

However, historically, the presence of a co-operative or a collective society in the midst of a capitalist system is not unique to the European Jewish settler's experience. Historical parallels to the Kibbutz were known in mid 19th century Britain when Owen's "communistic societies" were formed.

Commenting on this phenomenon, Engels highlighted two functions he believed were crucial in the establishment of these communal societies. On the one hand, he pointed out that this arrangement was economically rewarding for both the members and the owner himself. "Owen's communism", Engels states:

[Was based upon this purely business foundation, the outcome, so to say, of commercial calculations. Thus, in 1873, Owen proposed the relief of the distress in Ireland by communist colonies, and drew up complete estimates of costs of founding them, yearly expenditure, and probable revenues.. (Engels, 1977:123)

While for the workers this arrangement secures employment and living conditions, for the owner it can also be rewarding. In light of the fact that all decisions concerning production, the realization of surplus value, supervision, management..etc., are left to the members, this organization can serve as a means for the conservation of human and capital resources. It saves the owner the costs of managing, supervising and controlling production and reproduction in his enterprise.

Described by Engels as utopian socialism, Owen's enterprises had another dimension. These societies functioned as a response to the "crying social abuses..and the loosening of all traditional moral bonds..." created by capitalism. "Owen", Engels writes, "wanted to place the people in conditions worthy of human beings, and especially