**There is a plan, and it is being carried out**

It would appear that the prevailing assumption in the media is that Netanyahu has no plan for the “day after.” According to the sequence of events, it seems the American government asked for a plan before the invasion of Gaza—after all, there is no war without a strategic objective. Netanyahu refused. The War Cabinet has been demanding the same for eight months, and yet there is still no plan. In sheer desperation, the entire security establishment is publicly calling for—indeed, is begging for—a strategic goal so that it can plan its operations. It is being met with silence. The soldiers fighting in Gaza return time and again to the very same neighborhoods in the Strip that they have already battled in, moved out from, and returned to—and again they are killed or are wounded, and the scars of this war will remain forevermore etched on them.

You don’t hear the mantra “*toppling Hamas*” here anymore, since that would necessitate actually removing Hamas from government. Apparently, Netanyahu has no such intention, because to date we have not taken even a tiny step in that direction. Right now, the war is focused solely on killing Hamas’s terrorist-soldiers. However, government is also manifested in the distribution of food and water, the provision of housing, health, and education, and in public legitimacy. These are the sources of government power. Hamas remains in power—and is even managing to collect taxes from Gazans.

In contrast to the Prime Minister’s silence, other ministers are clearly voicing the goals of the war—Israeli occupation and long-term control of the entire Gaza Strip; the establishment of an Israeli civil administration; the construction of settlements in Gaza as part of the Greater Land of Israel; and the removal of all Palestinians from Gaza, which is euphemistically expressed as “encouraging voluntary migration.” In other words, we will transform the lives of the Palestinians to such a degree that they will *want* to emigrate, even by sea in makeshift boats, without any destination; or they will flock in droves to Sinai, scuttling the peace agreement with Egypt. The majority of the public believes that these views are solely those of Ben Gvir and Smotrich, the modern-day Kahanists. Indeed, both are the disciples of Meir Kahane, who preached the expulsion of the Arabs and the transformation of Israel into a Halachic State that was “cleansed” of Arabs; racism; Jewish supremacy; a theocratic State. This is an ideology opposed to democracy, one that views democratic values as a weakness as something that ought to be wiped out.

The idea of occupying Gaza arose at the outset of the “full, full” rightwing government, one that sanctifies the land over and above Israel’s democratic political essence. Thus, the Disengagement Law has been repealed, and steps are being taken to reestablish four West Bank outposts that were evacuated back in 2005. When the Disengagement Law was repealed, Orit Strock announced that there would be a return to Gaza, involving “many casualties.” Back then, no one imagined that Gaza would be occupied for a second time. When Strock greeted her friends on “Black Saturday”—the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah (“the joy of Torah”)—with “Happy Holiday,” she knew what the joy was about: the occupation of Gaza seemed within reach. The 1,400 murder victims did not move her in the slightest.

Founded in 1971, the Kach party was outlawed as a terrorist organization by the Israeli government in 1994, in the wake of the massacre by Baruch Goldstein—who was number three in Kach at the time—at the Cave of the Patriarchs. While the ban was never revoked, it most certainly became a dead letter after Netanyahu appointed Ben Gvir—whose living room is adorned with a portrait of Goldstein—as Minister of National Security, thereby conferring state legitimacy on Kahanism. From that point on, the Minister has implemented the doctrine of Kach. He has transformed the Israel Police into a political organ and the Jewish Power party and its doctrine, including by taking over the country’s centers of power, suppressing freedom of expression, and undermining the rule of law, in order to turn it into what Kahane had intended. The way in which Kahane’s “representatives” in the government operate is to take over Israel via a weak and troubled Prime Minister, an accused man who sees his position as a lever to help him evade his sentence. His very political survival depends on Ben Gvir and Smotrich, which makes them Israel’s *de* *facto* Prime Minister. Today’s Israel is governed, at least in part, by the doctrine of Rabbi Kahane. Meanwhile, other parts of the country are still engaged in protests, and other parts have already been banished from power. This is why Netanyahu’s goals in Gaza are subject to the will of Ben Gvir—occupation, a civil administration that oppresses the Palestinians, Jewish settlement, and the expulsion of Arabs. This is the plan that is being carried out in practice, even if the Prime Minister does not admit it publicly. Even so, his policies have, it would seem, brought him an international arrest warrant as a war criminal, in addition to his indictment on serious corruption charges as an Israeli crook.

Democratic Israel has tried—albeit not very successfully—to contend with the fascist, racist, religious, and powerful trends imported by Kahane. These trends have become intertwined into the “settlement enterprise”— settlements that, since 1967, have been built completely illegally, amid a population that is controlled by another people. Under the cover of the settlements, and in the best interests of the settlers, Israel is committing injustices and human rights violations against Palestinians in the West Bank. Israel’s policies in the West Bank foster violence, lawbreaking, and Jewish supremacy, sometimes under the auspices of the army and sometimes in opposition to it, with the state caving to the domination and rule of the settlers.

Now, this tectonic collision between Democratic Israel and Kahanist Israel has shifted to the war in Gaza. And this time, our children and our hostages are its sacrificial lambs.