

Israel Elections: Shock the Victims to Save the Coloniser

The Palestinian citizens of Israel are not a reserve force for the Zionist 'left'. Rather, they are a vital part of - and a fighting force for - their people and homeland

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Just three weeks before the [Israeli elections](#) due on 1 November, a prominent Israeli academic has published a Hebrew-language piece in [Ha'aretz](#) titled "400 Buses and a Tent City: This is How 200,000 Israeli Arabs Will Be Expelled in Two Days".

Yoram Yovell, who is known in the fields of psychiatry and neuroscience, is considered an expert on shaping public opinion.

As a member of Israel's "left", he has generally sided with the opponents of the [occupation](#).

However, in his piece, Yovell paints a horrific scenario led by far-right politicians [Itamar Ben-Gvir](#) as Minister of Judiciary, [Bezalel Smotrich](#) as Minister of Security, and [General Zvi Fogel](#) in the role of Minister of Public Security.

Stoking fear

Yovell details a sequence of events that could begin in November – immediately following the election – and extend over two months, during which, in a sudden military operation, 200,000 Palestinian citizens of Israel would be rounded up and transported in 400 buses to a tent city set up in the occupied West Bank.

He continues that they would be exiled, never allowed to return, and the operation completed by intimidating the rest of the Palestinians in the 1948 territories. Their

citizenship would descend into a state of permanent horror.

The writer ends the scene by noting that it is one that may or may not happen, but could be applicable in light of current political trends in [Israel](#) and the dominant mentality in Israeli society.

But this raises an important question: why would Yovell write such an article?

In politics, Yovell is not considered as prominent a figure as in his own academic and medical career. He does not belong to any anti-Zionist or anti-occupation Jewish groups that [clash weekly](#) with the occupying soldiers alongside the Palestinian [popular resistance](#) in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Is it Yovell's goal to frighten the vulnerable Palestinian citizens of Israel into rushing to the polls? Is he posing an equation of displacement buses or of buses to transport voters to the [Knesset](#) polls to coerce Palestinians in Israel into voting for [Yair Lapid](#), [Benny Gantz](#) and [Gideon Saar](#) to reform what they called 'the government of change', or 'the government of dreams'?

Or is it to make the Palestinian citizens of Israel suffer shock and despair and not go out to vote? Does Yovell want them to bear the burden of the rise of Itamar Ben-Gvir and his [fascist party](#), the heir to the historical Kach movement led by [Meir Kahane](#), and the possibility of his future control over the reins of Israeli rule?

Yovell does not seek to intimidate the voters of the Labour Party, Meretz Party, or Lapid's party, but rather the Palestinian voters. He does not seek to "shock" the residents of Tel Aviv's north neighbourhoods that support the secular Zionist parties of the centre, nor does he speak to what they call the Jewish conscience.

Burdening the victim

Yovell is not the prophet of anger his grandfather [Yeshayahu Leibowitz](#) established himself to be among Israelis due to his critical commentary of the country's military, religious and political practices – including the [1967 occupation](#).

Rather, Yovell aspires to change the victims of Zionist colonisation and their behaviour. He even sees his state as a refuge for political protection. He does not call, for instance, for an anti-fascist front, fighting [fascism on the ground](#) and bringing it down through demonstrations, protests and clashes.

Yovell's article appears to be part of a push to get the Palestinians living under the 1948 occupation to vote as part of a [campaign funded](#) by both Jewish and non-Jewish Americans who wish to prevent former Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu's](#) return to power.

Regretfully, however, there is a silent consensus on this issue among the [Arab political parties](#) which periodically participate in the electoral race, on an approach that dates back to the late 1990s and is still deepening, to encourage the integration of Palestinian Arabs into the Israeli game rules and to create elites moving in this direction, for the long term.

Products of Israel

[Ben-Gvir](#) and his fascist party are one hundred percent the product of Israel, its racism, its occupation and its system. They are also the product of the profound transformations taking place in the Haredi community, which has been gradually Zionised.

What the secular Zionist movement, led by [Lapid](#), is striving for today is the Zionisation of the Haredi movement and its [conscription for military service](#). That is politically herding them, on a silver platter, to Ben-Gvir, who addresses their Jewishness. For the Haridim traditional leaders, Ben-Gvir constitutes the greatest threat.

No one from either the Palestinian communities in Israel or from the far-right could claim that [the rise of Ben-Gvir](#), especially among the Israeli youth from all its circles, is the product of the Arab Palestinian political behaviour at home, similar to that claimed by Shimon Peres: that the role of the Arabs is to overthrow the right-wing Likud and inaugurate him as prime minister of Israel.

When Peres lost the 1996 elections to Netanyahu, after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Peres blamed the victims of his occupation, and held the Palestinian Arab masses responsible for his downfall and the rise of Netanyahu.

Yet he did not show any regret towards the [school massacre in Qana](#), Lebanon, which was committed during the Israeli aggression known as the “Clusters of Wrath” in the same year.

Yovell does not subject his Israeli Jewish audience to the potential shock of the elections, but does so to the Palestinian victims of Zionist colonisation. He does not say to his fellow Israelis: do not be racist and do not allow ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and implement genocidal policies and commit crimes against humanity.

Rather, he calls on Arabs to participate and follow the rules of the game of the extinct Zionist “left” [represented by the Labor Party and Meretz](#).

The Labor Party and the United Workers’ Party, Mapam – which merged with Meretz – are the central perpetrator in creating the Nakba, the population transfer and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

But they did not use “400 buses” as much as they used ships to expel the people of coastal cities or for mass expulsion in the north, centre and south; since then, the expelled had to manage their affairs towards the perpetuation of uprooting and displacement.

Fighting for their rights

Palestinian Arabs were eventually liberated from tutelage and the “reserve” box that the Labor Party sought to impose on them in the year of the Nakba, through their national and civil struggles to abolish the military rule, to confront Judaisation of the Galilee and Negev and to refuse the Israeli-imposed educational curricula until today.

It is possible to consider the “Land Day” and the elections that followed it in 1977 as a pivotal event in this regard as the newly established [“Democratic Front for Peace and Equality”](#) obtained for the first time a majority of Arab votes, whereas the Zionist parties retreated.

These are the elections in which the Labor Party lost and the Likud took over the reins of power. However, even as the Labor Party fades in Israel, it has a strong passion for revenge against Arabs whom it saw as no more than followers, inferiors and porters of rescue kits to save it from [drowning](#).

Perhaps Yovell's article implies his recognition that there is no hope in Israeli society and its ability to change or stop the rising fascist, racist tide.

It is an implicit acknowledgement that the Palestinian Arab masses are the true and weighty democratic force capable of changing Israeli society and establishing their weight, while in reality this excessive betting on the Palestinians under the 1948 occupation to bear the responsibility of preventing the return of the Netanyahu government is a disadvantage for this public.

Deepening the occupation

On the most fundamental issues, Netanyahu, Lapid and Gantz agree on the continuation and deepening of the occupation, aggression, and the legitimisation of Israel's [apartheid](#), and are supported in this by the Supreme Court, the media and public opinion.

At the partisan level, the chance that Gantz and his party will join a coalition led by Netanyahu is also possible as an alternative to the Ben-Gvir-Smotrich alliance, because some international and American circles – both for their own interests and for Israel's legitimacy – are interested in such a coalition in order to prevent Israel from deepening its profile as a racist regime.

The Palestinian citizens of Israel are fighting for their rights and for the rights of all Palestinians confronting the aggression and the inherent structural racism of Israel.

They are seeking development and to enhance their status, but they are not a reserve force for the Zionist "left". Rather, they are a vital part of and a fighting force for their people and homeland.

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