

Socio-Political Formations Behind Israel's Neo-Zionist Government

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Two months after the election of the new government of Israel, the blurred picture is becoming more transparent, and it seems one can offer some more informed insights about its composition, personalities, and possible future policies and reaction to them.

It would not be an exaggeration to define Benjamin Netanyahu as the least extreme member of this government, which tells you about the personalities and policies of all the others.

There are three major groups in the government, and I am not referring here to various political parties, but rather to socio-political formations. In the first group are the ultra-orthodox Jews, both the European and Arab Jews orthodoxies. What characterizes them is the process of Zionization they underwent since 1948.

Zionization of Ultra-Orthodox Jews

From a marginal role in politics, only for the sake of their communities, they belong now to the captains of this new state. From being moderate and adhering to sacred Jewish precepts that do not allow Jewish sovereignty in the Holy Land, they now emulate the Israeli secular right: supporting colonization in the West Bank, the siege on the Gaza Strip, employing racist discourse toward the Palestinians where they are, advocating harsh and aggressive policies and, at the same time, trying to take over the public space and Judaize it, according to their own strict version of Judaism.

The only exception is Neturei Karata, loyal to their long-term anti-Zionism and solidarity with the Palestinians.

National Religious Jews

In the second group are the national religious Jews, mostly living in colonies, on

expropriated Palestinian land in the West Bank, and recently creating “learning centers” of settlers in the midst of mixed Arab-Jews towns in Israel.

They support both the criminal policies of the Israeli army and the actions by settler vigilantes that harass Palestinians, uprooting their orchards, shooting at them, and disputing their way of life.

Their aim is to give both the army and these vigilantes a freer hand in oppressing the occupied West Bank, with the hope of pressuring more Palestinians to leave. This group is also the backbone of the Israeli secret service command and dominates the cadre of senior officers in the army.

The two groups mentioned so far share the wish to impose stricter apartheid inside Israel against the 48 Arabs and, at the same time, begin a crusade against the LGBT community while demanding a more strict marginalization of women in the public space.

They also share a messianic vision and they believe they are now in a position to implement it. At the center of this vision is the Judaization of sacred sites that are now “still” Islamic or Christian. The most coveted site is Haram al-Sharif.

The first precursor was the provocative visit by the Minister of National Security Itamar Ben Gvir to the Haram. The next step will come on Passover, with an attempt to fully invade the Haram with Jewish prayers and ministers. Similar actions will be taken in Nablus, Hebron, and Bethlehem. How far they will go is difficult to predict.

Marginalization of Likud’s Secular Jews

The second group also has representatives in the major party of the government, the Likud. But most of the Likud members are part of a third socio-political group: the secular Jews who are also adhering to traditional Jewish practices.

They try to distinguish themselves by claiming that economic and political liberalism is still an important pillar in the Likud’s political platform. Netanyahu used to be one of them but now seems to desert them when it comes to dividing the spoils, namely marginalizing them in the government. He needs the others more than his own party, to avoid trial and remain in power.

The Zionist Project

The prominent members of all these groups arrived with pre-prepared legislation initiatives and policies: all of them, without any exception, are meant to allow an extreme right-wing government to dispense of whatever has remained of the charade called the Israeli democracy.

The first initiative already began, sterilizing the judicial system in such a way that it could not, if it ever wished to, defend the rights of minorities in general or that of the Palestinians more specifically.

To be honest, all the previous Israeli governments were informed by this overall disregard for the civil and human rights of Palestinians. This is just a phase of making it more constitutional, more mainstream, and more apparent, without any attempt to hide the aim

behind it: to have as much historical Palestine as possible with as few Palestinians in it as possible.

However, if this materializes in the future, it will take Israel further into its neo-Zionist destiny; namely, the truthful fulfillment and maturation of the Zionist project: a ruthless settler colonial project, built on apartheid, ethnic cleansing, occupation, colonization and genocidal policies.

A project that, so far, escaped any significant rebuke from the Western world and one which is tolerated by the rest of the world, even if it is censured and rejected by many in the global civil society. So far, it is only due to Palestinian resistance and resilience that it failed to be triumphant.

End of 'Fantasy Israel'

This new reality brings to the fore a series of questions, that one has to ask, even if at the moment we cannot answer them.

- Will the Arab and Muslim governments, which only recently joined the immunization of this travesty, realize that it is not too late to change course?
- Will new governments of the Left, such as the one elected in Brazil, be able to lead the way for a change of attitude from above that would reflect democratically the one that is demanded from below?
- And will Jewish communities be shocked enough to wake up from the [“fantasy Israel”](#) dream and realize the danger of present-day Israel, not only to Palestinians but to Jews and Judaism as well?

These are questions that are not easy to answer. What we can stress is, once more, a call for Palestinian unity so as to enhance the struggle against this government and the ideology it represents. Such unity would become a compass for a powerful global front that is already there, thanks to the [BDS](#) movement, and is willing to continue its work of solidarity and enhance it further and wider: galvanizing governments, as well as societies, and bringing back Palestine to the center of global attention.

The three components of the new Israeli government did not always coexist easily; so there is also a possibility of an earlier political collapse since all in all we are talking about a group of incompetent politicians when it comes to running such an intricate economy as the Israeli one. Probably, they will not be able to arrest the high inflation, rise in prices, and swelling unemployment.

However, even if this is going to happen, there isn't an alternative fourth socio-political group that can lead Israel. So, a new government would be formed by another combination of the same forces, with the same intent and policies.

We should treat this as a structural challenge, not a one-off, and prepare for a long struggle, based on even more enhanced international solidarity and tighter Palestinian unity.

This rogue government, and what it represents, will not be there forever; we should do all we can to shorten the wait for its replacement with a much better alternative not only for the Palestinians but also for the Jews, and everyone else that resides in historical Palestine.

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