Analyzing the "Decisive Plan" of

the Religious Zionist Party

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Introduction

In 2017, Bezalel Smotrich, leader of the Religious Zionism party, announced a plan to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians. Dubbed "Israel's Decisive Plan," it was later adopted by a general congress of the Religious Zionist Party. After the 2022 elections, when the Religious Zionist Party was able to win important decision-making positions in the Israeli ruling coalition, we started seeing active efforts to implement this plan. What is the background of this plan, and what are the most prominent items included in it? This is what this paper will seek to answer by referring to the original

Bezalel Smotrich

text of the plan, published in 2017 in the Hebrew Journal *Hashiloaḥ*. The paper argues that the foundations on which the plan was built are nothing but a reproduction of the Zionist discourse establishing the "State of Israel" with the addition of a religious dimension, meaning that the plan falls under the category of religionizing Zionism.

The paper consists of an introduction, four sections, and a conclusion. In the first section, we discuss how the religious Zionist party was formed and the electoral alliances it had previously concluded. In the second, we turn to the political background of the decisive plan. Then, the most important sections of the plan are addressed, after analyzing its content. Finally, the fourth section addresses the possibility of Smotrich implementing his plan, with the paper ending with a summary and conclusions.

First: The Formation of the Religious Zionist Party

The Zionist movement was founded with three main movements:

1. The Zionist labor movement with "socialist" tendencies, represented during the founding of the "State of Israel" by the Mapai Party, and later succeeded by the Labor Party.

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☑ 2. The Zionist revisionist movement with "liberal" capitalist tendencies, like the Herut party during the founding period, and its successor later on, the Likud party.

☑ 3. The Religious Zionist movement, which includes under its wing the Haredim, as well as the national religious movement, represented during the founding period by the Mafdal party, and represented in the 2022 elections by the Religious Zionist party.

The political roots of the Religious Zionist Party belongs to the national religious movement, and its foundation dates back to the merger of several right-wing parties from the national religious movement, namely: (Moledet, Tkuma, and Herut–The National Movement).

The Moledet party was founded in 1988, bringing together both secular and religious adherents of the values of the Torah. It was headed at that time by Rehavam Ze'evi (who was assassinated in 2001 by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–PFLP). Moledet stood out among the parties for its explicit call for the transfer of the Palestinians as a solution to the conflict, echoing similar calls by the racist Kach party affiliated with the same national religious movement.

The Tkuma movement was set up by Hanan Porat and Zvi Hendel, who resigned from the Mafdal National Religious Party (the main representative of the national religious movement) to fight the election for the Knesset in 1999. At first, the movement was called Emunim "The Faithful" (perhaps by analogy with the Gush Emunim movement), but it was quickly renamed the Tkuma Movement. Tkuma differs from Moledet in that it relies on a religious authority of ultra-Orthodox rabbis headed by Rabbi Chaim Steiner.

After its founding Tkuma united with Moledet as well as the Herut party–The National Movement, which was formed after Benny Begin and Michael Kleiner defected from the Likud party. The three parties (Tkuma, Moledet, and Herut) gathered under one name, National Union. The union ran for the Knesset elections, under the pretext of preventing Benjamin Netanyahu from conceding any part of the "Land of Israel," after he signed the Wye River Agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) at the end of 1998, which included the redeployment of Israeli security forces in some areas of the West Bank (WB).

The modest results of the National Union in the 1999 elections (4 seats) prompted it to seek alliances with other lists. The National Union began its series of alliances with the Yisrael Beitenu party headed by Avigdor Lieberman. Subsequently, with the aim of running in the 2009 elections, an electoral coalition was formed including the National Union, Hatikvah, and Eretz Yisrael. In the 2013 and 2015 elections, the National Union ran with the Jewish Home party (the successor to the National Religious Party).

The electoral landscape was reshuffled in the April 2019 elections, with the withdrawal of Naftali Bennett and his deputy, Ayelet Shaked, from the leadership of Jewish Home and their formation of the "New Right" list. On the other hand, the National Union ran in the elections under the umbrella of the "Union of Right-Wing Parties" list, which included what remained of the Jewish Home and Otzma Yehudit (*lit*. Jewish Might) parties. Otzma Yehudit left this alliance in the September 2019 elections, while the New Right, led by Bennett, joined it under the name of Yamina list, which included the Jewish Home, the National Union, and the New Right. However, this alliance quickly disintegrated in the 2021 elections. Two lists representing the national religious movement ran in the elections under the name of Yamina; and Religious Zionism which included the National Union "Religious Zionism," Otzma Yehudit and Noam. Religious Zionism ran in the 2022 elections within the same coalition against the Jewish House, Yamina's heir which did not cross the electoral threshold.[2]

Second: The Political Background of the Decisive Plan

Smotrich based his plan on the basic conclusion that the "two-state solution" model has reached a dead end. Smotrich was critical of the shift of Israeli politicians from seeking to end the conflict to managing the conflict. According to his point of view, Israeli society must be prepared to take a decision to end the conflict, not just manage it. In order for this decision to be achieved, a basis must be established, which is to educate the Israeli public that there is no place in the Land of Israel (between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River) for two contradictory national movements. That is, as long as there is hope among the Palestinians to establish a national entity

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[2] National Union, site of The Israel Democracy Institute,
  https://www.idi.org.il/policy/parties-and-elections/parties/haihud-haleumi (in Hebrew)

under any name, even a Palestinian authority stripped of sovereignty, time will continue to be wasted in managing conflict, not resolving it, and encouraging "terrorism."[3]

Smotrich argued that the "statement that 'terrorism derives from despair' is a lie. Terrorism derives from hope—a hope to weaken us."[4] Therefore, the solution lies in making the Palestinians lose any hope of establishing their own national entity, through "decisive settlement," encouraging emigration, and most importantly, military victory over the Palestinians.

Smotrich identifies two main scenarios for how to deal with the Palestinians. The first is the retention of the Palestinians who abandon their national ambitions as individual residents of the "Jewish State." The second scenario, which is divided into two parts, relates to dealing with those who do not want to give up their national ambitions. These must choose between voluntary exile, or (and in the event that the refuseniks use violence against Israel), be dealt with using excessive force and military "decisiveness."[5]

Third: The Most Important Elements of the Plan

After examining the details of the plan, we can argue that its most elements are summarized as follows: "The complete Land of Israel," redemption, encouragement of settlement, use of

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[3] Bezalel Smotrich, "The Decisive Plan: The Key to Peace is in the Right," *Hashiloach* Journal, September 2017, p. 81, https://hashiloach.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/hashiloach-6 all-web.pdf (in Hebrew).
  Translator: see also the English version of the plan, in https://hashiloach.org.il/israels-decisive-plan/
[4] op.cit, p. 89.
[5] op.cit, p. 86.

force and violence, denial of the existence of a Palestinian people, rejection of the establishment of any Palestinian national entity and forcible displacement.

1. "The Complete Land of Israel"

Smotrich said, "The territory between the Mediterranean and the Jordan is a single geographical and topographical unit, and cannot be divided in a manner that will provide political and national stability."[6] Emphasizing the idea of "the complete Land of Israel" he added, "We are here to stay. We will make it clear that our national ambition for a Jewish State from the river to the sea is an accomplished fact, a fact not open to discussion or negotiation."[7]

In the pre-statehood period, the Zionist movement set its sights on establishing a "Jewish state" on the entire territory of Mandatory Palestine. However, after the intervention of the international community, Partition Resolution 181 was issued, dividing the land of Mandatory Palestine between Palestinians and Jews. Most of the leadership of the Zionist movement agreed to the partition proposal, on the basis of the principle of "take what's given then demand more," with the aim of consolidating and legitimizing the emerging Israeli entity. However, some Israeli parties refused to accept the partition decision, including secular ones such as the Herut Party (later the Likud) and the Ahdut HaAvoda Party- the "socialist" labor party, which split from the Mapai party (later Labor), including what is religious and nationalist, such as the Mizrachi party.

The idea of the "complete Land of Israel" dates back to the early days after the end of the 1967 war, with the emergence of the Movement For Greater Israel. The movement emerged in the Israeli political arena a month after the 1967 war, to include under its wing a group of politicians, leaders of Zionist thought, intellectuals from the right and left, and religious figures. Its founding statement was signed by 50 public figures from all Zionist movements. The movement called for the adoption of the principle of "the entire Land of Israel," meaning the annexation of the lands occupied in 1967, including the Golan and Sinai, and the imposition of Israeli sovereignty as well as the strengthening of settlements there.[8]

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[6] op.cit, p. 89.
[7] op.cit, p. 91.
[8] For the Complete Land of Israel, The National Library of Israel, *Maariv* newspaper, 22/9/1967, https://www.nli.org.il/ (in Hebrew)

The national religious movement adopted the goal of enforcing the principle of Greater Israel. This began with Rabbi Moshe Levinger, as a representative of the Movement For Greater Israel, communicating with Minister of Labor Yigal Allon, one of the leaders of the Ahdut HaAvodah party, in order to allow settlement in the city of Hebron. The minister in turn submitted a proposal to the government in the beginning of 1968, but the Prime Minister at the time, Levi Eshkol, opted not to present the proposal for a vote in the government, for fear of opposition from the rest of the ministers. Levinger decided to circumvent this by imposing a fait accompli,[9] by occupying the Park Hotel in Hebron during the Passover holiday of 1968. He refused to vacate the hotel until the Israeli military governor intervened and allowed him, along with dozens of settlers, to live in an Israeli army camp for about three years, after which a settlement would be built on the outskirts of Hebron (Kiryat Arba) in 1972.[10]

The work to implement the principle of the "Complete Israel" was institutionalized in 1974 by the formation of the Gush Emunim Movement (Bloc of the Faithful), an offshoot from the national religious movement, which at that time was represented on the political scene by the Mafdal party. The Gush Emunim movement emerged from the "Mercaz HaRav" religious school, led by the spiritual guide of religious Zionism, Rabbi Abraham Kook. Levinger was the actual head of the movement that entrenched settlement in the occupied territories in 1967, and imposed on the Israeli government the expansion of settlement building.[11] This reflected in the settlement building in Sebastia and Kafr Qaddum in 1975, with the complicity of the Israeli government led at that time by the Labor Party, some of whose leaders (such as Shimon Peres) saw in Gush Emunim a pioneering movement that would help consolidate settlement in the 1967 territories. The Likud followed in the footsteps of Labor after the political coup in Israel in 1977, when Ariel Sharon and the Likud party adopted the work of this movement and its settlement activity.[12]

2. Redemption

The parties of the national religious movement built their ideas on the principle of "redemption," from their point of view stemming from the Torah. The establishment of Israel came as part of a process that paves the way for the emergence of the expected

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[9] David Kretzmer and Gershom Gorenberg, "Politics, Law and the Judicial Process: The Case of the High Court of Justice in the Territories," *Mishpat Umimshal* [Law and Government] *Law Review*, University of Haifa, vol. 17, 2016, p. 57. (in Hebrew)

[10] Inam Hamed, Gush Emunim Settlement Movements as an Example, site of Al-Quds Center, 13/7/2022, https://alqudscenter.info

[11] op.cit.

[12] Ashraf Badr, From Dayan to Trump... The Complete Shift of the Israeli "Right" Towards the "Left" in the Israeli Settler-Colonial System, site of al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 8/2/2021, p. 20, https://www.alzaytouna.net/arabic/data/attachments/AcademicArticles/PA-AshrafBader_Dayan-Trump_Israel_2-21.pdf

Messiah, in whose hands the redemption of mankind will be accomplished, bringing the mastery of the Jews over the world. Smotrich adopts the redemption thought. In presenting his plan, he said:

> I am a believer. I believe in the Holy One, Blessed Be He; in His love for the Jewish People, and His Providence over them. I believe in the Torah which foretold the exile and promised redemption. I believe in the words of the prophets who witnessed the destruction, and no less in the renewed building that has taken shape before our eyes. I believe that the State of Israel is the beginning of our unfolding redemption, the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Torah and the visions of the Prophets.[13]
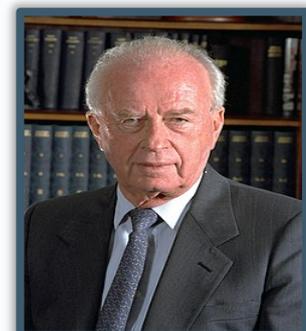
3. Encouraging Settlement

Based on the practices of successive Israeli governments, we can argue as if there is consensus among the Israeli parties (from the right and the left) on encouraging settlement building in the 1967 areas, except for the left-wing Meretz party, which "expressed reservations" on this issue while it was in the government. Actually, after the 1967 war, the successive governments, dominated by the Labor Party, established settlements and consolidated existing ones. The Labor Party government consolidated the settlement policy in the first two years after the occupation of the territories of 1967. According to the Minister of Labor at the time, Yigal Allon, the number of settlements established reached 30, distributed as follows: 10 in the Golan in addition to 4 under construction; 5 in the Jordan Valley in WB and 1 under construction; 3 in North Sinai and 2 under construction in Rafah in the Gaza Strip (GS); 2 in Gush Etzion near Bethlehem and 1 under construction; 1 in Modi'in in the vicinity of Jerusalem, in addition to settlements in Hebron and east Jerusalem. Despite this settlement effort, some right-wing parties aspired to accelerate and intensify settlement further.[14]

Yigal Allon

Yitzhak Rabin

Settlement building was launched in the spirit of the Allon Settlement Plan, which focused on consolidating settlement in the Jordan Valley while remaining far from the Palestinian population centers. However, with Yitzhak Rabin assuming the premiership in 1974, a change occurred by adopting a more expansive policy in building settlements, and not confining them to the territories Allon identified in his plan. Settlement began in the tops of the mountains and in areas close to the Palestinian

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[13] Bezalel Smotrich, "The Decisive Plan: The Key to Peace is in the Right," p. 82.
[14] See Ashraf Badr, From Dayan to Trump, 8/2/2021.

population centers, as we see with the establishment of the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim near Jerusalem, and the settlements of Elon Moreh, Sebastia and Ofra in the center and north of WB by the Gush Emunim movement at the encouragement of the then Minister of Defense Shimon Peres. Indeed, the interests of the "left" Labor government converged with the religious right-wing Gush Emunim movement, in light of the Gush Emunim movement's declaration of its quest to settle in WB to prepare for the return of the Messiah.

The Israeli governments lacked the population weight necessary to implement the settlement plan. Since the beginning of the settlement movement in the 1967 areas, Zionism has suffered from a shortage of population, and the reluctance of the young generation of settlers to leave the city centers in the 1948 areas in order to settle in WB and GS. The convergence of the interests of the Labor Party with Gush Emunim contributed to strengthening the settlements, so that during the Rabin government, 33 settlements were established in the 1967 territories. Between the 1967 war until 1977 a total of 101 settlements were built under the left-wing Labor Party.[15]

At the end of its term in 1976, the Labor government discussed settlement expansion based on the Double Column plan, which aspired that the number of settlers in the 1967 territories would reach two million in 2000. However, the elections in 1977 and the rise of the Likud Party to power prevented the Labor Party from implementing this plan, and the Likud Party took over its implementation with Minister Ariel Sharon. The Double Column plan was later known as Sharon's settlement plan, according to which 88 settlements were built, with the support of the Gush Emunim movement, which provided the population element between 1977 and until Israel signed the Oslo Accords with the PLO in 1993.[16]

The national religious movement's adoption of the principle of the "Complete Israel" prompted them to encourage settlement in the 1967 areas, to impose a fait accompli that would prevent withdrawal from or division of these lands, as mentioned in the section on the formation of the Gush Emunim movement.

In his plan to settle the conflict, Smotrich confirmed the foregoing, by defining the first stage of the plan, which he believes that "the greater part of the plan can be successfully accomplished in the first years of decisive settlement." This, he says, "will be realized via a political-legal act of imposing sovereignty on all Judea and Samaria [WB], and with

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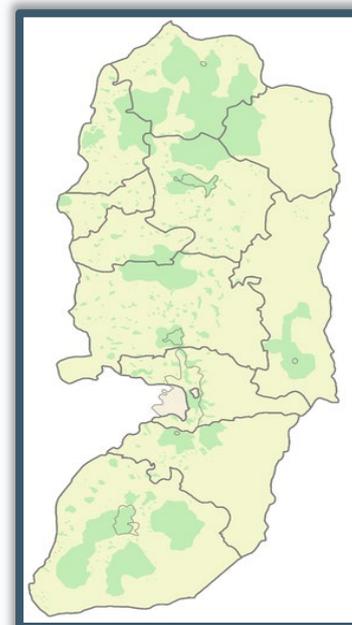
[15] op.cit.
[16] See op.cit.

concurrent acts of settlement: the establishment of cities and towns, the laying down of infrastructure as is customary in "little" Israel and the encouragement of tens and hundreds of thousands of residents to come live in Judea and Samaria."

Smotrich elaborated the goal behind the pursuit of a settlement thus: "In this way, we will be able to create a clear and irreversible reality on the ground. Nothing would have a greater and deeper effect on the consciousness of the Arabs of Judea and Samaria, deflating their illusions of a Palestinian state and demonstrating the impossibility of establishing another Arab state west of the Jordan. Facts on the ground deflate aspirations and defeat ambitions. Let the settlement blocs attest to this."[17]

4. Violence as a Means to Action

The Zionist movement was based on the adoption of violence and the use of force. It can be said that it adopted the idea of the "iron wall" advanced by Ze'ev Jabotinsky, which stipulates the use of force to build an iron wall that protects the Israel from attacks. We can imagine that if the Zionist movement did not adopt violence and ethnic cleansing at the beginning of the establishment of the "State of Israel," this entity would not have been sustained.

The parties of the national religious movement consider the use of violence an effective means to cement the existence of Israel. As mentioned above, Smotrich believes that Palestinian "terrorism" results from the hope for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Therefore, this hope must be eliminated by force and facts on the ground, through "decisive settlement," the encouragement of emigration and before that military "decisiveness." He made it clear in his plan that the only way to deal with those who reject the existence of Israel is to use excessive force, and to harness the Israeli army to eliminate whoever is tempted to resist.[18]

5. Denying the Existence of a "Palestinian People"

Smotrich based his plan on a clear theoretical paradigm that "there is no room in the Land of Israel for two conflicting national movements,"[19] in the sense that there is no room for the Palestinian national movement to coexist with the Zionist movement (which he considers a national liberation movement). He believes that "the contradiction between the existence of the Jewish state and the national Palestinian aspiration is inherent," as "the 'Palestinian People' is but a counter-movement to the Zionist

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[17] Bezalel Smotrich, "The Decisive Plan: The Key to Peace is in the Right," p. 91.
[18] op.cit, p. 97.
[19] op.cit, p. 81.

movement."[20] In other words, he refuses to even acknowledge the existence of a Palestinian people. From his point of view, in order to resolve the Jewish-Palestinian conflict, there must be only one national definition west of the Jordan River, and that is the Jewish definition. This definition must not allow the establishment of any Arab state in the heart of the "Eretz Israel" that can realize the Arab national aspirations there. Smotrich explains that the aim of denying the existence of a Palestinian people is to eliminate the motives for establishing a Palestinian state. Thus, the entire settlement movement, and the subsequent consolidation and intensification of settlements, aim primarily at "convincing the Arabs and the whole world that there is no chance for the establishment of an Arab state on the Land of Israel."[21]

In his plan, Smotrich tried to weave a Zionist historical narrative that denies the existence of a Palestinian people, claiming that "such a 'nation' did not exist before the Zionist project, and that Palestine was but the geographical name of this stretch of territory—a name given it by the Romans, not by Arabs." He claims that "When the Arabs conquered the Land of Israel in the seventh century, they adopted the Roman name 'Palestine,' while the northern part remained 'Syria.'" About 1,500 years later, he further claimed, the Arabs of Palestine "adopted this name upon launching their struggle against the Zionist movement—a movement that came to restore the Land of Israel to the Jews," concluding that "the Palestinian national movement is a negative mirror image of Zionism. As such, it cannot make peace with it. This is the reason Palestinians reject the minimal demand of the State of Israel for recognition of its right to exist as a Jewish State…[.] there is simply no Palestinian nationalism."[22]

Smotrich presents his rejection of the existence of a "Palestinian people" as a fundamental Zionist idea of the pioneers and founders of the "State of Israel," citing their position rejecting the existence of the name "Palestinian people" by saying, "This of course is nothing new. It was obvious to David Ben Gurion and Golda Meir, and effectively to the entire Israeli leadership—until recent confusion set in."[23] He meant the famous statement of Israeli Prime Minister Meir in 1972, in which she declared, "There was no such thing as Palestinians…It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country from them. They did not exist."[24]

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[20] op.cit, p.84
[21] op.cit, p.86
[22] op.cit, p.85
[23] op.cit, p. 89.
[24] Zaki Bani Irsheid, Palestine Between Two Documents, site of Aljazeera.net, 2/5/2017, https://www.aljazeera.net
   Translator: Golda Meir quoted in: Frank Giles, "Who can blame Israel," *The Sunday Times* newspaper, 15/6/1969.

We can refute Smotrich's claim that there is no such thing as Palestinian people by relying on simple historical facts. The idea of a nation-state did not appear in the Arab region until after World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman State. On the other hand, the appearance of Palestinian institutions and parties at the beginning of the twentieth century proves the invalidity of Smotrich's claim. In addition, the decisions of the Peel Commission in 1937 and Partition Resolution 181 clearly refer to the existence of the Palestinian people, and their right to self-determination and to live in a state of their own.

It is true that awareness of the Palestinian identity developed after the end of World War I, the collapse of the Ottoman State, when Palestine fell under British colonization (mandate). However, reference must be made here to Rashid Khalidi's argument in his book *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Contemporary National Consciousness*, that the "incipient sense of community-as-nation can be seen in an article by Najib 'Azuri, a former Ottoman official in Palestine," in 1908, who suggested to "expand the existing sanjaq of Jerusalem northwards to include the northern regions of Palestine which at that time were part of the vilayet of Beirut, stressing that 'the progress of the land of Palestine depends on this.' "[25]

6. The Rejection of a Palestinian Entity

The parties of the national religious movement refused the establishment of a Palestinian national entity that might lead to an independent state. Smotrich explained that Palestinians who accept to forgo their national aspirations will be allowed to stay, but will not enjoy "citizenship rights" in the "State of Israel," and in that case the authorities:

> need to define a model of residency that includes autonomous self-management including municipal administrations, alongside individual rights and obligations. The Arabs of Judea and Samaria will conduct their daily lives on their own terms via regional municipal administrations lacking national characteristics. Like other local authorities these will hold their own elections... In time, and contingent on loyalty to the state and its institutions, and on military or national service, models of residency and even citizenship will become available.[26]

Smotrich indicated that the Palestinians in the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 will have the "right to vote for the system which runs their everyday lives," and the self-government of the Palestinians of WB "will be divided into six municipal governmental regions wherein representatives will be elected in democratic elections: Hebron, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jericho, Nablus, and Jenin." Smotrich explains the purpose of the partition, where

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[25] Halima Abu Haniyeh, "The Stages of Formation of the Consciousness of Identity among Palestinians," Journal of Palestinian Affairs, Palestine Liberation Organization, Research Center, Issue 265, 2016, p. 128.
Translator: Original quote Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Contemporary National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), p. 28.
[26] Bezalel Smotrich, "The Decisive Plan: The Key to Peace is in the Right," p. 87.

"A division into regional municipal governments will dismantle the Palestinian national collective and the ambitions to realize its independence, but will at the same time preserve the tribal-familial structure and thus allow the existence of a stable system for managing day-to-day life free of tensions and internal conflicts."[27]

Smotrich's plan takes us back to the concept of "village leagues" that the Labor Party established and the Likud Party implemented in the early 1980s, but which failed on the ground due to the Palestinian people's resistance. Smotrich pointed out that his plan did not fundamentally differ from the program of the Israeli right, represented by the Likud party, saying, "there is no daylight between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and the plan before you" (the decisiveness plan). According to Smotrich, Netanyahu defines the Palestinian entity he strives to establish in WB as an "state-minus," meaning a state without sovereignty and army, and doesn't "control the aerial, land, sea, and cyberspaces." Thus, according to Smotrich's point of view, there is no fundamental difference between the groundwork that Netanyahu is establishing and the

Binyamin Netanyahu

Smotrich plan. Rather, the difference lies in the fact that Netanyahu's policy is to preserve a collective national entity for the Arabs in "Judea and Samaria," an entity that has national aspirations that contradict the Smotrich plan.[28]

It is worth noting that Smotrich believes that Partition Resolution 181 issued by the United Nations General Assembly in 1947 has been already implemented on the ground, arguing that the original agreement between the Zionist movement and the countries of the world was based on that "the State of Israel was founded by force of the belief in the justice of the Biblical story, and by force of the agreement of the nations of the world—at a rare historic moment—to realize the vision and restore the Land of Israel to the People of Israel." However, as a result of "surrender to Arab violence," he claimed, "the entire territory east of the Jordan was torn away to form the Kingdom of Transjordan, instead of being part of the Jewish national home; and this is how the partition plan was later born, creating the concept of two-states in the Land of Israel."[29]

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[27] op.cit, p. 93.
[28] op.cit, p. 95.
[29] op.cit, p. 88.

In other words, he claimed that Jordan is part of the "Promised Land of Israel," and by deducting it in favor of establishing the Kingdom of Jordan, the partition decision was actually implemented, as the two-state solution model.

Smotrich's proposal is not new, as it is identical to that of its predecessor, the Moledet party, and before it the Herut party (later the Likud). The latter demanded in its 1952 platform to preserve "sanctity of the historic boundaries of the Land of Israel and of the integrity of the homeland," and "demanded that the state's political boundaries include the whole territory of the British Mandate of Palestine, on both banks of the Jordan River."[30]

7. Forced Transfer

Smotrich called for "encouraging emigration" those who will have difficulty letting go of national ambitions. They are "invited to realize them in one of the many surrounding Arab countries—or search, like so many Arabs around us, for a better life in Europe, South America, or elsewhere—so that he won't have to stay in the Jewish state."[31]

Smotrich criticized the Israeli "Left" idea of the separation from the Palestinians under the pretext of ensuring a demographic majority in the land of Palestine, and their avoidance of resorting to the "the decent and effective means of improving our demographic reality, namely, encouraging emigration." However, he views that Palestinians face "limitations and lack of encouragement for emigration." Therefore, the solution lies in "having a reality that allows easy and convenient emigration, and even provides logistical and financial aid to those interested in trying their luck in other countries."[32]

We can say that the idea of "voluntary" displacement, or as it is termed in some literature, "silent transfer," already exists within the political thought of the Israeli political leadership and is not confined to the national religious movement. For example, after the end of the 1967 war, as archive documents revealed, the Israeli national unity government, headed by Mapai, which included right-wing and leftist parties, developed a plan to motivate Palestinian families to emigrate to Jordan.[33]

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[30] Herut, The Israel Democracy Institute, https://en.idi.org.il/israeli-elections-and-parties/parties/herut/
[31] Bezalel Smotrich, "The Decisive Plan: The Key to Peace is in the Right," p. 96.
[32] op.cit, p. 96.
[33] For more, see Ashraf Badr, "The System of Control of the Israeli Military Rule in the Colonized Territories in 1967 in the Period Between 1967–1981 / Agricultural Biopower as an Introduction" (PhD thesis, Birzeit University, 2022).

Fourth: Will Smotrich be Able to Implement His Plan?

There are three possibilities: complete success, failure and partial success. It is unlikely that Smotrich will succeed in fully implementing his plan, as the voluntary displacement of the Palestinians has proven to be a failure over the years. Previous Israeli governments were unable to entice large numbers of Palestinians to voluntary emigration. Therefore, the only thing left for Smotrich to accomplish the idea of displacement is the implementation of forced transfer, and in order for this scenario to materialize, it requires a major event, such as a regional war, to realize this scenario.

It is also not expected that the Palestinians will give up their national aspiration and accept coexistence with the domination of an Israeli racist state. It is likely that the Palestinians will continue to be motivated to determine their fate, establish a Palestinian entity and get rid of the occupation. As for the "security decisive solution" that Smotrich calls for, it is unlikely that it will be achieved. Over the past decades, Israel has tried to settle the conflict by using excessive violence and directing targeted strikes, but every time the Palestinian resistance factions would regroup and resume their action. They have accumulated experience in their war with Israel, and succeeded in staying steadfastness despite the successive wars.

Regarding settlement, Smotrich's problem lies in the weak motivation of the Israeli younger generation towards settling outside the central area, that is, Tel Aviv and its suburbs. About 50% of the Israelis live in the central area, and the rest are distributed among the main cities. Successive Israeli governments have sought to provide incentives for the younger generation to move to the periphery and suburbs, but most of these efforts have failed. Accordingly, an extrapolation can be made with regard to settlement in WB: Despite the economic incentives for settlers such as providing financial facilities and assistance to those who wish to settle in the areas of 1967, settlement in these areas has become almost confined to members of the national religious movement, who have ideological motivations. Therefore, unless a new wave of Jewish immigration from outside Palestine occurs, it is not expected that Smotrich will be able to implement his ambition of "decisive settlement," and increase the number of settlers in WB region to form a majority population.

Smotrich is expected to succeed in his goal of preserving the "Complete Land of Israel." The Israeli parties, with the exception of Meretz, agree on the right-wing program that negotiations with the Palestinians are futile, and that giving up any part of

the land would harm Israel's security. Therefore, as a result of the consensus among the Israeli parties not to withdraw from the 1967 territories, Smotrich is expected to succeed in his endeavour.

Based on the above, it is likely that Smotrich will fail to fully implement his plan due to subjective and objective considerations. It is not expected that he will succeed in voluntary displacement or a decisive security and settlement resolution. But he will be able, as did other Israeli politicians, to prevent negotiations with the Palestinians that would lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity.

Conclusions

Smotrich's plan comes in the context of searching for a solution to the conflict with the Palestinians, after the "peace" process based on the Oslo Accords, and the model on which the (two-state solution) was built reached a dead end. His plan seeks to return to the roots of the Zionist plan before the Oslo Accords, where he hopes to end Palestinian presence as an independent entity in the land of Palestine.

In his plan, Smotrich avoids addressing the forced transfer of the Palestinian population, and presents his plan in the context of "encouraging" emigration by facilitating conducive conditions. However, if we link "encouraging" emigration to the general idea of the plan; i.e., rejecting the existence of a "Palestinian people," refusing to achieve any national aspiration for the Palestinians, while strengthening settlements and using violence with those who refuse to accept the existence of Israel, this will lead us to the conclusion that the concept of "encouraging" emigration is only a smokescreen to hide the real plan, which is creating conditions to expel the Palestinian population. This makes the claimed "voluntary" emigration the "Only Option" to the Palestinian population, who are deprived of citizenship rights in the "State of Israel," treated as guests in their homeland, and are ruled by a Zionist settler-colonial system based on racial discrimination.

The Smotrich plan, in its entirety, is in line with the Zionist discourse that was used by the leaders of the Israeli parties from both the right and the left. Therefore, we can argue that the Smotrich plan is nothing but a reproduction of the Zionist discourse founding the "State of Israel," with the addition of biblical messianic references. The foundations on which the "decisive plan" is based are consistent with the practices of successive Israeli governments led by various parties of the right or the left. Indeed, the "complete Israel," the encouragement of settlements, the use of force and violence, the denial of the existence of a Palestinian people, and the rejection of the establishment of any Palestinian national entity, and forced transfer are all policies and principles practiced by Israeli governments over the years. Perhaps the difference between these

governments and the national religious movement represented by the religious Zionist party is that these governments resorted to passing their policies under "rational" and pragmatic justifications (achieving security, for example), based on concern for the interest of the Zionist project and the "State of Israel," while Smotrich bases his plan on biblical visions and religious "doctrines," so that his plan is subject to ideological considerations at the expense of pragmatic instrumentalism.

It is expected that Smotrich will not succeed in implementing the terms of his plan, which is based on displacement, security solutions and decisive settlement. In order to ensure the failure of his plan, the Palestinians must agree on the terms of the national project that they want to achieve, and end the political division, in conjunction with setting up an agreed-upon national program that guarantees confronting and thwarting Smotrich's plan. in conjunction with that, Arabs and Muslims must support the Palestinians financially and logistically in order to stand firm on their land and thwart the Smotrich project of displacement. Moreover, Smotrich and what he represents in Israel must be exposed to the world and the international community, as he denies the existence of the Palestinian people and their most basic rights guaranteed by international law, including the right to self-determination.