

Source: <http://www.green-party.co.il/Election2013/more/english>

## The Greens

Following is the English information that the Greens made available on their website prior to the 2013 Elections for the 19<sup>th</sup> Knesset. For the party's full Hebrew platform, visit its website at <http://www.green-party.co.il/Election2013/matza>

### **Living Green**

You have to think of life in shades of green.

Women, Men, Jews, Arabs, young and old... we can and should be the ones who make the choices crucial to our existence. Together we choose to build a healthy society based on ethics and morality, not corruption, exploitation and the denial of the needs of others.

### **Save the world**

Our world is currently facing a serious environmental crisis symptomatic of a wider social crisis. In Israel, years of environmental and social neglect coupled with the constant need to deal with the country's urgent security problems have had disastrous consequences on the environment and society in general.

The Greens are aware of the fact that security issues will continue to require the full attention of policymakers. However, we must start today to take environmental issues seriously. Israel is our home and we must not neglect it. The Greens have a platform focusing on every aspect in the life of the country.

Politics is one! Peace, security, the market and the economy, education, health and the environment of course, are all elements which together built the edifice of our quality of life which constitutes the vision that we pass on to our children.

For the Greens, the quality of life is the founding block of politics.

The Greens will make quality of life a priority of the government.

### **The vision**

All the prime ministers of Israel, without exception, made security issues the top priority of their governments – often at the expense of the environment and quality of life issues.

We don't deny their importance! Security is a crucial aspect of political life of Israel. But defense and security notwithstanding, their absolute priority are at our expense: rivers full of pollutants, air pollution responsible for hundreds of deaths each year, water which is often more drinking aquifers poisoned everything that we reject on the ground that waste pile and growing exponentially, a sea impoverished.

It is time to stop ignoring the environment in which our society is evolving. This awareness is urgent, a national interest that cuts across political lines. The land belongs to all of us, the water to all of us, the air. Protecting them is protecting us ensuring equality of quality of life.

Integrating environmental protection into all our activities is more than a national necessity. It is a call to arms to give our children a future in which we have no shame because our environment is in danger.

Israel is not a transitional destination for us.

The Jewish people, full of wandering through the diaspora, must learn to see Israel as the home to which they return – for better or for worse.

Israel is not a destination of passage, a place you are passing through where you can behave irresponsibly without thinking of the ramifications of environmental damage.

In Israel, we cannot say: "I can litter as much as I want. When they run out of room, they will find somewhere else."

In Israel, no one has a right to say: "Polluting the water is of no consequence to me. When it becomes undrinkable I will drink water from somewhere else."

In Israel, it is irresponsible to say: "Roads can be built to everywhere regardless of the flora and fauna that may be destroyed along the way. When they are gone I will use the new roads to see nature somewhere else."

In Israel, we must put an end to this mindset that focuses on immediate gratification at the expense of the needs of the future.

Contrary to the reality dictated that the mentality of the Diaspora Jews is based on instability and mobility, the Israeli mentality should advocate stability and continuity. Our children will grow up here, so we should be vigilant because how they will live tomorrow depends on the environment we shape today.

### **The love of Israel**

It is our hope, *Hatikva*, also our national anthem and we hope it is a realistic expectation. We are investing in our children's education and in the protection of our land, not just its borders because this is also the love of the land of Israel: Be connected to its landscapes, its rivers, its forests, valleys, its fields and deserts in their biodiversity and visual beauty.

### **The Greens in Power**

The Green Party was founded as a nonpartisan party with representation at all political levels from municipal to national. Policy change requires political action.

## **The Party's History**

The Green Party was born in 1997 spurred by the tragic collapse of the bridge at the opening ceremony of the Maccabiah Games in Ramat Gan. That was the turning point. The generally accepted notion that something could be 'cheap', 'expedient' and 'good' proved bankrupt. Young Jewish athletes from all over the world came to Tel Aviv to compete in the Maccabiah Jewish Olympics, crossing the wooden bridge over the Yarkon River built for the occasion. In a few seconds, the bridge collapsed and a number of the athletes and guests fell into the poisoned waters which had absorbed a toxic fungus that flourished in the highly polluted waters of the river. Several athletes died in this tragedy.

The tragedy of the Yarkon follows a certain logic: "Why invest in a bridge that we will dismantle tomorrow?" This is a prevalent attitude within society as well and is symptomatic of the mentality that tells us we are only guests on this planet. This irresponsible attitude must come to an end.

Thus the Green Party was born. We believe that how we treat our environment is the first step to integrating and showing our connection to this land as a people and as a society. This is our home and that of future generations. We have no other homeland. The Greens are trying to spread the message and to propose ways of thinking and acting 'green'.

### **Political History of the Greens**

#### **1998 Municipal elections**

The Greens ran in the Tel Aviv Yafo city elections. Peer Visner and Hadas Shakhnai were elected to the city council.

#### **1999 Knesset Elections**

The Green Party ran a party list in the 1999 national elections receiving 14,000 votes.

#### **2003 Knesset Elections**

The Greens ran a list in the 2003 national elections. Despite their shoestring budget, they received 13000 votes.

#### **2003 Municipal elections**

Lists submitted by the Greens and other parties friendly to the environment run in 14 municipal and local council elections.

The Greens have doubled their representation in Tel Aviv, from 2 to 4 councilors. The leader of the Greens, Peer Visner is a Vice-Mayor of Tel Aviv since 2004. First party secretary and former parliamentarian Mordechai Warshovsky regains a seat on the municipal council as do attorney Hadas Shakhnai and animal rights activist actress Orna Banai.

The Greens have presented lists and now have representation in: Ramat Hasharon, Holon, Kiryat Motzkin, Petah Tikva, Ness Ziona, Zikhron Yaakov, Herzliya, Modi'in, Rishon LeTzion, Azor, Shoam and Beer Sheva.

Green Party lists running in local elections received a total of 90,000 votes.

### **2006 Knesset Elections**

The Greens ran for the Knesset in 2006 and received 48,000 votes. That exceeded the threshold of more than 1.5% of the votes needed to be elected in 2003. The Greens were the closest party to return to the Knesset. The next election will be a breakthrough, the beginning of 'think green' at the national level in Israel.

## **The Symbol**

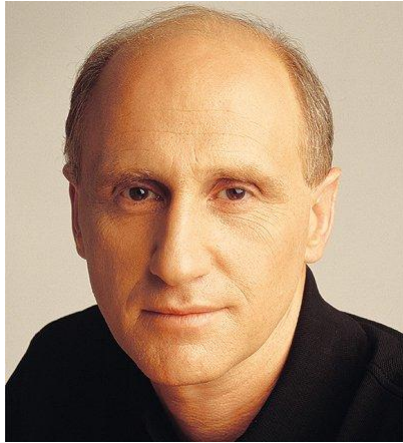


Greens in Israel have chosen the sunflower (which is used by most Green parties in the world) as its symbol. It represents the sun, our main source of energy, and the importance attached by the Greens around the world to renewable energy. The Greens know the sunflower's role in sowing the seeds and raising the Israeli consciousness of the importance of environmental issues.

You know the man in the sunflower! You see him almost every day! It is the little green guy from the traffic lights inviting us to move forward, to cross to the other side. The Greens are a party of action.

The Greens see that man is at the center. In the world of action, he moves forward with and not against the environment towards a healthy, prosperous society of equals.

## Peer Visner



Born: 1957

Married, two children.

### WORK EXPERIENCE

Formerly industrial and exporting electrical engineer.

- Founder and Chairman of the Greens Party
- Founder and Chairman of 'Man is a Tree of the Field' active in the preservation and planting trees across the country with offices in Tel Aviv, Ness Ziona and Kiryat Ono

### Tel Aviv Yafo Municipality Positions

- Vice Mayor of Tel Aviv Yafo and Chairman of the Greens Faction
- Environmental Development Portfolio
- Chairman, Board of Directors of the Yarkon River Project
- Member of the municipal management
- Assistant Director of the Municipal Planning and Construction Committee
- Director, Corporation for Economic Development.

### HOBBIES

Trumpet, skiing and swimming, watching the sunset

## **Achievements**

### **THANKS TO THE GREENS:**

- 1) Israel's public bus companies have been forced to use a depleted sulfur diesel, to lessen air pollution, which kills 1500 people each year.

### **THANKS TO THE GREENS:**

- 2) Although many cellular antennas have been installed throughout the country, others have been dismantled following pressure from the Greens and the public who are aware of the danger of radiation.

### **THANKS TO THE GREENS:**

- 3) The Yarkon River rehabilitation project was initiated. Legal action was resumed against the agencies responsible for the pollution of the Yarkon and Ayalon rivers.

### **THANKS TO THE GREENS:**

- 4) A number of real estate projects on public land were stopped.

### **THANKS TO THE GREENS:**

- 5) Tel Aviv has laws against air pollution enabling violators to be prosecuted.

### **THANKS TO THE GREENS:**

- 6) Instances of water and land pollution have been prevented. Soil examples are now routinely examined as part of new construction projects.

### **THANKS TO THE GREENS:**

- 7) Overbuilding near the sea has been halted which is for the common good of the community.

### **THANKS TO THE GREENS:**

- 8) There is now a growing awareness that it is no longer enough to protect the borders. We must protect the earth.

## **GREEN PARTY ACTIVITIES**

In its ten years of existence, the party has made visible inroads at various levels because of collaboration with the country's decision makers including politicians, government ministries and environmental agencies.

### **Preserving the Land**

- The Greens lead the fight to save the seafront of Herzliya, threatened by real estate projects.

- The Greens have prevented the construction of a neighborhood of villas on the waterfront adjacent to Kibbutz Gaash (south of Netanya)
- The Greens have prevented the expansion of houses at Kibbutz Sdot Yam, on the Mediterranean coast.
- The Greens have been a decisive factor in the drafting of the coastal preservation law.
- The Greens were involved in the fight against the Nitsanim development project, a threat to the ecological space of this area south of Ashdod.
- The Greens have helped surfers to safeguard the Tel Aviv Hilton beach.
- The Greens have been and are active in keeping motor vehicles from the seashore.

### **Reducing air pollution**

- The Greens have convinced the Electric Corporation to use gas instead of coal as a source of energy to power the Reading Plant in Tel Aviv.
- The Greens led the struggle against the Egged and Dan bus companies to reduce pollution emissions from the public busses.
- The Greens have gotten all the mayors of Gush Dan area towns and cities to sign an agreement to minimize air pollution.

### **Cellular Antennae**

- The Greens have led a national campaign against cellular companies erecting of their antennae in populated areas.
- The Greens were at the forefront of the actions to locate the hidden and potentially dangerous antennae.
- The Greens have increased public awareness of the danger of using mobile phones which has led to a more prudent use of these devices.
- The Greens have forced cellphone companies to recognize the problems associated with the production of electromagnetic radiation and to create a forum which will increase the information provided on this topic.
- The Greens are pressing for the establishment of a special committee in Tel Aviv to oversee the setting up of the antennae in the city.
- The Greens have filed a petition with the Supreme Court to compel the ministers of telecommunications, interior, health and the environment, to determine, each within its own sphere of jurisdiction, clear guidelines on the placement of the antennas and limiting electromagnetic radiation.
- The Greens have filed a petition with the Supreme Court to compel the electronic media to ban the broadcast of advertisements that promote the use of mobile phones by children.

- The Greens have forced telephone companies to share cellular antennas in order to reduce the number and to work together as well as with government officials.
- The Greens have managed to dismantle antennae (even if they met the existing standards) because of electromagnetic radiation in houses and public buildings.

### **Water Pollution**

- The Greens led the struggle which uncovered major sea water pollution off the Tel Aviv coast which was made public February 2003. Following this fight, the water treatment management was forced to resign.
- The Greens have raised awareness as to the link between the military industries of Nof Yam and the yellow colored pollutants found on the shores of the Mediterranean along the beaches at Herzliya.
- The Greens lead the fight for the purification of the land of the military industries of Nof Yam

### **Green spaces and preservation of nature**

- The Greens are at the forefront of the fight for the preservation of biodiversity and green spaces in Israel.
- The Greens are among the main opponents of the agreement giving farmers unrestricted rights.
- The Greens are fighting to halt illegal construction in the rural areas of the country.
- The Greens are pioneers in the fight for the preservation of green spaces near the military industries (Tel Aviv, Ramat Hasharon, Nof Yam) — The Greens are among those opposed to the establishment of the northern part of the Ayalon highway. — The Greens have led a successful campaign against the introduction of the road connecting Highway 45 from Ben Shemen in Givat Zeev, parallel to Highway 443.
- The Greens have led the fight against the establishment of Highway 6, including coordinating the demonstrations against the road.

### **The Dead Sea**

- The Greens and other environmental groups have filed a petition with the Supreme Court, against the state and Dead Sea area factories for the ongoing damage and destruction of this unique region of our heritage.

### **Animal Rights**

- Greens lead the fight against the use of animals in circuses.
- The Greens were in the forefront of the fight against the sale of fur at the stores belonging to the Castro Fashion chain.
- The Greens have participated in the struggle to stop the force-feeding of geese in view of producing foie gras.