

Abstract

This study examines the bargaining relationship between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the colonial state of Israel, with a particular focus on the discourse of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the leftist parties therein as it is related to the negotiation process. This study deals with the decisions taken by the PLO and the concessions that have been presented in light of the negotiations process and also addresses the role of the Palestinian left in the continuation of this process in spite of the rejection of the left to the negotiation process, and their rejection to the very principal of negotiations. As a result, Palestinian left-wing parties have become fragmented and fundamentally changed their goals and priorities, and have come to work for their own interests eliding the discourse of liberation and resistance in all of its forms.

The importance of this study is that it sheds light on the discourse of the PLO and the overall concessions made by the organization in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations process since its inception. These concessions have given legitimacy to Israel, legitimacy that they have been looking for since the state's inception. Moreover, this study monitors the nature of the Palestinian political system and uncovers the process by which fateful decisions have been taken in important political moments regarding the Palestinian issue, especially where there are serious doubts about the legitimacy of those decisions. In addition, the importance of this study is reflected through investigating Palestinian leftist thought, structure, and its position and role in the overall political spectrum. Furthermore, the thesis discusses the crisis of the Palestinian left which encompasses a reflection of the global crisis and the Arab left after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp.

The importance of this thesis lies in its overall presentation of the Palestinian left – politically and ideologically. The thesis presents the Palestinian left in its entirety and its relationship to the political settlement since its inception, covering the major historical moments for the Palestinian cause as they are related to the settlement projects. It studies the opinion of the Palestinian left of in this epic moments from the phased program or project of the Palestinian Authority in 1974, to the Declaration of Independence in 1988, to the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991 and the Oslo Accords in 1993 (whether they were supportive of the process of settlement and negotiations with Israel or rejected that process). This study follows a critical approach analysis of this discourse, which formed the Palestinian Liberation Organization including the Palestinian leftist parties relationship with the idea and act of a political settlement with the settler-colonial state of the Israel.

The structure of the study is formed of five chapters as follows:

Chapter One: presents the theoretical framework of the study. The main problematic of the study is identified through a main question that revolves around the impact of the Palestinian left on the continuation of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations process. This chapter covers the previous literature and is divided into three parts: Arab-Israeli negotiations, Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, and the Palestinian left. This chapter presents the general framework of the study, which is based around a central premise that the Palestinian left has played a prominent role in the continuation of the negotiations between the PLO and the settler-colonial state of Israel.

Chapter Two: presents an overall view of the Palestinian national project and its unbalanced negotiating strategy. This chapter discusses the historical definition of Palestinian-Israeli

negotiations since the formal and informal beginnings along with the associated bilateral negotiations, multilateral negotiations. This chapter also covers the international factor in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and the role of the United States in the process. Moreover, it addresses several issues raised by the negotiations including: the right of return of refugees, settlements and security coordination between the Palestinian Authority and the settler-colonial state of Israel. This chapter presents the concessions made by the PLO in the process of negotiations, and the terms of reference of the organization in the process. As this chapter also focuses on primary stations in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations including the Oslo Accords (1993), the Camp David negotiations (2000), and the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations in 2013. This chapter provides the position of Israeli political settlement with the PLO and also presents the effects of the first and second intifadas and the changes they made in the Palestinian cause, affecting far more than the negotiations process. The chapter concludes with a general assessment of the negotiations, and the scenario that is expected after "peace" between the PLO and Israel negotiations. This chapter concludes that the elements in the Palestinian national project have dismissed a liberation strategy as a result of an unbalanced negotiating strategy.

Chapter Three: covers the crisis of the Palestinian left and the absence of an alternative discourse in the ideological left in general and the Palestinian left in particular to work towards an understanding of the dismal state of affairs of the major left parties in Palestine. This chapter examines the role of these political parties in the political and social arenas, including a reading of the discourse of revolution adopted by the parties that in word advocated for the elimination of injustice and tyranny and colonialism. Because of this liberation discourse, the Palestinian leftist has played a major role in the Palestinian arena in spite of the growing distance between word and deed over the course of the last few decades. The prominent role of the left in the Palestinian national movement and the struggle against the colonial power is embodied by the major parties in the arena: the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Palestinian People's Party. This chapter reviews the general vision of these Palestinian political parties and their general political approach and how that has changed dramatically over time. It also discusses the Palestinian crisis and the declining factors for the left forces in the Palestinian arena. This chapter concludes that there is no alternative to the Palestinian revolutionary discourse and only that can lead the Palestinian national project in spite of the demise of the parties in their on-going organizational and intellectual crisis (especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the instance of a Palestinian authority on claiming only a small part of the land of Palestine).

Chapter Four: covers the fragmented discourse and ineffective behavior of the Palestinian left with a focus on four important political stations in the history of the Palestinian cause: the phased program or project of the Palestinian Authority (1974); the Declaration of Independence (1988); the Madrid Peace Conference (1991); the Oslo agreement (1993). The chapter investigates the political behavior of the Palestinian left in every part of these four political stations including the various reactions of the Palestinian left to these stations. This chapter closely reads primary documents that are related to these political stations, especially those related to the Palestinian left, deconstructing the relevant documents in order to highlight the role of the Palestinian left in the continuation of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. Finally, this chapter discusses the attitudes and behaviors of the Palestinian left in the period following the Oslo Accords. This chapter concludes that the existence of divisions within the left are trifling and the behavior of the parties are inefficient, all of which can only prevent the much needed (re)establishment of a unified left discourse in Palestine.

Chapter Five: presents a critique of the negotiating strategy and the discourse of the Palestinian left. The chapter concludes that the crisis of the left is essentially a corruption of the leftist parties that has had more to do with money and selfish personal aims than liberation. The most important thing we have learned from this study is the disaster of political negotiations has reeked on the Palestinian cause and how the manipulation and actual abandonment of this discourse of the “left” and revolution has played a major role in the construction of this politics. In addition to presenting recommendations that can be implemented in the future or in the present, as the negotiations seem to continue between the PLO and the settler-colonial state of Israel even though they have yet to achieve any positive results for the benefit of the Palestinians, continuing to only offer concessions to the rights of the Palestinians. The chapter ends with questions raised in the Palestinian arena linked to the process of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, and reflections on the most prominent Palestinian political events.