

Masar Badil: The Palestinian Liberation Struggle Movement that Dare Speak Its Name

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Now that news about [Masar Badil](#) is beginning to surface, some Palestinians and their allies may be a bit confused. How does this movement differ from initiatives out there, such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS) and the One Democratic State Campaign (ODSC), that have already achieved some traction on the international scene?

Like BDS and ODSC, **Masar Badil is a popular mass movement with supporters from diverse Palestinian viewpoints.** But there is a fundamental (not simply rhetorical) difference to approaching the Palestinian struggle among these movements. BDS is a tactic without a political program (included in Masar and expanded to up “the economic costs to the Zionist entity... to isolate it in international diplomacy and ostracize its official and semi-official academics, athletes, artists and journalists.”) And although Masar is for a single, undivided Palestine from the river to the sea, it defines itself as struggling for the liberation of all of Palestine, which is not exactly the same demand as that made by “one democratic state,” which seeks to dismantle apartheid in Israel, rather than to liberate (decolonize Palestine) and then go on from there to grapple with humanitarian and practical issues vis-a-vis Israeli Jews.

In an excellent [report](#) on the conference titled “Masar Badil Founded in Madrid, Sao Paolo and Beirut,” Blake Alcott writes:

The language used by Masar Badil is refreshing: All of Palestine is occupied, not just the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. In most contexts, the present colonialist state ruling Palestine is referred to as the Zionist entity rather than ‘Israel’. Most participants define Palestine as Arabic in linguistic, historical and cultural ways. There is no mincing of words in describing the Palestinian Authority as not only corrupt but, in terms of leading or speaking for Palestinians, illegitimate. Most participants would not limit the term settler to those in the West Bank—a view captured by a graffito of last May: “There is not a city in Israel that was not at one time Sheikh Jarrah.”

Because Masar Badil’s rhetoric derives from Marxist ideology and the revolutionary history

of the PLO in its early years (See: [The Palestinian National Charter: Resolutions of the Palestine National Council July 1-17, 1968](#)), and because the movement correctly identifies the enemies of the Palestinian revolution as Zionism, Israel, imperialism and Arab reaction, some people associate it with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), but it is not, in fact, linked to any of the existing Palestinian political blocs.

At long last, more and more people are speaking out, albeit cautiously, against Zionism, not simply as a legalized apartheid regime that has been dehumanizing Palestinians since it violently manifested itself in Palestine as a Jewish state in 1948, but crucially as a settler-colonial regime. They reject the Zionist claim (aka Israel's "narrative") to the land of Palestine as a land belonging to Jews worldwide, rather than to its indigenous population, and ally the Palestinian struggle for liberation from Zionist colonization with that of other struggles worldwide, including the struggles of the Filipino, Turtle Island, Indian and South African peoples.

Those speaking out against Zionist ideology include Jews who hark back to when a Jewish anti-Zionist movement was alive and well as expressed, for example, in the 1931 [lyrics](#): Oy Ir Narishe Tsienistn / Oh You Foolish Little Zionists / Глупые Сионисты:

You want to take us to Jerusalem
So we can die as a nation
We'd rather stay in the Diaspora
And fight for our liberation

It's worth noting that among the many organizations and activists that participated in [Masar Badil](#) conference was the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network.

[Masar Badil](#) salutes "the whole struggle of our Palestinian people in all their places of residence, and all the resistance forces in Palestine." It promotes an alternative path of revolutionary resistance meant to isolate the Zionist state.

Its rallying cries are bold, direct, straightforward and unapologetic:

Long live the struggle of our Palestinian people everywhere!

No voice is louder than the voice of the Palestinian people!

Glory to the martyrs, freedom to the prisoners!

We shall return and be victorious!

Although rooted in revolutionary political thought, Masar Badil has gone beyond generalities. In the conference that took place in Madrid, Spain; Beirut, Lebanon; and Sao Paulo, Brazil between 30 October and 2 November 2021, [Masar Badil](#)

... not only discussed the politics of Palestinian organizing and resistance but also developed a five-year plan and numerous policy proposals that lay out a distinct plan for upcoming activities. Committees focusing on organizing Palestinian students, protecting and implementing the Palestinian right to return and advancing the boycott of Israel were launched, while the conference planned to develop a network of Palestine centers in cities around the world, focusing on the needs of Palestinian refugees

alongside political organizing and education.

Masar Badil has a very sacred task, namely, to protect the Palestinian revolution at this critical time in Palestine's history, a 4,000-year long history, as historian Nur Masalha details it in his [book](#) with that title, from Late Bronze Age Egypt through the Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic empires to the modern era.

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