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**The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the
Italian New Left's Magazines of the Seventies**

by Sonia Zanier

Abstract

This article identifies and discusses the representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict produced in Italy during the long 1970s by the most important organizations of the New Left that were born in the two-year period 1968-1969; the goal is analyze the diverse of points of view that have characterized the often radical and prejudiced analyzes of the extreme left, highlighting how in the mid-Seventies we can trace a break in the ways in which the New Left chose to narrate and interpret the Middle Eastern political scenario.

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Introduction

The goal of this study is to identify and discuss the representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict produced in Italy during the Seventies by the New Left.¹ The phrase refers to a set of left-wing movements, groups and political parties that developed outside of, and in opposition to, traditional parties, which they accused of ideological revisionism, political moderatism and organizational bureaucracy. The objective is to provide an interpretation that accounts for the plurality of points of view that have characterized the analyses - often radical and prejudiced - of the New Left regarding the Middle Eastern conflict, highlighting, rather than the causes of the phenomenon, the different forms of discursive production. At the same time, this investigation - which is not exhaustive and follows a path already partly explored by historians² - intends to show how in the

¹ Other labels will also be used, such as “extraparliamentary left” and “extreme left;” on the legitimacy of these expressions see: Gabriele Donato, “*La lotta è armata.*” *Estrema sinistra e violenza: gli anni dell’apprendistato 1969-1972*, (Trieste: Irsml Fvg, 2012), 16-17.

² Arturo Marzano, “Il mito della Palestina nell’immaginario della sinistra extraparlamentare italiana,” *Italia contemporanea*, 280 (2016); Arturo Marzano, Guri Schwarz, *Attentato alla sinagoga. Roma, 9 ottobre 1982. Il conflitto israelo-palestinese e l’Italia*, (Rome: Viella, 2013). There are also several studies on the positions taken by the Italian Communist Party (PCI) since 1967: Luca Riccardi, *Il “problema Israele.” Diplomazia italiana e Pci di fronte allo Stato ebraico (1948-1973)*, (Milan: Guerini, 2006); Id., *L’internazionalismo difficile. La “diplomazia” del Pci e il Medio Oriente dalla crisi petrolifera alla caduta del muro di Berlino (1973-1989)*, (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2013); Valentino Baldacci, *1967. Comunisti e socialisti di fronte alla guerra dei sei giorni. La costruzione dell’immagine dello Stato d’Israele nella Sinistra italiana*, (Florence: Aska Edizioni, 2014); Gianmarco Santese, “Il Partito comunista italiano e la questione palestinese (1945-1956): ‘L’Unità’ e ‘Rinascita’,” *Mondo contemporaneo*, 2 (2007): 63-104. Other significant studies focus on the relationship between the left, Judaism and the Jewish state: ed. Mario Toscano, *Ebraismo, sionismo e antisemitismo nella stampa socialista italiana. Dalla fine dell’Ottocento agli anni sessanta*, (Venice: Marsilio, 2007); eds. Marcella Simoni, Arturo Marzano, “*Roma e Gerusalemme.*” *Israele nelle vita politica e culturale italiana (1949-2009)*, (Genova: ECIG, 2010); Matteo Di Figlia, *Israele e la sinistra. Gli ebrei nel dibattito pubblico italiano dal 1945 a oggi*, (Rome: Donzelli, 2012). The recent volume edited by Mario Toscano, *L’Italia racconta Israele, 1948-2018*, (Rome: Viella, 2018) also deserves to be mentioned; it offers an analysis of the evolution of the representation of the Jewish state by Italian culture, society and politics in the last seventy years. It must also be considered that the interconnected and partially overlapping issues of Left wing anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism have been the object of ample discussions by international historiography. Those contributions rarely even mention the Italian case. For the French case see Marcel Dreyfus, *L’Antisémitisme à gauche. Histoire d’un paradoxe, de 1830 à nos jours*, (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2009); for the German scenario cfr. Jeffrey Herf, *Undeclared Wars with Israel: East Germany and the West German Far Left, 1967-1989* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016). Attempts at offering a broad transnational framework, encompassing recent phenomena within a larger history, have been offered by the

middle of that decade we can notice a break in the way in which the extreme left decided to tell and interpret events in the Middle East. Finally, we will try to pin down those analyses that took form in the Seventies and still represent an element of political identification for that part of the left that is ideologically critical of Israel.

Chronologically, this article focuses on the period 1968-1981, a choice that reflects the peculiar Italian political context. This time frame is delimited on one side by the youth protests of 1968 and the birth of numerous New Left groups. On the other hand we have the conclusion – in 1979 – of the national solidarity experience, during which the Italian Communist Party had offered its external support to the Government lead by the Christian-Democrats; the development of a five-party neo-centrist alliance (1981); and finally the evident decline [*riflusso*] experienced by extreme left groups and movements.³ The choice of defining the Seventies as the period between 1968 and 1981, however, also finds external motivations, that are linked to the Middle Eastern context. The West “discovered” the Palestinian armed struggle with the battle of Karameh in 1968⁴. Instead 1981⁵ was the calmest year along the border between Israel and Lebanon, an area from which the largest number of terrorist actions had been launched by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Shortly thereafter, in June 1982, the operation “Peace in Galilee” was launched, that was a watershed event in the relations between Israel and the West, and it greatly influenced the attitudes of the Italian Left.⁶

late Robert Wistrich; see at least Id., *A Lethal Obsession. Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, (New York: Random House, 2010).

³ On the years 1968-1969 see: Nicola Gallerano, “Il Sessantotto e la politica,” in *Il '68: l'evento e la storia*, ed. Pier Paolo Poggio, (Brescia: Annali della Fondazione Micheletti 1990); on the intermediate nature of the two-year period 1979-1981 see: Roberto Bellofiore, “I lunghi anni settanta. Crisi sociale e integrazione economica internazionale,” in *Le radici della crisi. L'Italia tra gli anni sessanta e settanta*, ed. Luca Baldissara (Rome: Carocci, 2001), 101.

⁴ The battle of Karameh, between Palestinian armed groups and the Israeli army, though not very important from a military point of view, became a crucial point in the history of the Palestinian movement. Xavier Baron, *I Palestinesi. Genesi di una nazione*, (Milan: Baldini & Castoldi, 2002), 655-9.

⁵ Marzano, “Il mito della Palestina,” 16.

⁶ During the Second invasion of Lebanon there was a wide mobilization in defense of the Palestinian cause, as well as a widespread anti-Zionist hostility that took over even moderate public opinion and sometimes gave expression to petty anti-Semitism. The reader is referred to: Marzano, Schwarz, *Attentato alla sinagoga*; Marianna Scherini, “L'immagine di Israele nella stampa quotidiana italiana. La guerra del Libano (settembre 1982),” in “*Roma e Gerusalemme*,” 177-99; ed. Adriana Goldstaub, *La guerra nel Libano e l'opinione pubblica italiana*, (Milano: CDEC, 1983); Enzo Campelli, Roberta Cipollini, *Contro il seme di Abramo. Indagine sull'antisemitismo a Roma*, (Milan: Angeli, 1984).

In this work we have examined the periodicals published by the most important organizations - in terms of both the distribution on national territory and number of members - of the extra-parliamentary left that emerged in the two-year period 1968-1969, i.e. *Servire il popolo* of the *Unione dei Comunisti Italiani, marxisti-leninisti - UCI* [Union of Italian Communists, Marxist-Leninists];⁷ *Avanguardia Operaia*, *Quaderni di Avanguardia Operaia* and the *Quotidiano dei lavoratori* connected to the *Autonomia Operaia - AO* movement [Worker's Autonomy];⁸ *Lotta Continua - LC* and *Potere Operaio - PO* of the respective and homonymous organizations;⁹ and finally the daily *il manifesto*, produced by a group of radical communist intellectuals that had left the PCI [Italian Communist Party] after Pietro Ingrao's defeat at the 11th Party Congress in 1966.¹⁰

The First Half of the Seventies

Although the various groups, and related periodicals, of the New Left had very different political perspectives, in the case of the Middle Eastern conflict there was a repertoire of positions common to all groups and movements, and only partly subject to different interpretative nuances. The central element of this "substratum" of echoes and shared themes was anti-imperialism:¹¹ the Arab-Israeli conflict was interpreted as a battle between imperialism and anti-imperialism; the former was represented by the two superpowers, and America's ally Israel, the second was the expression of revolutionary forces, especially the 'Resistance' and the Palestinian proletariat.

The paradigm of the anti-imperialist struggle imposed an extremely schematic understanding of the reality and international role of Israel: the Jewish state was,

⁷ On the UCI see Dolores Negrello, *A pugno chiuso. Il partito comunista padovano dal biennio rosso alla stagione dei movimenti*, (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2000), 171-3.

⁸ On AO see Angelo Ventrone, *Vogliamo tutto. Perché due generazioni hanno creduto nella rivoluzione 1960-1988*, (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2012).

⁹ On LC the reader is referred to Luigi Bobbio, *Storia di Lotta continua*, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1988); on PO Aldo Grandi, *La generazione degli anni perduti: storie di Potere Operaio*, (Turin: Einaudi, 2003).

¹⁰ On the history of the group of *il manifesto* see: Aldo Garzia, *Da Natta a Natta. Storia del Manifesto e del Pdup*, (Bari: Dedalo, 1985).

¹¹ Marzano, "Il mito della Palestina," 16.

according to the most common definition, the “bridgehead”¹² of the US superpower, a “puppet” state,¹³ forced by its very nature to play the role of the “watchdog”¹⁴ in the strategic Middle Eastern region. Thus it was a capitalist, sub-imperialist, racist, fascist country, whose artificial birth and existence could only be supported by a war-mongering and oppressive rhetoric.

The statements on the “unnatural” nature of Israel were closely linked to the debate on Zionism. All the periodicals studied here held that Zionism was a racist ideology, a clear manifestation of European colonialism and nationalism, guilty of the Arabs’ expulsion from their lands. The Zionists were considered guilty of the expulsion of the Palestinians, as well as of practicing or defending Israel’s imperialist policy in the Middle East. In that context, the word “Zionism” collected in a single definition the characteristics that made Israel a sub-imperialist state - hence capitalist, racist, fascist, war-mongering - or was synonymous with one of them.

During the early Seventies the New Left was then monopolized by a marked and polarized revolutionary rhetoric aimed at extolling a process that was expected to spread in the Middle East through its struggle against a single - and triple - enemy: “imperialism, Zionism and Arab reactionary forces.”¹⁵

This last label referred to those oppressive Arab regimes that were bound to stand against the Arab masses in order to protect their own interests, thus hindering the revolutionary and national liberation processes. The periodicals taken into consideration, however, tended to incorporate in this “sphere of evil” not only those Arab states they considered “feudal remnants,” such as Hashemite Jordan, but also those governments that were the expression of the “progressive” bourgeoisie, which were also considered an obstacle to the revolutionary struggles for the emancipation of peoples. On the contrary, such regimes were valued by the PCI as anti-imperialist engines. The judgment on the various Third World governments did not depend, in fact, on whether they belonged to the Soviet sphere - which in their view also had an imperialist character, complementary to that of the United States - or to a non-aligned position, which they often viewed as sterile. The main difference was found in the ability to adopt a revolutionary Marxist strategy that could take into consideration and

¹² “La difficile resistenza dei compagni palestinesi,” *Avanguardia Operaia*, March 25, 1972, “Dalla lotta nazionale palestinese verso la guerra di classe per il socialismo nel mondo arabo in un processo di rivoluzione ininterrotta,” *Quaderni di Avanguardia Operaia*, 1970.

¹³ “Vittoria dei palestinesi,” *Servire il Popolo*, October 3, 1970.

¹⁴ “Aggressione USA,” *Servire il Popolo*, September 26, 1970.

¹⁵ “Libano: dalla reazione nazionale alla nazione araba,” *Potere Operaio*, October 30, 1969.

implement the armed struggle. Hence the condemnation of Nasser's regime in Egypt, even if he was the leader of the Arab Socialist Union, hence the sometimes marked hostility against Yasser Arafat. Although the condemnation of the leader of *Al Fatah* was not constant throughout the Seventies, nor was it so clear-cut for all the organizations of the extreme left, most of them decided to support more markedly Marxist groups, such as the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) and the PDFLP (Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine).

“Palestinian resistance” and “proletarian revolution”

The “Palestinian resistance movement” was inserted by the New Left into an interpretative paradigm that tended to compare situations that were geographically, politically and socially very distant, but were thought to share the evident emergence of an imperialist and fascist oppression; different international events also acquired significance because, according to the groups to the left of the PCI, there was a link and profound affinity between anti-imperialist struggles in the Third World and the class struggle against factory owners in the West. Support for the struggles in the Third World was accompanied by a strong identification with them. Guevara's watchwords “Create 2, 3, many Vietnams”¹⁶ were the guiding principle of the different groups of the New Left. In March 1971 *Potere Operaio*, in an article titled “We, the vietcong,” repeated how, despite the laxity of the Communist Party, the revolution could be carried out in Italy as well

Italy is today at an extremely weak point [...] there are all the objective conditions, and a part of the subjective ones, for the opening, here and today, of the revolutionary process. The facts speak clearly. And the facts tell us that today Italy is already our Vietnam.¹⁷

The reference to Vietnam was certainly not casual; as pointed out by Peppino Ortoleva, the struggle of the Vietnamese people became for the extreme left a moral example that transcended national, historical and geographical reality,¹⁸ a prototype for the daily battles at the university, in the factory or in the Country at large. The conflict in Indochina became the yardstick used to measure other conflicts: a concrete example through which to evaluate other liberation

¹⁶ “Creare 2, 3, molti Vietnam,” *Lotta Continua*, October 1, 1970.

¹⁷ “Noi, i vietcong,” *Potere Operaio*, March 5-19, 1971.

¹⁸ Peppino Ortoleva, *Saggio sui movimenti del 1968 in Europa e in America*, (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1988), 50-2.

movements and their strategies, from different African contexts, to the *foquista* or the Tupamaros' guerilla in South America, to the urban guerilla in Ireland, to that of the Palestinian *fedayeen*.

Arturo Marzano has pointed out that as early as 1968-1969, with the "discovery" of the Palestinian struggle, began the "journey that saw Palestine progressively become the new Vietnam" in the eyes of the leftist militants.¹⁹ The parallelism arose from explicit comparisons, from the use of a similar language to describe the two different scenarios, and from analogous iconographic depictions of the protagonists. Vietcong and *fedayeen* were portrayed in cartoons, drawings and photographs as guerrilla fighters, each with their own typical headgear and holding the Kalashnikov, the weapon *par excellence* of Third World liberation struggles. Of course, this analogy did not exclude others, but gradually, thanks also to the image that the Palestinians themselves gave of their own struggle,²⁰ it certainly became a privileged symmetry. In September 1972 *Lotta Continua* inserted this parallelism in the exaltation of the heroic popular struggle that the Palestinians had been able to oppose to the Israeli army:

The struggle of Palestinian guerrilla fighters has included men, women and even children from refugee camps, who often attack their exterminators with bare hands, stones, sticks. In the history book of this area tormented by imperialism, therefore, a new page of heroism and irreducible struggle for the life of a people has been inserted in front of that of the Israeli infamy, a page that for the proletarians and the oppressed of the world, next to Vietnam, is the symbol of a historical certainty: the will of liberation.²¹

The rhetoric of the people's war assisted by an elite was in some ways similar to the one that at the beginning of the Seventies still dominated the narrative on the Italian anti-fascist Resistance. In fact, the New Left often interpreted its own battles and contemporary national liberation movements through the filter of

¹⁹ Marzano, "Il mito della Palestina," 25.

²⁰ It was the Palestinians themselves that promoted the comparison with the Vietcong. The symmetry between the Middle Eastern and the Vietnamese scenario came to Italy from the Arab world, favored by the presence on the Italian territory of Palestinian organizations, especially the students' organization, and in close relationship with movements and groups of the New Left. On the image promoted by the "Palestinian Resistance" see T. Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). On the activity of Palestinian students in Italy and in particular on the General Union of Palestinian Students (Gups), see Marzano, "Il mito della Palestina," 25.

²¹ "Il terrorismo israeliano e l'eroismo palestinese," *Lotta Continua*, September 19, 1972.

the memory of the Resistance: the partisan war against Nazi-fascism became a fundamental symbolic and historical reference point that provided legitimacy to its own anti-authoritarian action and to that of resistance movements in other countries. The struggles against foreign armies or despotic regimes were often interpreted as specific stages of a single great international emancipation movement that was conceived as the logical prosecution of the anti-fascist struggle of the 1940s.

Around these interpretative keys an ideological imaginary was established: the Vietcong and the *fedayeen* could be portrayed as the Italian partisans of 1943-45, the United States' intervention in Vietnam and the Israeli policies in the Middle East could be conceived as similar to Nazi expansionism during the Second World War, and very different struggles could be unified under the common category of "resistance." This mixture of themes and identities emerges clearly from this passage taken from *Lotta Continua*, describing the Palestinian response to Israeli attacks in Lebanon in the aftermath of the massacre of eleven Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in Munich:

The Israeli aggression against Lebanon has been carried out with the classic methods of Hitler's invasions: destruction and killing of all that is encountered during the advance. [...] Hundreds of houses have been blown up, often with the families inside; whole villages have been burnt and razed to the ground; dozens of people have been shot; refugee camps have been bombed with napalm, burning old people, women, children. [...] They have destroyed the poor tents of those refugees who in their lives had to suffer three times (in '48, '56 and '67) the ferocity of the Zionist genocide and the tragedy of the escape, of the loss of everything, of the loss of family members. It has not yet been possible to make an exact calculation of the civilian victims of this Nazi enterprise. [...] Another element of the invasion [...] is the heroism of the Palestinian *fedayeen* who have opposed the advance of the fascist army step by step, fighting with the force of justice and despair, inflicting heavy losses on the aggressor, which the Tel Aviv liars will never admit. The cornerstone of the resistance has come from the Kalashnikovs of the *fedayeen*, firing from windows, doors, roofs, bushes, caves, hills; from their bazookas; from their mines.²²

²² "Il terrorismo israeliano e l'eroismo palestinese." The passage is also quoted in Marzano, Schwarz, *Attentato alla sinagoga*, 82.

If the *fedayeen* were the new partisans and their struggle promoted a people's war of liberation, then the Zionists, just like the Americans in Vietnam, were the new Nazis. This parallelism often showed up in simple labels - the "Nazi retaliation in Israel,"²³ "Dayan's SS,"²⁴ "Israel's Hitlerian blitz"²⁵ - but sometimes it lingered on in more detailed accounts, where the comparison between Zionist and Nazi violence was spelled out. Among the numerous examples of this discursive rhetoric, perhaps the most complete and radical was produced by *Servire il popolo* after the Munich terror attack and the Israeli government's decision to strike some PLO bases in Lebanon:

The school from which Dayan, Golda Meir, and the other Zionists come - stated the Maoist periodical - has a name: Nazi-fascism. The practice of the SS was: 10 Italians for every fallen German. At Marzabotto, at the Fosse Ardeatine, the SS slaughtered defenseless and innocent civilians as "retaliation." To avenge the eleven Israeli athletes that he himself has killed in Munich, he has ordered a "retaliation" against hundreds of unarmed civilians. The Zionists have surpassed the master: they are now at the level of Nixon, their arms supplier. Hitler practiced the doctrine of the extermination of the nations that were considered inferior. Dayan and Golda Meir are anxious to apply the solution of collective extermination to the two and a half million Palestinian Arabs. When the SS could not find the partisans, they killed the women at the front door. The Israelis, who cannot find the *fedayeen*, bomb the villages with napalm, with women and children inside. [...] Dayan and the Zionists accuse the Arab terrorists, complain of being oppressed and defenseless. But they are the only terrorists, with the support of US imperialism.²⁶

Among the organizations studied here it was the *Unione dei Comunisti Italiani* that fully married the Palestinian cause, presenting the armed struggle of the *fedayeen* through a grandiose narrative, devoid of any concern for the most radical war conduct. The other organizations of the New Left never went as far as to grant an unconditional support for the Palestinian resistance: *Avanguardia Operaia* supported fully only the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by Nayef Hawatmeh, insisting on the need for the "Resistance" to involve the masses towards a proletarian revolution of the whole Middle East;

²³ "Centinaia le vittime della rappresaglia nazista in Israele," *Lotta Continua*, September 12, 1972.

²⁴ "Le SS di Dayan sbarcano nella notte a Beirut. Dirigenti palestinesi assassinati nelle loro case sotto gli occhi dei familiari," *il manifesto*, April 11, 1973.

²⁵ "Rivoluzione e controrivoluzione in Medio Oriente," *Il Giornale di Avanguardia Operaia*, September-October, 1972.

²⁶ "Le bombe di Dayan fanno centinaia di vittime," *Servire il Popolo*, September 16, 1972.

Potere Operaio relied almost exclusively on this perspective, and criticized the bourgeois character of Al Fatah, but also the unpreparedness of the various Fronts; *Lotta Continua* also considered Arafat excessively inclined towards “solutions of compromise and renunciation,”²⁷ and it wondered about the inability of the resistance’s vanguard to involve the masses; the group of *il manifesto*, which did not refuse *a priori* to support *Al Fatah*, but it also noted the limits and the unpreparedness of a ‘Resistance’ that often appeared immature.

The most important factor that prevented the New Left from supporting without hesitation the armed Palestinian struggle was represented by the terrorist acts that had repeatedly hit representatives of the Jewish state in Europe since 1968. Palestinian terrorism constituted one of the most difficult and ambiguous terrains that the new organizations to the left of the PCI had to face regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Terrorism was often judged counterproductive, the result of the exasperation and inexperience of the various armed organizations, far removed from what was instead supposed to be the only and definitive struggle: popular struggle on Middle Eastern land.²⁸ However, these assessments did not tackle the problem of revolutionary violence, which instead found full legitimacy even in the Middle East. Both in the Third World and in the West, “violence [was believed to be] indispensable to regain that humanity that the oppressors had taken from the oppressed; in fact, the oppressed could be freed only in and through violence.”²⁹ The New Left’s

²⁷ “Nixon boia: ti aspettiamo alle presse,” *Lotta Continua*, October 1, 1970.

²⁸ The debate became fierce in 1972, when two Palestinian terrorist attacks took place within a few months, which made a deep impression on international public opinion and prompted extensive coverage in the press (on May 29, three members of the Japanese Red Army recruited by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine attacked the Lod airport of Tel Aviv, killing 26 people; a few months later, during the Munich Olympics, a Black September organization’s commando kidnapped eleven Israeli athletes and, after twenty hours of negotiations, the action concluded tragically at the airport of Fürstenfeldbruck with the death of all the hostages). While the attack in Tel Aviv was criticized as reckless and the result of the desperation of the Palestinian armed organizations, concerning Munich the positions were more nuanced: with the exception of *Lotta Continua*, in fact, according to which terrorism did not have legitimacy neither in Tel Aviv nor in Munich, as it was indistinctly deemed as counterproductive and the fruit of the critical situation in which the Resistance found itself, the other periodicals provided evaluations that made the responsibility of the kidnapping’s tragic conclusion fall on the Western powers, underlining how the attack had the primary objective of obtaining the release of Palestinian fighters and not the indiscriminate slaughter of the athletes. “Una guerra terribile,” *il manifesto*, November 6, 1972; “I disperati, i cinici, gli ipocriti,” *il manifesto*, September 7, 1972; “Strage all’aeroporto,” *Lotta Continua*, June 1, 1972; “Sul “terrorismo,” *Lotta Continua*, June 3, 1972; “Una strage voluta da Brandt e Dayan,” *Servire il Popolo*, September 9, 1972.

²⁹ Ventrone, *Vogliamo tutto*, 93.

Third-Worldism, in fact, did not extol the supposedly uncontaminated innocence of the oppressed in contrast with the violence of a colonizing West. Rather, the attention for Third World struggles was fueled in the first place by the energy that that area of the world seemed to emanate in the eyes of the extreme left. In those armed liberation struggles many militants thought they recognized the impulse for their own battles in the West:

Doing a wildcat strike - said *Lotta Continua* - is not like shooting. It is still much, much less. But the proletariat is the same everywhere: it has no country, it has no land, it has nothing [...]. We have learned a new word: *fedayeen*. We like the one we learned ten years ago: vietcong. We know that if we produce less, the *fedayeen* will be able to shoot more and more. We know that they will be able to shoot less if we produce more (as the masters want). We want the *fedayeen* to shoot more. We want to produce less. It's the way we get to shoot sooner with them, too.³⁰

Leaving aside the different opinions on Palestinian revolutionary violence, what all the periodicals shared was the accusation directed at Israel of being the one responsible, with its “dangerous terrorism, more serious, more cynical and less desperate,”³¹ of the inevitable Palestinian reaction. If the *fedayeen's* terrorist actions could appear inconsiderate to some, and the result of the exasperation induced by the Israelis, the violence perpetrated by the latter remained in any case unequalled.

Potere Operaio was among the few periodicals that avoided the discussion on Palestinian terrorism. In general, the periodical dealt less with Middle Eastern and foreign matters than the others studied here; PO was above all a place for debate and reflection on internal dynamics, especially the unity and prospects of the workers' struggle.³² However, the periodical of Toni Negri and Franco Piperno's organization differed from other newspapers of the New Left also because it looked at the Middle Eastern conflict from a peculiar perspective. The emphasis was placed almost exclusively on the so-called proletarian revolution, that is, on that revolutionary process that should have involved Arabs and Jews

³⁰ “Nixon boia: ti aspettiamo alle presse.”

³¹ “Terrorismo di stato,” *il manifesto*, February 22, 1973.

³² As Angelo Ventura points out, *Potere Operaio* also placed itself in the international revolutionary movement, but entrusted the hegemonic role in the struggle to the working class of industrialized countries (A. Ventura, *Per una storia del terrorismo italiano*, (Rome: Donzelli, 2010) 47-50). The periodical used the term “Third-Worldism” with a contemptuous connotation: Third World approaches were judged as opportunist because they were unable to recognize the potential of the revolutionary struggle in developed countries.

united together towards the socialist future in the Middle East. The magazine believed that “the relationship between the Palestinian revolution and the Arab revolution” should be reversed:

And to reverse it – said an article of 1971 - [...] means [...] to subordinate the Palestinian organizations’ choices to the revolution of the Arab world and in Israel, it means the full support for the workers’ struggles, not only in Israel, but also in Egypt, and not only in Egypt and Jordan, but also among the Arab proletarians living in the area occupied by Israel, and among the Palestinians dispersed to work in the Arab countries.³³

Within the diversified Marxist galaxy there were therefore at least two diverging perspectives concerning the way the anti-imperialist struggle was supposed to progress. On the one hand that of *Servire il Popolo*, for example, but also of the Communist Party. They insisted above all on the armed struggle of the vanguard of the Palestinian resistance and the Arab peoples against the imperialist pillar represented by Israel. On the other hand there was the line supported by *Potere Operaio*, according to which the main struggle that should have developed in the Middle East was the one that should see the united proletariat, both Arab and Jewish, fighting against the dominant bourgeoisie.³⁴ An approach of this kind, based on the primacy of the class struggle, involved two further considerations. In the first place, it underlined the existence of a Jewish proletariat, which was also seen as a possible revolutionary agent. This in itself constituted a brake on the possible transfer of negative judgments from the “Zionist” (imperialist, racist and war-mongering) to the “Israeli” and to the “Jew” in general. In that framework Israel became a State like all the others, and the criticism against it was placed within the more generic condemnation of the imperialist bourgeois elements. Secondly, such a position did not consider “the privilege of the ‘national’ aspects of the Palestinian cause” as insurmountable.³⁵ In this sense, there prevailed a clear rejection of all nationalisms, including the Palestinian one. It could be sacrificed in the name of the clash with the bourgeoisie.

³³ “Contro ‘l’unità nell’interesse nazionale’, offensiva di classe e lotta armata rivoluzionaria,” *Potere Operaio*, September 25, 1971.

³⁴ Halfway between these positions were *Lotta Continua*, *Avanguardia Operaia* and *il manifesto*, which saw in some components of the “Resistance” a possible revolutionary engine of the Arab masses, while considering the socialist revolution of the proletariat as the ultimate goal. The crucial factor for these groups was the trust in the resistance movement: the less they thought that it was an autonomous force, capable of not sheltering itself in terrorist actions far from Middle Eastern soil, the more they believed that the only solution to imperialist oppression passed through an immediate struggle of the united proletariat.

³⁵ “Contro ‘l’unità nell’interesse nazionale’, offensiva di classe e lotta armata rivoluzionaria.”

To these two perspectives were also linked two different considerations on how the Jewish state should have changed, and into what. For those who emphasized the proletarian struggle, the first objective was the revolution, a situation that was hoped for and considered possible, but which was not investigated in its subsequent developments (Israel was to be overcome as a state). For those who accepted Palestinian nationalism and placed themselves within an anti-imperialist logic, the privileged solution remained the so-called “democratic Palestine,” i.e. an a-confessional and ethnically diverse Palestine in which Jews and Arabs could live peacefully outside the Zionist theocratic bond (in other words, Israel had to be overcome as a Zionist state).

The Second Half of the Seventies

Starting from 1974-1975, but more clearly from the following two years, there is a change in the modalities and themes with which the periodicals relate to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Jewish state. The discussion on Middle Eastern events began to focus more on Israel and on the issue of the occupation, compared to the preponderant application of the anti-imperialist paradigm and the almost exclusive focus on “liberation” at the hands of the “Palestinian Resistance,” which had dominated the New Left’s rhetoric after ‘68. After the Yom Kippur War, a new rhetoric began to take form, it was largely structured around the constant confrontation between Israel’s arrogance, violence, intolerance and the suffering of Palestinians, not just armed “partisan” guerrilla fighters but also children, women, old men.

The first evident change consisted in the gradual loss of hegemony, within the New Left’s narrative, of the “Palestinian Resistance.” The paradigm that made the new partisan out of the *fedayeen* never completely disappeared; however, in the second half of the decade the primary objective became the immediate pacification of the Middle East and the diplomatic resolution of the dispute through explicit support for the proposals brought forward by Arafat’s PLO. The latter became the point of reference for those organizations of the New Left who had shown in the early Seventies a certain hostility towards him.

This tendency to applaud diplomatic negotiations was linked to a re-evaluation of the role of the United Nations, a favorite venue in which the PLO - *Lotta*

Continua said - was implementing a real “diplomatic escalation.”³⁶ This forum became the main stage for the claims with which the New Left accused the Jewish state: it was according to UN resolutions, and in particular to that of November 1967, that Israel was accused of extremism and aggression; and it was a United Nations resolution of 1975 that had internationally ratified the equation between Zionism and racism, a favorite argument of the New Left as well.

At the center of the New Left’s discourse were the sufferings and abuses suffered by the Palestinians; the photographs of the armed *fedayeen* were accompanied by those from the refugee camps and above all, inside these, Palestinian children. There were numerous in-depth analyses, reports on the conditions of the Arabs residing inside and outside Israel, and the occupation became one of the main stories on the international pages. Israel - explained *il manifesto* in September 1978 - boasted that it was “a strong, modern country, without contradictions,”³⁷ but was actually pervaded by the latter and the occupation was its clearest sign. The Jewish state seemed to have two faces, an external facade, cloaked in democracy and free elections, and another, that of the “napalm bombings against refugee villages” and the “Arab hunting systematically carried out in the occupied areas with violence and terrorism.”³⁸

Terrorism, racism, military expansionism, the identification of an internal and external enemy, were seen as indispensable unifying factors for a society that was actually disrupted, and – it was believed – was about to implode because of its social, ethnic and economic contradictions. One of the most frequently underlined aspects was the belief that Israeli society, politics and the state itself were being traversed by a constant state of neurosis; an irrational, pervasive component of the whole of Israeli society, which contrasted in a complementary way to the ruthless lucidity, the coldness with which military operations and punitive reprisals were carried out, and to the cunning way in which Israel played for time, waiting for a collapse in diplomatic initiatives. Too easy - claimed *Lotta Continua* – “to explain the hysterical reactions of Zionist leaders with the ancestral fears of the Jews, with the ‘Samson complex’, or with the mania of

³⁶ “L’ONU per l’autodeterminazione del popolo palestinese,” *Lotta Continua*, November 23, 1974.

³⁷ Lucia Annunziata, “Il volto di Israele che preoccupa,” *il manifesto*, September 5, 1978.

³⁸ Silverio Corvisieri, “Razzismo, Onu e antisemitismo,” *Quotidiano dei lavoratori*, November 13, 1975. The comparison between Zionist and Nazi violence continued to be used. The *Quotidiano dei lavoratori*, in particular, used the category of Nazi-Zionist, introducing next to it another comparison that would become widespread on the left between the Seventies and eighties: that with South African apartheid.

persecution.”³⁹ In fact, it was believed that the fear, real or imaginary, and the anathema of the besieged country were ably exploited by the Israelis and used as a cover for every infamy:

When an Israeli is asked about the thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians bombed and killed by his air force - stated *Lotta Continua* - the answer will inevitably be: “We had six million people killed without anyone lifting a finger.”⁴⁰

The New Left magazines did not hesitate to speak of an unacceptable “moral blackmail” based on the constant reference to the Shoah, which the Israelis imposed to the Jews of the Diaspora and the international public opinion to obtain solidarity and understanding. A “cynical mystification” that, “to cover the systematic massacre of the Palestinian people,”⁴¹ associated anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism when, instead, we read in *il manifesto*, those who fought against the Zionist, racist and fascist nature of the State of Israel were fighting “the true and profound nature of anti-Semitism, [preserving] the lesson of Auschwitz.”⁴²

In the second half of the Seventies, the transformation of Palestinian-combatants into Palestinian-victims involved a more frequent use of the parallelism that made Zionists, the victims of yesterday (the Jews of the past), the oppressors of today. For example, AO’s magazine recalled how “Israel [had] learned so far more from its executioners, than from the partisans who [had risked] sometimes everything to snatch them from the concentration camps,”⁴³ likewise, *Lotta Continua* in March 1978 recalled how the only possible fate for the Palestinians seemed to be that

of replacing the Jews (who, in a dramatic role reversal, have freed themselves of their “curse” only to build a state whose ferocity is equal only to that of their persecutors of yesterday) in the role of “scapegoat,” which humanity apparently cannot do without: from the “mean Jew” to the “Palestinian terrorist” the world of states does not recognize dignity to a people without a state.⁴⁴

³⁹ “Medio Oriente: Grominko parte, arriva Kissinger. Tutto resta in alto mare,” *Lotta Continua*, February 9, 1975.

⁴⁰ “Ma che pace potrà mai fare questo stato d’Israele?,” *Lotta Continua*, September 5, 1978.

⁴¹ “Il sionismo è una forma di razzismo,” *Lotta Continua*, November 12, 1975.

⁴² Roberto Livi, “Gli ebrei di sinistra discutono, sulla difensiva, di Olocausto,” *il manifesto*, May 27, 1979.

⁴³ “Il quadro mediterraneo e la guerra in Libano,” *Quotidiano dei lavoratori*, September 5-6, 1976.

⁴⁴ “La pace è lontana,” *Lotta Continua*, March 24, 1978.

In May 1979 *il manifesto*, in an article-debate on the television miniseries *Holocaust*, reported the words of Livia Rokach, an expert in the Middle East and collaborator of the newspaper, who explained the parallelism between the Nazi-fascists responsible for the Holocaust and the Israeli conduct:

The Nazis and the fascists demonized the “Rothschilds” and the “Jewish plutocracy” to exterminate the Jewish proletarian masses of Europe. In the same way the Zionists today demonize Arab oil to justify genocide in Palestinian refugee camps [...]. If this is the profound nature of anti-Semitism, and the lesson of Auschwitz, then Zionism as a political movement and the state of Israel as its realization repeat the anti-Semitic mechanism.⁴⁵

The danger that Zionism could adopt the same logic from which it escaped was now - according to Rokach - a fact.

In fact, Zionism continued to be at the basis of every analysis, and continued to be accused, representing a real “cement”⁴⁶ that held together Israel’s contradictions, as the official “religion” of the Jewish State, the “moral and religious foundation of its existence”, “its very legal foundation.”⁴⁷

the state of Israel, as is well known, does not have a constitutional charter, precisely because its non-written constitution identifies it with the “kingdom of Zion”, i.e., it is a theocratic, totalitarian and racist state. The rights of the “chosen people” are those in the name of which every right is denied to the people who inhabited that land, destined by God to the Jews.⁴⁸

These last quotations place us, in our opinion, before the most relevant aspect that emerges from the press of the latter part of the Seventies: the considerable attention given to the “religious factor” and to “attachment to the land” as constitutive elements, indispensable and at the same time metastasis of Israel.

After the Six Day War the imperialist aspect had been the pivot of all the analyses of the Jewish state, and Zionism had been brought fully into that interpretative

⁴⁵ Livi, “Gli ebrei di sinistra discutono, sulla difensiva, di Olocausto.”

⁴⁶ “In Libano una lotta a morte: l’autonomia e la rivoluzione dei popoli contro la guerra e l’oppressione imperialista,” *Lotta Continua*, September 7, 1976.

⁴⁷ “Il sionismo è una forma di razzismo.”

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

paradigm. In this view, the confrontation in the Middle East was between the military and governmental Zionist apparatus, subservient to the American power, on the one hand, and the *fedayeen*, the new partisan and the new Vietcong, on the other. In the second half of the Seventies the description of the Jewish state was enriched by further elements revolving around the theme of “religion” and “land,” factors which became indispensable to explain Israel’s racism, war-mongering and fascism. If Israeli society and state were pervaded by a “congenital militaristic folly,”⁴⁹ the situation was such not only for a general Israeli enslavement to imperialism, that required it to act through expansionism and repression, but above all because the foundations on which the Jewish state continued to be based were undermined by a series of myths, beliefs, ideologies that pushed it in that direction. The Jewish state was no longer just an instrument of imperialism, but rather an irremediably sick state: it would not be enough to repudiate the bond with the United States to recover, it would have to deny its very Zionist foundation. The latter, however, was no longer just regarded as the direct result of European nationalism and colonialism. It was seen more and more as an ideology that established an inseparable link between the “land” and the “people” on the basis of religion. Within that framework the prospect of the so-called “great Israel” was conceived, and it represented the main obstacle not only to the pacification of the Middle Eastern region, but also to a possible democratic existence of Israel.

Persistently, on the pages of the periodicals under study appeared accusations against the Israelis, because they identified themselves with the “chosen people,” because of their obstinacy in supporting religious parties and the fundamentalism they expressed. References to the ‘violent god’ of Israel, and the supposed Zionist obsession for the realization of an empire from the Nile to the Euphrates also increased. In November 1975 Silverio Corvisieri, arguing that there was no doubt that Hitler today would have sided with the “exterminators of the Palestinians,”⁵⁰ listed a series of factors that confirmed how racism in Israel found strong support in the religious ideology of which the Zionist ideal had become a vehicle:

in that country one cannot marry, separate, divorce or make a will if not according to the rules of the Torah. The dietary laws of the Jewish religion are compulsorily followed in hotels, restaurants, military kitchens, schools, airplanes and Israeli ships. The state of Israel - unbelievable but true - is perhaps the only modern state that does not

⁴⁹ “Medio Oriente: Israele prepara la ‘bomba atomica’,” *Lotta Continua*, March 20, 1980.

⁵⁰ Silverio Corvisieri, “Razzismo, Onu e antisemitismo,” *Quotidiano dei lavoratori*, November 13, 1975.

have a Constitution: this peculiarity is determined by the concern not to clash with religious parties that demand that the Torah be the fundamental law of Israel. [...] Religious pressure does not have the sole purpose of strengthening national unity [...] It acts as a screen to a policy of frankly racist inspiration. “There is no ‘chosen people’ without accursed foreigners.”⁵¹

It was a representation that summarized and generalized a particular notion of Zionism, of which some Jewish fundamentalist religious movements were made spokesmen; the most immediate reference, and the focus of intense attention by the press considered here, is to the *Gush Emunim*, the “block of the faithful,” a movement that arose in 1974 within the occupied territories and supported the need for the Jewish state to become a messianic kingdom extending over all the “territories of Israel.” However, the shift from religious Zionism to the political extremism of *Gush Emunim* was extended by the New Left to Zionist ideology, to Israeli politics and society as a whole. Then in 1977, as the right wing for the first time won the elections and took over the government in Israel, this generalization appeared to find a full justification in the eyes of the New Left. The fact that the coalition led by Menachem Begin promoted a “line of maximization of the extension of the Jewish state,”⁵² led the New Left to argue that the policy promoted by the Israeli ruling class was a clear expression of the religious fundamentalist ideology, dominated by military expansionism. The accusation against the government of having as its goal the construction of the ‘great Israel,’ of wanting to pursue it militarily, with continuous provocations and clever maneuvers, capable of exploiting to its advantage international diplomatic uncertainties, then became recurrent references. Although most of the periodicals came to the conclusion that with the arrival of Likud to power there had not been a real political change, but rather a confirmation of trends already widely developed by Labor governments, with 1977 the accusations of fascism, bellicism and in particular fanaticism, became even more pronounced. Menachem Begin, the new prime minister, was accused of wanting to feed the violence of his people and of not reining-in extremist groups. As *Lotta Continua* put it, the settlers, with their intolerance and extremism, were used as “tacks to better fix the annexation choice.”⁵³ The figure of the fanatic, violent, provocative settler, obsessed with the return to a biblical land, thus became one of the new trends on the pages dedicated to the Middle East. The settler was a sort of emblem of the regression that was taking place in Israeli society as a whole. It was represented as increasingly unwilling to share its space with non-Jews and

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Marcella Emiliani, *Medio Oriente. Una storia dal 1918 al 1991*, (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2012), 213.

⁵³ “Altri guai per Begin,” *Lotta Continua*, October 23, 1979.

impregnated with a growing hatred for the Palestinians. The settlers epitomized, together with the religious parties and the victory of the right, the most tangible proof of the continuous degeneration of the Jewish state.

Conclusions

The New Left's original perspective, strongly centered on the post-'68 revolutionary rhetoric, dissolved in the second half of the Seventies in favor of a pacifist Third-World ideology, that broke the rigid anti-imperialist paradigm and replaced the exaltation of the heroic struggle of the *fedayeen* with a specific attention to the Palestinian people as a whole. At the end of the Seventies, the dominant interpretative pattern was no longer the one that saw the confrontation between Israel's imperialism and the armed "partisan" guerrillas' anti-imperialism, but the one that saw the suffering and almost unarmed Palestinian people being overwhelmed by an Israel that was no longer a simple pawn on the western front, but a willing executioner of a whole people; the immediate prospect was no longer the revolutionary transformation of the Middle East in favor of a socialist Palestine - that had never been investigated in detail - but the pacification of the Middle Eastern region and the end of Israeli violence. Pacifism was certainly not an unprecedented phenomenon in the analyses of the extreme left, but now it seemed to be organically assumed as a way of thinking in place of anti-imperialism. This rejection of war was primarily moral: wars, that is, were criticized not only as the effects of economic aggression, but also as violence to be disapproved from an ethical point of view. References to 'human rights' were then added to those to the geo-political framework and the economic context. The United Nations became the most accredited reference point for deciding what was legitimate and what was not, in a sort of primacy entrusted primarily to international law.

This development was primarily due to a series of changes that occurred at the international level and revolved around the so-called 'moderate turn' of the Palestinian armed groups. Starting from 1973-1974 there was a slowdown in terrorist activity and armed actions in general and there were also some important diplomatic successes by the PLO in the aftermath of the Kippur War. On the Arab side, the summit of Algiers in November 1973 recognized the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, while the following summit of Rabat of October 1974 stated the PLO's right to establish an independent entity on all the Palestinian territories that would be liberated. On the international side, a UN Assembly resolution of November of the same year proclaimed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination,

granting the PLO permanent observer status. The fact that the armed activities of the Palestinian formations had diminished, though never ceased altogether, and that a more incisive diplomatic action had been added, entailed a necessary retreat of the revolutionary rhetoric: starting from the mid-Seventies, that is, there was a different Palestinian reality to be interpreted and a different form of struggle that was no longer centered on armed guerrilla war and was no longer comparable to the Indochinese context which, in the meantime, had seen the main pivot of the parallelism between Palestine and Vietnam - the United States - disengage from its twenty years long conflict.

To all this must be added the changes within the Jewish state and in particular the shift represented by the 1977 elections. The Jewish state had always represented a challenge for the Marxist left, but with the right's coming to power the new character of the state became even more unsustainable. Without a radical secularization of the Jewish state, a sort of 'identity monster' in the representations of the New Left, there was no possibility that the Middle Eastern region could find a lasting peace. Thus the "de-zionistization," or the transformation of Israel into an a-confessional and fully inclusive state, became for the extreme left an indispensable necessity in the face of a society and a country that were perceived as pervaded by an exasperated presence of religion and ultra-nationalist ideology, elements that could potentially curb any positive social transformation.

The shift recorded during the Seventies, however, also called for a reconsideration of class analysis, or for what then passed for class analysis as applied to the international conflicts of the Cold War era. In the early Seventies, both those who placed themselves in an anti-nationalist perspective, and those who accepted a 'partisan' logic of support to anyone who opposed imperialism, believed that the imperialist war had to be confronted with the mobilization of the masses (the oppressed nations in this scheme occupied the role of the proletariat). In their view all conflicts were connected and their hope was that such a struggle would eventually lead to a global revolution. The pacifist perspective, on the other hand, led to the conviction that, despite the resistance of the oppressed masses, it was legitimate to act primarily through the pressure of public opinion in order to convince the powerful and international organizations to end the violence against the oppressed. The abandonment of the most markedly revolutionary rhetoric should therefore, in our view, be traced above all to internal political issues and in particular to the collapse of the political axis of the New Left in the first half of the Seventies: for the organizations analyzed here the goal of developing a truly 'revolutionary party' would be set aside. The choice of some organizations of the extreme left, also

driven by the crisis that they were going through since the middle of the decade, to participate in elections,⁵⁴ abandoning the “traditional” refusal of liberal-democratic political practice, necessarily lead to set aside revolutionary rhetoric in the analysis of international scenario as well. At the same time, a renewed, pacifist, Third-World ideology allowed the New Left to reconvert the almost exhausted dream of a social and political revolution, carrying forward a particular form of internationalism at a time when the Marxist paradigm was now going through an inexorable crisis.

Recognizing a hiatus within the Seventies leads us to propose two further considerations. First, it should be noted that it is precisely with the weakening of the global anti-imperialist rhetoric that a connection was established between a radical criticism of Israel and cultural codes derived from the anti-Semitic repertoire. In the second half of the Seventies, in fact, the criticism carried out by the extreme left towards the Jewish state became more direct and at the same time tainted with ambiguity. In the earlier phase the rigid anti-imperialist paradigm made it possible to leave in the background Israel’s peculiarity, while bringing to the foreground the imperialist enemy as a whole. Instead, by the middle of the Seventies a more context-specific anti-Israeli discourse began taking shape. It was marked by its own rhetoric, and ended up involving the image of the Jew in general: i.e. the reversal of the dichotomy between victims and perpetrators (the victims of yesterday who have become the executioners of today) and the attention paid to the role played by religion in the representation of Israel and the Middle Eastern affairs.

Secondly, it should be emphasized that the adoption of a Third-World ideology characterized above all by pacifist connotations was not a prerogative of the New Left. At the end of the Seventies, it was above all ‘peace’ that moved – at least rhetorically – not only the international considerations of the extreme left, but also of socialists and communists, in a sort of irenism that united “men of the left,” who were actually ideologically quite distant. In the past, a part of the left, more linked to the logics of the Cold War, had judged as unjust only the wars of the West, but now, by loosening its link with the USSR, the left adopted a more

⁵⁴ In particular, we refer here to the electoral list of *Democrazia Proletaria* (Proletarian Democracy, DP), established since the national elections of 1976, to which adhered the already constituted *Partito di unità proletaria per il comunismo* (Party of proletarian unity for communism, PdUPpc), and the major groups of the extreme left, like *Lotta Continua* and *Avanguardia Operaia*.

“inclusive” pacifism, which considered that there were no just wars in any case.⁵⁵ At the end of the Seventies, a shared identity of the left was under construction: an identity that was going to make pacifism and the promotion of the people’s diplomacy one of its fixed points.⁵⁶

Historical research should therefore clarify how and through what cultural contributions the New Left galaxy came, in the late Seventies, to read the Middle Eastern conflict through interpretative categories that were at the same time renewed and widely shared on the left. That ideology continues to represent, even today, the lens through which the Middle Eastern conflict and the vicissitudes of the Jewish State are conceived by a substantial part of the Italian political and cultural world. It is a worldview that has more to do with what matured at the end of the long Seventies, rather than with the simplistic anti-imperialist doctrine of the post-’68 period.

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⁵⁵ On the progressive fusion between pacifism and Berlinguer’s “third way” see: Andrea Guiso, “Sul’ultimo Pci nella crisi della sua cultura politica,” in *Socialisti e comunisti negli anni di Craxi*, eds. Gennaro Acquaviva, Marco Gervasoni, (Venice: Marsilio, 2011), 204-8.

⁵⁶ On this point see the analysis of Silvio Pons, *Berlinguer e la fine del comunismo*, (Turin: Einaudi, 2006), 240-52.