
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 political constellation: no peace agreement 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 philosophy of Revisionist Zionism. These roots were unknown to my interlocutors, and I must confess that they are known to only a small minority of my own movement - the Likud.

The central principle that I presented 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 peoples and the partition of the land. From this principle we can derive political solutions that are more flexible and more just than any imposed partition solution of one type or another.

As against the minimalist Zionist stand that proposed territorial concessions which would appease the Arabs, the Revisionist movement presented three principles: the integrity of the land, a Jewish majority, 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 national 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 propose a distinction between national rule and "national sovereignty," and he saw the possibility of a solution for the national minority in combining the two.

"Do you mean that we would rule the country in partnership?" my interlocutors 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 over it together -- in accordance with Jabotinsky's principles!"

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

(a) A peace agreement with representatives of the Palestinian people (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 formal arrangement being broad autonomy in which Israel has sovereignty and an army, while the Palestinians possess all other ruling authority and its national symbols (flag, anthem, stamps, and currency).

(c) In historic Eretz Yisrael on both sides of the Jordan there would be established an Israeli-Arab confederation, with the Palestinians, who constitute a majority in Jordan, having the option of regarding it as their homeland or of contenting

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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 Isra-

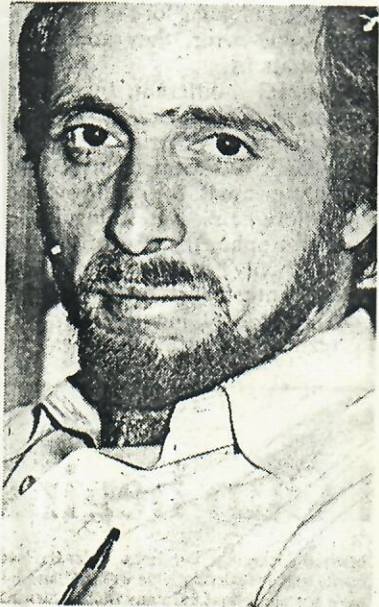


Ze'ev Jabotinsky

el, 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 Yisrael 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.



Moshe Amirav