Can We Comprehend Radical Social Movements Without Deciphering Leadership Changes? Leaders' Survival and USSR Reverence in Kibbutzim

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Abstract: While social research of kibbutz movements has ignored the leadership factor, historians did not use sociological theory to explain phenomena that negated their egalitarian and democratic ethos: leaders' half-century tenure and reverence of dictatorial USSR. This reverence was a survival strategy of leaders who started out as transformational, but with success and growth became oligarchic and autocratic conservatives and weakened. To retain power they turned to USSR reverence, but as this engendered crises, they joined an anti-kibbutz-principled government to prevent collapse, retaining power as assumed charismatic saviors, appropriating the prestige of others' successful innovations. Deciphering their leadership changes explains the conformism of inter-kibbutz federative

organizations, ignored by researchers, that thwarted kibbutz movements' struggle against hegemony of oligarchic Mapai party in the Zionist labor movement, marred the creation of kibbutz-principled industry, enhancing oligarchic Israeli politics, and eventually ruining kibbutz democratic egalitarianism. The leadership factor has been found decisive in explaining both kibbutz movements early success and eventual failure, supporting Bunzel's (2004) call for Neo-Boasian anthropology that grasps the past as a principal site of inquiry, and Wallerstein's (2004) call for a historical social science.

Keywords: kibbutz, oligarchy, transformational leader, charismatic leader, USSR reverence, radical social movement, federative structure, neo-Boasian anthropology, historical social science.

Introduction

"…in History, sociology, and the study of politics, understanding possibility is at the heart of understanding itself." "Answers to questions about humanly plausible worlds… are given by judgment, in particular, practical judgment. And the resources that we need to make such judgments, I argue, are given in the details of the particular cases" (Hawthorn 1991: xi).

"The topic of leadership represents one of social science's greatest disappointments" (Sergiovanni 1992: 2).

Leaders of social movements aimed at a radical change choose among alternative policies and practices, and their choices largely decide movement fates (e.g., Chang and Halliday 2005; Downton 1973; Freeman 1974; Kafkafi 1998; Kanari 2003; Shapira 1989; Tzachor 1997). However, the leadership factor is usually absent or marginal in social movement studies (e.g., Della Porta and Diani 1999; Jasper 1997; Niman 1997; Rochon 1998; Tilly and Tarrow 2007), as well as in studies of cooperative movements (Darr and Lewin 2001; Heller et al. 1998; Ingram and Simons 2000; Kasmir 1996; Lafferty and Rosenstein 1993; Stryjan 1989).

And such has been the case with kibbutz social research (Krausz 1983, and references below). Anthropologists of kibbutzim (plural of kibbutz) have alluded to local leaderships (Bowes 1989; Fadida 1972; Kressel 1974, 1983; Rayman 1981; Schwartz and Naor 2000; Spiro 1955; Topel 1979), but not to the impact of the leadership of the movement to which a kibbutz was affiliated. This has been a critical oversight, marring comprehension of kibbutz movements, especially the largest ones, Kibbutz Meuchad (Hereafter: KM), led by Itzhak Tabenkin, and Kibbutz Artzi (KA), led by Me'ir Yaari and Yaakov Hazan, to which some 80% of kibbutzim were affiliated up to 1951, and some 65% afterwards. These founding leaders continued for half of a century up to the 1970s-1980s, becoming powerful and autocratic. They were major national leaders as each movement had tens of thousands of members, and even more urban supporters, typically electing eight-nine Knesset (Parliament) members (out of 120), having two-three cabinet ministers, and holding other major national offices (Beilin 1984; Izhar 2005; Kanari 2003; Near 1992-1997; Shem Tov 1997; Tzachor 1997).

Lord Acton asserted that power continuity corrupts, and Kets De Vries (1993) added that it made leaders narcissistic. Michels (1959[1915]) finds that it engenders oligarchy: leaders become conservative self-servers, aiming at power perpetuation rather than movement goals, avoiding problems requiring innovations, promoting conservative loyalists to movement staff, privileging them, and suppressing critics and innovators (Also: Brumann 2000; Hambrick and Fukutomi 1991; Harris 1990: 369-372; Hirschman 1970; Lenski 1966). However, neither such phenomena, nor these references appear in kibbutz canonical social science literature. Can it be that so powerful and continuous leaders were exempt from such negative changes? If so, why have social scientists not exposed and explained this unusual exemption? If these leaders were not exempt, how can we explain that hundreds of students and thousands of studies missed phenomena that clearly negated the radical kibbutz ethos and culture? Is this oversight explicable by social scientists' choice to ignore the leadership factor, by histories

that did not use oligarchy theory but used a confusing leadership concept, by anthropologists' missing the context of phenomena (Marx 1985), and by a lack of social action motivation that deterred the study of innovators and innovation social processes (Whyte 1992)? Is it explicable by social scientists' lack of historical perspective, ignoring the past as a principal site of inquiry for explaining the present (Bunzel 2004; Wallerstein 2004)?

The Mistaken Kibbutz Social Research

Supporting positive answers to the above questions requires exposure of the mistaken kibbutz research. Rosner (1991: 1) defined a kibbutz as "...a commune belonging to a Movement which is part of the Histadrut and the Israeli labor movement," but none of his hundreds of publications dealt with The Movements, as the KM, KA, and two other kibbutz federations were called. Likewise, almost all students studied kibbutzim which comprised only one sector of the kibbutz field in Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) terms, neglecting the other sector, that of The Movements and hundreds of other inter-kibbutz federative organizations (FOs). In contrast to radical kibbutzim, FOs were conformist bureaucracies, in which thousands of kibbutz elite members administered hired employees, up to 15-18,000 in the 1980s when FO sales amounted to billions of $US (Exact numbers are unknown due to lack of research. See: Brum 1986; Niv and Bar-On 1992; Rosolio 1975, 1999; Shapira 1978, 1978/9, 1987, 2008). The study of FOs would have exposed a conformist sector with capitalist practices and elites accumulating power, privileges, prestige, and other intangible capitals (Bourdieu 1984), contrary to the kibbutz principles (Adar 1975; Cohen 1978; Pe'eri 1977; Ron 1978; Shapira 1978, 1978/9, 1995a, 2005; Shepher 1980). Such exposure would have ruined the radical kibbutz image; hence, leaders opposed it and researchers acquiesced: while hundreds studied kibbutzim and published over 5000 publications,[1] only five studied FOs and were mostly ignored (Avrahamy 1993; Niv and Bar-On 1992; Rosolio 1975; Shapira 1978, 1978/9, 1987, 1995a, 1995b). Ignoring FOs commenced with Buber (1958 [1945]) who pointed out that

"…the truly structural tasks of the new Village Communes, begins with their *federation*, that is, their union under the same principle that operates in their internal structure. Hardly anywhere has it come to this" (Ibid: 141).

Thus, FOs should have adopted kibbutz principles, but Buber did not explain their failure to do so, bewared of exposing leaders' choice of conformism in FOs. Later students ignored FOs and rewarded for this by kibbutz leaders support, accumulated academic capital, and became prestigious professors (Shapira 2005). However, kibbutz leaders were at first highly committed, zealous pioneers who paid a heavy personal price for trying to turn lofty moral ideals into radical social reality. Therefore, explaining their choice of conformism in FOs is not simple, requiring half a book (Shapira 2008: Chaps. 3-11). Here I will present only a few parts of it that explain this choice and the turn to USSR reverence that together prolonged their office survival for decades, disproving its current explanations, and exposing research mistakes that led to missing leaders' ruinous impact on kibbutz movement radicalism.

Confused Leadership Theories, Faulty Explanation of Leaders' Continuity

Kibbutz social research ignored the prolonged leadership, while confused leadership concepts facilitated a faulty explanation of this phenomenon by historians. Strict limits of a few years' tenure in authority jobs by the *rotatzia* (rotation) norm, was a hallmark of kibbutz radical democratic egalitarianism. Nevertheless, Tabenkin, Yaari, and Hazan held power for 48-52 years, beyond anything known in a genuine democracy.[2] One cannot explain this by the similar continuity of other Israeli leaders, like David Ben-Gurion in Ahdut Ha'avoda/Mapai and Menachem Begin in Etzel/Herut, because Mapai and Herut had no radical egalitarian ethos and no *rotatzia* norm (Shapira 1984, 1989, 1993). Kibbutz research has ignored the negation of the *rotatzia* norm by these prolonged tenures, only referring to leaders' charisma (Argaman 1997: 216; Ben-Rafael 1997: 45; Izhar 2005: 15; Rosolio 1999: 23). This referring ignored the power mechanisms by which the leaders became irreplaceable autocratic rulers:

castration of democracy, centralization, promoting and privileging loyalists, exempting loyalists from *rotatzia* or keeping them in consecutive high offices, rotating and sidetracking careers of critics and innovators, and censoring publications. Nor have students alluded to legitimization for these practices by USSR reverence known as "Leftism" (see below).

The very depiction of the leaders as charismatic is dubious up to the late 1950s, explicable by the confusion in the literature between charismatic and transformational (Barbuto 1997; Beyer 1999). A charismatic leader emerges in a crisis as a savior with an assumed "magic gift," providing him with a radical, incomprehensible solution to the insoluble public plight. He asks the public to identify with him, believe in his solution, and obey orders without questioning their logic and dubious morality, which only he understands (Tucker 1970). A transformational leader also appears in a crisis, but boasts neither a "magic gift," nor an incomprehensible solution, and demands no unquestioned obedience; he is grasped as talented and rationally leading to higher moral aims, inspires followers to extra effort by envisioning lofty goals, serves as a model of high commitment to tasks, and encourages use of followers' faculties for problem-solving (Barbuto 1997; Burns 1978; Graham 1991; O'Toole 1999).

Further confusion has caused dissociation of oligarchy theory, which explains a change of leadership type during incumbency (Michels 1959[1915]), from the theory that deals with the elevation of different leader types in different political climates: A transformational leader emerges in a political climate calling for radical changes, while the opposite climate elevates a transactional, conservative leader (Burns 1978). Yet the two theories are better integrated for successful democratic movements: At first, a democratic transformational leader leads to success, growth, and affluence; he then becomes an autocratic, transactional conservative oligarch, using the ample resources at his disposal to promote and reward loyalists and repress critics and innovators, asserting success proves additional changes are superfluous.

All known facts point to such a change in kibbutz leadership, but as this change occurred

long ago and was camouflaged by aligning to USSR's radical image, when later on others' solutions overcame crises engendered by Leftism, this overcoming created images of charismatic saviors for the prime leaders. Only studies of changing FO practices could have exposed the truth. In the absence of such studies, the transformational and transactional periods also seemed to be charismatic, conformist practices by which leaders ruled were overlooked, and was missed how the USSR's radical image camouflaged conformism and retained some trust in the leaders, permitting power, status, and privileges retention.

Initial Leadership: Transformational, Not Charismatic

Initially, the leaders were not charismatic. A charismatic leader is "treated as though he has been endowed with unique, supernatural, superhuman qualities" (Izhar 2005: 15), but in the 1920s-1940s there was no such treatment, and the leaders were harshly criticized. For instance, Tabenkin was accused of "totalitarian yearnings" and of "selection of KM functionaries according to personal loyalty to him" (Minutes of the 11th KM Council, 2-7.10.1936: 111-113). Criticism of leaders was common up to 1948, when the turn to USSR reverence finally won, but even in the early 1950s, quite similar accusations were leveled at Yaari and Hazan (Kafkafi 1988; Tzachor 1997: 163). Other signs of charismatic leadership were also absent up to the turn to Leftism: The leaders neither boasted a 'magical gift,' nor sought irrational belief in their solutions, blind obedience to orders, and dubious morality. In accord with cited literature of transformational leadership, they earned followers' trust by rational visions that accorded their needs, aims, and wishes, modeled high morality by preferring public tasks to personal interests, encouraged followers to do the same and to use their own faculties for innovative problem-solving.

A few examples: In 1921, at the age of 34, Tabenkin as one of three Ahdut Ha'avoda leaders, could have lived better in Kinneret or Tel Aviv, without prolonged separation from his wife and children. He joined young founders of Kibbutz Ein Harod and suffered hardships

and impoverishment in order to create a "Large *Kvutza*," that is a kibbutz of some 250 people that would solve insoluble existential problems of small *kvutzot* like Kinneret and Degania (20-30 people each. Kanari 2003). Yaari was a known leader in the early 1920s, and could have joined one of the two labor parties that opposed to the separate organizing of Hashomer Hatzair youth movement graduates. However, despite two failures to lead groups of these graduates, he joined an impoverished third urban group of these graduates, and led it and three kibbutzim of such graduates to found the independent KA (Halamish 2002). Hazan could have remained in Vienna in 1932, for a full enjoyable year of academic studies and romance with his future wife Berta. Yet he abruptly left after six months, as Yaari called for his help in coping with organizing the fast-growing KA. Back in Kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emek, he worked 16-18 hours a day in a one-room hut, with one aide, turning a loose association into an organized movement (Tzachor 1997: 138-148).

Another proof of their early transformational leadership was the timing of initial use of non-rational arguments, only when they turned to Leftism. Then Tabenkin argued that faith is more important than truth (Kafkafi 1992: 27), and Yaari declared: "We will not reach national and social redemption without an alliance with the USSR," although a little earlier he had derogated the USSR as "Machiavellian" (Zait 1993: 121, 205).

A fourth proof involves innovativeness. Charismatic leaders are autocratic and centralize rule, impose their solutions and only allow innovations that serve them and their solutions (Tucker 1970), while kibbutz innovation served public aims, as the innovators saw them, flourishing due to high-trust cultures (see below) and decentralization (Niv and Bar-On 1992: 215; Rayman 1981: 268; Rosolio 1999: 23; Spiro 1983: 4; Shapira 1980, 1995b). For instance, in 1931, a KM functionary proposed establishing an FO for financing development. Soon Tabenkin and KM secretariat adopted it, and the KA followed suit (Sack 1999). Shimon Koch (Avidan) of Ayelet Hashachar of Hever Hakvutzot movement devised new military

tactics that defeated Arabs in the 1936 revolt, but disappointed of Ayelet Hashachar's apolitical conservatism he left and joined a KA kibbutz; then he innovatively led military units (Dagan and Yakir 1995). Shlomo Gur of KA's Kibbutz Tel Amal invented the very successful "Tower and Stockade" system for the establishment of defensible new settlements (see below). Innovation abounded in early KM and KA kibbutzim (Shapira 2001, 2008).

Phenomenal Success and the Overlooked Transformation to Conservatism

A successful social movement changes itself by the societal changes it causes (Turner 1983). The KM and KA spearheaded the Zionist struggle, and greatly expanded as they successfully promoted prime ends of this struggle, completely changing themselves. In 1927, a few poor and struggling kibbutzim and urban communes, numbering some 1000 and 300, founded the KM and KA, respectively. By 1939, the two movements comprised 54 prosperous kibbutzim numbering some 19,000; each had dozens of functionaries, many representatives in all major Yishuv executives,[3] dozens of emissaries throughout Europe who trained tens of thousands of youths in hundreds of branches for kibbutz pioneering, and an organ that smuggled Jews into Palestine (Avneri 1985; Kanari 1989; Near 1992; Sack 1999; Tzachor 1997). The economies of KM and KA kibbutzim grew by 10-12% yearly (Barkai 1977). This enabled them to sustain, in addition to all the above, the underground Palmach army (see below), to which, along with the British Army and the Aliya Bet illegal immigration organization, they conscripted 13% of their members, compared to 5% for the Yishuv as a whole (Near 1997: 21). Despite the Nazi extermination, rapid growth brought the population to over 56,000 in 1950 (Near 1997: 364), as against slower growth of more conservative Hever Hakvutzot (4209 people in 1939 and 9702 people in 1949; Ben-Avram 1976: 206), despite its loyalty to David Ben-Gurion and Berl Katzenelson, Mapai and Yishuv prime leaders. This phenomenal growth is explicable by societal support for the kibbutz as a serving elite (Kanari 1989; Yaar et al. 1994), and other factors: a federative structure that kept units small and encouraged

innovation (Niv and Bar-On 1992; Stryjan 1989), and high-trust, innovation-prone cultures that empowered members and encouraged the sharing of know-how, as in other such cultures (Dore 1973; Fox 1974; Ouchi 1981; Saxenian 1994; Semler 1993; Shapira 2001, 2008).

With success, KM and KA leaders became transactional conservatives and dysfunctional (see below), a problem found also in large American firms (Hambrick and Fukutomi 1991); in such firms, "Golden Parachutes," large sums of money, encouraged early retirement of leaders to overcome this problem (Vancil 1987). However, kibbutz social research ignored this problem, while historians without social science theory missed it, since for a long period success continued due to local kibbutz innovation, although many critical thinkers and innovators had been suppressed and left (Hirschman 1970), and a radical discourse masked conformist practices (See: Sasson-levy 1995). The exit from kibbutzim of innovators and critical thinkers hurt members who valued their problem-solving; unsolved problems caused failures and frustration, augmented by FOs conformism, and leaders were also distrusted due to mistakes caused by filtered and biased information (e.g., Dalton 1959; Geneen 1985; Zand 1972). A leader can enforce decisions by using his powers, capitals, and by Machiavellianism (Shapira 1987; Scharfstein 1995), but this furthers distrust (Fox 1974), and encourages the mass exit of talent that may lead to collapse (Hirschman 1995). However, only a few kibbutzim collapsed (Ben Horin 1984) due to their leading role in the Yishuv which attracted members (Kanari 1989; Near 1997; Yaar et al. 1994), kibbutz autonomy enhanced innovative problem-solving, and leaders' alignment to USSR's radical image camouflaged conservative oligarchic rule, retaining some faith in them that also prevented mass exit and collapse.

Oligarchization: Centralization, Suppression of Democracy and Creativity, Privileges for Functionaries

The change to oligarchic rule commenced by centralization and castration of democracy from 1933 in the KM, and from 1935 in the KA. Up to then, kibbutz representatives conferred

several times a year and made all major decisions. Then time lag between conferences extended to several years, and power transferred to leader-chosen unelected bodies approved en bloc at conferences, blocking kibbutzim control of Movements' decision-making. In the KM, this body was first called the "Extended Secretariat" and then the "Council." From 1933, KM conferences convened every three years, and from 1939 even less frequently (Tzur 1981). By 1935, the castration of democracy and centralization were criticized, and more so at the 1936 Yagur Conference, as cited, as well as functionaries' prolonged tenures and their being chosen according to loyalty to Tabenkin (Kafkafi 1992: 18, 25, 34-35; Kanari 2003: 375, 389; Near 1997: 65).

KA governing body was the "Executive Committee," appointed like the KM's. In 1935 it was promised that councils of kibbutz delegates would convene every four months, but they met only once a year; the councils eventually became non-elected nominees of Yaari and Hazan and convened more rarely (Yad Yaari Archives, File [1]5-20.2). KA functionaries rotated more than those of KM due to power struggles between Yaari and Hazan (see later), but senior functionaries continued for long periods or circulated to other offices under leaders' auspices (Shapira 2005; Shure 2001; Tzachor 1997: 197; Vilan 1993: 247, 273).

Concomitantly, critics and innovators were suppressed. Eliezer Livenshtein (Livne) and Gershon Ostrovski of Ein Harod, were among KM founding leaders and headed its missions to Germany and Poland (respectively). After returning in 1935, they criticized Tabenkin, and then at the 1936 Yagur Conference they criticized KM functionaries for violating equality. Ostrovski also accused Tabenkin of freeing his son from manual work by pressuring Ein Harod to make him a teacher (Kanari 2003: 389-390). Kanari explained this by frustration, Ostrovski "did not find his place in Ein Harod" (Ibid: 389), but in fact he was demoted: In Poland he had successfully led the Halutz Movement that doubled the KM in two years (Ibid: 395); he "stood up against the heavy pressure of Jews who tried to immigrate… one who had

to improvise solutions so that the flood of people into the Halutz would not ruin the system"
(Ibid: 389). Naturally, he expected another high office, but instead, due to criticism, he was
sent back to the ranks. The same done to Livenshtein, and they left. Their friend David Maletz
remained, despite the KM publishing house's refusal to publish his critical novel, *Cycles*
(Published by Am Oved, 1945), as had been done to other critical novelists (Keshet 1995).

Mordechay Shenhabi was KA's foremost innovator. He initiated the "Shomria Battalion,"
a cooperative of Hashomer Hatza'ir graduates for road building, then a cattle improvement
ranch in Kibbutz Beit Alpha, and then led the renewal of Hashomer Hatza'ir in Poland. He
moved to Mishmar Ha'emek, initiated a forest planting with money he had raised abroad, set
up a KA boarding high school, rescued European Jews' capital from confiscation by the
Nazis, and established factories. He often clashed with Yaari, but Hazan supported him, and
he continued up to 1942, when he fired while setting up another high school, apparently since
Hazan surrendered to Yaari's fear of his growing prestige (see below). Predicting the scale of
the Holocaust already in 1942, he initiated the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum and
Memorial in Jerusalem, and managed it (Zait 2005; My unpublished study).

Oligarchic change included privileging loyalists by material benefits. At first, only a few of
them who were executives of the Jewish Agency and Histadrut General Labor Union got
accommodation expenses from which they saved money and bought appliances that other
members could not afford, while Movement functionaries got only intangible rewards. In the
1940s however, more functionaries received money and bought appliances, FO heads
received cars, other functionaries shared cars, and all used cars privately, excluding other
kibbutz members (Adar 1975; Shapira 1978, 1987). Functionaries had rented apartments in
Tel Aviv according to hierarchical status: Seniors had private flats, while lesser officers
shared apartments with three or four others (Shapira 2008: Ch. 8).

In 1939-42 Innovative Leadership Ended, While Basic Problems Mounted

Conservatism accompanied oligarchization, as indicated in leadership theory. Tabenkin's last major innovation was in 1942, the establishment of the underground Palmach working army in the kibbutzim that financed it, hid its weapons, ammunition, and arms plants, while soldiers worked three days a week beside training. Operationally, it was a wing of Yishuv's Hagana military organization under Jewish Agency control, but logistically it was an FO, staffed by kibbutz members and graduates of affiliated Youth Movements, and culturally part of the kibbutzim, enhancing their status as a serving elite (Kanari 1989; Yaar et al. 1994).

The last major innovation of Hazan was in 1939, an alliance with a group of radical Tel Aviv authors led by the poet Avraham Shlonsky, who opposed the literary establishment led by H. N. Bialik, under Mapai's auspices. They sought employment and outlets for publishing their work. Though rejecting KA's Marxism, they aligned with the KA, were employed by its journal and publishing house, and published there (Shapira 1974; Tzachor 1997: 231).

Then the leaders suppressed innovation, while success, growth, centralization, erosion of democracy, and conformist practices engendered many problems. Some examples:

Autocracy in kibbutzim - Growth and increasing complexity aggravated problems of direct democracy. By the 1930s, kibbutz general assemblies suffered from low attendance and voter participation, frequent appeals and decision reversals, violation of decisions, and power-monger officers dominating debates (Argaman 1997). Movements' centralization aggravated these problems, diminished kibbutz assemblies' powers and curbed interest in them, and the same did anti-democratic *rotatzia* norm: A distrusted conservative and/or failing manager continued no less than a trusted talented innovator who had solved problems, contrary to the democratic idea that trust determines leadership. The latter saw their careers sidetracked and left, while conservatives loyal to FO heads were promoted, accumulated power and intangible capitals, and dominated their kibbutz by conformist and Machiavellian means, causing ineffectiveness and backwardness (Shapira 1990, 1992, 2001, 2008; Topel 1979).

Conformist industry - From 1940, kibbutzim established factories, because of the limits of agriculture and wartime opportunities. By 1946, there were 126 factories with 1150 workers, but mostly conformism prevailed, such as hired labor and autocratic management (Daniel 1975). The leaders ignored autocracy and local dominance of autocrats, criticized hired labor, but did not encourage innovations aimed at kibbutz-principled industry. Such innovations succeeded after the 1950s crises (see below), but rarely were innovators advanced to FOs, and if they were, they were soon fired, and their innovations barely diffused to other kibbutzim (Kressel 1974; Leviatan 1975; Rosner 1992; Shapira 1980, 1990, 1992).

Conformist FOs – Economic FOs were mostly located in cities and were conformist from inception, while KM and KA headquarters were located at first in leaders' kibbutzim and followed their norms. From the late 1930s, new conformist FOs were located in the cities, Movement headquarters moved to Tel Aviv and their functionaries, while at first modest egalitarians, from the 1940s got privileges according to hierarchical rank, and tenure, as well: senior officials continued for decades, while juniors were *rotated*. Critics of FO heads were sent back to the ranks, under the pretext of *rotatzia*, while loyalists continued or assigned to other FO jobs, enjoyed power and prestige, and violated material equality by privileges (Ron 1978; Shapira 1978, 1987, 1995a, 2001, 2008; Tzachor 1997: 171, 180; Vilan 1993: 273).

Material inequality – In addition to the above breaches of egalitarianism, urban middle class youths joined the kibbutzim and brought possessions which most members did not have (e.g., Katzir 1999: 76), many of the thousands who had served in the British army frequently did not give their salaries to their kibbutzim, and the rising living standard also debilitated old egalitarian solutions. Alas, the leaders rejected new solutions, and significant gaps appeared (Ben-Horin 1984; Landshut 1944; Shapira 2005, 2008).

Difficulties of divided kibbutzim - Many new kibbutzim divided into two groups: Most men settled in outlying areas, while most of the kibbutz remained in a temporary camp adjacent to

a town. Divisions engendered major differences between the groups, estrangement, conflicts, and mass exits; only kibbutzim with effective leadership overcame these problems (Ben-Horin 1984), but as described, leaders' policies suppressed effective local leaders.

As cited, rapid growth continued despite these problems, and the number of kibbutzim and their population tripled in the 1940s. However, trust in the leaders dwindled as conformist practices negated the radical ethos, and those trying to promote this ethos innovatively were suppressed. Many exited in despair (Leviatan et al. [1998: 163] found 4-5 exits for each member who stayed), but exits remained almost unstudied, apparently for fear of exposing conformism (see: Kressel 1974; Sabar 1996; Shapira 2008: Chaps. 14-16). Conflicts over national politics also curbed faith in the leaders: Tabenkin confronted Ben-Gurion and Katzenelson in Mapai, and Hazan confronted Yaari in the KA (see below).

USSR Reverence Helped Maintaining Leaders' Power

The turn to the left, in 1937-9, of Tabenkin and Yaari was a Machiavellian, self-serving move (Jay 1969; Scharfstein 1995); up to then the KM and KA had repressed and ousted admirers of the USSR, and the attitude to USSR was a mixture of critique and sympathy for achievements (Near 1997: 69). It is implausible that suddenly the two discovered that Stalin had been right with the showcase trials and the murder of party and army chiefs, deeds which all Tabenkin's deputies had criticized, and KA secretariat had called for an international investigation (Kafkafi 1992: 30; Zait 1993: 120, 144). In 1939, the two leaders supported the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact despite criticism by almost all their deputies and Hazan, but in 1940 they retreated, seemingly to appease opposition: Tabenkin called the USSR "imperialistic" and Yaari called it "Machiavellian" (Kanari 2003: 471-472, 478; Tzachor 1997: 164; Zait 1993: 121-123, 145-146). However, the problematic timing of the leftist turn, just as USSR regime was exposed as antithetic to kibbutz principles, contradicts historians' explanations (see below), and supports its explanation as an effort to strengthen weakened leadership.

Before examining this explanation, let us distinguish leftist USSR reverence from Marxism. Many ideologies used Marxist ideas; one being Leninist-Stalinist Communism, and others, different and critical of this one, were the Zionist-Socialist ideologies of the KM and KA that combined Marxism with constructive Zionism, "building the country and a working society based on the principles of equality and collectivism" (Zait 1993: 7). One clear sign of the difference was that, up to 1948, when Leftism won, there was no use of the paired term "Marxism-Leninism" in KM and KA discourse (Ibid: 39, 119-123, 259-263).

Leftism enhanced leaders' power in many ways. First, revering the centralized, autocratic, and oligarchic USSR legitimized similar norms in a weaker version in the kibbutz field. Only FOs centralized, kibbutzim remained autonomous, democracy was castrated but not abolished, most FO officials frequently changed jobs, and censorship of publications was limited (Keshet 1995; Porat 2000). Second, revolutionary discourse was congenial to the leaders' polemical skills, camouflaging conservatism with radical rhetoric, and minimizing the significance of conformist FOs and industry. Thus, the leaders did not have to advance the radical ethos in these sectors by innovation which might have failed and harmed their image, or worse, might have succeeded and elevated competitors from among innovators (Shapira 1995b). Third, the radical image drew youths to the kibbutzim, which continued to grow, adding prestige to the leaders. But even more decisive, the leftist cosmic order made their supremacy independent of functioning (see: Wolf 1999). In this cosmic order, Stalin was "the sun of the nations," the USSR was the zenith of socialism, and its communism, rather than Zionism, was the kibbutz's justification. Kibbutz achievements became secondary, the significance of its unsolved problems diminished, and failures barely harmed leaders' authority, as authority derived from "their role of mediators or executors on behalf of the larger cosmic forces that granted them 'natural' rights to dominate" (Wolf 1999: 283-284).

The leaders acquired supreme status like Jewish Admors (Rabbinical religious leaders) that

required no reelection, and autocratically managed the KM and KA. Yaari and Hazan decided every issue as they wished (Kynan 1989; Shem-Tov 1997; Shure 2001; Tzachor 1997; Vilan 1993), while Tabenkin autocratically abolished liberalization in consumption, which some kibbutzim had instituted (Kafkafi 1992: 131), and chose KM officials. For instance, in the wake of the major KM crises of 1949-1951 (Near 1997: 168-219), ex-Palmach commanders who were KM functionaries concluded that "the Movement must have a head of another stature [than the present Secretary-General]…a Secretary-General on the scale of Yig'al Allon or Ben-Aharon" (Cohen 2000: 201).[4] They sent ex-brigadier Cohen to Oxford, where Allon was studying, and he convinced him to undertake this office; Allon only asked for Tabenkin's approval, who refused, as "he was not sure that Yig'al …would 'dance to his tune'" (Ibid: 202), preferring an unknown ex-kibbutz secretary whom he easily controlled.

Likewise, Yaari and Hazan chose either loyalists or powerless young ex-kibbutz secretaries for key offices (Tzachor 1997: 247; Shem-Tov 1997), rather than innovative proven leaders, like Shenhabi, Efraim Reiner (see below), and Shimon Avidan. The latter, like all senior army commanders of the 1948 War who were KM and KA members or supporters, was sidetracked and pushed out of the army in 1950. However, as he dared to criticize Yaari, in spite of, or maybe because of his exceptional success as Givaati Brigade commander, eleven years passed before he got a fourth level KA office (Dagan and Yakir 1995).[5]

In accordance with Kets De Vries (1993), power continuity made the leaders narcissists. Yoske Rabinowich disagreed with Tabenkin, resigned his KM office, rejected requests to return, and did not answer Tabenkin's letters. Tabenkin came to his kibbutz, Naan, and "burst into his home in a rage, angrily took a chair and banged it against the floor until it was broken, shouting at him: 'What do you think! I am more important to our movement than Lenin was to Russia!'" (Kanari 2003: 745). When Yaari's leadership was attacked, he asserted: "I, Meir, am Mapam. I am Hashomer Hatzair. I embody Hashomer Hatzair's

historical way" (Tzur 1998: 215).[6] Hazan claimed that he and Yaari expressed "the hidden will, both conscious and sub-conscious, of the [KA] movement" (Tzachor 1997: 141).

Tabenkin remained Admor-like after formal retirement in 1961, participated in Secretariat sessions as he wished to, and if he refused to attend a council or conference, it was cancelled; his speeches continued for hours as against others' few minutes, and under his pressure kibbutzim changed decisions. When KM leaders Galili and Allon initiated a political bloc with Mapai in 1965, they went out of their way to moderate his opposition, lest they fail or cause a split in the KM, and in 1967 he barred adoption of Allon's plan for compromise with Palestinian Arabs, although Galili supported it (Izhar 2005; Kanari 2003: 760-788, 800-808).

Admor-like status granted the leaders an additional benefit: They sent deputies to executive jobs in which one could fail and lose prestige (Hughes 1958), such as cabinet ministers and as coalition negotiators with Ben-Gurion (Tzachor 1997: 186-191). Hazan wanted to be a cabinet minister, but surrendered to Yaari's opposition (Tzachor 1997: 224).

Timing of Leftism Bars Alternative Proposed Explanations

A reader of an earlier version of this paper contended that the explanation of Leftism as a leadership survival strategy ignored "the October revolution's popularity among socialists and intellectuals in the world." However, how can he explain that, at the height of this popularity in the 1920s-early 1930s, both Movements repressed and expelled Soviet admirers, while the leaders' veneration began when the image of the USSR was at its nadir? In 1924-5, Hashomer Hatza'ir's Warsaw branch expelled some 40 Soviet admirers (Zertal 1980: 160-177). In the mid-1920s, Tabenkin and Kibbutz Ein Harod Artzi (the embryonic KM) led the struggle against the leftists of the Worker Battalion (*Gdud Ha'avoda*. Kanari 2003: 241). In 1933, Yaari and Hazan suppressed KA leftists, causing splits in kibbutzim and expulsions (Tzachor 1997: 152-157); then Hazan (1934: 438) called the USSR "a destructive force within the working class," and as cited, in 1937 the KA called for an international investigation of the

Moscow trials. No wonder that a decade of pushing leftward and reversal of Stalin's anti-Zionism were needed to convince Secretariats, which the leaders had chosen, to support USSR reverence, and even then, the KM's ex-Secretary-General and most of KA members opposed it (Goren 1992; Near 1997: 69; Tzachor 1997: 229; Tzur 1998: 237).

USSR reverence was also explained by the leftward drift in the wake of Stalingrad, as well as a stumble in a complex ideological-political revolutionary discourse aimed at blocking Mapai's efforts to dominate kibbutzim (Near 1997: 69-70; Tzachor 1997: 152-155; Zait 1993: 122-125). However, the first explanation is clearly mistaken; the Stalingrad victory took place 4-6 years after Tabenkin and Yaari commenced Leftism.[7] The explanation that they stumbled is unconvincing, as well: For two decades, up to 1937-9, the two did not stumble, despite difficult combination of criticism of the USSR with sympathy for its achievements (Near 1997: 69); so why stumble after Stalin's dictatorial regime was exposed, and they themselves viewed it as "imperialistic" and "Machiavellian?" As experienced, powerful, but still relatively young leaders (Tabenkin was 50 and had been in office for 14 years; Yaari, 42 and had been in office 12 years), they could have continued the above combination, while reverence required Machiavellianism and irrational assertions. Tabenkin had to employ false comparisons and distortions (see below), while Yaari and Hazan had to erase the chapters on the brutal anti-Semitism and chauvinism of Stalin's emissaries to partisans in the forests of Eastern Europe from books authored by ex-partisans Abba Kovner and Ruzka Korchak (Porat 2000: 178-182). Until then, the leaders had never resorted to Machiavellianism; this supports the hypothesis that their power and status were at stake.

Further proof was adherence to Leftism after Khruschev exposed Stalinist horrors in 1956, and the brutal suppression of Hungarian democracy that proved the regime's imperialism. While Western Socialist leaders denounced the USSR, Tabenkin and Yaari criticized its past, but continued reverential discourse of "Soviet Socialism" and suppressed its critics (Beilin

1984; Izhar 2005: 182-183). Zand (2000) explained Western intellectuals who continued to admire the USSR by their frustration with lack of power, but the two were powerful leaders; their continued Leftism indicated that its abandonment might endanger their power and status.

Tabenkin and Yaari Pushed for Leftism for a Decade Until Succeeding

Details of the turn to Leftism support the above contentions. Tabenkin turned left in 1937, initiated a Lenin-style cadres seminar when his deputies condemned the Moscow trials (Zait 1993: 144). The seminar employed lies and false comparisons, and the few who disagreed were "torn to bits" (Kafkafi 1992: 30): In the USSR, free speech and love of humanity reigned supreme; both the KM and the USSR were "societies built on rule from above;" Soviet purges were wrong, but so is "the [Yishuv] Labor Movement's deprivation of workers;" the Moscow trials were justified, the regime "has the right to keep order;" its cruelties resembled KM's cruelty to pioneers at its Polish training camps (Kafkafi 1992: 29-31). In 1939, Tabenkin boasted "Bolshevist" imposition of Secretariat decisions on kibbutzim, although its members and the Secretary-General, Israel Idelson (Bar-Yehuda), who as leader of the ZS Party in the USSR had experienced repression, opposed leftism and denounced Tabenkin's comparison of the Soviet invasion of Poland to the Yishuv's "fighting outside the gates" against Arab terror (Goren 1992; Kafkafi 1992: 31-40). In 1940, Tabenkin partially retreated, calling the USSR "imperialistic" and ignoring it until 1943, when he resumed Leftism, likening the KM to the USSR, supported its brutal collectivization, pushed KM's Youth Movement leftward until it had split, organized another cadres seminar, and promised students future jobs in a USSR-led international scheme of his imagination. However, only in 1947 when Stalin supported a Jewish state, the Secretariat (except Idelson) turned left (Goren 1992; Kafkafi 1992: 27-31, 61-73; Kanari 2003: 432-478; Zait 1993: 83-84, 123, 246-250).

Yaari moved leftward in 1939, supporting the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, along with leftists Riftin and Oren who seemingly abandoned Leftism after the cited 1933 defeat. Hazan and

others opposed the pact, but as mentioned, Yaari won. He then criticized USSR in 1940 as "Machiavellian," but renewed Leftism in 1942, as Mapai courted the USSR to gain support for the Zionist struggle. At a reception for its diplomats, Yaari proclaimed, "We will not achieve full national and social redemption without… an alliance with the forces of the world of tomorrow," i.e., the USSR (Zait 1993: 205), but Hazan still opposed Leftism (see below).

Only in January 1948 did Leftism win conclusively, as the KM- and KA-affiliated parties united to form Mapam, which aligned itself with the USSR's "revolutionary camp," a major political mistake that estranged KM and KA from almost all the Yishuv, which rejected the Soviet regime, as did most KA members (Zait 1993: 262; Tzur 1998: 237; Near 1997: 329). This move played into the hands of Ben-Gurion, who overcame opposition in Mapai to fire KM- and KA-member officials by casting doubt on their national loyalty. He dismissed KM's Israel Galili,[8] disbanded the Palmach, sidetracked the careers of its victorious generals of the 1948 War and they left the army, forced Mapam into the opposition, encouraged a KM split and the loss of one-third of its kibbutzim and members, and disbanded the Histadrut school system that favored kibbutz life (Kafkafi 1992: 100-103; Yaar et al. 1994: 33-46). KM's Ben-Aharon summarized the failures: "There was not even one land mine that Ben-Gurion had buried for us, upon which we did not tread" (Gwirtz 2003: 217).

Tabenkin's Case: Threats to Power from Within and Without

I shall now add details that support the hypothesis that Leftism followed threats to leaders' power, starting with Tabenkin. From 1919, he was a main leader of Ahdut Haavoda/Mapai, along with Ben-Gurion and Katzenelson. In 1934-5, he led the opposition to Ben-Gurion's agreement with right-wing leader Jabotinski, until its rejection in a referendum of Histadrut members. Then Katzenelson led a campaign for kibbutz movement unification that barbed at Tabenkin: as KA leaders had rejected it, only the KM and Hever Hakvutzot were to unite; this would have undermined Tabenkin, as his supporters had only a slight majority within the KM,

while in the Hever he had no supporters (Kanari 2003: Ch. 23; Zait 1993: 44-51). Tabenkin tried uniting KM and KA, but was rejected (Tzachor 1997: 153), tried to prevent discussion of the unification at the 1936 Yagur Conference but failed, and was attacked for autocracy, promotion of loyalists, violation of egalitarianism, and nepotism, as cited. Besieged, he proposed an alternative, an "Alliance of the Kibbutz Movement", "a free… inter-kibbutz framework," but as "everyone understood why Tabenkin suddenly needed the Alliance," it was rejected (Kanari 2003: 408). He then organized the 1937 leftist cadres seminar.

Unification supporters grew stronger in 1938, opposing Tabenkin's alliance with Mapai's Faction B (*Siah Bet*), which defied Ben-Gurion-Katzenelson rule; KM delegates to Mapai's Rehovot Conference were compelled to vote for unification (Zait 1993: 89). But Leftism legitimized KM centralization and "Bolshevism" that negated the Hever's decentralization and blocked unification (Kafkafi 1992: 40). Then at the KM Naan Conference in 1939 the unification proposal achieved a small majority, but Tabenkin neutralized it by his loyalists' control of KM functions, and his threat to resign, while the opposition lacked a leader of his caliber without Livenshtein and Ostrovski (Kafkafi 1992: 33-35; Near 1992: 349-350).

Thus, Tabenkin turned left as he had been weakened by strong internal and external opposition that caused him defeats and pushed him to regain power through other means. USSR reverence deepened the rift with supporters of Ben-Gurion–Katzenelson until Mapai's split in 1942, while removing the threat to his leadership of the KM.

Yaari Threatened by Rise of Hazan, Who Opposed Leftism But Defeated

Yaari, KA leader from inception, turned left in the wake of the threat to his leadership by Hazan. Yaari as an adept ideologist but a poor organizer, appointed Hazan KA Secretary-General in 1932, to help him with organizing the fast-growing KA. However, their public image as close partners concealed "an alliance… with a permanent presence of dispute" (Tzachor 1997: 91). Yaari aspired to establish a political party, while Hazan predicted that a

party would become leftist, to attract disgruntled Mapai voters; he wanted agreement or even unification with Mapai, and harshly criticized leftist leaders Riftin and Oren who were defeated in 1933 and recanted (Zait 1933: 22-24; Tzachor 1997: 153). The two became Yaari protégés, attained KA offices as they helped his supremacy, thwarted Hazan's effort to reach an agreement with Mapai, while Yaari seemingly led the central course, between Hazan and other "rightists," and Riftin-Oren leftism (Kafkafi 1988; Tzur 1998: 189, 259). Thus, Yaari became an indispensable leader, as Ansell and Fish (1999) explained: Charisma is not necessary to keep leadership, it is sufficient that a leader is perceived essential for the movement's existence.

In 1936, Yaari advanced to having a party: KA's urban supporters established a Socialist League and the KA aligned with it. However, he also suffered a major setback as the Arab rebellion and terrorism radicalized the Yishuv and undermined the KA position of seeking a compromise with the Arabs. This especially hurt Yaari, as Hazan was more militant toward them. Hazan also benefited from helping the successful innovation of the Tower and Stockade settlement system, devised by Shlomo Gur of the KA (Interview with Gur, Tel Aviv, 1992), taunted Mapai with the bi-national state proposal of Mordechai Bentov, even though he did not believe in it, and got prestige from aligning with the Shlonsky group (Tzachor 1997: 156-162, 231; Zait 1993: 27-32). Then Yaari took the lead in rivalry with Mapai by supporting the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that it had rejected, and by defeating Hazan's opposition to this, as cited. Soon Yaari distanced himself from the leftists, calling the USSR "Machiavellian" and reinforcing a centrist position as indispensable leader, as per Ansell and Fish. He resumed Leftism in 1942 with "the forces of tomorrow" declaration, published a leftist ideological book, and defeated Hazan's opposition to establishing a party (Zait 1993: 78-79, 121-122).

Tzachor asserted (1997: 167) that Hazan quickly wrote a competing book, to maintain his stature vis-a-vis Yaari, but as he mistakenly attributed Leftism to Hazan in the 1930s (Ibid:

155), he missed the fact that Hazan in 1942-3 rushed to block Yaari's Leftism. Hazan wrote: "The shadows of USSR dictatorship are many; it imposes a heavy yoke, it maintains rule with a heavy hand" and "its rulers… are always endangered by corruption" (Zait 1993: 123, 205). His book was a failure (Tzachor 1997: 168), and along with previous defeats (Molotov-Ribbentrop, the party decision), Hazan had to join Yaari's Leftism to keep his status, as Yaari could have demoted him to a deputy. However, in the wake of the USSR's return to anti-Zionism and the Oren's show trial in Prague in 1952-3, Hazan led the suppression of leftists who justified it, and had their rank-and-file expelled from the KA, while Riftin and other leftist functionaries remained due to Yaari auspices (Kafkafi 1988; Tzachor 1997: 202-213, and below). Then Hazan favored a group of young leaders headed by Efraim Reiner who mostly renounced the USSR and were detested by Yaari, but in 1959, he submitted to Yaari and broke the group unity by planting leftists in it (Beilin 1984). Only in 1968, with his power rising, did he express regret for having given in to Yaari (Tzachor 1997: 240-243).

Unlike Tabenkin, Yaari faced no serious outside threat, but Hazan blocked his wish for a party, and when Hazan gained strength in 1937-9, Yaari defended his primacy by Leftism. In 1940, he, like Tabenkin, retreated but readopted Leftism in 1942 and repeatedly defeated Hazan. Hazan's surrendering retained his status and power to install "rightists" in KA high offices, but this assured Yaari's hegemony in their joint rule of the KA, afforded Yaari with advantages of Leftism, and neutralized opposition to Leftism, as its leader was co-opted.

Leaders' Fear of Radicals Who Could Promote Democracy and Equality

Further proof of leadership survival being the main explanation for Leftism is supplied by studying the question of why Yaari and Tabenkin did not seek popular trust by stepping-up attacks on the undemocratic control of the Histadrut by the Mapai machine of privileged bureaucracy (Shapira 1984, 1993). Why was Katzenelson's unification proposal not answered with demands for the democratization of Mapai and the Histadrut and cuts in their staff

privileges? Such demands comported with kibbutz principles and KM's alliance with Faction B that was struggling for Histadrut democracy (Zait 1992: 92-95). These demands would certainly have been rejected, as they undermined the Ben-Gurion-Katzenelson rule.

For Tabenkin, this would have been difficult, as he was a senior partner in creating this undemocratic rule (Kanari 2003: 482), while Shapira (1993: 47) asserted that Mapai co-opted the KA by granting it some top-level Histadrut offices, as well as in Zionist organizations; for instance, nominating Hazan as Director of the Jewish National Fund (Tzachor 1997: 224). The KM, as part of Mapai, also enjoyed such offices, and both KA and KM leaders traveled bi-yearly to the Zionist Congresses in Europe as a part of the Histadrut delegation: Tabenkin and Yaari from 1925, and Hazan from 1931 (Minutes of WZO Congresses, No. 14-19, 1925-1935). However, the decisive barrier against demanding democratization, was the castrated democracy of the Movements. If democracy had been made a condition for unification, Ben-Gurion and Katzenelson, with Ostrovski and Livenshtein, would have exposed Tabenkin's undemocratic rule. Yaari had no such critics, but he also knew Ben-Gurion and Katzenelson could have easily exposed KA's castrated democracy. Leftist criticism of Mapai proposed the USSR as a counter-ideal whose reality was hidden behind the "Iron Curtain," sparing Tabenkin and Yaari the opening of a Pandora's box of criticism of their own autocracies.

The Movements' castrated democracy and centralization enhanced leaders' rule, and with it their stature in Yishuv politics, while democracy might have weakened them. Moreover, new democratic practices in FOs could have failed and damaged their prestige, while if others had succeeded devising them, they might have competed for leadership. Democracy would have increased the chances of leadership succession, especially if it had included limits to the number of possible reelections (Shapira 2008: Ch. 18). In such a case, Livenshtein and Ostrovski would certainly have awaited their chance to succeed Tabenkin, and Hazan would have done likewise, not surrendering. The prime leaders opted for undemocratic rule, and

when trust in them decreased and threats to their power increased, they were compelled to act, and chose Leftism that enhanced status and power. This reason dwarfed the importance of cooptation.

Turning the Leaders into Charismatic Saviors in the 1950s

After 1948, the kibbutzim underwent a major crisis, suffered mass exit and were attacked by Ben-Gurion on lack of Zionist zeal as they did not absorb enough immigrants (Kynan 1989; Yaar et al. 1994). The crisis was explained by Israeli government taking from the kibbutzim many Zionist tasks, and by leaders' adherence to an anachronistic ideology (Near 1997; Fauker 2005). What they adhered to, though, was a Leftism that was worse than an anachronism, was a fraud. Moreover, there was no scarcity of new tasks beside immigrant absorption, such as industrialization, but they all awaited new solutions, while the leaders suppressed innovation, sticking to old ones that failed and/or induced conformism (Daniel 1975; Kafkafi 1992: 125-127; Kynan 1989; Near 1997: 245; Shapira 2008; Yaar et al. 1994).

In accord with oligarchy theory, the leaders were irreplaceable. To overcome the crisis, in 1955, they joined a government whose policies contradicted kibbutz ethos: widened social and economic gaps, repressed the Arab minority and the Eastern Jew immigrants, and curbed democracy by a Ben-Gurion personality cult and censorship, cooptation, and monopolization of mass media outlets (Caspi and Limor 1992; Shitrit 2004; Samocha 1996). For Tzachor (1997: 223) their joining signaled awakening from dreams of a revolution, but if so, why did they not renounce the USSR as had other socialists, and why did they suppress those who did renounce it (Beilin 1984; Izhar 2005)? The leaders' decisions ever since 1937-9, were barely related to revolutionary dreams, but very much to power survival. Hence, Leftism continued even when proved an unpredictable monster that caused crises and seriously hurt the two movements, and they joined an anti-kibbutz-principled government for practical gains aimed at rescuing their power base, the kibbutzim.

Their step aided kibbutzim economically, gave access to budgets, yet mass exits continued, substantiating extensive distrust of leaders (In the period 1956-1965, 12,131 more people left kibbutzim than joined; Meron 1985: 34). Moreover, according to a large body of literature which is too numerous to detail here, the kibbutzim overcame crises less due to governmental aid than thanks to innovators who filled the leadership vacuum caused by dysfunctional leaders. They adapted to economic changes by developing new export crops and industry, solved the debt crisis caused by heavy investments in innovations by a new financing system called "The Brum Club," and industrialized agriculture by setting up regional processing industry (Brum 1986; Niv and Bar-On 1992; Rosolio 1975; Rosner 1992; Shalem 2000; Shapira 1987, 2008). All through this period, the leaders just sought power retention. For instance, in the Prague trials crisis, hundreds of leftists were expelled from KA but not the functionaries who led them that were reelected to KA Executive Committee, and their leader Riftin remained a Knesset member. Members wondered: What was the point in reelecting "the entire leadership group which had been in office before the crisis, including those who instigated it?" (Tzachor 1997: 219). The point was that leftist functionaries assured Yaari's supremacy and his status as the indispensable leader (Ansell and Fish 1999; Kafkafi 1988).

Power retention was ironic: The leaders reaped the glory of successful innovations that overcame their conservatism and rescued kibbutzim, while their irrational solution, joining an anti-kibbutz-ethos government, seemingly caused success, creating an image of charismatic saviors in the eyes of many of the minority who stayed, and in researchers' eyes, as cited. Their power blocked elevation of innovators who had achieved major successes, while conformist and/or conservative autocratic managers became dominant in the field (Cohen 1978; Pe'eri 1977; Kressel 1974, 1983; Shapira 1987, 1990, 1992, 1995b), leading to the current crisis and the renouncing of the radical ethos (Shapira 2001, 2008).

Summary and Conclusions of the Kibbutz Case

The leadership factor is critical for comprehending the kibbutz, as it is for other communal societies (Brumann 2000) and radical social movements (Downton 1973; Freeman 1974; Sasson-levy 1995). Kibbutz social research has missed this factor, and historians have erred concerning it, viewing leaders as charismatic while they were transformational at first, became conservative self-servers with success, growth, and tenure, centralized control and castrated democracy, in accord with oligarchy theory. As this negated kibbutz ethos, they lost much of members' trust and weakened. Tabenkin weakened also because of the Katzenelson unification attack and problematic alignment with Faction B, which, unlike him, sought democracy in Mapai and the Histadrut, and Yaari was threatened by Hazan's ascendance. They defended leaderships by turning to USSR reverence that they had previously suppressed as it legitimized autocracy, earned them Admor-like status that made reelection superfluous, permitted sending challenging tasks to deputies, camouflaged conservatism by a radical image, diminished the significance of kibbutz problems caused by success and growth, and drew young radicals who replaced the many disenchanted who had left.

Leftism suited leaders who have entered a dysfunction phase (Hambrick and Fukutomi 1991), and who have specialized in rhetoric and politics. They chose conformism in FOs that enabled privileging loyal functionaries that enhanced power but nullified the struggle for democracy and egalitarianism in Mapai and the Histadrut. They acquiesced to similar choice by industry leaders, and marred creative solutions to problems concomitant to success and growth, as well as to FO conformism and societal changes, trying to prevent both failures that would have hurt their image, and successes by others that would have elevated competing leaders. Their survival strategy engendered major crises, and then they seemed charismatic to many of those who did not leave and to researchers, due to seemingly successful irrational joining an anti-kibbutz-principled government, while in fact they appropriated the prestige of successes of radicals who rescued the system by innovating in kibbutzim and economic FOs.

By ignoring leaders' choice of conformism in FOs and its profound impact on the kibbutz field, researchers have spared themselves conflicts with power-holders who could bar entrance and mar kibbutz study (Shapira 2005). Alas, without exposing conformism and the elite interests it served, was inexplicable its spread in the field, was missed the creation of innovative egalitarian and democratic practices by radicals in some kibbutzim that countered this spread, and was missed radicals' and talents' suppression by *rotatzia,* conservative tenured FO heads and their loyalists. This suppression and the negative effects of growing conservatism, conformism, leadership failures, and societal animosity to kibbutz advantages due to political power, engendered a terminal crisis (Shapira 2001, 2008).

Decline caused by prolonged leadership tenures and oligarchization has been a well-known phenomenon in the social sciences for a century. U.S. presidents Washington and Jefferson were aware of it a century earlier, creating the norm of a two-term presidency (Sobel 1975). It is incomprehensible how so well-known a phenomenon, which so clearly clashed with kibbutz radicalism was missed by so much research. This is explicable by a combination of lethal factors: the sociological tradition of ignoring leadership; researchers avoiding conflict with powerful leaders and accumulating academic capital by ignoring half of the field; histories and ethnographies that had exposed signs of conformist oligarchies, but did not underpin them by social science theory; and ethnographies that ignored the impact of FOs, the prime context of kibbutzim. Thus, it was missed that for some decades, federalization largely overcame prime leaders' dysfunction, enhanced innovations that diffused among kibbutzim, causing successes that enabled leading the national struggle, phenomenal growth, and then overcoming Leftism-caused crises. The above research mistakes and confused leadership literature explained why students missed both the transformational and the conservative transactional stages, as well as how Leftism camouflaged the latter stage.

Ignoring the leadership factor also marred Stryjan's seminal work (1989) that unlike others

included FOs in kibbutz analysis. He found that cooperatives fail or become capitalist firms as they succeed and grow, since with growth and success they lost creative innovation so vital to maintaining their principles; only kibbutzim retained smallness by federalization that enhanced creativity that retained their principles (Brumann 2000). However, Stryjan ignored leadership and missed the leaders' choice of conformism in FOs that enhanced conservatism, oligarchy, repression of innovators, and elevation of loyalists who furthered repression, until creative innovation vanished. Then, in accord with his theory but unlike his analysis of the kibbutz case, eventually kibbutz fate resembled prior successful cooperatives (Shapira 2008).

While anthropologists exposed local conservative and/or conformist oligarchies and their rule of kibbutzim, they missed their context: conformist FOs and autocratic heads whose patronage encouraged these oligarchies. The critical factors the anthropologists missed were the preference of loyal clients over critical thinkers and innovators in the promotion to FO offices, and *rotatzia*'s demotion and sidetracking of the latter careers while enhancing power, continuity, and promotion of FO heads and their clients. Without alluding to the impact of FOs on local leaderships, anthropologists missed a prime reason for dominance of conservatives and conformists. They also overlooked the deleterious impact of conformist FOs on democracy and egalitarianism, even when the oligarchic practices involved were literally under their noses: FO cars for the exclusive use by functionaries, parked in the kibbutzim they lived in, violating egalitarianism and elevating the prestige and power of these functionaries, many of whom became kibbutz rulers (Shapira 1978, 1990, 1992, 2001, 2008).

Political scientist Beilin (1984) explained the repression of young radical KA leaders using oligarchy theory, but historians missed his work and this theory, despite studying leaders and exposure of oligarchic practices, as they used confused leadership concepts and missed how trust in leaders eroded as their practices negated their preaching. They exposed many relevant facts, but lacking a good theory, they permitted Leftism to conceal the change from

transformational to transactional conservative leadership. Their depiction of leaders as charismatic was mistaken, Leftism was given marginal or mistaken explanations that fitted neither its timing nor many other details, the overarching interest it served was not exposed, and its continuation after 1956 was misunderstood.

General Conclusions

Leadership research is vital for understanding radical societies like kibbutz, but leaders may have the power to mislead or block researchers' intrusions necessary to expose social realities (Berger 1966: Chap. 2). Students have to suspect that leaders' power has prevented the proper exposure of reality, and caused misinterpretations due to mistakes such as those that led kibbutz research astray, and/or because a leader's protégés have successfully defended his memory as, for example, Ben-Gurion's admirers tried to do to Kafkafi's (1998) study of rival leader Lavon. Researchers must find ways to overcome such obstacles. Anthropology has the advantage of being informal, facilitating the bypass of barriers that power-holders impose, but it tends to miss the impact of context (Marx 1985), and to view cultures non-historically; thus, changes are overlooked, and with them leaders' interests they serve. Therefore, the integration of anthropology and critical sociology with historical research is necessary. This poses difficulties that derive from differences in academic background and work methods, but may succeed if one explains significant features of a field by a good theory, according to Kurt Lewin's saying that there is nothing more practical in science than a good theory. However, the good theory may be from another discipline, unknown to the anthropologist, who may miss relevant features of the culture, as he is blind to their significance, as many kibbutz ethnographers were blind to oligarchic features they have seen.

Wallerstein (2004) calls for integration of disciplines by "historical social sciences." This call accords with Hawthorn (1991), Bunzel (2004), and the kibbutz case: A history of a case exposes the possibilities among which a leader has chosen and explains his choice by

circumstances and common causes, while social science views add research-based causes, exposing other possibilities that the leader could have chosen had he sought them, and had he encouraged the creation of practices that would have made them plausible (Joas 1996). For example, kibbutz leaders could not find communes with democratic and egalitarian FOs to emulate, but as their deputies and others created one such, the Palmach with innovative practices tuned to kibbutz culture, all FOs could have been similarly shaped if the leaders had encouraged creativity. Directing research to creativity accords Whyte's (1992) idea of Social Theory for Action, which explains efforts at social change and innovation as emerging from intelligent dialogue between scientists, inventors, and leaders of changes. However, social scientists can participate intelligently in such a dialogue only if they have knowledge of the practical problems involved, but this is rare; academic knowledge tends to be irrelevant to problem-solving by leaders (Fendt et al. 2007).

Native anthropologists may have such practical knowledge, but historical knowledge is no less essential, as my experience points out. Due to a prior kibbutz managerial career, I knew kibbutz managers' problems and had fruitful dialogues with them that led to discoveries. But I have suffered from a native anthropologist's lack of reflexivity (Handelman 2006): I exposed FOs conformism (Shapira 1978, 1978/9, 1987) and its incursion into kibbutzim (Shapira 1980, 1990, 1992), but my managerial habitus caused "dampening and occluding native reflexivity" (Handelman 2006): For decades I supposed the founders of the FOs I had studied chose conformism, not suspecting they imitated veteran FOs. Only when reading histories, autobiographies, and biographies that exposed early conformist practices and which reminded me of childhood memories of them, did I realize conformism had been chosen in the 1930s-1940s. Integrating it with knowledge of concomitant Leftism, exposed that both served the same leaders' interest. Thus, it supports Wallerstein's (2004) call for historical social science, and Bunzel's (2004) call for neo-Boasian native anthropology, which sees the past as the

principal site of inquiry, grounding a comprehension of the present in the history that had led to it.

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Notes

[1] See the Kibbutz Research Institute website: http://research.haifa.ac.il/~kibbutz/main.html#teaching

[2] Tabenkin from 1923 to 1971, Yaari from 1927 to 1973-5, and Hazan from 1932 to 1984.

[3] The Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine was termed the *Yishuv*.

[4] Allon was Palmach's Chief of Staff and led major victories in the 1948 War of Independence (Shapira 2004); Ben-Aharon was a rising star among Tabenkin's deputies (Gvirtz 2003).

[5] Highest status was held by Yaari and Hazan; beneath them were cabinet ministers, then Knesset members. Avidan as one of two KA Secretaries-General, was a fourth rank official. Shenhabi and Efraim Reiner were not promoted even to this rank, as they were more radical than Avidan.

[6] Mapam party united KM's and KA's affiliated parties and Yaari was its Secretary-General.

[7] This timing also prevents explaining Leftism by the Cold War in the late 1940s.

[8] Galili headed Hagana National Headquarters, the supreme body of the *Yishuv*'s defense forces.