**This is how Israel is being annexed to the West Bank**

**Shaul Arieli, Haaretz, June 11, 2021**

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The letter from the nationalist-Messianic rabbis, in which they called for "doing anything to prevent the formation of this government", and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's instructions to Likud ministers to attack the "left wing collaborating media", join the recent terrorist incidents in Israel between Jews and Arabs. All of these are an expression of a process that began more than a decade ago, in which the Messianic nationalists, under Netanyahu's threatened rule, seek to overthrow the democratic regime in Israel, in order to allow for the expansion of its borders. To their understanding, it will not be possible to annex the West Bank as long as Israel maintains a democratic regime in which the Palestinians will retain Israeli citizenship.

They focus their efforts on trying to erase the Green Line in every aspect – conscious-wise, socially and legally - and turn the whole of the land of Israel into the arena of Palestinian struggle, and the military regime in the West Bank into a de facto regime of the entire country, where Palestinians can be pushed across the Jordan River. In other words, in the last decade, Israeli Jews crossing the Green Line west of Israel are doing so for the first time not to return to their sovereign state, but to conquer it and turn it into a Judeo-autocracy.

In his book The Annexation Illusions (2020), Hagai Ehrlich describes the failed attempts made throughout history by the countries of the region to annex countries and territories under slogans and ideas that are inconsistent with political, demographic and spatial realities: the Egyptian attempt to annex Sudan under the slogan "Nile Valley Unity" (19th century); The Christian attempt in Lebanon to annex Muslim territories under the slogan "Greater Lebanon"; And the Palestinian fantasy of maintaining an Arab state from "the river to the sea".

The same is true of the "Greater Israel" illusion. After the return of Sinai to Egypt in the 1979 peace agreement, and the evacuation of the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria in the disengagement plan in 2005, Israel was left with the dream of annexing the West Bank (and the Golan Heights). But politically, demographically and spatially, Israel has failed like the aforementioned Arab states: Most countries in the world recognize Palestine as an observer state in the UN and its institutions, and no American administration will allow annexation moves in the West Bank. The demographic ratio in the West Bank between Jews and Palestinians is 86:14, and the spatial ratio is 98: 2 - in favor of the Palestinians. Despite the steady annual increase in recent decades of about 14,000 Israelis in the West Bank, the perennial trends indicate a decline in the settlement enterprise (which is on the verge of a negative migration balance), a change in the composition of the population (40% ultra-Orthodox) and a steady decline in socioeconomic rankings (one third of the residents are ranked in cluster 1).

Thus, for about a decade, under Netanyahu's wings as Prime Minister, Naftali Bennett, Ayelet Shaked, Bezalel Smutrich and others have been leading an opposite trend - the annexation of Israel to the West Bank. This is not surprising. As early as 1988, Boaz Evron wrote in his book "The National Account" that the settlers do not seek to integrate into the Palestinian population in the territories, and "their real goal is not to enslave the Arabs, but to expel them. So their success (in annexing the territory) will not lead to any mixing of populations. More importantly, Evron adds: "As it turns out (from other cases) ... these ruling castes cooperate with the reactionary forces and with militaristic circles within the 'Motherland' and try to bring about military coups and create fascist and reactionary regimes in the Motherland ... The consequences could therefore be a national rift, a dictatorship or a civil war and destruction in the mother country".

In order to destry Israeli democracy, the Messianic nationalists set a number of goals. The first is the Supreme Court, whose role is to limit governmental authority - on the basis of the laws of the democratic-liberal state and in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, while respecting international law - including rejecting the messianic whims and preventing harm to minorities. Shaked is proud that she led the initiative to infringe on the powers of the High Court, arguing that "in recent years it seems that the decision-making of governance is not in the hands of the people and their elected representatives in the Knesset but in the legal system" (Lawyers Conference, May 2015).

The legal infrastructure for the process of reverse annexation is built on anti-democratic laws, chief among them the Regulation Law (which was repealed), the Nation State Law, the Overcoming Clause, the "Young Settlement" Law and more. All of these are intended to ensure that throughout Israel, absolute priority will be given to Jewish settlement (According to Peace Now data, 99.76% of state lands allocated to settlement in the West Bank were allocated to Jews), It will be possible to expropriate private Palestinian land for the purpose of building settlements for Jews (since the establishment of the state, Israel has established 930 settlements for Jews in Israel and zero for Arabs) and legalizing dozens of illegal outposts.

The second target is the education systems. Bennet, Shaked and Smutrich know that the political positions of the youth will affect the political system, and the character and regime of Israel in the coming years. They want to apply to all children a Jewish (religious-Messianic) and Zionist (nationalist) education. This includes the "love of the homeland" that requires annexation of the West Bank, continued control of another people, and international isolation, until we " habituate the world". This is an educational world for which Isaiah Leibowitz wrote the stern warning: "When a person accepts the view that 'the state', 'the nation', 'the homeland', 'security', etc. are the supreme values, and that unconditional loyalty to these values ​​is an absolute and sacred duty - He will be able to commit any act of abomination for the sake of this sacred interest, without remorse".

The pursuit of this goal is expressed in the allocation of resources for religious-nationalist-Messianic education. As recalled, Smutrich wrote in 2011 in the article "We Deserve More" in Besheva magazine: "It is appropriate for the state to invest more budgets in the education of the religious Zionists. Why? Because thier sons have been given the task - to lead the people of Israel". Smutrich even pledged before the last election that if he became a member of the government that would be formed, he would carry out a broad reform in education, and announced a 30% -50% reduction in tuition fees in high school yeshivahs and Ulpanas.

Gideon Saar and Shai Piron were also partners in allocating resources for religious-nationalist-messianic education. According to data from the Ministry of Education, between 2012 and 2016, the ministry increased the budget for religious high school students at the sharpest rate compared to other sectors - and the budget reached a peak of 33,000 NIS per student per year. This amount is 22% higher than the budget of 'general' high school students, and 67% higher than the budget of Arab high school students.

The third goal: Bennett argued that for the sake of Israel (that is, the annexation of the territories), the people of Israel and the State of Israel must be changed. He and his friends focus on "settling in the hearts" of the Israelis who live within the Green Line. The buses of the Jewish rioters who arrived in the mixed cities from the settlements were preceded by the Garinim HaToraniim (a group of religious Zionist individuals and families who settle in communities with low religious population, aiming to strengthen the community's connection to religion). Amnon Bari from the Avraham Initiative wrote about this in a Facebook post last month:

"In the violence between Arabs and Jews of the past week, the Garinim were the 'charge companies' that paved the way and prepared the infrastructure and logistics for settler battalions and Kahanists to invade the cities in an organized manner to harm Arabs. We saw it this week mainly in Lod but also in Jaffa, Ramla and Acre .... In the last three years, the leading Garinim alone were transferred government support in the amount of 20.5 million NIS... An in-depth investigation by Moled organization from 2014 shows that in that year alone 68 'settlement and Torah' Garinim won the support of 24 million NIS. Since then, their support has only grown and grown."

The fourth target is the media. It has not escaped even now the armrest of Netanyahu and his allies and their 'shofars'. With a number of media outlets that are not subject to their corruption and influence, Yair Netanyahu was "appointed" to draw targets on the backs of independent journalists who do not follow the path of flattery, deception, feigned patriotism and more. These recent events have been accompanied by countless threats and attempts to harm media outlets seeking to report on the violent organizations of Jewish gangs that planned to harm Arabs.

These processes will ultimately lead to the establishment of a Judeo-autocracy with characteristics that currently exist in the West Bank, or perhaps, similar to the model of the ultra-Orthodox-nationalist united Jerusalem, with an anti-Zionist majority, poor, full of violent gangs, suffering from nationalist clashes and discriminates against its non-Jewish inhabitants, who in a few years will become the majority.

These tendencies are driven by politicians who perceive the world as an arena in which the concept of the "chosen people" and the logic of the "zero-sum game" dominate. This is an anti-democratic government parade, which holds: if you cannot persuade - slander, silence and outlaw. Those fearful of the Zionist enterprise must internalize that the Green Line has been breached again, but this time to the west. The struggle is no longer about the future of the settlements, but about the future of the State of Israel, its character and the police.