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30 Years



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30 years of Peace Now

Group focused too little on principled stance against occupation's immorality

Ariel Rubinstein

There are those who think that Peace Now failed by engaging in only one aspect of the Israeli experience and ignoring other issues – the social issue in particular. I do not agree with this view. The movement focused on the issue that was and is the most important issue in the Israeli experience since 1967: The occupation and the settlement enterprise.

I would like to see [Israel](#) become an exemplary social-welfare state and aspire to equality. However, I could imagine living in a society that wavers between a social-welfare state and a [Netanyahu](#) state.

I think that the emergence of a wealthy class in Israel, even if it tends to support dovish views, harms the foundations of democracy. Nonetheless, I could see myself as a citizen in a state of 19 aristocratic families, at least as long as there are democratic mechanisms capable of offsetting them.

I could imagine an Israel that is more secular and an Israel that is more religious. Neither of these alternatives in the reasonable future would make my presence here something that I am ashamed of.

Government misconduct is bad. But corruption is part of any government, and the war against corruption is a part of any developed state. The level of corruption is far from convincing us to flee from here.

However, there is one issue that affects the essence of the State of Israel in a nearly irrevocable way, and leads me to ask myself whether I want my children to live in the Land of Israel: an Israel that occupies, settles the territories and scorns the human image of members of a different people – is not our Israel. It is an Israel that raises profound questions for many of us, not only about its chances of survival, but also about our desire, at the most personal level, to be part of it.

I could imagine my children living in a corrupt and unequal Israel, with a weak justice system, attending schools overloaded with Jewish studies. But I cannot accept the idea that my children will live in an Israel that settles the territories and acts abusively.

Peace Now's focus on the issues of the occupation and settlements was not a political caprice, but rather an expression of a worldview that sees the Jewish people as fundamentally identifying with those who are occupied, and despising the occupier and oppressor. For us, ruling over another people is akin to being "Terefah."

This view leads me to recognize the failure of Peace Now. We did not convince the public that these heartfelt issues are important to us in the same way that the Mercaz Harav yeshiva students and Kedumim settlers proved that settlement in all of the Land of Israel is etched in their hearts. Part of Israeli society regards us as a group of hedonists and defeatists, and not as an ideological group.

It seems to me that Peace Now placed too much emphasis on the price of war and the benefits of peace, and too little on the principled stance against ruling over another people. Personally, I never liked the name "Peace Now," which is based upon an axiom of the feasibility of peace.

Too many times, speakers from the camp make prophecies about peace. The history of the past 30 years has not demonstrated the sober political vision of the right, nor has it provided unequivocal proof of the feasibility of the path of peace. I have no idea whether

peace is possible, but our positions are still correct in my eyes, even if peace is only a dream.

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