

## **Fighting for “Israeli Democracy” too little and too late**

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It is early 2023 and the Israeli streets are flooded with demonstrators fighting to save their democracy. Why are they demonstrating? The Israeli supreme court and other parts of the judicial system are about to be dismantled by an ultra-right-wing government. Many of the demonstrators believe that the supreme court is an essential part of any democracy and certainly theirs. Without it, governments that rule with a small margin may do as they wish and bend rules in ways that will further increase their margins, while slowly (or rapidly) eating away at civil rights.

My closest loved ones are out there demonstrating in the streets. Quite courageously, they are doing their best to “fight for democracy”. Like them, hundreds of thousands of other good Israelis are doing their best to “save their country”. But I am sorry to say, these demonstrations are **too little and too late**. In fact, most demonstrators miss a key point. The true fight was actually lost about 15-20 years ago when support of a two-state solution within the Israeli public vanished.

TLDR; More bluntly, I believe that it is pathetic to demonstrate about democracy now. Instead, my best suggestion for any Israeli who cares about their future and the future of their family is to pack up and leave. Start to plan your way out of Israel now!

Let me give you some context...

Israel has had a military dictatorship over Arab populations since the start of time. In fact, since its creation in 1948 until 1966 Arab civilians inside Israel were under military rule, and then from 1967 until today, Arabs (also identifying as Palestinians) have been under military rule in the west bank. While today Arabs inside Israel enjoy “democracy” and many civil rights, the Palestinians in the West Bank don’t have any voting rights. In fact, they lack any rights whatsoever. They are ruled by a military dictatorship, enforced by Israeli soldiers where the primary mission of the soldiers is to protect Israeli settlements and settlers. Frankly, years ago, I used to be one such soldier.

It is true that for Israel, there is a real survival conflict with the Palestinians. Terror is a common Palestinian theme and as a “nation”, Palestinians have failed to pick up and create a constructive country. They had multiple avenues to do so but many resort to armed violence and terror. As one example, take the Gaza strip. Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. Then, instead of seizing the opportunity to create an independent fruitful (mini-)country, extreme Islamic religious Palestinian leaders took over the Gaza strip. Today it is one of the nastiest places on earth – ruled by the ruthless Hamas that continuously engages with Israel via useless rocket wars that lead to nowhere.

OK, so Palestinian regimes are ruthless and useless, but what has happened on the Israeli side?

Well, what has happened is that in the early 2000's efforts within the Israeli public to stop occupation of Palestinians territories vanished from mainstream political activity and debate. Instead, through a sequence of smart right-wing manoeuvres, the "complete Israel" (i.e. Israel = Israel + West Bank) grew to become the undisputed mainstream public view. As a consequence, the occupation of large Palestinian territories and a massive civilian population in the West Bank has become the acceptable norm by almost all Israelis. Basically, when it comes to occupation, Israelis stopped asking questions.

Today, this highly non-democratic Apartheid is only disputed by small fringe groups in Israel while most Israelis find no moral issue with serving in the military. Having said that, I believe that the Israeli military is still (in general) a moral institution. However, one of its main missions, occupation, is highly immoral and goes against the core of "democracy". As I said – Israelis stopped asking questions.

So basically, Israelis have opted for "non-democracy" way before the current supreme court reform was even a thing. Now everyone is paying the price.

You see, you can't hold a sustainable fight for democracy and hope to have any credible chance in succeeding, if at the same time you accept the unjust occupation of people that don't have any civil rights. This type of "fight" lacks long term credibility and won't stand the test of time. It differs from true historical humanistic struggles that succeed such as the civil rights movement in the United States, or struggles for female rights, or even the struggles for the creation of the state of Israel itself. It is a "fake fight" because it is a fight for a "fake democracy". It has major moral flaws and it won't last.

In fact, the weakening (and near disappearance) of the true fight for stopping the occupation is exactly what opened the door for the ultra-crazy-right-wing side of the Israeli political spectrum to go the extra step. I reckon that if the Israeli left would have held to its ways and had not accepted occupation as it did (sometime in the early 2000's), then there would be no reason to fight today for a supreme court. But that is a counter-factual discussion about the past, and is hence an irrelevant discussion for anyone actually living in Israel today.

So basically, I believe that since the moral basis of most demonstrators is not founded, cracks will form in their battle, and they will ultimately fail. As a consequence, I believe that the ultra-right wing government will certainly succeed to topple the supreme court. Further, other legal foundations will be alerted in a non-reversible way. This will then pave the path for injustice against many communities inside Israel in ways that all the demonstrators see. What many demonstrators fail to see is that they are stepping to be one step closer to the occupied Palestinians which they abandoned years ago.

In summary: **too little and too late...** From a pragmatic viewpoint, you may choose to do as I did - pack up and leave, or maybe stay in the ultra-right Apartheid state. If you do, for your sake, you may eventually label me and others like me as "traitors". Because after all, when you don't have civil rights – it is safest to align with the government.