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# Israel's Zionist Left and "The Day of the Land"

KHALIL NAKHLEH\*

## 1. DEFINITIONS, REFERENCE GROUPS AND HISTORICAL CROUNDINGS

The Israeli Zionist Left does not exist as a clearly bounded and identifiable category; it is a label under which various groups and individuals in the Israeli political spectrum may be conveniently grouped. The best known of these bodies are: Mapam (especially its left wing), Moked, Yaad (now defunct), the Independent Liberals Party, the *New Outlook* enterprise, and the Council for Israel-Palestine Peace. Various individuals, mainly at academic institutions, may also be lumped under this category on the basis of the affinity between their views and perceptions and those of the bodies listed above.

The Zionist component of the label is not accidental; it distinguishes these groups from the non- (and anti-) Zionist Left in Israel. The latter category may include Rakah (the New Communist List), Matzpen (the Israeli Socialist Organization) and its factions (e.g., Ma'avak, Avant-Garde, etc.), at least one faction of Siah, and some individuals in various other capacities, e.g., Israel Shahak, Chairman of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights.

The Zionist Left's views and positions which will be expounded in this essay are those of Mapam, the *New Outlook* group and the Council for Israel-Palestine Peace. My judgment is that these views are comprehensive and representative of the general category of the Zionist Left in Israel. It is possible, however, to find such views on an individual basis among the various centrist parties in Israel, e.g., Mapai (Labour) and the recently established Dash (Democratic Movement for Change).

The historical development of Zionist Left (or Zionist-socialist)<sup>1</sup> views is

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<sup>1</sup> The Zionist Left, as discussed in this paper, must be distinguished from the historical Zionist socialist movement whose views were represented by Ahdut Haavoda party, and whose leaders were such men as Berl Katznelson, David Ben Gurion, and Yitzhak Ben Zvai, etc. (see Gorni, 1977: 50-70). The Zionist socialists on whom this paper focuses represented the left wing of this general movement.

grounded in the Eastern European context of socialism during the first few years of this century (see Lockman, 1976: 3-18).<sup>2</sup> Influenced by the socialist movement, some Zionist groups tried to combine their Zionism with socialism. One such group was the Marxist branch of Poale Zion (Workers of Zion), which acquired a specific organizational form at the turn of the century. They constituted one of the forerunners of the Mapam party in Israel.

A second and more influential ancestor in the formation of Mapam (especially its left wing), and the other groups under discussion, is the Zionist-socialist movement of Hashomer Hatzair (the Young Guard). Its founders immigrated to Palestine during the third aliya [wave of immigration] between 1919 and 1923. Influenced by radical and highly idealistic socialism, they embarked on establishing socialist communal settlements in Palestine during the twenties and the thirties—a period of intensive colonization (see Eisenstadt, 1967).

With the establishment of Israel in 1948, the various Zionist-socialist movements in Palestine realigned themselves to form Mapam (the United Workers Party). Mapam thus became composed of Hashomer Hatzair workers party, the left wing of Mapai (Labour), and the left Poale Zion.

Historically, then, the Zionist left movements attempted to develop a synthesis between European socialism and Zionism in the process of building a new Jewish society in Palestine. But, as it will become clear later, the actual direction espoused by these movements did not reflect their claimed ideals. It reflected, at best, a leftist tendency of a colonizing political movement, even though it might not have viewed immigration to Palestine as colonization.

It is important for our analysis at this stage to examine carefully the self-perceptions of the Zionist Left in Israel. The importance of this self-perception, as I shall argue, lies in its relation to the specific political behaviour of this group. In other words, I shall argue that their position reflects a continuation of their internal argument within the Zionist movement historically, and, contemporarily, within the Israeli party system.

The Israeli Zionist Left defines its position in reference to other groups and movements in the Israeli structure. They invest themselves with the label “left” or “doves,” as a counterpart to the “right” or the “hawks.” In their own eyes they represent the “socialist-progressive” wing of the Zionists,

<sup>2</sup> In the system of footnotes used in this article, the reader is referred to the list of works cited at the end. Thus, the present reference is to pages 3-18 of Lockman’s article of 1976.

which advocates workers' hegemony, and the brotherhood of nations, etc., as opposed to the "nationalist-chauvinist" wing of the same movement, which advocates a capitalistic Jewish state. They characterize themselves as almost militantly anti-religious as opposed to the fanaticism of religious Zionists. Pertaining to the Arab territories which were occupied in the 1967 war, they define themselves as "minimalists," i.e., opposing the total annexation of these territories, as differentiated from the "maximalists" who advocate the retention of all Arab territories.

The Zionist Left in Israel never fails to emphasize that the ideological locus of its position is Zionism. On the one hand, they use this repeatedly to deflect the attacks on them from the right, but on the other, they are prompt to differentiate themselves from the anti-Zionist socialist left. The hidden pivot in these argumentations is the interpretation of Zionism, rather than socialism. In situations where Zionism is perceived to be under attack (e.g., the UN November 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism), the Zionist Left in Israel joined other Zionist groups in reaffirming their Zionist affiliation and in attacking their critics. This reaction was clearly evident in the aftermath of the UN resolution on Zionism. *New Outlook's* editorial in the issue following that resolution stressed that the UN General Assembly had erred, and that by adopting such a resolution it rendered itself "... at best ridiculous, and at worst dangerous" (Vol. 18, No. 8, 1975).

A member of the magazine's editorial council (Nahumi, 1975:5-7) wrote another article in the same issue in which he claimed that it was "a gross fallacy" for the UN Assembly to have equated Zionism with apartheid. "The Zionist movement," he stressed, "was created to liberate Jews from persecution, oppression and humiliation, to reconstruct a full-fledged national life, and it was only natural for it to seek this aim in the country historically connected with the Jewish people..."

Being well-entrenched on the Zionist continuum, therefore, the Israeli Zionist Left embraces the sovereignty of Israel, as a Zionist state for the Jews, as well as Zionism as a Jewish national liberation movement. This, they argue, is the lowest common denominator. Anything beyond that may be negotiable.

This process of self-definition, which is done almost exclusively in reference to the Israeli structural context, and which has in part resulted in their failure to gain the support of the international left, produces peculiar behaviour on the Palestinian question. This behaviour can be characterized as contradictory, inconsistent, and, I argue here, hypocritical.

## 2. PRINCIPAL DETERMINANTS OF THEIR POSITION

The synthesis which the Zionist Left hoped to achieve between Zionism and socialism early in this century was to be articulated through the process of Jewish settlement in Palestine. This synthesis was characterized as the “integration of pioneering Zionism with revolutionary socialism, colonization with class struggle” (Merhav as quoted in Lockman, 1976:6). Thus, the issue was not the principle of Jewish settlement of Palestine, but the nature of the settlement. Even on basic tenets of Zionism, such as the “conquest of labour,” the concept of only employing Jews in Jewish economic projects and excluding Arabs, which touched the core of socialist ideology, the policy of the Zionist Left was ambiguous.

Prior to the establishment of Israel, more specifically, during the 1930's and 1940's, at the time when the Jewish population in Palestine did not exceed one third of the total population, Hashomer Hatzair advocated a policy of socialist bi-nationalism in Palestine. The major determinant of this position was the right of the Jewish people to return to their homeland and the equal right of its Arab inhabitants. The question of the sovereignty of the Palestinian people then, even though it was under British colonial and capitalistic rule, was not raised. At the time, therefore, the lowest common denominator for the precursors of the contemporary Zionist Left was *not* a Zionist state for the Jews. The preoccupation was in reconciling ideologically the waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine with the desires of the indigenous population. Since Hashomer Hatzair refused to consider limitations on Jewish immigration to Palestine, a bi-national policy became a “progressive” stand (see Isaac, 1976:39).

With the establishment of the state, for which the Zionist Left fought very hard, the idea of a socialist bi-national state was dropped. It is interesting to observe the response of the Zionist Left in Israel to the current resurrection of the bi-national concept (especially regarding the views expressed in Chomsky, 1974). The general response has been basically homogeneous: bi-nationalism was the proper solution for a specific historical period (pre-statehood); today's situation can be solved only by “confederation” between two states, Israel and an Arab-Palestinian state composed of the East and West Banks of Jordan. The main logic behind this argument rests on the assumption that Israel can never give up its sovereignty. (For a sampling of these views see S. Bari, 1969:32-37, S. Flapan, 1969 b: 49-52, and P. Merhav, 1968:43-48).

One observer (Lockman, 1976:3) interprets the “basic dilemma” of the Zionist Left in the Yishuv and in Israel as emanating from the synthesis they

attempted to achieve: "They were compelled, by the logic of their very presence and goals in Palestine, to compromise their socialist principles one by one when they came into conflict with the demands of Zionist colonization . . . ."

The Zionist, rather than the socialist, principle was the operating imperative in Hashomer Hatzair's push for Jewish immigration to Palestine. This is also true today regarding the position of the Zionist Left on the "Law of Return"; Flapan, the long-time editor of *New Outlook*, for example, has offered a peculiar interpretation of the "Law of Return." He wrote: "It is nothing more than the right of asylum for victims of persecution and discrimination, a right supported by liberals, progressives and socialists throughout the world. . . . In reality, it is a voluntary discrimination which Israeli Jews have imposed upon themselves by undertaking. . . to absorb any Jew who desires to immigrate" (1969 a, 37).

By no means is this an isolated position. It articulates with another principal determinant of the position of this camp, namely, the relationship between Zionism and Arab nationalism. Contrary to those who advocate "dezionization" of Israel, (e. g., Matzpen) the Zionist Left argues strongly against such a plan on the grounds that no inherent incompatibility exists between Zionism and Arab nationalism. They assert further that Zionism was in fact a liberating force for Palestine Arabs before as well as after the establishment of the state. Mapam provides additional evidence for this line of thought. In its so-called "Plan for Peace, 1972," it was stated: "Mapam will. . . strive to carry on the traditions of progressive Zionism which have proven that Jewish settlement. . . has. . . the power to grant Arabs as well as Jews the blessings of socio-economic progress and prosperity" (*New Outlook*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1973:78).

The exploration of the Israeli Zionist Left's stand leads us to analyse their reaction to the 1967 occupation of Arab lands, and the subsequent international recognition of the PLO. Furthermore, this analysis puts the Zionist Left's position towards the Palestinians in pre-1967 Israel into sharp relief.

The 1967 war produced three major developments which became problematic to the Zionist Left in Israel: (1) Military occupation of densely populated Arab lands, (2) Establishment of Jewish settlements on occupied Arab lands, and (3) The rise in the prestige and influence of the PLO. The response to each of these developments by the Zionist Left, I maintain, shows that their stand is only situationally and tactically "left" and ideologically "right."

To assess their position regarding the occupied territories, some members of *New Outlook's* editorial council met in September 1967. The positions which emerged from this meeting on "Peace and Security" (*New Outlook*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1968: 23-78) may be summarized as follows.

1. The June 1967 war was a defensive one for Israel.
2. A position was adopted against the annexation of the territories, but also against their return until there were assurances for secure borders and real peace.
3. The Palestine refugees should be settled in the Arab countries.
4. Annexation of the territories would create two problems: (a) the "demographic problem," and (b) a colonial image.
5. The State of Israel existed by right and should be recognized as such.
6. The only possible solution for Palestinian statehood was through the "Jordanian solution," namely, an Arab state combining the West and the East Banks of Jordan.

In the immediate years after the occupation, the Israeli Zionist Left failed not only to recognize that the Palestinian people had the right to self-determination, but they published torrential comments and editorials against the legitimacy of the PLO. Consistent with their advocacy of the so-called "Jordanian solution," and negotiations with anyone but the Palestinian leadership, well-known names in the Zionist Left camp attempted to undermine the legitimacy of Palestinian resistance organizations. Simha Flapan, for example, described Fateh as representing "... the most intransigent, reactionary and chauvinistic trend within the Palestinian people" (1969: 36). Furthermore, Flapan chastized world opinion for "developing an attitude of blind admiration for al-Fateh, and for attributing to it all the characteristics of a movement for national liberation..." (*Ibid*: 34).

Similarly, Amos Kenan (1969: 225-228), in an attempt to short circuit the PLO, called for Mapam to formulate a specific programme recognizing the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination, but not through the PLO. Three years later, Matty Peled (1972: 5) questioned, in a diatribe, the mass following of the Palestinian revolution. "What masses?" he asked, "there are none. If it had mass support perhaps the 'Palestinian revolution' would be a political movement. It has no pretensions of being one; it is a terrorist movement."

Although some within the Zionist Left camp opposed the establishment of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories from the outset, the opposition



was tactical, and not ideological. In other words, no questions were raised when it was argued that the settlements were erected for reasons of security. The present expressed position of the Zionist Left is that such settlements constitute an impediment to peace. Mapam's theoretician, Peretz Merhav, argued that "despite our full moral right to restore the Jewish settlement in Hebron... we are required to exercise *political wisdom* and to refrain from doing so at the present stage..." (1970: 43; emphasis his).

### 3. ARABS IN ISRAEL, NAZARETH ELECTIONS AND "YAWM AL-ARD"

The major non-negotiable ideological premise for the Zionist Left, as well as the Zionist Right and Centre, is the Zionist-Jewish nature of the State of Israel. In 1972, the currently most active Zionist Left spokesman, Matty Peled, declared that "we have nothing to discuss with a group [PLO] that does not explicitly accept the independent existence of the state of Israel *as the state of the Jews*" (1972: 11; emphasis added). This ideological premise became very problematic to the Zionist Left in Israel on two counts: (1) How to reconcile ideologically the presence of an Arab population which, formally at least, constituted a part of the citizenry of the state; and (2) How to interpret the relationship (of identity and a perception of political destiny) between the Arabs in Israel, whose objective Palestinian identity could not be denied, and Palestinians elsewhere, especially in the occupied areas after 1967. The pattern of the Zionist Left's reaction on these issues is very clear. It postulates with persistent explicitness that (1) The Arabs in Israel constitute a cultural minority which should be integrated fully in the state structure through equal treatment. (2) In any discussion of the general Palestinian problem, efforts are made to separate the Arabs in Israel from the Palestinian problem, and to discourage ties between them and the Palestinians in the territories, and elsewhere.

My view here is that the Zionist Left in Israel attempts to partition the Palestine question by focusing their efforts only on certain segments of the Palestinian people. At present, and in my discussions with certain well-entrenched members of this camp, the mere suggestion on my part that the Palestinian identification of the Arabs in Israel had to be considered in any discussion of a Palestinian state was rejected on the grounds that it would play into the hands of the Israeli Right. Such a suggestion, it was claimed, created unnecessary hurdles in the path to the solution of the problem. Further, it was claimed, whatever problems Arabs in Israel have can be solved within the framework of a Zionist-Jewish Israel.

Recently, David Shaham, the acting editor of *New Outlook* who was



instrumental in the formation of the now-defunct Yaad characterized this position very clearly. *New Outlook* (Vol. 19, No. 5, 1976) printed a statement by Bir Zeit University in which the University criticized the prohibition on its admission of Arab students from Israel which was imposed by Shimon Peres (the then Minister of Defence). The Minister of Defence justified his prohibition with the claim that "extreme anti-Jewish incitement [was] propagated on the Bir Zeit University campus." Commenting on the Bir Zeit statement, Shaham wrote: ". . . I have serious doubts as to the *advisability and political wisdom* of the University's 'admission policy'. . . . Unwittingly, this policy would contribute to the West Bank's integration in Israel and thereby to perpetuation of the occupation" (1976, 66; emphasis added).

I argued earlier in this paper that the Zionist Left is only tactically left, but ideologically right. This inherent contradiction cannot be demonstrated better than by examining the Zionist Left's position towards certain political developments among the Arab population in Israel. I shall show here that the Zionist Left views the Arabs in Israel as a minority occupying a certain niche defined by the Zionist Left itself. As long as the Arabs do not break away from that niche, the Zionist Left champions their cause for equal rights. It is important to keep this distinction in mind when assessing its reactions to the 1975 Nazareth elections, and the massive protest against land expropriation as manifested in "Yawm al-Ard" (the Day of the Land).

On December 9, 1975, the Arab people of Nazareth went to the polls and gave about 67 percent of their votes to a new mayor. Tawfiq Zayyad, the mayor-elect, is a Knesset member of the Rakah Communist Party and a well-known nationalist poet. Until the elections of 1975, Nazareth had a Labour Party-sponsored, unrepresentative and corrupt municipality. Thus, in terms of the nature of the municipality itself, the change of 1975 was dramatic and more responsive to the needs of the people of the city. It is necessary to mention here that the campaign period witnessed a series of flagrant threats and harassments by top officials in the government against any support for the "Democratic Front," an alliance of Rakah forces and some independents.

Any true democratic and progressive left should have been elated by the results of the Nazareth elections. But this was not the case for the Israeli Zionist Left. The outcome was characterized as "repugnant," and as a "debacle." In an article titled "The Cure for Nazareth," Matty Peled (1976: 35-38) argued implicitly that what happened in Nazareth was pathological; an abnormal development which required diagnosis and cure.<sup>3</sup> The con-

<sup>3</sup> See my response to his article in Nakhleh, 1976: 62-63.

sternation generated by the results of the elections, Peled argued, stemmed from the fact that "... the victory went to the Communist candidate of Rakah, through the support he managed to secure from the intellectual elite of Nazarene society. This open alliance between non-Communist Israeli Arabs, who have always been considered a positive and constructive element of Israeli society, and a political party that is notoriously anti-Israel in its basic attitudes, is looked upon as an indication that the Arab population of Israel is siding with Israel's enemies" (*Ibid.* : 35).

Peled bares various hidden assumptions which characterize the Zionist Left's position towards the Arabs in Israel. First, although there is no evidence that Rakah is "notoriously anti-Israel," Arab voting for this party does not fit into the paradigm as conceived by the Zionist Left. Second, what happened in Nazareth is only explained in terms of the administration's faulty tactics. Naturally, and by the momentum of their own political consciousness, this camp argues, Arabs in Israel do not vote for Rakah; they are "positive and constructive" elements in Israeli society; and they show "... a prevailing desire to integrate more fully within Israel" (*Ibid.* : 37). Third, the underlined Zionist-Jewish nature of Israel is not an impediment in the road of full integration.

Immediately after the elections, Mapam's *Al Hamishmar* (December 11, 1975) attempted, in its editorial, to offer an explanation for the election results. This paper's explanation depended on the sway Rakah's "national line" seemed to have over the Arabs, as well as the international recognition of the PLO and the "isolation of Israel." It must be repeated here that this camp, which explicitly identifies itself with socialist and progressive ideology, exhibited a noticeable anxiety in explaining the socialist progressive tendency among the Arab population.

It is apparent by now that, like other Zionist groups in Israel, the Zionist Left subscribes to the premise that the Arab population fits into a preconceived political paradigm. The broad parameters of such a paradigm are that it is a minority in a Jewish state; that its future lies in its full integration into the existent economic and political structures; that the state's laws and policies which are designed to insure Zionist hegemony, even if discriminatory, take precedence; and that, *beyond this*, it is legitimate for the Arab minority to seek equality under the law.

Israel's expropriation of Arab lands reflects the problematic nature of this paradigm. Following the Zionist tenets, Israel has systematically and callously followed an intricate and continuous process of Arab land expropriation through the promulgation of new laws, the circumvention of

existing laws, harassment and duplicity. Recognizing this naked truth, Y. Ben-Porat, a known “hawk,” wrote: “One truth is that there is no Zionism, no settlement, no Jewish state without evacuation of the Arabs and confiscation and enclosure of their land” (1972).

To protest against the essence of this process and the orders for new expropriations, the Arab population declared a general strike for March 30, 1976. In an effort to pre-empt the strike, army and border police, including armoured units, were dispatched to the most affected Arab villages. Violent confrontations ensued and left behind six Arabs killed, tens wounded, and hundreds arrested. March 30 was commemorated as “Yawm al-Ard,” or the Day of the Land.

The focus of the most recent orders for land expropriation from Arabs had been Galilee. The official rationale for the orders was explicit: demographically, Galilee is overwhelmingly Arab; the percentage of its Jewish population needs to be increased. In addition to the confiscation of Arab lands, armaments factories — in which Arabs are not employed for security reasons — would be moved to Galilee to enhance the Jewish economic base there. A Jewish state must become Jewish in all its constituent regions. Because of its goal, this new plan for expropriation became known as *Yibud Ha-Galil*, or the Judaization of Galilee.

Basically, this principle is unopposed by the Zionist Left. Mapam, for example, boasted of a stand against expropriation, and that they, as a partner in the Alignment, protested against the “unfortunate working” of the “Judaization of Galilee” plan. As a result of their protest, the official label of the plan was changed to the “development of Galilee” (*Mapam Bulletin*, No. 35, 1976). It is amply clear that Mapam’s protest was not directed against the principle of Arab expropriation in favour of Jewish settlement, and consequently, the involuntary imposition of the State’s Zionist character. There are, in fact, cases in Israel where kibbutzim of the Mapam Party have taken over land confiscated not just from Palestinian refugees living in camps beyond the borders of Israel, but from neighbouring Palestinian Arab villages, lands belonging to Palestinians who are Israeli citizens and expropriated against the will of these villagers. The case of the village of Baram in the north of Israel is the best known example. Mapam’s protest was against *portraying* the Zionist principles to the Arab population as blatantly discriminatory.

The persistent evasiveness of the issues at stake for the Arab population, which is inherent in this position, is reflected in the following comments of Mapam’s Secretary-General, Meir Talmi (*Ibid.*: 17-18):

The development and growth of cities all over the world is inevitably carried out at the expense of the surrounding settlements. When an Arab city expands within an Arab area, it is not a subject for headlines. The same is true for cities such as Hadera and Tel Aviv in Jewish regions. The growth of the Jewish suburb Upper Nazareth and the Jewish town Carmiel, within an Arab area, naturally accents the problem of the Arab minority and arouses its apprehensions. Along with the plan for developing Jewish Nazareth there should be a parallel plan for Arabic Nazareth. The plans should take into account the probable growth of both Arab and Jewish settlements in the area.

Other voices in the Zionist Left camp, who conceivably consider themselves to the left of Mapam's central current, persisted in substituting issues of strategy, timing, unintended consequences, and harm to the Jewish national interest, for ideological questions. The legitimacy of expropriating the Arabs in order to enhance Zionist hegemony was not questioned. These voices focused on the equal rate and fairness of development, as if these voices had no knowledge of the capitalistic and colonial nature of Israel's economy, and the role that this economy plays in the Arab sector. The general tone of the comments was, by and large, innocuous and placatory. Another *New Outlook* editorial (Vol. 19, No. 3, 1976) expressed the opinion that "the present policy of land expropriation be stopped, [and] that plans be drawn up for real development for all Israel's citizens. . . ."

Another voice (Harpazi, 1976: 14-16) emphasized that "the right to protest is not expropriable. . .", but without questioning the government's authority, nor whether or not it had "sufficient need of justification. . ." to expropriate Arab lands. For another commentator (Kislev, 1976: 23-32) "Jewish public interest more than that of Israeli Arabs" should be the criterion for action. Expropriations of Arab land are generating a "time bomb" which needs to be defused.

Certain voices of the Zionist Left were more adamant at justifying the expropriation orders which led to the Day of the Land prior to the actual events themselves. In an article on "Fears and Threats in Galilee," Victor Cygielman (1976: 25-26; 29) explained the political conditions which rendered expropriations in Galilee understandable. He wrote:

As always, the reasons are much more political than economic. The terrorist attacks at Maalot, Kiryat Shmoneh and other places in the Galilee have drawn general attention to the underdevelopment of the Jewish villages and towns of the region, which face the danger of depopulation. The struggles in Lebanon have added a new threat to Israel's north, and increased the feelings of insecurity. It is therefore absolutely necessary to breathe new life into what has been revealed to be Israel's weak northern regions. The weakness becomes even more evident in view of the vigorous demographic and economic growth

enjoyed by the Galilee Arab population, now numbering almost a quarter of a million, as compared with sixty thousand Jews.

Cygielman's type of explanation, of course, is commensurate with one of the basic determinants of the position of the Zionist Left, namely, that the discriminatory and oppressive practices of the Zionist state against its Arab population are a result of the dominant political conditions, and not inherent in political Zionism itself. Furthermore, this article sheds more light on my present claim regarding the tactical character of the "left" component of the Zionist Left. Otherwise, why should Mapam have given its vote to such a programme in the first place? Further yet, why should it have allowed the establishment of its own settlements on Arab lands much earlier?

#### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Zionist Left in Israel prides itself on, and loses no opportunity in emphasizing its representation of central segments in Israeli society. It does so by its unwillingness to compromise its Zionist grounding, and by affirming its ideological identification with it every time it is threatened. In the Israeli, as well as the international context, the Zionist Left becomes nothing more than a liberal reform movement whose current political behaviour is influenced by a residue of historical affiliation with socialism, rather than by socialist ideology itself. To maintain its reformist role and credibility (without much success, as shown by the 1977 elections), it follows a two-pronged pattern: on the one hand, it makes its Zionist grounding overt, and on the other, it criticizes some of the policies of the Zionist Right while attacking the so-called radical non-Zionist elements. The upshot of this stand is that it becomes ideologically Zionist, and only tactically moderate.

The difference between consciously Zionist and consciously non-Zionist groups in Israel is qualitative. My present analysis suggests that adherence to Zionism (or lack of it), rather than any claims to socialism, should constitute the principal criterion for supporters of the Palestinian cause seeking potential allies within the Israeli system. Progressive, democratic and socialist ideology is inherently incompatible with political Zionism in so far as the struggle for Palestinian rights at present is concerned.

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