Israel Elections: Competition Among Right-Wing Zionist Parties for Arab Votes

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Introduction

It is noteworthy to mention that at the beginning of the Israeli election campaigns, especially the parliamentary, a process of party formation begins and a process of divisions within the existing Zionist parties also begins. This will be followed by a process of unification of small parliamentary parties to form larger parties. Small parties are also formed by ex-generals of the Israeli army.

The most helpful factor for all these political processes is that there are a number of shared attributes among all Zionist parties. With the exception of Palestinian Arab parties and the Israeli Communist Party, Zionist Jewish parties share Zionist ideology, right-wing politics and ethnicity. In addition, there is almost complete national consensus among most Zionist parties on many political issues such as: rejecting the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state, excluding and ignoring Palestinian Arab issues of the Palestinian indigenous citizens, refusing to stop colonial settlement, and refusing to dismantle existing colonial settlements.

The political environment fosters right-wing ideology in Israel provided by the dominant colonial authority. This ideology is metaphorically known as Zionist ideology. This right-wing ideology becomes more extreme as fear, terror and panic dominate the consciousness of the Jewish Israeli citizen, who feels the weakness of the Zionist state as a result of its external failures, especially during its defeat in two wars in Lebanon, as well as a result of external challenges that may come from the axis of resistance, as a result of the internal challenges produced by the Palestinian resistance in the colonized territories and the degree of disintegration and slackness that began to emerge in the structure of the Zionist colonial entity.

A critical view of The Zionist parties

Nowadays in Israel, there are a number of right-wing parties opposed to the Likud party that are seeking to overthrow the Netanyahu group. There are also new and small parties that are seeking to change the balance of party power. Israeli parties are experiencing political turmoil due to their focus on personalities and their avoidance of discussing social, political and economic issues. There is no pioneering idea or pilot program that distinguishes a party

from the other, especially when it comes to Palestinian issues.

All Zionist parties support the Zionist apartheid regime that exists inside the colonized territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Even the "left-wing" Meretz party, whose leader Nitzan Horowitz has shown political readiness to align his party with the most extremist right wing parties in Israel. In a recent declaration, Mr. Horowitz asserted that "...the party does not rule out joining elements with whom it has never thought of working with, such as Bennet's "right-wing" party, Yisrael Bitayno, of Lieberman."[1] These two parties are known to be representatives of the extreme Zionist right.

Most Zionist parties suffer from a structural crisis on the level of leadership due to the nature of colonial settlement communities that lack an environment for the formation and growth of political leaders with a new political vision and a realistic and creative strategic dimension. These parties lack leaders with principles, who are willing to discuss humanitarian principles and defend humanitarian causes. The colonial settlement environment produces opportunistic leaders who seek to monopolize power, conspire, and hold a political supermarket. Zionist politicians behave as if they were in a market, they buy loyalties and appoint loyalists to positions they do not deserve. We see these shallow leaders controlling the joints of class political power because of their alliance with the dominant settler capitalist class. In short, they run a colony and do not run a country that seeks to develop and serve the interests of all its inhabitants. A good example of this caliber of politician is the current Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

Important Impressions of Benjamin Netanyahu

Those who met or worked with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu believe that he is a liar with distinction, and possess a high degree of readiness to commit fraud and deception. In addition, he is narcissistic, opportunistic, and immoral. These qualities were confirmed recently by a press interview conducted by Israeli journalist Yossi Millman with the former director of the CIA Director John Brennan. When asked about his impressions of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, John Brennan replied:

> Netanyahu is very cautious and a cunning politician, and has survived several attempts to remove him from office. In my opinion, he has a cunning understanding and manipulative control over Israeli domestic politics. But he is not a man of principles and not a moral person. In meetings with him, alone or as part of a delegation, I found that his description of reality was a distortion of the truth. But in this way he is a typical politician. He will change his mind and positions and will not honour his promises, if it is in his political interest. Did he lie to me personally? My answer is that he interferes with the facts.[2]

According to the assessment of the Israeli journalist Asa-el Amotz, the morality system adopted by Netanyahu regarding his position on the Likud party is evident. "Likud has no longer been a party for promoting politics or even discussing political issues only. In the past, Likud founder Menachem Begin believed in the power of ideas and the leader's submission to the party, but Netanyahu believes in the idea of power and the party's submission to the leader."[3]

Racism, Terror and Incitement in Electoral Propaganda

The media propaganda of right-wing Israeli parties is based on fueling the security concerns

of the Jewish public. We see, for example, that the political-ideological discourse of Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu is always based on a number of constants, the most important of which are intimidation and creation of panic among the Israeli-Jewish citizens regarding the "Iranian atomic threat", the danger of Hezbollah's precision missiles, and the danger of Palestinian resistance missiles. Netanyahu's election speeches are full with the repetitive claims that "Iran is trying to acquire an atomic bomb and intends to use it to exterminate the Jewish people in Israel".

The Removal of Vital Interests

Image on the right is from IMEMC

The focus in Zionist political discourse, especially in electoral propaganda, on intimidation and racial hatred, on the degree of brutality, and on colonial violence against the indigenous Palestinian population, i.e. on the factor of the so-called "security", produces, in turn, psychological effects that are compressing on the social awareness of the Israeli-Jewish citizens forcing them to sympathize and reconcile in harmony with this situation. The Zionist leaders made this reality appear as if it is epitome of the Israeli-Jewish national consensus.

These stressful psychological effects are aimed at removing the awareness of the Israeli-Jewish citizens away from their real interests and from hot issues affecting their quality of life, such as health, education, economy, housing, standard of living and unemployment. Israeli citizens currently suffer from poor health services especially at hospitals, increasingly expensive education and housing, an increasing degree of administrative and financial corruption, and an increasing degree of social violence, especially among the indigenous Palestinian population.

In addition to the rhetoric of intimidation and panic, the Israeli right, particularly Netanyahu, employed racist attitudes in his political speech by inflaming the racist hatred of Jewish Israelis against the indigenous Palestinians of both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and against Palestinian citizens and foreign workers. Through his speech and the behavior of his party in the Zionist parliament, Netanyahu succeeded in promoting the racist nature of the government, its institutions, its military and settlement organizations and its policies on the ground. His party, with the help of a right-wing majority in the Zionist parliament, enacted a number of racist laws. He also succeeded in turning the state of brutality and racism into the backbone of his political discourse.

The Prime Minister's record is full of racist rhetoric and attitudes, he is responsible for the Kamenitz Law to speed up the demolition of Palestinian homes, and for the demolition of the

village of Al-Araqeeb in the Negev for 182 times[4], for the continued construction of the Apartheid Wall, the legislation of the Nationality Law, and the abolition of Arabic as an official language. Netanyahu prides himself on the Nationality Law and does not deny his role in its legislation. When actress Rotem Sela' criticized his government for its racist policies towards the Palestinian citizens of the Zionist State, Benjamin Netanyahu replied: "First and foremost an important correction: Israel is not a state for all its citizens. According to the Nationality Law that we have adopted, Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people alone."[5]

Because of his authoritarian positions within the Likud party, he has caused internal divisions that have resulted in the disintegration of part of his party's leadership, such as Gideon Sa'ar, which led to the founding of a new right-wing party called "The New Hope". Netanyahu has been threatened by the new party that is strongly rivaling him for the votes of the Zionist right and may prevent Netanyahu from winning enough seats to form the next government. The rest of the right-wing Zionist parties have also expressed their distaste for Netanyahu's dominance of the Zionist right and are seeking to replace him. These negative developments have prompted Netanyahu to change his electoral strategy.

The Relentless Pursuit of Arab Electoral Potential

In order to adjust Netanyahu's expected loss in the upcoming elections, the prime minister sought to acquire a portion of the votes of Palestinian citizens. In order to do so, Netanyahu has found it necessary to improve his electoral image among Palestinian citizens. So, he issued false promises in which he promised the Palestinian public to "eliminate crime inside Palestinian society as it was eliminated in the Jewish community." He spoke of "increasing budgets" for Arab municipal and local councils." Netanyahu suddenly retreated. Instead of inciting and lying to the Arab public, he adopted a strategy of containment and incubation."[6]

Despite his previous racist record, we are recently witnessing a different trend by Benjamin Netanyahu. In an effort to attract enough Palestinian votes to win one or two more seats, Benjamin Netanyahu has visited a number of Palestinian cities and towns such as Nazareth, Umm al-Fahm and Tira, with the aim of capturing Palestinian electoral votes. He said he was ready to put an "Arab" candidate on the party's list of candidates for the Knesset for later appointment to the post of minister.[7], and during his visit to Nazareth, Netanyahu "apologized" for his racist remarks towards Arabs. "Peace be upon you," he said in Arabic." I think that The Arabs of Israel should be an integral part of Israeli society."[8]

The Grooming of the Islamic Movement by Netanyahu

In addition to adopting this different approach, Natanyahu pursued a two-way electoral strategy: attacking and inciting against the "Joint List"[9] and accusing it of "losing the confidence of the Arab masses", and the second: attempting to create a political rift within the "Joint List" with a view of liquidating it. Netanyahu succeeded in luring the list of the "Southern Islamic Movement" (the Muslim Brotherhood Movement) led by Mansour Abbas, and pushed it to split from the "Joint List". In preparation for this, Netanyahu's Likud party showed a desire for rapprochement with the Muslim Brotherhood Movement led by Mansour Abbas. "Mansoor Abbas has revealed his aversion to the Israeli left and his support for the right, and has repeatedly defended the role of the Israeli police in the violence that is rampant in the Arab community in Israel."[10]

According to the Israeli Minister Tsahi Hanegbi, the real ambition of the Likud party behind the rapprochement with the Muslim Brotherhood is in the disintegration of "the Joint List" and then the "theft" (in his own words) of Arab votes from Mansour Abbas."[11]

The Muslim Brotherhood and its Opportunistic Positions

The split of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement from the "Joint List" has weakened the "Joint List" and made it vulnerable to active pursuit by Zionist parties, which believe that the dismantling of the "Joint List" is in their interest and that the "Joint List" is only a big store of potential Palestinian votes. Netanyahu's Likud party is ready to put a Palestinian candidate, or perhaps two, in its election list. Other Zionist parties have begun their frenzied pursuit to capture Palestinian votes and have placed Palestinian candidates in their electoral lists such as the Israelis and Meretz parties.[12]

In a statement by Mansoor Abbas, the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, he expressed his reservation from the left by saying that "in religious matters I am a right-winger. I have a lot more in common with Shas and Yehadut Hatorah than I have with Meretz and Kahul Lavan."[13]

At this juncture, we do not want to ask Abbas to tell us what the Muslim Brotherhood has in common with the Shas and Yahdot Hatorah parties, two racist parties with adherence to a settler colonial ideology. But such statements and political positions cast the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the category of cheap political opportunism. The so-called "Islamic morals" put forward by the Muslim Brotherhood Movement constitute nothing but a cover that hides its political opportunism and gives it false credibility. Apparently, his desire to become a "minister" in the right-wing government headed by the super corrupt Benjamin Netanyahu is overwhelming. Within this government, which runs a colony and oppresses an entire people, Abbas will have the opportunity to get closer to those with whom he has "common denominators."

Concluding Remark

Right-wing ideology in colonial settlements can be seen as an extreme nationalist ideology, but this is not a fascist ideology as some leftists mischaracterize it. However, it should be stressed here that much of the behavior of the settler colonialists is very similar to that of fascist regimes and fascists. The fascist regime does not believe in multi-party systems, parliaments, trade unions or elections, but rather they adhere to worship of the state, a one-party regime, and they espouse hostility to both democracy and the political left.

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Notes

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[2] Millman, Yossi, "The Life of an Intelligence Man" – Interview with John Brennan, former President of the CIA, Haartz Supplement (in Hebrew), 4-12-2020, p. 24

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[6] Reuters, Monte Carlo International, "Netanyahu changes his attitude towards the Arabs in Israel: They must become an equal part of society", https://www.mc-doualiya.com, 20-1-2021

[7] Ibid.

[8] Reuters – Monte Carlo/AFB, "Natanyahu changes his tone towards the Arabs in Israel: They should be an integral part of society", https://www.mc-doualiya.com, 20-1-2021

[9] The "Joint List", is a coalition of three Palestinian secular parties (ZS)

[10] Abu Kbash, Bilal, "Netanyahu aspires to win even in alliance with the Arabs", https://24.ae, 9-1-2021

[11] Ibid.

[12] Sama-Occupied Jerusalem, "member of the Arab United List, Abas Mansour Defends Netanyahu", (in Arabic) ,https://samanews.ps,2-12-2020

[13] Occupied Jerusalem- Sama, "Member of the Joint Arab List Abbas Mansour defends Netanyahu", https://samanews.ps, 2-12-2020

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