Herut Party member Moshe Amirav draws on the principles of Revisionist
prophet Ze’ev Jabotinsky in order to justify his controversial meeting with
pro-PLO Palestinians.

Only the Likud can make peace

In my recent talks with the PLO-supporting Palestinians, which
aroused a storm among the Israel public and shocked the Likud, there
was one statement by them that I cannot forget: “The Alignment can
make war, but only the Likud can make peace.”

From their point of view, the logic
of that statement lies in Israel’s po-
litical constellation: no peace agree-
ment is possible without the Likud’s
agreement, and the Alignment
would never oppose an agreement
acceptable to the Likud.

From my point of view, the logic
of the statement goes much deeper
and goes to the roots of the philoso-
phy of Revisionist Zionism. These
roots were unknown to my interloc-
tors, and I must confess that they
are known to only a small minority
of my own movement - the Likud.

The central principle that I pre-
tended to the Palestinians was that
of “a partnership in Greater Eretz
Yisrael.” This principle stands in
opposition to all the solutions that
call for a separation of the two peo-
oples and the partition of the land.
From this principle we can derive
different political solutions that are more
flexible and more just than any im-
posed partition solution of one type
or another.

As against the minimalist Zionist
stand that proposed territorial conces-
sions which would appease the
Arabs, the Revisionist movement
proposed three principles: the in-
tegrity of the land, a Jewish major-
ity, and a Hebrew state.

The leader of this movement,
Ze’ev Jabotinsky, was courageous
enough to say this to the Arabs
straight out, in contrast to the other
Zionist leaders, who ignored the
Arab problem. It was Jabotinsky
who asserted that the Arabs of this
country constitute “a separate na-
tional entity...and they will not
agree to anything less than national
rule...with respect to communities,
education and culture, and political
representation.”

Jabotinsky was the first to pro-
pose a distinction between national
rule and “national sovereignty,” and
he saw the possibility of a solution
for the national minority in combin-
ing the two.

“Do you mean that we would rule
the country in partnership?” my in-
terlocutors asked me in surprise.
“Yes, indeed,” I replied. “Eretz
Yisrael is large; its area on both
sides of the Jordan is 120,000 square
kilometers. The dispute between us
is over 6,000 sq.km. alone. You say
that this area -- the West Bank and
Gaza -- is your homeland, while we
say that it is the land of our fathers
and that it is vital for our security.
Let us rule it together -- in
accordance with Jabotinsky’s
principles!”

I presented to them a detailed
proposal consisting of three parts:

(a) A peace agreement with rep-
resentatives of the Palestinian peo-
ple (and if they preferred the PLO, I
would accept that on condition that
it ended its terror and recognized
the State of Israel).

(b) Partnership in the rule over
Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, the for-
mal arrangement being broad au-
tonomy in which Israel has sover-
eignty and an army, while the
Palestinians possess all other ruling
authority and its national symbols
(flag, anthem, stamps, and curren-
cy).

(c) In historic Eretz Yisrael on
both sides of the Jordan there would
be established an Israeli-Arab con-
federation, with the Palestinians,
who constitute a majority in Jordan,
having the option of regarding it as
their homeland or of contenting
themselves with having broad ruling authority in Judea and Samaria. "The day will come," I told them, "when you will achieve both: sovereignty in Jordan and self-rule on the West Bank."

With respect to Jerusalem, we agreed that the city would remain united under Israeli sovereignty, and that the administrative capital of expanded autonomy would be established in East Jerusalem.

We agreed that the PLO would cease to be a terror organization, disband its military frameworks, and become an organization along the lines of the World Zionist Organization, with branches and emissaries all over the world.

The advantages of such an arrangement to the Palestinians are clear: this is the maximum that they can get in an arrangement with Israel, and it does not require them to renounce the idea of one day establishing a Palestinian state on the West Bank.

As for Israel, the proposal enables it to retain the two options of security and settlement. It is also a long-term solution to the demographic problem, since we cannot indefinitely deny the Palestinians civil rights. The granting of such rights would mean a bi-national state with a population in Eretz Israel in the year 2000 (according to projections of the Central Bureau of Statistics) of 3.8 million Arabs and 4.3 million Jews.

There is one more advantage to my plan. It appears to me to be the only one today that stands a chance of being accepted by the Likud, the Alignment, and the Palestinians. In my talks with the latter, they did not reject it out of hand— and that gives me new hope for peace.