A day must not pass without protest against this government

Shaul Arieli, Haaretz, August 27, 2018

The end of August. Summer vacation is over. The public protest against the Netanyahu government's policies is likely to fade away. Leaving the squares and intersections and going back to normal is a disaster because it ignores the height of the struggle in which Israeli society is subjected - the struggle for the regime, character and image of the State of Israel. A struggle whose fate will be decided in the upcoming Knesset elections. Israel will choose whether to follow the path of nationalism and annexation of the West Bank, or to U-turn and return to policy in accordance with the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, while striving for a two-state solution. There is no other alternative, a third way, or a "more central" way.

In June 2001, in a Channel 10 report, Netanyahu, in the status of "the concerned citizen," boasted to the bereaved family of Hershkovitz, "I stopped the Oslo agreement." Since his re-election in 2009 until the election of President Trump, Israeli governments under his command have been vanquishing all the lights of hope of the peace process that have hitherto dominated Israeli consciousness (the Arab League initiative, the road map, the Annapolis process). Even worse, most of Netanyahu's governments efforts were spent on blocking any attempt to revive the process, resume negotiations and allow the necessary unification of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (opposition to the four French initiatives to renew negotiations, opposition to cooperation with the Quartet, ignoring the proposal of The European Union, opposition to General Allen's security plan as part of John Kerry's mission, etc.).

When the denial, concealment, and containment stages were completed, Netanyahu's last government, with its establishment in 2015, moved to the last stage. Education Minister Bennett declared to the Amona evacuees in an event commemorating Hanan Porat - and in response to the American condemnation of the government's decision to establish a new settlement (Amichai) – "We will lead a strategic solution to settlements arrangement ... On the subject of the Land of Israel, we need to move from a halt to a decision. We have to mark the dream, and the dream is that Judea and Samaria will be part of the sovereign land of Israel". Bennett and Justice Minister Shaked conducted the strategic solution together with their ideological partners in the Likud. In order to maintain his chair, the "Pied Piper of Balfour" made sure to incite, split, lie, debase the memory of the Holocaust and fulfill all the budgetary and other whims of the coalition partners. This is the only strategic plan implemented by the "right-wing government with the two left hands," as Ehud Barak recently called it.

The main strategic solution was to shatter the judiciary "glass ceiling", which the Supreme Court sought to place in order to limit governmental power, on the basis of the laws of the democratic-liberal state and in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, while respecting international law - in order to reject messianic whims and prevent harm to minorities. The court rejected in most cases the claim that these actions were the "will of the people," under the anti-democratic view that democracy is simply the majority's rule. The rationale of the legal basis for the decision stage in the struggle for the future of the State of Israel has been built from various laws, first and foremost the Law of Regulation, the Nation State Law, the Override clause and the decision of the Ministerial Committee on Legislation to approve that every bill passed by the government must indicate how it will apply to Israelis living in the West Bank. All these were meant to ensure that an absolute and sole priority would be given to Jewish settlement throughout the land, and that private Palestinian land could be expropriated in order to legalize dozens of outposts without the High Court's ability to prevent this.

Until the legislation is completed, and against the background of the public protest against the Nation State law, Netanyahu is in no hurry to move to the "decision stage." He managed to block many proposals by Knesset members from the Greater Israel lobby, headed by Smotrich and Kish, who wanted to annex various parts of the West Bank to Israel (Ma'aleh Adumim, Greater Jerusalem, Jewish settlement areas and the Jordan Valley). Despite his promise to raise these proposals in the upcoming Knesset session, it appears that Netanyahu will ask to do so only after the elections. Until then, he must persuade President Trump not to subject his proposal to renew negotiations with the Palestinians, even if it appears that this proposal meets most of the whims of the Israeli government.

In the matters of territory and a permanent settlement, differences of opinion and small gaps may crack and overthrow the current coalition. Netanyahu and Bennett - and those who want to succeed them - prefer to go to elections on time, while no clear plan, which requires a decision in national terms, is placed before the Israeli voter. The prefer to win them on the basis of the prevailing atmosphere in the Israeli public, without any public protest, and to reestablish the nationalist-messianic coalition. The worst might still be ahead.

In the absence of external restraining factors to the Israeli government, and under Trump's umbrella, the upcoming elections are undoubtedly the final line of supporters of the liberal democracy of the Jewish people against the completion of the Netanyahu and Benet moves. Every day until the elections, when there is no significant protest and no clear rival political agenda put in place, will weaken this camp and reduce concern from the Israeli government. The victory of the nationalist and messianic parties in the Knesset elections will put an end to most of the complaints and protests that accompany us today. The new government will be able to claim that the public supports its policy and its recent decisions to achieve the dream of Bennett, Shaked and their colleagues. The State of Israel will move forward, with many of its citizens not even looking up from Facebook and the "Big Brother" show, to the proposed annexation processes, at the end of which, will be establish a "Jewdeaucratic" state based on the current model in Jerusalem - ultra-Orthodox, nationalist, with an anti-Zionist majority, poor and upholding a discriminatory regime against non-Jewish residents, which will become a majority within a few years.

It can be assumed that in the 21st century this regime will not last for many years. Contrary to the claims of Bennett and his colleagues, the government's new PR campaign - which makes Israel's contribution to the world stand on cherry tomatoes, pipettes, waze and disk on key - will not succeed in persuading the developed Western world to accept the State of Israel, which maintains an apartheid regime. The road to the international leper's position will be short, even if there is a pause in the company of Netanyahu's new friends from Eastern Europe and South America. The road to a bi-national state, which will soon become an Arab state, will be short. The revolution, which in recent years has been led by the nationalist-messianic minority, is fueled by the infuriating indifference and the growing ignorance of the majority. When it is completed, it will dissolve the Zionist vision and throw it into the dustbin of history, and to the head of the list of missed opportunities of the Jewish people.