

four decades of state terror, massacres, murder, displacement, annihilation, etc.

The above-mentioned socioeconomic and strategic achievements of the enemy provided the basis for important changes at the political level. Great changes took place in the political thinking, and more important changes took place in the weight of the different Israeli political forces. Although the concept of «Greater Israel» is repeatedly referred to as a practical possibility by the Zionist leaders, the first goal of further expansion remains to be the full absorption of the territories occupied in 1967. The difference between the two poles of the Israeli political spectrum - Likud and the Labor Alignment - on this point is only differing evaluations of Israeli capability to enact this absorption, its capability to convert ideology into policy and actually apply this policy. All this occurs in an internal political atmosphere which is shifting towards the extreme right, and of actual policies for gradual realization of «Greater Israel» by building formidable power and fully absorbing the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in 1967.

This leads us to comment briefly on the most salient features of the current political life in 'Israel' and their relation to the changes that have taken place in the structure of this entity:

First: Splits and mergers have been historical phenomena in the Israeli political parties. The new thing is that splits occur in the ranks of the 'left' in favor of the right, as seen in the last electoral lists for the Knesset.

Second: The game of 'doves' and 'hawks' in the Israeli parties is an old one. The new element is that key positions steadily shift to the 'hawks' at the expense of the 'doves'.

Third: Political life is increasingly concentrated in the big blocs; two of the fifteen party lists in the present Knesset occupy more than two-thirds of the seats. The situation has been almost the same since 1969.

Fourth: The settler population increasingly takes part in the elections; 80% of registered Jewish voters voted in the last elections.

Fifth: The political weight of the right has increased. In the first years after the establishment of the Israeli state, the right was weak in comparison to the Zionist 'left'. Then the gap began to diminish, reaching equilibrium, and in 1977, the right won over the 'left'. In 1984, equilibrium was restored. In spite of the present equilibrium, the trend is still in favor of the right, because there is a large reserve of right-wing parties and extremist religious groups to resort to in times of crisis, as Shamir has repeatedly threatened to do.

Sixth: The electoral weight of the non-Zionist forces among Israeli Jews is very small. In the last elections, the Communist Party (Rakah), which draws the bulk of its votes from Palestinians, got only 5,800 Jewish votes, i.e., 0.3% as against 36%, 34.7% and 1.3% for the Labor Alignment, Likud and Rabbi Kahana, respectively.

Seventh: The vote for the religious parties rose until reaching a peak in 1961; then it stabilized in the last two rounds at 11% of the Jewish vote.

Eighth: The weight of the Oriental Jews in the Knesset has steadily increased to 31 seats, as compared to eight in 1961. Two-thirds of the Oriental Jewish members of the Knesset were on the lists of the Labor Alignment or Likud, not the explicitly Oriental lists, such as Tami which got only 1.5% of the votes.

Ninth: The representation of Palestinian Arabs is weak, compared to their real numbers. They constitute 10.5% of the population but occupy only 5.8% of the Knesset seats, a percentage which had not increased since 1965.

Tenth: In the last five years, the phenomenon of the «peace camp» has emerged in 'Israel' in a noteworthy way, due to the criminal policies of the Zionist enemy in Lebanon and the occupied territories, in addition to a number of internal and external factors which cannot be discussed here. Although this phenomenon is important, it is not a decisive break with the foundation which governs Israeli policies. At least at present, it can by no means be considered a solid attitude to be depended on.

Reviewing the political life of 'Israel' shows that the changes that have occurred go parallel to a series of socioeconomic and strategic developments. Parallel changes have taken place in the demographic situation. The separate immigrant groups which constitute the population have progressively shifted away from their respective small entities to be integrated in a broader social entity. This development is due to material factors provided by the policy of controlling the social and educational gaps, etc., that separated the different groups of the Jewish population of 'Israel'.

The most significant feature of Israeli political life remains to be the expansion of the social base of the right, in contrast to that of the Zionist 'left' which kept receding. Needless to say, the terms 'right' and 'left' in Israeli politics have the same ideological content. The main difference between them concerns Israeli capacity to convert the ideological slogan into a political one, and whether to publicly proclaim their real goals. Long experience has shown how essentially identical the opposing poles in Israeli political life are in terms of the strategy and ultimate aims of the Zionist project. It has also proved that differences were confined to the immediate political framework and only concerned the means to be adopted for achieving common objectives. The typical example which proves this is that there is a consensus on the invariables of remaining opposed to Palestine - the name, the people, the cause, the revolution, the organization (the PLO), the legitimate rights, etc. This is very clear in the program of the basic Zionist parties, where Palestine appears as the total negation of the Zionist concept.

This point is even clearer in the respective foreign policies pursued by the main poles of Israeli political life against the forces of liberation, progress, peace and socialism on both the Arab and international levels. These policies are extensions of their internal policies which remain based on Zionism in theory and practice, fitting in with world imperialism in general, and the latter's most reactionary and aggressive circles in particular.

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We have presented a brief picture of the most salient tendencies and changes in the Zionist entity over the last forty years. We have tried to point out the more important ones. We by no means pretend to have covered them all. We have tried to pay special attention to the sources of strength at the disposal of this entity, since our intent is to contribute to refutation of the simplistic, superficial attitude whereby various qualities and descriptions are attributed to 'Israel' with no attempt at scientific understanding. In our view, refutation of such an attitude constitutes the first condition and the prelude to building a comprehensive Palestinian-Arab-international strategy of confrontation. ●