

The Transformation of the Kibbutz: From a Classless to a Class Society

by

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Abstract

The kibbutz, communal and collective settlement in Israel, is known as a classless society. Research carried out in kibbutz settlements since 1951 discovered several different levels of stratification in the kibbutz society. However all researchers agreed that even though differential access to kibbutz resources was found in the kibbutz society, no development of a class society had emerged. The argument of this paper is that since processes of change occurred in the kibbutz society (i.e. industrialization, the introduction of hired labor, the economic crisis, and the change of the social world), a development of a class society is emerging in the kibbutz. In this connection an analysis is presented of the social borders of the kibbutz, its labor market and the effect on the kibbutz members of the changes in their social world. The conclusion of this analysis supports the argument that a class society is developing in the kibbutz.