

Communist Party of Israel

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26th Congress

For Equality, Democracy, Peace and Socialism!

Resumé of the Report of the Central Committee To the 26th Congress To be held 15-17 March 2012

2011 will be remembered as the year of socio-political protest around the world, including Israel. Following the "Arab Spring", which began in December 2010, a tide of social rage engulfed many countries, among them Israel. Cities all over the world sported protest camps and saw demonstrations by workers, women and above all – youth, against the attempt to shift the burden of the ongoing economic crisis in the advanced capitalist countries onto their shoulders.

The great corporations and their governments, first and foremost the US Administration, were at first hesitant in their response to the protest but soon regrouped and commenced violent repression of social protests, deepening their imperialist military and diplomatic interventions in the Middle East and North Africa, where the wave of protest began. Imperialism is investing greater and greater efforts into turning the struggle of the peoples for democracy and social justice to its advantage, joining forces for the purpose with various reactionary regional actors, including religious fundamentalists.

The rights of the peoples vs. US policy

A cornerstone of the CPI's worldview is support for the rights of the peoples and their role in rising up to depose despotic regimes which trample on human and civil rights replacing them with advanced democratic regimes.

The mass social and democratic insurgency in the Arab world which began in December 2010 is one of the most important, unique and significant developments among the Arab peoples in recent decades.

The US and its allies, including Israel, are being hypocritical when they speak of democracy and claim to demand liberty, free elections and human rights in the Arab world. The opposite is true: they have historically, and do still, represent the greatest obstacle to democratic change in the Middle East. It is they who prevent the realization of human and popular rights, first and foremost in Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Yemen, and Lybia – and their attitude toward Syria is no different.

The revolt of the Arab peoples has deep social class and political roots. Neo-liberalism is the real reason for the deepening poverty, growing unemployment, repression and corruption of the Arab states. The regional capitalist regime, dependent on international corporations, has turned countries like Egypt and Tunisia into a paradise for capital and foreign investors and an inferno for workers and the broad popular strata, including the middle class.

As far as the US is concerned, the future regime in Egypt must make sure to maintain Egypt's dependency in the geopolitical sphere (with regard to ties with Israel and American strategy in the area), in the economic sphere (neo-liberalism), and in the military sphere (subordination of the military establishment to Washington). The US plans to strengthen the hold on power of the reactionary block comprised of the grand bourgeoisie, which is dependent on global capital, the landowning stratum, and the leadership of political Islam. As expected, the American plan has been adopted both by the leadership of the military establishment and by the Muslim Brotherhood.

The majorities achieved by the Islamic movements in the general elections in Tunisia and Egypt, and the Islamic regimes installed earlier in Sudan and the Gaza Strip, all indicate the emergence in the Arab countries of a religious-Islamist wave, fed by the rage of the masses.

Our basic position has not changed. We unhesitatingly declare our allegiance "with the Arab peoples against imperialism, never with imperialism against the Arab peoples". In response to the Arab insurgency we have updated this slogan to: "with the Arab peoples against imperialism and the regimes of repression and dependency". This is a more complex formula, but these complex situations have no simplistic solution.

The CPI warns against the escalation of civil war in Syria and against the disaster which direct or indirect imperialist military intervention will impose upon it. We denounce the complicity of the Arab League and Turkey in the attempts of the American administration, NATO and the Israeli government to yoke Syria to the hegemony of the US and the West.

Imperialism has supported and continues to support the most dreadfully oppressive regimes of the Middle East. It is fighting to bring down the Syrian regime not on account of its repression of the Syrian people but in order to turn Syria into yet another of its lackeys in the Middle East.

The CPI supports the legitimate demands of the Syrian people, which is fighting against oppression and censorship and for democratic liberties and social progress, and which is opposed to any foreign intervention in its country's internal affairs. These objectives are voiced by significant sectors of the patriotic opposition and by activists in the popular movement in Syria.

Within the Syrian opposition there are other groups, mostly led from outside the country, who serve foreign interests and call for foreign intervention in their country's affairs. These groups have mounted a military campaign, supported by Turkey and funded by the oil states, and with Western support have employed divisive slogans and rejected all initiatives for dialogue which aim at the preservation of human life.

So long as blood is being spilled in Syria, the interest of the Syrian people lies with an end to the current regime's repression of legitimate popular protest and freedom of expression, an end to the shooting of civilians and the use of forceful military means to settle internal social and political questions.

An immediate end to the bloodshed and a shift to democracy are the only guarantee of the national and territorial unity of Syria, the realization of the rights of the people of Syria, and its defense from external intervention.

The CPI expresses its support for the statement made by the Convention of Communist and Workers' Parties in Athens in 2011, which it sees as fundamental to the struggle for peace, democracy and popular and workers' rights.

The main objective of the CPI's struggle within Israel is – an end to the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights and its return to Syrian sovereignty; an end to occupation of the Palestinian and Lebanese territories; and the realization of a just peace between Israeli and the Arab countries in general, and the Palestinians in particular.

The occupation and the fascist peril

Netanyahu and his partners in the governing coalition see US hegemony in the Middle East as guaranteeing the perpetual occupation of the Palestinian Territories, the growth of settlements and the prevention of the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel along the borders of 4 June 1967.

American-Israeli collaboration was manifestly visible in the coordinated campaign to prevent the accession of Palestine to full UN membership, as well as in the destruction of the possibilities for a peace without occupation and annexation. 2011 was a peak year for construction in the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Netanyahu's policy, which leads to destruction of all chances for Israeli-Palestinian peace and to total war in the region, also entails an attack on the democratic arena within Israel. The occupation which has gone on since 1967 is a cancer, eating away at the weakened body of Israeli democracy. The settler government is working to fortify the regime of internal repression, trampling on the principles of equality and freedom of speech, and even engaging in the construction of mass internment camps.

It is precisely because Netanyahu has no public mandate for his dangerous policy of war, and because his neo-liberal policies continue to deepen poverty, discrimination and social inequality, that he has recourse to the destruction of democratic processes. This is why Netanyahu is initiating legislation promoting censorship, racism, and the labeling as "enemies" of all opponents of his disastrous policies. The Right's attempts to brainwash the public through exaggerated mongering of "existential threats to Israel" is aimed at blocking all debate and criticism.

The success of the fight to protect the democratic arena in Israel and against the threat of fascism depends on the construction of a unified Jewish-Arab struggle, crossing ideological and political boundaries.

From social protest to political change

Over the summer of 2011, a huge wave of social protest engulfed Israel. The profile of participants was diverse: afflicted middle strata, middle- and low-waged employees, residents of popular neighborhoods, mothers, students – almost all of them workers.

What began as a protest against rising housing costs became, within a week, a wide-ranging social protest. Tent camps arose in the big cities and in poor neighborhoods, in peripheral towns and Arab communities. In an unprecedented climax, on September 3rd 2011 about half a million Israelis took part in huge and exhilarating people's rallies, which combined concrete struggles and demands with a growing opposition to neo-liberal policies which widen social rifts, privatization and social- and national inequality.

The CPI and DFPE authored the slogan *ha'am doresh tzedek hevrat* – "the people demand social justice" and distributed thousands of signs reading "When the government is against the people – the people is against the government", with a view to sharpening the political edge of the struggle, arguing that the Netanyahu government is at base a servant of the interests of tycoons and oligarchs, not the needs of the wider public, and that for real change to occur it must be deposed.

The protest camps raised in Arab and mixed Arab-Jewish communities, led by our comrades, were an important development in the consolidation of the struggle's Jewish-Arab character. The participation of the Arab public in the protest is doubly significant: first, because this public suffers greatly from lack of housing, diminished social services and a poverty rate double the national average, as a result of the discriminatory policies of all Israeli governments; second, because its involvement in the social struggle was a counterstrike against the Right's attempts to push the Arab citizens outside of the Israeli social and political arena.

The anti-capitalist protest movement has weakened, but not eradicated, nationalist prejudices and political polarization on the question of the occupation and peace. Therefore it is up to the CPI to continue to warn against the attempts to wipe out the protest through military conflict or even war, and to go on patiently and sensitively pointing out the links between society, occupation and democracy.

The popular aspiration to a society of social justice cannot be realized so long as the occupation continues. A people which is dominating another people cannot be free. In this spirit the CPI argues that support for the Palestinian initiative to gain recognition of an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, side by side with Israel, is the true interest of both peoples. The end of the occupation and the establishment of Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab peace will free up huge sums currently used for the military, occupation and settlements towards social needs and resolution of the real problems faced by people in this country.

Essentially, the social protest movement of summer 2011 was a show of progressive power not only against the rule of neo-liberal capitalism but also against the sinister fascist tendencies of the regime. Dark days of geopolitical deadlock and pernicious erosion of the democratic arena made for an oppressive feeling of suffocation throughout Israeli society. The protest movement has opened a channel for liberation from this suffocation.

The protest movement presented clear evidence that in Israel there are unmistakably healthy forces who can lead a progressive change. This is a convincing response to the feelings of desperation which have taken hold in certain circles of the Left and the Arab population in recent years. The renewal of the wave of social protest is a practical possibility which depends on objective conditions, on consolidation of a leadership for the protest and on our own contribution to its organization.

A mass politics

In recent years the CPI has consistently acted within the Arab and Jewish publics in accordance with "mass politics", speaking carefully to the public with engaging slogans and steadily building broad partnerships in struggle.

The mass politics engaged in by the CPI within the Arab population over many years is the foundation of our strength among it. Even under difficult conditions, the party has meticulously maintained its strong links to the wider public. The historic victory of the Nazareth Front in 1975 was a manifest expression of this mass politics. On its heels came the initiation of the important campaign which culminated in the historic

Land Day of 1976, a campaign which gave crucial impetus to the struggle of the Arab population against the expropriation of its land and of all democratic forces over the character of Israeli society.

Over many years, our enemies have managed to exploit the ongoing national conflict to impose political isolation on us among the Jewish public. But in the last few years we have managed to actuate a mass politics within the Jewish public once again. This is an important achievement for the CPI.

The electoral campaign of *Ir Lekulanu* ("City for All") in Tel Aviv-Jaffa (2008) was a successful example of such a mass politics. *Ir Lekulanu*, with a progressive municipal program, faced off against all the forces of the establishment, which joined together to support the incumbent mayor. With almost no budget, and running against a lavishly funded campaign, *Ir Lekulanu* managed to mobilize thousands of volunteers and gain tens of thousands of votes, including a large majority among young voters. The failure of the McCarthyist and anti-Communist smear campaign against *Ir Lekulanu* showed the wide possibilities open to a progressive mass politics in Israel.

The CPI has also engaged in "mass politics" with respect to May Day rallies of recent years, to broad democratic demonstrations against the dangers of fascism, and to actions for a Palestinian state, for an end to the occupation and for achievement of a just peace. In the face of the danger of war into which the government of the Right is threatening to plunge Israel and the entire region, we shall act to further a "mass politics" in this sphere also.

At the heart of this activity lies our understanding that the crisis of the parties of the Zionist center and left thrusts a great historical responsibility upon us: to consolidate a broad, mobilizing cooperation against the Right in Israel.

The CPI's "mass politics" has contributed greatly to the evolution of the progressive struggle in this country. For this struggle in turn to contribute to our political strength, we shall act to consolidate a broad Arab-Jewish movement with roots in the social protest movement, which will include other groups, organizations, youth movements and social organizations as well as ourselves. Such a movement must integrate socialist values, democratic struggle, a Jewish-Arab character and an understanding of the connection between the occupation and the problems of society.

The economic crisis and the workers

The crisis which began in the United States has spread quickly to all the countries of the capitalist core and even beyond them, to some of the countries of the periphery. It is especially in the era of globalization, as capital attempts to lower the cost of labor, that the contradiction between overproduction and the impoverishment of workers grows, even in the countries of the capitalist core. The crisis looms threatening over democracy, the achievements of workers and world peace.

Israeli capitalism continues to encourage the militarization of the economy and the political sphere, as the wealth and power of a few groups of capitalists called "tycoons" continue to grow. Military expenditures, which also include outlay on the settlements, interest payments and loan repayments, swallow about half of the national budget. In addition to the military budget, which is authorized in advance of every new fiscal year, additional military expenditure is granted to the military throughout the fiscal year. The wars initiated and waged by Israel every few years swallow up gigantic sums. The cost of the Gaza War (December 2008 – January 2009), including damage caused, was 5.5 billion NIS. The cost of the Second Lebanon War (summer of 2006) was 30 billion NIS.

Beginning in 1985 the economic policy of Israeli governments has coddled capitalist groups, molded tax policy with a view to their enrichment, reduced resistance to their power through the marginalization of organized labor and the encouragement of employment through manpower agencies, contractors and individual contracts; reduced National Insurance living allowances to force workers, and especially women, to work part-time and for low wages, and changed legislation to fit the interests of these capitalist groups.

The economic project of "fostering the free market", which coddled the groups of capital, was also a political project supported by all the establishment parties which took part in governing coalitions. The obverse of growing wealth and concentration of capital was deepening socio-economic inequality and a growth in the dimensions of poverty. Economic inequality in Israel in the 2000's is the highest in the OECD countries, after the USA.

In 2010, 1.8 million Israelis or 25% of the population were living below the poverty line. In eight years (2002 to 2010) the percentage of children living in poverty grew from 20% to 36%. The poverty rate among families grew from 18% to 20% of families in the same period, and the poverty rate among Arab families grew from 49.5% to 57%.

In recent years we have witnessed a renewed wave of labor organization, creation of unions, and struggles against employers for the very right to unionize and work under collective agreements. In the public sector, there have been prominent strikes by social workers (2011), state attorneys (2010), and a prolonged strike by doctors in defense of public medicine and for the improvement of their conditions of employment (2011).

The CPI offers to the workers a program of social class struggle, which joins the demand for better wages and working conditions here and now with a fight for better understanding of capitalist exploitation and the character of the bourgeois state. In the last decade, the CPI has once again achieved a more central place on political issues and in democratic and social struggles. But in relation to our activity among the workers we are still weak.

The CPI and the youth

In the secondary and higher education system, the state has throughout the last decade implemented a neo-liberal program of cutting expenditure on education (per student), forcing parents to invest more in education, and various forms of covert and overt privatization of Education Department activities and the school curriculum. The outcome of these moves has been a growing gap in the educational achievements of different groups, perpetuating national, class and ethnic inequalities.

Inspired by the right-wing ideology of Likud governments, the contents of the Hebrew educational system are becoming more and more nationalistic and individualistic, abandoning education for democracy, human and civil rights and the rights of minorities.

In recent years, studies and polls have shown that democratic values are deteriorating rapidly in society as a whole, and especially among Jewish teenagers and young adults. These studies have shown that Jewish youth, more than any other group in society, have adopted racist and extreme rightist worldviews.

Arab teens and young people suffer from the same problems which afflict Jewish youth, as well as from the policies of oppression and discrimination to which the Palestinian national minority in Israel is subjected. Arab youth are most injured by

national policies of discrimination in education, employment, housing and personal safety.

Nevertheless, many young people are participating in protests against the occupation, against economic policies and against the attack on democracy. Jewish-Arab activities are taking place in different parts of the country, including in universities and mixed cities. Young Jews who take part in such activities are finding their way to the DFPE and the CPI.

The erosion of the democratic arena in Israel

Israel, since its establishment, has been a reduced bourgeois democracy. One expression of this is the lack of a democratic constitution. Zionist ideology and practice continue to encourage venomous racist tendencies against Arabs. The internal regime in Israel is therefore a limited democracy which routinely employs violence by means of the police, legislation and all-encompassing discrimination.

The especially right-wing majority of the 17th (2006) and 18th (2009) Knessets and the extreme right-wing government headed by Netanyahu have initiated and implemented a long list of racist and anti-democratic legislation. In an attempt at censorship, the attorney-general has indicted a member of the CPI's political bureau, MK Muhammad Barakeh, beside many other Arab figures.

The democratic arenas of human and workers' rights of which the Israeli establishment is so proud, are in some ways an obstacle in the path of big capital. Fascism is the last resort to which the regime, in association with the heads of corporations, may turn in order to overcome the deep crises of the socio-economic regime and the party-political-governmental complex.

For the equality of the Arab national minority

In mid-2011, the Arab population of Israel (not including the Palestinians of East Jerusalem and the Syrian Arabs of the Golan) was 1,330,000, or 17.7% of the population of Israel (not including the Palestinians of East Jerusalem and the Syrian Arabs of the Golan). By comparison, in 2001 the Arab population was 957,000.

In the 2000's, unemployment among Arabs is triple or more the rate among the Jewish population. In the third quarter of 2011, the unemployment rate in Israel was 5.7%; among Arabs, however, it was between 13% and 15%.

The Communist Party of Israel was the first to demand that the Israeli political establishment acknowledge the right of the Arab-Palestinian population of Israel to full civil and national equality in all fields and to the realization of all its civil, social and cultural rights. Immediately after the establishment of Israel, the CPI was the first to demand that the government respect the national rights of the Palestinian minority in Israel and its identity as part of the Palestinian Arab people and as a national minority in Israel.

The CPI raised the banner of "two states for two peoples", initiated and led the struggles against repression and discrimination directed at the Arab population, and educated Jews and Arabs to joint struggle. From a historical point of view one may say that the Arab population has been able to maintain itself as a national Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel and to undertake significant campaigns against the expropriation of its land, home demolitions and budgetary discrimination, thanks to

the leading role of the Communist Party of Israel among the Arab public and by virtue of its policy, which is based on a class analysis of the national question.

The existential problems of the Arab population can be solved as part of a struggle leading to the development of Israeli democracy, extension of human and civil rights and promotion of equality. Therefore, the Arab public has a deeply vested interest in eliminating the danger of fascism and fortifying democracy, and it contributes to that struggle vis-à-vis its fight against the discrimination it suffers and all discrimination, against its own oppression and all oppression.

Under prevailing conditions in Israel, fundamentalist movements are exploiting the racist discrimination, the deteriorating socio-economic condition of the Arab population and the growing repression of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories. From the CPI's point of view, all fundamentalist movements (Islamic, Jewish, or Christian) are reactionary movements who use religion as a political tool. These movements divert the struggle from the primary goal of equality, peace and democracy, isolate the populations within which they are active, sabotage the unity of struggle for democracy and equality, and retard social progress, especially women's equality.

The deepening military and political dependency of Israel on the US

The dangers threatening the peace and future of the citizens of Israel and Israeli democracy have also grown in tandem with the military ties and strategic coordination between Israel and US imperialism, which gives *carte blanche* backing to the Israeli establishment.

Israel is among those countries which supply the US with bases, training grounds and intelligence. The "special relationship" between the US and Israel is based on long years of strategic, economic, diplomatic and military cooperation, far exceeding the norm in the US's relations with its client regimes.

The strategic alliance between Israel and the US is a solid foundation of the political conceptions and practice of the entire Israeli establishment – the military, the government, the Zionist political parties, the media, the academy. This alliance enables the Israeli military establishment to maintain a constant level of bellicose tension, to garner inflated resources and to tighten its grip on the political system and Israeli society in general. As part of this strategic alliance, the US government agreed in 2007 to provide Israel with modern military equipment worth 30 billion dollars in the decade 2009-2018.

American imperialism is particularly interested in strengthening its control of the oil-rich and strategically important Gulf region. Therefore, together with its partners it has undertaken an international mission whose purpose is to bring Iran into the fold of American hegemony.

In the war on Iran which has been brewing for years, the Israeli establishment's role is to incite and mobilize international support for war. But even within the Israeli military establishment there are some who dispute the wisdom of attacking Iran.

The Communist Party of Israel has time and again stated its decisive stance in support of a Middle East free of nuclear arms and all weapons of mass destruction. As an essential part of this position, the CPI opposes the acquisition of nuclear arms by Iran and all other countries in the region, and the retention of such arms by Israel.

The developments in the internal Palestinian arena since 2007 are very significant. They signal the path of future development and the level of the Palestinian struggle to end the occupation and establish a Palestinian state along the borders of 4 June 1967.

In June 2007, Hamas carried out a bloody coup against the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip. The CPI maintained a clear and strong position, decrying the coup and opposing to the use of arms to solve internal political struggles. The CPI called for a return to the status quo ante in the Strip and for steps towards national reconciliation.

A step in this direction was taken on 6 February 2012, with the signing of a declaration of principles toward the establishment of a temporary transition government headed by Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, charged with preparing the general elections for the presidency and the legislative council.

In Summer 2011, the PLO petitioned the General Secretary of the UN to recognize the State of Palestine as a full member of the UN. The CPI supported this initiative, which returned the Palestinian issue to the head of the international agenda.

A solution of peace, not a recipe for despair

In its efforts toward resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the CPI is fighting on two fronts: one is the supposed support the American administration and Israeli prime ministers have declared for a solution of two states, Israel and Palestine. This support is given not in order to implement the solution and end the occupation, but rather to obscure the ongoing process of occupation and settlement.

The second front is the call heard in various circles to retreat from the program of two states, which commands broad international support, and to content ourselves with the theoretical option of "one bi-national state". The CPI's position is that the "one-state" option is unacceptable, unworkable, and no alternative at all to a two-state solution.

The path to a just and lasting peace

The policy of perpetuating the occupation which all Israeli governments have engaged in since June 1967 is the main obstacle to an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement and to a general Israeli-Arab peace. This policy is the main source for the growing deterioration of the democratic arena and the spread of racist discourse. The perpetuation of the occupation, and the wars it causes, are exploited by Israeli governments to create a public atmosphere conducive to ongoing erosion of the rights of the Arab citizens through legislation, expropriation of land, home demolitions, budgetary discrimination among local authorities and more.

The CPI, faithful to the right of the peoples to self-determination, has for 60 years and more been demanding the realization of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and a sovereign state beside Israel, and recognizes the state of Israel as realizing the right of the Jewish people in this country to self-determination. Yet we have always emphasized that Israel is not an exclusively Jewish state but a state with a Jewish majority and a sizeable Arab national minority. For this reason, the CPI demands the abolition of all forms of discrimination against Arab citizens and the recognition of the national and civil rights of the Arab minority in Israel, which is part of the Palestinian Arab people.

The CPI's peace plan

The CPI, which has struggled consistently and tirelessly against the Israeli occupation and its crimes and for a peace based on respect for the rights of the peoples, sees the realization of a general, just and stable Israeli-Arab peace, with Israeli-Palestinian peace at its heart, as a strategic goal of its political work.

The CPI's plan for peace includes the following elements:

1. Peace will be founded upon an Israeli retreat from all the Arab territories captured since the aggressive war it launched in June 1967, and on respect for the right of Israel, of the Palestinian state and of the Arab states to a sovereign existence and development in conditions of peace and security.
2. The Palestinian Arab people will realize its right to self-determination and to a sovereign state of its own in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab East Jerusalem, side by side with Israel.
3. The problem of the Palestinian refugees will be solved in accordance with the UN resolutions (which recognize their right to choose between return to the homeland and restitution) within the framework of the negotiations for Israeli-Palestinian peace.
4. The annexation of East Jerusalem, occupied by Israel, will be annulled. The independent Palestinian state will be sovereign over East Jerusalem. West Jerusalem will be recognized as the capital of Israel, and East Jerusalem as the capital of the independent Palestinian state, in accordance with the will of each people in its own state. The peace agreement will include a framework for accord on the entire city of Jerusalem, securing cooperation between its two parts in the municipal field, as well as free access to the holy places of the various religions etc.
5. All settlements in the Occupied Territories will be dismantled.
6. The entire Golan Heights will be returned to Syria.
7. Israel will retreat from all Lebanese territory (including Shebaa Farms).
8. Peace arrangements will be based on accords between states, which shall form the legal basis for peaceful coexistence and non-interference of all states in the internal affairs of the others. All sides will annul claims of a state of war and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states of the region, including Israel and the independent Palestinian state, and their right to live within recognized, secure borders, free of the threat and use of violence.
9. The Middle East will be freed of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons. Israel will sign the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Given the historical build-up of wars and distrust, the guarantee of the UN and other international agents will be necessary to implement the agreements and accords reached. Israeli-Palestinian peace and a general Israeli-Arab peace will open the way to additional, voluntary agreements on various matters, including economic matters, in which the parties have a common interest.

For the peace program to become reality, it is necessary to persevere in a consistent Jewish-Arab struggle against the occupation and the great injuries it causes to the Palestinian people and the people of Israel, as well as in the effort to raise international solidarity for this struggle.

The CPI will act to consolidate an Israeli peace camp as broadly as possible around commonly held principles. The fate of the two peoples, Israeli and Palestinian alike, depends on our extrication from the occupation and on an establishment of a just, neighborly peace, which will facilitate the mobilization of the public to fight against social wrongs, discrimination and racism and for a better life, for equality and social justice.

The struggle against Zionism and neo-Zionism

In recent years the Zionist-fundamentalist current also known as neo-Zionism has grown. The proponents of this current are the settlers and those who propagate their ideology. At the heart of the neo-Zionists' worldview and activity is the perpetuation of the occupation and the settlements, the negation of the civil rights of the Arab citizens of Israel, xenophobia and the use of force.

Our ideological struggle against Zionism as a worldview and a nationalistic, racist practice does not contradict our willingness to cooperate with seekers of peace, democracy and social justice who consider themselves to be Zionist. Such cooperation, above and beyond ideological disagreements, is essential to the promotion of social and democratic struggles and to the success of the struggle for a just and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace.

The socialism of the 21st century

Communists and others who have supported the democratic, popular and socialist vision have managed to find ways to bring about progressive change, with a view to realization of their vision, even as capitalism has transformed itself and historical conditions have changed. The experience gained since the mid-19th century teaches us that there is no one way forward to profound democratic and social change and no one model of a progressive or socialist regime which is applicable to all countries.

Every Communist Party and every national-democratic movement must decide, in accordance with conditions in its own country and around the world, how to unite the victims of capitalism in a struggle to change power; to what extent bourgeois-democratic institutions such as general elections can be leveraged to unite forces and bring about political transformations; what concrete goals must be placed at the center of the struggle; and what the next level is in the fight for a just society of workers and for workers.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist regimes of Eastern Europe, the partisans of capitalism have attempted to convince us of the impossibility of global change, or of global revolutionary change at any rate.

Even today we are inspired by the revolutionaries of Russia, who shook the world. In the face of growing economic inequality and social and ecological disasters caused by corporate globalization, more and more people are seeking a social alternative and social justice.

In the reality of the 21st century it is crystal clear that the social situation in the world today – immense socio-economic inequalities, hardship, poverty, war, commodification of human relationships, destruction of the social safety net, ecological catastrophe – this horrific situation demands revolutionary change. The

historical experience of the 20th century has taught us that this revolutionary change must be brought about in a better and more democratic way if it is to last.

Even in today's Israel, the concept of socialism has not disappeared from the public discourse. Thus it is up to us to connect this concept to the reality in Israel, to create a force for socialist social change.

The revolutionary change which the CPI is determined to lead will take place under the conditions of the 21st century, against the class enemies of the 21st century, using the tools of struggle which this century puts at our disposal.

The Communist Party of Israel

The Communist Party of Israel is a revolutionary, internationalist, Jewish-Arab, Marxist-Leninist party. This definition sums up the essence of the party and its distinction on the Israeli political scene.

The CPI struggles for a just, general and stable peace; in defense of the democratic arena; for equal rights; and for social justice and socialism.

The activity of the party, its strategic and tactical decisions, require personal responsibility and commitment to the masses of the people, Jews and Arabs, and an ideological, political and organizational effort to prepare the way for a transition to socialism.

The challenge we face today is not to preserve the party – that is behind us – but to fortify it ideologically and organizationally, to extend its public influence, and to bring more comrades, Jews and Arabs, into its ranks, especially from among the youth.

In the face of an Israeli establishment which encourages racism and prejudice, legal hatred and discrimination, fascist views, xenophobia, nationalistic narrow-mindedness and religious reaction – we continue to preserve and promote the Jewish-Arab unity of our Communist party. This unity is the quintessence of the Party.

The growing audience we command and the broadening sympathy towards our positions are the fruit of struggles we initiated and concrete struggles in which we have participated together with our partners. Our strengthened public standing is one of the most important achievements of our activity since the 25th Congress (2007). The job of the institutions of the party is to go on investing the greatest possible effort in amplifying our influence and extending our connections among the public in general and among the Jewish public in particular.

The CPI, together with its partners, has been active within the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE, al-Jabhah/Hadash) since its foundation (1977) in the promotion of a just peace, the defense of the democratic arena, equality and social justice. The CPI is proud of the partnership formed in the DFPE and is actively engaged in its extension.

The election to the 18th Knesset (2009) was held immediately after the end of the Gaza War. Nevertheless, in the framework of the DFPE we made an important achievement in this election: 112,300 votes, a growth of 30% in the number of votes relative to the previous elections (2006), in which we received 86,000 votes. The DFPE's representation in the Knesset thus grew from three to four seats.

Our success in the elections points to a great potential for deepening the CPI's influence and extending the reach of the DFPE in both the Arab and the Jewish publics.

The DFPE's Knesset faction has worked tirelessly to promote political, social and democratic issues, against the backdrop of the most right-wing Knesset since the foundation of Israel.

The elections to the 21st Congress of the Histadrut (the General Trade Union Federation) will be held in May 2012, and both the Party and the DFPE must prepare for them with the utmost care.

The DFPE's university branches play an important role in our day-to-day activity in the universities. They are the most active political group among students.

We must act responsibly to forward the growth of the CPI and DFPE among students, to rebuild the student movement, and to create broad coalitions with a view to repelling fascism, fighting privatization and freeing higher education and academic research from their subjugation to the forces of the market.

The Party's international relations

We maintain links with Communist and Workers' Parties through transmission of information about our activities and positions, inviting their delegates to our congresses and participating in theirs. We have participated, as far as our financial resources have allowed, in regional and world conventions taking place in Athens, Cyprus, India, Mexico and other places.

The CPI's policies and its public activities have met with great appreciation from most of our sister Parties. However, we sometimes still meet with attempts, especially in our region, to negate our existence using various excuses. We reject such attitudes as uncomradely and harmful to the progressive struggle.

The tasks at hand

Under conditions of growing distrust of the regime, of growing criticism of the policy of privatization and the enrichment of the rich, of hundreds of thousands of people mobilizing under the banner of social justice, of growing international isolation of the policy of violence and occupation, of deepening contention over the questions of democracy and national and civil equality – we Israeli Communists, Jewish and Arab, carry a heavy load of responsibility.

We are proud of the fact that reality bears out our analysis and the policies we support and implement. But we cannot be content with this.

The immediate tasks at hand for us in the next few years are:

1. To put great efforts into strengthening the CPI, extending its activities among workers, improving our activities among the youth and fostering the Israeli Union of Communist Youth.
2. To redouble our efforts to bring about cooperation among all democratic forces in the struggle against the attempts to enforce a fascist agenda in Israel; to establish a broad anti-fascist front to hold back the forces of the extreme right.

3. To consolidate a partnership among the forces of the left in Israel, above and beyond our disagreements on ideological questions, on the basis of a clear political program. The elements of this political program: two states along the borders of 4 June 1967; opposition to occupation, settlements and war; full civil equality for the Arab population of Israel; Jewish-Arab partnership; opposition to all nationalistic isolationism; socialist values; progressive environmental-social struggle; true equality for women. This partnership will be based on the existing partnership within the DFPE and an effort to extend it.
4. To further unity in the struggle of the Arab public in Israel against discrimination, racist incitement, home demolitions and land expropriation, and for full civil and national equality.
5. To promote of Jewish-Arab partnership within our institutions and those we participate in, and construction of such partnerships across Israeli society.
6. To deepen the political-ideological education of the members of the Party and disseminate the ideas of Marxism-Leninism among the youth, women and the public at large.
7. To extend the membership of the CPI.
8. To overcome the organizational weaknesses in the party's work, encourage personal responsibility among Party members, and strengthen ties between the organization's institutions – branches, districts and the Central Committee.
9. To heighten the CPI's presence as a factor in the public consciousness.
10. To prepare for the upcoming elections to the Histadrut, the 19th Knesset and municipal authorities.