

The Masa to Poland and Kibbutz Narratives of Holocaust Memory:
A Case Study of Kibbutz Yagur
Kibbutz Yagur, Israel

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Abstract

This thesis presents a unique case study of students from Kibbutz Yagur who have participated in the masaot to Poland in recent years. The study is focused on the topic of national Holocaust commemorative narratives and practices and how they have been transmitted to and interpreted by the current generation of kibbutz youth. The study begins with a brief outline of the history of the masa to Poland from the Kibbutz Yagur Regional High School. It then continues to explore the possible ways in which kibbutz ideological principles and Zionist values have been transmitted to the current generation of kibbutznikim who choose to participate in the journey.

The study shifts to an examination of materials and methods used to facilitate pre-trip learning and discussion. The goal of this section is to discover if any underlying connections can be drawn between those materials and methods to the kibbutz ideology at large. The next section of the thesis is focused on understanding the impact the masa has on the kibbutz students' sense of identity as individuals, but also as students born and raised on the kibbutz as compared to non-kibbutz participants from the regional high school. The objective is to understand to what extent in-group "gibush" (crystallization) that may or may not already be present amongst kibbutz participants who were born and raised in an insulated environment, has impacted their unique experience as "kibbutznikim" on the trip itself. The final chapter examines the patterns of Holocaust commemoration throughout Israel's history and presents potential causes of friction within the discourse of Shoah memory narratives. It further seeks to understand if and how

kibbutz specific interpretations of the Shoah narrative are affecting the current generation of kibbutz youth.

Key Words: Shoah, Collective Memory, Zionism, Masa, Kibbutz, Gibush, Nationalism, Identity, Transformation