

Israeli Left-Right Divide Unmasked as Phony

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Avigdor Lieberman's ascent to a strategic executive role in Israel has unmasked the artificial divide between left and right and revealed the mainstream ruling elite as still in consensus on the Zionist goals, a fact that rules out any credible peace process in the foreseeable future and dooms peace and left as wishful thinking as they have been ever since the creation of the Jewish state, until a forcible outside intervention could enforce a de-Zionization of peace-making.

The line dividing Israeli right and left on the prerogatives of peace with Arabs, Palestinians inclusive, is too thin to be considered conducive to peace and as such peace-making will continue to be illusive and evasive.

The area of contention, which for too long focused on the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, has eroded after both right and left concluded that the only internationally-accepted framework to guarantee Israel's security is within the "vision" of a two-state solution; even comatose former premier Ariel Sharon and Lieberman have subscribed to the "vision," but after attaching 14-plus conditions to their subscription, which have become the Israeli official policy.

Incumbent Prime Minister Ehud Olmert recently stressed that "the basic policy guidelines of the government will not be changed" by bringing Lieberman aboard and there is nothing to refute Olmert's statement as being misleading because careful scrutiny will reveal Lieberman as a representative of the Israeli mainstream political spectrum.

The Jewish state is showing its real direction and unmasking its true identity that has been concealed since its creation with leftist posturing or by seemingly democratic wrangling between left and right.

"The most worrying thing about Lieberman is not that his ideas exist on a plane outside Israel's political continuum but that, in many ways, they are close to its dead centre... Not a single political party took to the streets to protest the very existence of a party based on a racist platform ... The political doctrine is identical, and so is the political path." (Bill Weinberg, World War 4 Report, on Wednesday, October 25, 2006)

Anti-Arab racism, for example, is currently approaching epidemic levels among Israeli Jews; "earlier this year, an opinion poll found that more than two-thirds of Israeli Jews would refuse to live in the same building as an Arab and half would not allow an Arab in their home. Among those surveyed 41% wanted entertainment facilities to be segregated, 18% said that they felt hatred when they heard Arabic spoken and 40% thought Israel should 'support the emigration of Arab citizens'," added Weinberg. Consequently it was no surprise that the Knesset resoundingly had approved Lieberman as deputy prime minister and

minister in charge of strategic affairs by 61 votes.

“Within Israel , there is nothing unprecedented about this (Lieberman’s) platform. In 1948 David Ben-Gurion, Israel ’s first prime minister, presided over the expulsion of more than 750,000 Palestinians. The country could not have been created in its current form without their enforced flight and the land seizures that followed. For this reason, denial of a Palestinian’s right of return is still seen as a litmus test in mainstream Israeli politics,” said Weinberg.

Separation from Palestinians who could not be “transferred” has become the official policy. In June of this year Ehud Olmert said in London that Europeans knew from historical memory that “territories were exchanged, that populations even moved sometimes, that territorial adjustments were made in order to create better circumstances for a peaceful solution.” Isn’t this “Liebermanism” pure and straightforward?

Lieberman’s ascent seriously raises the question of whether there is still a peace camp, be it leftist or rightist, in the Zionist state, where both Jewish left-wingers and right-wingers are still die-hardly entrenched in their Zionist Ghetto mentality to keep it a racially pure Jewish state in an international era of globalization and democratization.

The revival among Israelis of the old left-right controversies that surfaced last week are just a reflection of wrangling over power and leadership and not of real conflict over conflicting political platforms.

The common denominators that unite the Israeli ruling elites make a real left-right divide a propaganda tool to smokescreen their consensus on a racist platform. European public opinion and voters in particular had last week a very serious case to ponder: Why should Israel — who has just accommodated the symbol of her racist threat — object to the inclusion of the daughter of Lieberman’s French co-racist Jean-Marie Le Pen, Marine, in an EU 16-member delegation that was planned to visit Israel between October 28 and November 4, only days after their foreign policy chief Javier Solana met the man publicly?

In a show case of Israeli smoke-screening tactics intended to divert European attention away from Israel ’s accommodation of Lieberman , Israel ’s foreign ministry spokesman, Mark Regev, had this to say as justification: “The delegation contained a senior member (Marine Le Pen) of a political party which, unfortunately, is both racist and a Holocaust denier.”

To some fringe and marginal Israeli voices prominent European right-wingers are “lightweight” compared to Lieberman: “Lieberman, the extreme right-wing settler, and his party, are members of the dubious club of extreme right-wing parties with populist-fascist characteristics. Le Pen in France and Haider in Austria are lightweight compared to him,” Meretz parliamentary faction chairman MP Zahava Gal-On said in a published letter last week.

Israeli left-wing politics have been misleadingly linked to peace-making for too long now. “WHAT does it mean to be a left-winger in Israel these days?” The Economist asked on October 26.

The Economist has touched on an issue that has divided Palestinian leftists, let alone the mainstream nationalists, since the early days the PLO sought contacts with Israeli “leftists”

motivated by a sincere peace drive and influenced by its former world power ally, the USSR, as well as by indigenous communists and their Arab and international comrades.

Without elaboration on other important factors, renouncing Zionist colonial goals and commitment to peaceful coexistence are two major parameters to judge from a Palestinian perspective whether an Israeli is genuinely on the left or right in politics, because these two parameters could make or break peace-making.

As far as the issue is peace with Arabs the agenda of both Israeli left and right has always been that of dispossession, uprooting, colonization and expulsion. The left-led Israel 's agenda was a carbon copy of the agenda of the right-wingers in opposition and vice versa.

Israel may be said to be suffering from a chronic "Lieberman syndrome" that it has chronically failed to overcome by exaggerating its phony "left" credentials, especially among the peoples of its American and European allies.

However camouflaging its extreme right-wing policies by ultra-leftist rhetoric could not conceal its rightist agenda; Israeli left has not in fact failed but unmasked as a propaganda front for the Zionist rightist agenda which nurtured both left and right and on which peace and the peace processes have crashed and doomed to be always evasive and illusive so long as Zionism remains the terms of reference for an Israeli peace-making based on dictating a fait accompli in the name of security.

Lieberman's ascent marks a point of departure in Israel's short history when the right at last would be empowered to lead what is by virtue of logic and common sense the right's agenda, instead of leaving the mission to its political foes as has been the case since the creation of Israel until the era of "national unity" coalition governments ushered in late in the seventies of the twentieth century.

Separation from the Palestinians geographically and demographically has evolved as the common denominator uniting even the far right and far left. What differences are still there between for instance Yossi Beilin and Lieberman? Separation is promoted by Lieberman with a plan to "transfer" Israeli Arab Palestinians and by Beilin with insistence on establishing the "original transfer" in 1948 as a fait accompli that could not be rectified.

Israeli far left is posturing as if acting outside the framework of the Zionist agenda. Judging by the Geneva Accord (Initiative), the jewel of its peace efforts, which Beilin co-authored with the member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Yasser Abed Rabbo, Beilin is revealed as an ally of Lieberman by default.

His terms of reference for acceding to the creation of a Palestinian state in the territories occupied by his state in 1967 are based on Israel's security as "the priority," separation from Palestinians as land and people instead of co-existence and the exchange of territories in principle to allow the annexation of large illegal colonial settlements to Israel, especially in "Greater Jerusalem." Aren't these the same parameters of Lieberman's "racist platform"?

He even justified comatose former premier Ariel Sharon's unilateralism: "The Israeli-Palestinian border will be determined either by means of an agreement or unilaterally if the negotiations are not successful," Beilin said. (The Guardian, 6 November 2002)

Scrutiny of the far left's peace perceptions would reveal that in essence it commits to the same mainstream denominator: Separation from Palestinians both inside and outside Israel .

Co-existence with the Arab citizens of Israel remains the test that will determine the peace with their other Arab compatriots and the Jewish state has so far failed this test, downgrading their citizenship to second status and expropriating their land property to less than two percent of its area in a premeditated policy to enforce their migration and “gradual transfer.”

The best that an Israeli marginal and relatively de-Zionized far left as Gush Shalom could offer on the litmus test of peace-making, i.e. the Palestinian Right of Return, was a published “draft” proposal “for public debate” in 2001 to “recognize, in principle, the Palestinian Right of Return as an inalienable human right.”

In a globalization era it is very odd to watch Israeli leaders still determined to converge on a ghetto-styled nationalism that espouses racist and religious purity. What makes this nationalism very dangerous is turning it into a warrior’s ghetto mentality where an “army has a state,” in the words of a diplomat I met recently. The peace process has collapsed on this account and taken down with it the Israeli left and its so-called peace camp.

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