The Land of Israel lobby is working to abolish the Zionist vision

Shaul Arieli, Haaretz, August 5, 2018

For years, the nationalist and the messianic, those who rejected the two-state solution, were unable to present an alternative that would guarantee Jewish control of the Land of Israel without separation from the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. According to members of the coalition in the Israeli government, it seems that these days have passed, and that they have a worthy alternative, even at the cost of the democratic police of the State of Israel.

It is not coincidental that most of the initiators of the Nation State Law are members of the "Eretz Israel lobby", which champions the idea of ​​"strengthening the hold of the State of Israel throughout the Land of Israel, especially in Judea, Samaria and the Jordan Valley" - MKs Smotrich, Kish, Negosa, Yogev, Boker, Levi-Abekasis, Ilatov, Amsalem and Bitan. Even if this is not an organized plan, it is possible to identify in these MKs' moves an alternative that includes two clear efforts: giving absolute superiority to the Jewish people in the State of Israel and in the Land of Israel at the expense of democratic values, primarily equality, through the Nation State law and other legislation (the override clause, the regularization law, anti-NGO legislation, etc.), and annexations in the West Bank that will eventually lead to a one state with an Arab majority, that would be subjected to the Jewish superiority of the Nation State law in an Ethnocratic state.

Ideas and plans for annexation in the West Bank have in recent years, accompanied Israeli political discourse, and since the election of Trump to the US presidency, initiatives in the Knesset and the Israeli government have been growing, to apply Israeli law to parts or all of Area C. Almost all of these proposals are initiated and supported by members of the "Eretz Israel lobby", one of whose goals is "to promote legislation that will strengthen settlement in these areas and that will prevent any sabotage to it".

Yoav Kish, chairman of the lobby, and his colleagues, submitted a bill for the annexation of Ma'aleh Adumim. An initiative to annex all areas of Jewish settlement is also being promoted by Kish and his colleagues and is based on the decision of the Likud Central Committee from December 31 2017. MK Sharan Heschel of the Likud submitted two bills for the Annexation of the Jordan Valley. MK Yehuda Glick proposes creating "Greater Jerusalem". Members of the Jewish Home propose annexing Area C on the way to the annexation of the entire West Bank, as Bennett told Netanyahu in 2016: "On the issue of the Land of Israel, we have to move from a halt to a decision. We have to mark the dream, and the dream is that Judea and Samaria be part of the sovereign land of Israel". Finally, the "National Union" party of Smotrich (also chairman of the lobby), which seeks to annex the entire West Bank in the "Decision Plan" and even more so, as evidenced by another goal of the lobby: "correcting the serious mistake of the disengagement and preventing its recurrence."

This policy, promoted by the Prime Minister, willingly or involuntarily, to practical aspects by means of legislation, is a dramatic change in relations to the required decision by the Zionist movement and the governments of Israel that have been made for 100 years of conflict - a decision among the three main goals of Zionism: The first, to be a state with a Jewish majority that realizes the right of the Jewish people to self-determination. Second, to be a democratic state, as we undertook in the Declaration of Independence. And third, to establish a state on all of the Mandatory territory. This is how Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, insisted in 1972: "Zionism has its foundations in the Land of Israel ... There will be a Jewish majority, an Arab minority, and equal rights for all. We did not deviate from this Torah, and we will not deviate from that in which the righteousness of our case is folded".

Due to the fact that in most years of the century long conflict there was a non-Jewish majority in Palestine, the Zionist leadership was forced to choose two of the three national goals. It could choose a Jewish state in the whole of Mandatory Palestine, but not enjoy a democratic regime. As Ben-Gurion explained in the Knesset at the end of the War of Independence: "A Jewish state ... in the whole land can only be a dictatorship of the minority".

This option would have been contrary to the Balfour Declaration, which stated that the national home would be established "on the clear condition that nothing would be done that might prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in the Land of Israel"; In contrast to the Mandate, which emphasized that the national home would be established "while preserving the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, regardless of race and religion"; And contrary to the Partition Resolution, which stated that "the Constituent Assembly of each State shall establish a democratic constitution for its State." All of these international resolutions serve as the political and legal basis for the establishment of the State of Israel.

The Zionist leadership had the option to choose two other goals: a democratic state in all of the land of Israel, but to lose the goal of a Jewish state, as Ben-Gurion emphasized in 1937: "I have no satisfaction from the entire Land of Israel when it is Arab."

The third option was a Jewish and democratic state in part of the Land of Israel, which was always the one chosen by the Zionist leadership (1937, 1947, 1949, 1993, 2005).

Thus, in light of the demographic, security and political reality, the two-state solution and the political and physical separation from the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were at the basis of the political-security outlook of the last Israeli prime ministers: Yitzhak Rabin, 1995 ("Israel will continue the peace process ... and will aspire for separation between Israel and the Palestinians"), Ehud Barak, 2003 ("Separation is a supreme national necessity of Israeli demography, identity and democracy"), Ariel Sharon, 2003 ("The demographic consideration played an important role in determining the route of the separation fence because of the fear of the annexation of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians"). And Ehud Olmert, ("The direction is clear, we are going to separate from the Palestinians, to determining a permanent border for Israel").

The policy of the Netanyahu government, in which the Land of Israel lobbyists set the tone, systematically removes the solution of an agreed or independent separation from the national agenda. It creates a change in the order of preference in choosing the three goals, in favor of the whole of Mandatory Palestine at the expense of the democratic police of the State of Israel. This is a dramatic change taking place under the nose of the Israeli public, which is overfed and incited by those who pretend to be innocent, and by the nationalist and messianic, who are careful to hide the full and gloomy picture from it.

Under this charade, Netanyahu is leading the country in giant steps towards the abolition of the Zionist vision of the founding fathers and prime ministers of Israel throughout history: a democratic state with a Jewish majority and recognized borders that is apart of the family of nations.