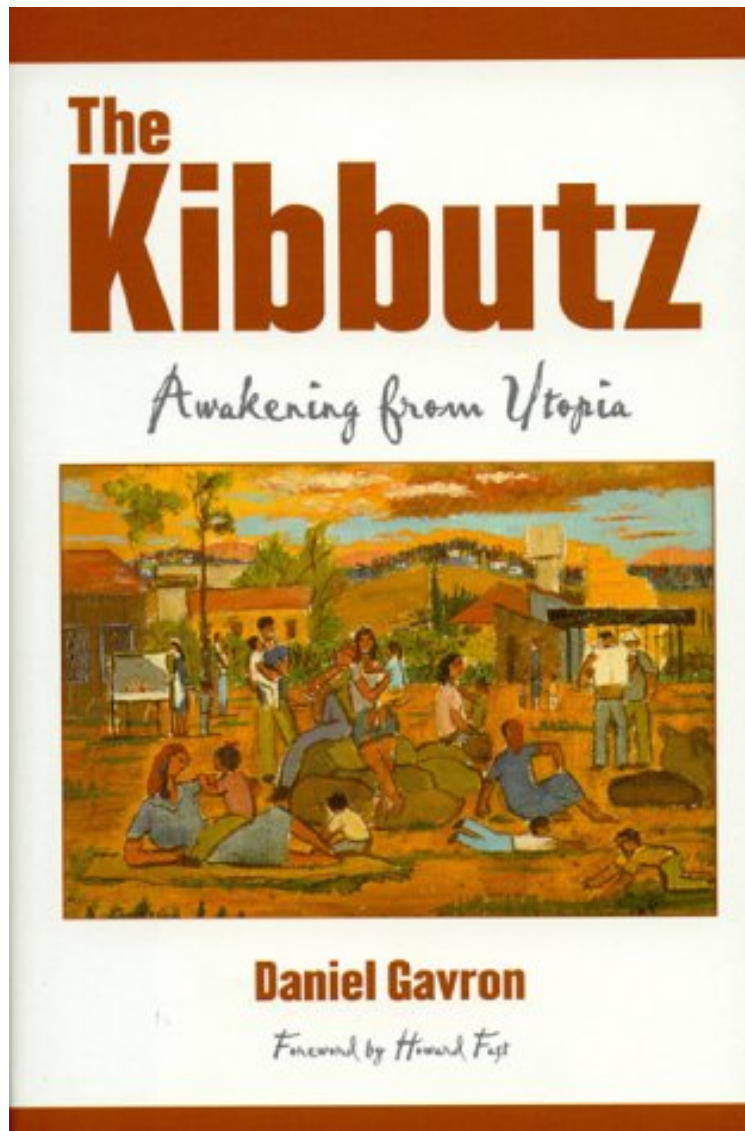


(Pdf free) The Kibbutz: Awakening from Utopia

The Kibbutz: Awakening from Utopia

Daniel Gavron

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Daniel Gavron : The Kibbutz: Awakening from Utopia before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Kibbutz: Awakening from Utopia:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. interesting study of some kibbutzimBy reluctant reviewerOn the positive side, the book presents interesting histories of several kibbutz settlements. It showcases the wide variety within in the kibbutz movement. It also explains the history of the kibbutz movement within the greater context of Israeli history, explaining some reasons for the rise and slow decline of the movement.The one thing that seems to

unify every kibbutz is the struggle to retain members past the 2nd or 3rd generation generation. I was disappointed that the book doesn't provide interesting answers to the central question of the future of the movement. Are the problems attracting new members and retaining children due to historic cycles or to a fundamental flaw in the utopian vision? All in all, I'd recommend the book to those who already know a little about the movement and what to gain a deeper insight into the history and pitfalls of the Kibbutz..10 of 12 people found the following review helpful. The Death of Gentle Socialism By Eric Maroney The Kibbutz: Awakening from Utopia makes for interesting reading during a time when world capitalism as we know it, seemingly vindicated by its victory from state controlled economies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Block in the late 80's and early 90's, is tanking. Gavron's work explores what was considered the most successful and long lasting enterprise in collective living, the numerous kibbutzim established in Palestine and the State of Israel beginning in the late nineteenth century. During the mid-to late 1980s the kibbutz movement, in general, suffered from the same extreme malaise and crisis of ideology which brought down the Soviet Union and the Eastern Block. However the death of the kibbutzim is a strange cousin to these larger trends, since they were voluntary, democratic entities. People were not forced to forgo private property and live collectively. Living on a kibbutz was an individual choice. Yet the crisis came anyway, and this work details the response of various kibbutzim to the sudden disenchantment of Israelis from the collective form of life. Privatization to varying degrees was adopted by the movement, essentially transforming the socialist structures of the kibbutz into private enterprises of varying styles and degrees. Gavron points out that the kibbutz set out to create a new human being, one who put the group first and the individual last. In many ways, this enterprise failed. Yet we suddenly live in a world today where privatization has finally trampled over its limitations, yet there is no alternative collective life any longer. Gavron's work, it seems, is timely reading. What can we look to now? This book ends with developments in the year 2000. For an update about the kibbutzim, the New York Times has an article from August 27, 2007 on the future transformations of the kibbutz, calling them, "less about pure socialism than a kind of suburbanized version of it." And their popularity is increasing. They are becoming more and more like gated, suburban communities than the pioneer outposts of their heady, early days.

The Israeli kibbutz, the twentieth century's most interesting social experiment, is in the throes of change. Instrumental in establishing the State of Israel, defending its borders, creating its agriculture and industry, and setting its social norms, the kibbutz is the only commune in history to have played a central role in a nation's life. Over the years, however, Israel has developed from an idealistic pioneering community into a materialistic free market society. Consequently, the kibbutz has been marginalized and is undergoing a radical transformation. The egalitarian ethic expressed in the phrase, From each according to ability, to each according to need, is being replaced by the concept of reward for effort. Cooperative management is increasingly giving way to business administration. Kibbutz members, who were obligated to and dependent on their community, are now responsible for running their own lives and earning their own living. Through distinguished journalist Daniel Gavron's revealing portraits of ten kibbutzim we hear the voices both of the veterans who are witnessing the collapse of their dream and of the youngsters who have rejected the vision of their parents. The author also analyzes the economic collapse that triggered the changes and the failure of the unique kibbutz education system to perpetuate communal values. The opening and concluding chapters provide a compelling overview of the situation and look toward the future. Gavron, a former kibbutznik, brings a keen and sensitive eye to this first overview of the current revolution in the Israeli kibbutz. Jewish readers and all those interested in Israel will find this book a compelling portrait of a country trying to hold onto its past while facing its future.

.com The kibbutz, or agricultural and light industrial commune, was one of Israel's chief instruments of state-building. Initiated in 1910 as a socialist experiment in cooperative action, it provided work for newcomers, promoted their settlement in inland areas of Palestine, and afforded a sense of purpose and solidarity. At the time of statehood, Israel's national borders were largely determined by the location of the most distant kibbutzim, and, writes journalist Daniel Gavron, the kibbutz movement "held a unique position of prestige, providing many of the nation's best military commanders, as well as a third of its government." Over the last half century, Gavron argues, and especially since the 1970s, the kibbutzim have lost some of their utopian sensibility. For example, where before each kibbutz worker held an equal share of the commune's holdings, there are now differentials in income, and decades of inflation and borrowing compromised the financial integrity of several of the most important communities. Many Israelis consider kibbutzim to be wonderful places for children and the elderly, but not for career-minded workers in the prime of life. All that notwithstanding, the kibbutz continues to play an important role in Israeli life, Gavron writes, producing some 40 percent of the country's crops and about 10 percent of its manufactured goods. His study of this remarkable, and in the main successful, experiment is a useful contribution to Israeli history. --Gregory McNamee From Publishers Weekly The Israeli collective farms known as kibbutzim, once the darlings of Israeli society, have fallen on hard times in this hyper-capitalist era, in part because of the decreasing importance of agriculture and the decline of Zionism even among Israelis. Even the most prosperous of the kibbutzim explored by Gavron, a veteran journalist (Israel After

Begin), find it difficult to retain the children who have grown up there. Stock market investment, land development and salaries based on a member's worth to the collective (rather than equal pay for all)--all anathema to the movement's early 20th-century founders--are now common practice on some kibbutzim. Gavron provides historical and contemporary snapshots of a dozen kibbutzim. The early history he tells through the story of some of the kibbutz pioneers is fascinating, if not new, and offers a necessary basis for those new to the subject. The most illuminating parts of the book come in his interviews with contemporary kibbutz members--some of whom are very ready to admit the flaws of the system--and in his exploration of the effects of the communal child rearing that used to be a kibbutz hallmark. Gavron's recounting of the 1985 debt crisis that accelerated the movement's downward trend, however, will be confusing even to the knowledgeable, as is his description of the different types of financial perestroika that kibbutzim have undergone to maintain their viability. Gavron, who admits to a fondness for the kibbutz, states in his conclusion that the death knell is arriving for many of the collectives, once dubbed the experiment that didn't fail. As one member puts it, "It is a painful process. There is a feeling of loss, of uncertainty. No one knows where it will end." (May) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal This is an Israeli journalist's perceptive evaluation of his country's social and agricultural commune experiment, the kibbutz. An integral part of the Socialist ideology of Zionism, the kibbutz movement, in the author's opinion, has not modernized even as the state has been forced to adjust to political, economic, and social change. There continues to be great variety among the 267 kibbutzim, but the effort lacks dynamic growth. The author culls reflections from the many interviews conducted with kibbutz members and other sociological studies published over the years. He takes nothing away from the movement's contribution to the character of the state but concludes that as the kibbutz begins to adapt to its current environment, it moves further away from its original character. For any one interested in current Israeli society as well as a study of any social utopian scheme. Well recommended. Sanford R. Silverburg, Catawba Coll., Salisbury, NC Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.