

Source: <http://hadash.org.il/english/>

## Hadash – Democratic Front for Peace and Equality

Following is the English content that Hadash made available on its website prior to the Knesset elections of 2013. For the party's full Hebrew platform see: <http://hadash.org.il/matzahadash/>

### Hadash – our story

Hadash – (the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality) was established in 1977. The aim of its founders was simple: to unite most of the supporters for peace, equality, democracy and workers' rights, Jews and Arabs, in order to create a political alternative to the government's policy of occupation and exploitation. Activists from the main protest movements of the time – the Land Day Protest against expropriation, and the Black Panthers Protest against discrimination; as well as adherents of different peace movements and academics, joined in the establishment of Hadash.

The basic principles of Hadash as a broad leftist movement included the unique demand for the evacuation of all the territories which were occupied in June 1967 and the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel – a claim that other movements began supporting only in later years. The principles stressed subjects such as workers' rights, social justice, opposition to privatization, democratic liberties and human rights, equality for the Arab minority, ethnic groups, women, the protection of the environment and the disarmament of mass destruction weapons. In the present elections there is still no other party which presents all these demands in its platform.

Hadash was established by the Israeli Communist Party (Maki), which was represented in the first Knesset, became one of the most influential political movements, both directly and indirectly. The reason for that is clear: Hadash always sustained the Jewish-Arab partnership and has never traded its principles.

### Against the tide

To be a consistent left wing movement in Israel means to swim against the tide. Hadash has been, during all its years of existence a haven of Jewish-Arab cooperation in a reality of separation and discrimination. It was (and still is) a socialist movement in a capitalist state; a movement which fights against every manifestation of racism and discrimination; a movement which supports women's rights in a patriarchal male chauvinist society; a

peace movement which objects to the occupation and fights for a just peace which will prevent wars; a movement of environmental justice in an area which is being polluted by real estate moguls who gradually take control over it; the only movement which demands the demilitarization of Israel and the whole Middle East and the abolition of nuclear and chemical weapons.

Hadash was the first to run in the elections under the slogan "Two states for two peoples"; the first who warned that the privatization policy would deepen poverty and inequality; the first and most consistent to stand up against the settlements and against military aggression, wars, and occupation, even on the very day they start.

## The history of a struggle

Over the course of Israel's political history parties were established and have disappeared, governments came and went, the methods of oppression became refined, and the means of deception by the establishment deepened. But Hadash was consistent in exposing the truth behind all the lies. We at Hadash condemned from the first moment the "Peace for Galilee war" (the first Lebanon war) and similar wars, whose aim was to prevent an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. We never succumbed to the fashionable concepts of – "quiet, we're shooting" and "shooting then crying".

We at Hadash sought and found partners in our struggle for a just peace, against racism and discrimination, against the ongoing diminishing of workers' and women's rights, against the cuts in education, health, welfare and housing budgets. Hadash demonstrators were the first to use slogans which later had a wide public acclaim, such as "Bread, Work", "Israel, Palestine, two countries for two peoples", "There is no democracy without equality", "The people demand social justice", and "Bibi, resign, health is worth more".

Until now Hadash has supported from outside only one government – The Rabin Government (1992-1995), which recognized the PLO, conducted negotiations with it and signed accords which were meant to bring about the cessation of the conflict within five years. It reduced the investments in the settlements; and abolished the discrimination against Arab children in children's benefits and funds.

When reading the historical speeches of Hadash Knesset members, one realises how consistent and principled their stand was during all these years. Tuffik Toubi, one of the founders of Hadash, was one of the first to attack the privatization policy, when it still was at its very beginnings: "There is today talk also about the privatization of the Post office, the phones, electricity, the trains etc. etc. This policy entails, on the one hand, damage to national-state interests. Entrusting these vital services into private hands subordinates them to the profit interest and the amassing of benefits for the new owners, at the expense of the economic-political interests and the benefits of the workers. At the same time, by

taking these steps the policy of the government aims at jeopardizing the rights of the workers and their achievements" (speech at the Knesset, 1.12.1982).

His faction co-member, Meir Wilner, said about the first Lebanon war, three days after it broke out: "It is said that the war was begun by Israel in order to remove the cannons to a distance of 40 kms. What are 40 kms? Tomorrow there will be a cannon with a range of 60 kms and 100 kms. This is an argument fit for a kindergarten! There is no other solution but a political one. According to your logic one will have tomorrow to conquer Beyruth and perhaps Damascus too, and who knows to what extremes your militaristic madness can go?" (speech at the Knesset, 8.6.1982).

## Achievements

The struggle which Hadash is conducting against the System which raises the banner of force and not that of negotiation, which drives about two million Israelis below the poverty line, and which prefers profit over welfare - is long and difficult, and requires much devotion and consistency.

Hadash is proud of its devoted members, Arabs and Jews, men and women. Hadash is also proud of the many achievements which it attained in the campaign which combines popular public activity with the performance of its representatives in the Knesset. Hadash is an effective political movement which curbed developments that were socially and democratically negative, and brought about changes in important issues.

Hadash led the impressive environmental revolution, which includes laws such as the clean air law and the "the polluter pays" law. The legislation initiatives of Hadash yielded the protection of workers' unions organizers from dismissal; the protection of contractor workers; the application of the equal opportunities law on manpower companies; the protection of the rights of a tenant in public housing; the law for the rehabilitation of mentally disabled persons in the community; the rehabilitation day care centers for children with special needs; the abolishment of the discrimination against women regarding unemployment compensation; the promotion of women's rights in shelters for beaten women; and many other laws which promoted social and environmental justice and human rights.

In the course of all the years, Hadash was first and foremost a field movement, and promoted struggles outside the Knesset too. Hadash was the leading force in ongoing battles against the destruction of the unrecognised village of El-Arkiv and in the building of thousands of missing classes in the Arabic educational system. The Hadash faction in the Histadrut workers' union accompanied innumerable workers struggles which ended with substantial achievements, such as the workers' organization and the absorption of contract workers as regular workers in many local councils.

Hadash activists among the students led many struggles against the endeavors to raise tuition fees; for the expanding student housing and dorms; for the protection of students' freedom of speech. Hadash-Students held, in the course of the years, mass events against the occupation and wars, against violence against women, for the protection of the rights of contract workers within the boundaries of the universities, and for the advancement of a democratic culture.

Hadash keeps up a consistent struggle for equal wages for women; against the murder of women, including those under the pretext of "protection of the family honour", and against discrimination against women by means of religious oppression. In 2003, as a reaction against the decrees of Netanyahu which harmed women especially, the women activists of Hadash initiated a joint campaign of all the women's organizations against the curtailing of the national insurance benefits, against dismissals and against the forcing of more women to live a life of poverty. Hadash activists in Tandil (the movement of democratic women in Israel) initiated the joint campaign of Israeli and Palestinian women under the heading: "Each woman deserves to live in an independent state".

## **Today as before**

To be a pacifist in a country which maintains an occupation since 1967; to be supporters of democracy in a regime which advances eviction from lands and laws that trample on human rights; to implement a Jewish Arab partnership in a system which institutionalizes racism and discrimination in all spheres; to be the leaders of a struggle against a regime of privatization, and for the right of workers to unionize – this is a lifelong project.

Hadash's doors are open to anybody who struggles for the rights of workers, for social justice, for Israeli-Palestinian peace, for the abolishment of racism, for equal rights and for a democratic and pacifistic Israel which integrates among the peoples of the area.

To join Hadash means joining a long, challenging, thrilling and exciting trip against the system. To be part of a socialist movement, without donations from wealthy people, and with a great number of volunteers who believe that the country we are living in could be a much better place.