

*He  
came back from Ramala a changed person.  
He drove directly from the airport to a big dinner prepared for him  
by his friends, sat on the table and said in a quiet, almost priestly voice: "They are  
good people. They are extremely hospitable. They let me stay in their house the entire time. I met  
the grandfather too; he fought against Israel even before the country existed." Later in the evening he said in  
response to a question by one of the guests: "I did not meet many women there; whenever I entered the living room to  
discuss politics with my hosts over sweet tea with mint leaves the women disappeared immediately to the back-room. It might  
seem strange to you but that is how they live - their culture - and we should not be too judgmental about such things.' A day or  
two later the man from Ramala came over to Berlin and gave a lecture about the current situation of the Palestinians. When he  
introduced his friend to the local leftists in attendance he ended with the words "Don't be surprised by our guest's relatively positive  
view of the nazis; having being oppressed for so many years by the Jews they began to feel their enemy's enemy was their friend. We  
must be sympathetic and understanding even if we disagree."*

“How can they tolerate such views?” He asked a day later an editor who published the writings of various leftist groups including the RAF. “Didn’t they all began as anti-nazis? And what about the Palestinians? I thought they too were committed leftists!” “Don’t get me started on that issue, the editor replied; at this point, the extreme German left no longer speaks about the specter of imperialism, nor about the workers’ revolution or the need

**P**alestinian Kitsch

to 'unmask the latent fascist tendencies of the German state'; the only issue that remained from the good old rhetoric of the new left is the kitschy love of the Palestinians who can simply do no wrong. The real tragedy, though, is that the Palestinian movement itself changed radically; I am not only speaking about the Muslim fundamentalists but the secular mainstream PLO. The intellectuals and feminists who were the backbones of the movement in the 70's and the bridge to the European left are now an endangered species - literally endangered. Hamas hunts and kills them because they are not religious; the PLO replaced them with corrupt functionaries because they were not sufficiently connected to the Palestinian street. The lucky ones moved to Paris while the rest are utterly demoralized and despondent.”

His Israeli friend reflected on the fact that for politicians like him who spent the 70's fighting for the right of the Palestinians for a state of their own the demise of the radical Left wing of the Palestinian movement was devastating as well. Their entire political world-view has been founded on the belief that even if Khawatme, Habash and their ilk were capable of cold blooded terror they shared nevertheless the basic moral and intellectual values that defined the new Left. With their downfall, the very possibility of a dialog founded on a secular democratic socialist world-view and a common opposition to imperialism seems to have slowly but resolutely disappeared.