

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Middle East & N. Africa > Palestine & Israel > Movements, Left forces, solidarities (Palestine) > **War on Gaza: How Israel's leftists quickly lost their compassion for (...)**

# War on Gaza: How Israel's leftists quickly lost their compassion for Palestinians

Sunday 17 March 2024, by [NOY Orly](#) (Date first published: 16 March 2024).

**Liberal Israeli sympathy for Palestinians was based on the colonial mindset that the subjugated are inferior and should be grateful for their support**

Contents

- [Legitimate targets](#)
- [Pure narcissism](#)
- [Embracing tribalism](#)

*Israeli protesters demonstrate near the Defence Ministry in Tel Aviv on 16 December 2023 (Alberto Pizzoli/AFP)*

The  [Hamas attack](#)  of 7 October and  [the war](#)  that  [Israel](#)  launched thereafter introduced a new conceptual category of persons to the Hebrew-Israeli vocabulary: the “disillusioned” - meaning, the folks who have now “sobered up”.

These people insist that, until 7 October, they were humanistic seekers of peace for whom the Hamas attack changed everything: in its wake, they moulted their former selves and now passionately supported the genocide that Israel was [perpetrating in Gaza](#).

For more than five months, they have continued to flog one another for the sin of their earlier left-wing innocence. After suitable ritual absolution, they enter into the bosom of the tribe and are showered with forgiveness in the name of the people and the nation.

Already tiresomely long, the ranks of these disillusioned persons continue to expand. Many of the newly added are from the entertainment industry and identified with the liberal camp. Everyone gets their 15 minutes of fame to reiterate the formulaic arguments: I believed in peace, I wanted coexistence, but on 7 October I discovered that on the other side, there are no humans, only [human animals](#) that must be fought to the bitter end.

The ritual purification is complete with expressions of love and appreciation for “the Israel Defence Forces, the most moral army in the world”, plus thanks and congratulations to our heroic soldiers, and some lip service paid to the plight of the hostages.

As veteran actor Hanny Nahmias [has said](#), “[We] were the most in favour of coexistence” - but now she wants a war “to the finish”.

## Legitimate targets

If we pay close attention to the newly disillusioned, the problem does not seem mainly to be their

new, changed position - which now often embraces the total extermination of the Palestinians in Gaza.

For example, popular singer Idan Raichel, who is generally associated with progressive values and often collaborates with musicians from the Ethiopian community, is resentful that the residents of Gaza - displaced, brutalised, thirsty and starving - do not enter the tunnels and battle Hamas, even if it costs them thousands of casualties, to effect the return of all the abductees.

Raichel concludes that since they do not do so, they should be viewed as accomplices to the crimes of Hamas and hence as legitimate targets for attack by Israel.

In fact, the problem with these newly disillusioned persons seems rather to be in their interpretation of their "leftist" position prior to their disillusionment.

In an [interview](#) on comedian Shalom Assayag's programme, *Stronger Together*, actor and TV presenter Tzufit Grant stated that "my leftist side no longer exists; I thought we were all human, but - no".

*Video: US economist Jeffrey Sachs says Israel has a murderous gang in government*

On 7 October, in her words, the attackers killed off "some humanitarian part of the brain, of overwhelming compassion, [the idea that] 'we are all human beings'".

Grant no longer believes that we are all human. So, now what?

She describes over two million Palestinians in Gaza with [an abhorrent vocabulary](#) for someone for whom, until recently, a love for humanity was her guiding light.

## **Pure narcissism**

Grant is not alone. Perhaps the strongest sentiment referenced repeatedly by many of the newly disillusioned folks is disappointment: the Palestinians have "lost them".

They, the leftists of the past who claim that they were after all completely committed to coexistence and saw every person as a human being - and their "reward" was a criminal attack on 7 October.

Yes, the Hamas attack on the Gaza-adjacent communities was horrifying. But beware of the notion that the overlord's mere goodwill was supposed to be sufficient to satisfy the Palestinians, who were supposed to be grateful for the mater's kindness and continue bearing their oppression in silence. (Oh, that longing for the "good old days" when Palestinians in Gaza, by dint of the kindness of Israel, could enter Israel to work as day labourers and be grateful for it.)

This stance was pure narcissism, at best - not a political position based on an analysis of reality and its distorted power relations.

Some observers repeatedly mention that many of the residents from the Gaza-adjacent communities that were attacked on 7 October were peace-seeking people, some even activists who regularly volunteered to drive Gaza's children from the Erez crossing to Israeli hospitals - a reference meant to portray Palestinians as ungrateful and to justify the shift in their own political positions.

This stance is tainted by the same narcissistic depoliticisation that views everything through the lens of the good intentions of (some) Israelis.

Undoubtedly, volunteering to transport sick Palestinians from Gaza is a noble act and the volunteers are people whose actions were prompted by morality and conscience. But a political position sees the larger context in which this volunteering takes place: that is, Israel's long-term siege of the Gaza Strip and the destruction of most of its civilian infrastructure.

Such a position inquires into how this reality came about - in which Palestinian civilians in Gaza must rely on the generosity of good Israelis and cannot receive suitable medical care in Gaza itself. It asks why there are no proper hospitals in Gaza, and who prevents Palestinians from building them, and by what right.

## **Embracing tribalism**

Such a position would highlight the significance of such a far-reaching denial of the freedom of movement for millions of people who require the overlord's permission not only to enter Israel but also to travel to the Palestinian territories in the West Bank. It would also point out the nature of the regime that for decades has controlled every breath taken by millions of disenfranchised subjects, and it would understand that such a regime inevitably must provoke an uprising.

And, contrary to all attempts to control how these realities are framed for public consumption, to understand them accurately is not the equivalent of supporting violence nor its justification, but quite the opposite: a dispassionate analysis of this bloody reality, to enable us to exit from it.

That the most the subject can aspire to is the master's recognition of his being human, a recognition that can be withheld as easily as it was given if the subject 'disappoints', is the hallmark of the colonial situation

The concept that the most the subject can aspire to is the master's recognition of his being human, a recognition that can be withheld as easily as it was given if the subject "disappoints", is the hallmark of the colonial situation.

In this situation, the master deems himself so superior to the subject that the latter should be thankful for every moment in which the master's grip on his throat remains loose, while any resistance to the ever-present threat of a chokehold is tantamount to ingratitude.

These are the same "leftists of the past" who, alongside their disappointment in the Palestinians, have also suddenly discovered the joys of embracing tribalism - as Tzufit Grant has evidently done.

Since 7 October, she says, she has wanted to walk all day through the streets and kiss Israelis: "I have become very Israeli, very Jewish."

Lamentably, disastrously, in today's Israel, this would seem to involve parting not only with the "humanitarian portion" of the brain, but with the brain itself.

**Orly Noy**

---

---

**P.S.**

- Middle East Eye. 16 March 2024 10:11 GMT | Last update: 22 hours 18 mins ago:  
<https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/war-gaza-israel-leftist-lost-compassion-palestinians>

The views expressed in this article belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of Middle East Eye.

- Orly Noy is the chair of B'Tselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories.