16 January 1950), in which he declared that he was "humiliated and ashamed" of the kibbutz movement. And compare note 15, above.

23. During the year 1948–49, 8,000 young people were absorbed into the kibbutzim in the framework of Youth Aliyah. Hacohen, The Policy of Mass Immigration, p. 75.

24. In 1957–58 14 percent of the admissions to Youth Aliya groups were Israeli-born, and in 1967–68 almost 40 percent (as well as 15 percent who had been between four and ten years in Israel at the time of their admission). M. Wolins and M. Gottesman, Group Care: An Israeli Approach. The Educational Path of Youth Aliyah (New York and London, 1971) p. 14.


26. At the Kibbutz Me’uhad conference in October 1949, one of the men working in the immigrant camps complained both of the small number of emissaries to the "Israeli Diaspora" as compared with those sent to Europe, and of the fastidious attitude of the kibbutzim to potential recruits from the immigrant camps. B. Gamarnik, "16th Conference of the Kibbutz Me’uhad," 19 October 1949. Stenographic report in Kibbutz Me’uhad archives, EfAl.

27. Tsizling, Humiliated and Ashamed. For a thorough-going condemnation of government policies by Kadiash Luzinsky (Luz), the outstanding figure in the leadership of Hever Hakvutzot, who can certainly not be suspected of anti-Mapai bias, see his speech at the conference of Hever Hakvutzot, 1949, pp. 33–34.


29. For instance, more kibbutzim might have become moshavim shulufim—just as the social structure of the "immigrants’ moshavim" evolved into patterns different from those of the classical moshav. See, for instance, O. Shapira, Rural Settlements of New Immigrants in Israel (Rehovot: Settlement Study Center 1972); D. Shores, The
30. For instance, the "liberal" tendencies of Tel Yosef and Dorot in matters of distribution of goods were condemned by the leadership of the Kibbutz Me'uhad before the split, but condoned in the Ihud. Z. Taur, The Kibbutz Me'uhad in the Settlement of Eretz-Israel, vol. III (Tel Aviv 1984), p. 34.


32. Do'ar, The Nahal. Virtually all of the administration of the Nahal from its beginnings was drawn from the Ihud. (The other major kibbutz movements had originally opposed its formation, and even boycotted it; but by 1951 they were as reliant on it as the Ihud for reinforcements to their kibbutzim.) It is, therefore, not surprising that seven of the eight kibbutzim founded as hehoyvat belonged to the Ihud.

33. On many occasions the leaders of the Ihud expressed concern about the very existence of the Nahal, in view of the restrictions placed on its activities and the doubts of many members of the General Staff as to its military effectiveness. For three instances among many, see the minutes of the central committee of the Ihud, 22.6.52, 24.3.53, 4.10.53. In June 1953 a letter to the secretaries of Mapai accused Moshe Dayan, then chief of the General Staff, of publicly denigrating the Nahal. Ihud Archives, Hulda: central committee minutes, and 6/226.


35. Beracha Habas, A Movement without a Name (Tel Aviv 1964), pp. 16–61 (Hebrew).

36. A useful summary of the arguments for and against hired labor can be found in the articles by Ben-Gurion, "Ze'ev Shefer" and "Kadish Luz" in Niv Hakivutzot 2, no. 1 (December 1952): 30–60.

37. Minutes of Kibbutz Me'uhad Central Committee, 8 March 1950. Kibbutz Me'uhad Archives, 1b, 8, file 36, 98.

38. Primarily a group centred on kibbutz Afikim, who were particularly close to Ben-Gurion.


40. Y. Hazan, Conclusions and Objectives (Tel Aviv 1964), p. 139 (Hebrew). And see the proceedings of the committee for abolishing hired labor in the Kibbutz Me'uhad in 1956, in the Kibbutz Me'uhad archives.

41. For one instance among many, see the speech of Kadish Luz at that movement's conference in 1949. Niv Hakivutzot, April 1950, pp. 32–42.