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THE PEACE PROCESS AND THE JEWISHNESS OF THE JEWISH STATE

Daniel J. Elazar

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Who among us does not want peace? Even those who have no faith in this peace process want peace. The truth is that many of us have very real hopes for the peace process with greater or lesser optimism and with more or fewer fears. The hopes remain and in certain ways have been reinforced by recent events. With all of those hopes, we need to recognize what peace will bring and what this process especially will bring in its wake.

The Peace Process and the End of Zionism?

The trends brought into sharp relief by the peace process are all trends that antedate it. They probably would have come into play in any case, but the peace process has hastened their arrival or development and they will be exacerbated by the peace process and its consequences if the peace is even partially successful. There are those among us who are pleased with the unfolding of these trends. Others of us have doubts, some of them grave, and are worried about their potential and even likely consequences. In one way or another

we must understand them in order to deal with them in a manner befitting our particular hopes and expectations.

We must begin by recognizing that for all intents and purposes the peace process is a landmark that may signify the end of Zionism, at least as an effective force in Jewish life for pursuing the goals the Zionist founding fathers set out for themselves 100 years ago and more. Zionism's end will come because of its success. Of all the ideologies to come out of the nineteenth century and to have an impact on our world in the last century, Zionism was the most successful, although it began from the least promising position. Its ideological competitors as ideologies have long since bitten the dust, whereas Zionism is reaching its end because of what it achieved, far more than because of its failures.

History teaches us that no ideology succeeds in all of its endeavors; so, too, with Zionism. But its success was as great as it was generally unanticipated, a more than hundred-fold increase in the

Daniel J. Elazar, Editor and Publisher; Zvi R. Marom, Associate Editor; Mark Ami-El, Managing Editor.
13 Tel-Hai St., Jerusalem, 92107, Israel; Tel. 02-619281, Fax 972-2-619112. © Copyright. All rights reserved.
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Jewish population of the Land of Israel; the transformation of a barren, poverty-stricken land into a green and pleasant one, among the most prosperous in the world; the establishment of an independent Jewish state and the revival of the Hebrew language and a culture to go with it; construction of more Jewish religious institutions and at a higher level in every field than had ever existed before, or at least for thousands of years.

Even the non- and anti-Zionists have benefitted from Zionism. There are more students studying in yeshivot today than there were in Eastern Europe in its heyday. Synagogues in Israel and throughout the world, regardless of their form of Judaism and degree of identification with the state, draw upon it for inspiration and expressions of Jewish culture at every level. The list goes on.

The New Privatism

The end of Zionism was bound to come, given the trends in the world against the old ideologies, on behalf of a new privatism that does not encourage great public purposes or individual sacrifice for public tasks, the decline of the possibility for religious or national exclusivism in a world increasingly interdependent in every way, where mass communications and pop culture enter into every corner and drive out local cultures, even those rooted for centuries. But all of these trends have been exacerbated by the non- or anti-Zionists within the Israeli peace camp who see in the goals and values of Zionism as in those of Judaism much more generally their *bete noir*. They have been trying to undermine Zionism for years, painting the Zionist enterprise in the blackest of hues. The peace process has opened the gates for them to express themselves more sharply on behalf of a goal that seems equally popular to much of the Israeli public. So harsh has been their response that it has provoked a counter-response from some of the most seemingly unlikely sources, not only religious but secular Jewish intellectuals and artists for whom Zionism is at the very least the faith of their fathers if not a sufficient answer for them.

Secular Zionism has had to bear the brunt of this failure. In its salad days it was capable of offering its adherents great tasks and great challenges, sufficiently equivalent to the tasks and challenges of religious Judaism to be equally compelling if not more, at least momentarily. But as those tasks have been completed and challenges overcome, it has gone the way of every other secular movement in Jewish life that has made

secularism its Jewish end. It ceased to be either necessary or sufficient to motivate new generations or to deflect Jews, who after all are only human, from natural paths of life, namely, to seek peace, ease, security and prosperity, and to pursue happiness however they define it, as individuals; in short, normalcy. Nor can Israelis be blamed for seeking normalcy, the natural inclination of ordinary people everywhere at all times.

The Zionism of Normalcy and the Zionism of Renaissance

Indeed, Zionism always had within it two great camps, those who saw the Zionist enterprise of restoring the Jewish people to their land as the first step toward that normalcy, and those who saw it as a means of restoration of the Jewish spirit in its most productive sense. Those two camps go back to the very beginning of Zionism and, regardless of what other divisions existed in the Zionist movement, represented the main and greatest division. Until the peace process began, while Israel was under siege, those two camps had enough in common to hold themselves together as one. Today, however, the prospect of peace has divided them in the most profound and contradictory ways, placing them in strong opposition to one another.

No doubt the polls would show a different result. Most people still combine their desires for normalcy with their desires for a Jewish revival to some degree, but like the Guttman Institute poll of last year that presumably brought such cheering news about the degree of Jewishness of Israeli Jews, such polls can be misleading, covering up the deep cleavages, in part because they are rarely compared to earlier findings which may show trends in the direction opposite from what the poll suggests when taken alone. Even more important, polls only offer a snapshot of behavior at the moment. In ordinary surveys they do not probe more deeply and hence they do not reflect *opinion*, which requires *opining* and more considered thought which may reveal reasons for behavior that are contradictory and pulling in opposite directions.

For example, in the Guttman Institute religious behavior poll, there is no recognition of the great schism between those who believe that Jews are religiously obligated to do what they do and those who view their Jewish religious behavior as simply the maintenance of the customs of their fathers that may be good for the children as well, provided that they are taken moderately. In operational terms, most of the first group can be expected to stand firm on matters of

Jewishness, while most of the second will, in the last analysis, usually go with the dominant trends in society since other matters will end up to be more important for them.

What we can say is that this is a historic struggle, not only within the Zionist movement but throughout Jewish history, between those Jews who seek normalcy and those Jews who feel in some way obligated or bound by their Jewishness. Indeed, much of the falling away of Jews in the past as well as the present probably has had to do with that struggle and the side different people were on.

Good for Jews, Not for the Jewish State

In a word, normalcy may be good for Jews but, left alone to unfold, will end the Jewish state as such. Still, many Israeli Jews and half of the Israeli leadership thirst for that normalcy, either for private reasons as people or because they are simply tired — legitimately in many respects. Both the people and leaders are acting on that thirst, whether we are speaking of those who flood the beaches and highways on Sabbaths and holidays looking for the right spot to set up their barbecues, or the most powerful judges on Israel's Supreme Court, the best and the brightest, who are setting the pace in Israeli constitutional law according to their interpretations which are designed to follow the most "liberal" trends in the West.

Increasingly, those who most want the Jewish state to remain Jewish are forced into a corner. None of this was dependent upon acquiring and holding on to the administered territories in 1967, but it is being exacerbated by the necessity to withdraw from them in 1994 and beyond.

The Maintenance of the State's Jewishness

Discounting a few small religious peace groups, those most active in promoting the Jewishness of the state (at least according to their lights), especially through public activity, are either the ultra-Orthodox haredim and their Shas offshoot or the National Religious Party joined also by the non-religious "Complete Land of Israel" supporters. Since 1967 the major investment of the NRP has been in the administered territories, both in terms of settlements and in terms of intensifying the meaning of the Land in the eyes of Israelis. They had become the heirs of the Labor-initiated settlement of the land movement that was the backbone of Zionism for nearly a century.

Now they are very much on the defensive and are likely to lose heavily, not only territories but perhaps

even settlements and certainly morale. While there need not be any direct correlation between the settlement of those territories and their retention, at least in part, as parts of the State of Israel (they will always remain part of the Land of Israel regardless of their political jurisdiction), their retention has been so identified with Israel's Jewishness that the loss is likely to be perceived as much greater than it might be "objectively." This is particularly true if that loss is accompanied by concessions in Jerusalem that are not matched by a continued Jewish presence in the rest of the territories. At this point the situation can only be mitigated by developing a measure of shared rule by Israel and the Palestinians for the territories, a principle not yet grasped by Israeli opinion-makers nor sought by the Palestinians.

"Jaffa versus Jerusalem"

Another way to phrase the recent turn of events from the point of view of the Jewishness of the Jewish state is in geographic terms as Jaffa versus Jerusalem. Throughout Jewish history, at least from the days of the authorship of the Book of Jonah, the struggle over the character of the Land of Israel has been perceived geographically as the struggle between Jaffa, symbolizing the Mediterranean coast, and Jerusalem, symbolizing the mountain highlands. Indeed, that struggle goes back to the thirteenth century BCE entrance into the land of the Israelites from the east and the Hellenic sea peoples who became the Philistines from the west.

The Philistines occupied the land's southern coast and the Israelites its mountainous heartland. Eventually, the two peoples entered into a mortal struggle that lasted a century and more, until David built his kingship on the Israelite destruction of Philistine power. Thus, since the thirteenth century BCE, Israel's Mediterranean coast has been the symbol of paganism, sometimes enlightened and sometimes not, and Jewish backsliding when coming in contact with it. This was reinforced by subsequent Hellenistic and Roman conquests and presence and came to settle in the chief city of the coast, Jaffa.

At the same time, the Jewish presence fortified itself in the mountains in Judea, Samaria, and the Galilee. The symbolism of this Jewishness came to be concentrated on Jerusalem. As Jaffa became the commercial center on the coast, Jerusalem became the spiritual center in the mountains and the struggle between them swayed back and forth.

Throughout all the years of exile Jerusalem remained preeminent, but often more in a spiritual sense

than in a physical one. The resettlement of Israel on the part of the Jewish people through the Zionist movement at the end of the nineteenth century, however, focused on Jaffa or after 1909 on its "suburb," Tel Aviv. The secular-dominated Zionist movement concentrated on building up the coastal plain. Jerusalem was generally neglected and left to the Arabs, religious Jews, and the foreign governing power, first Ottoman, then British.

When the United Nations made its decision to partition the land in 1947, Jerusalem was left outside of the boundaries of the proposed Jewish state. This was accepted by the Zionist leadership over the summer of 1947, but subsequently they changed their position on the ground as a result of Arab resistance to the establishment of the Jewish state altogether. The Haganah, Etzel, Lehi, and the Israel Defense Forces responded to the challenge and succeeded in bringing Jerusalem into the Jewish state, attached to the coast by a corridor but cut off at its very end.

The development of Zionist institutions continued to be concentrated in Tel Aviv, now Tel Aviv-Yafo, and along the coast. While Jerusalem was proclaimed capital of Israel for symbolic reasons, only heroic efforts on the part of the government and the Jewish national institutions (such as the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund, and the Hebrew University) kept Jerusalem from becoming entirely a backwater, but still having no hinterland, its development was cut off until 1967.

Only after the Six-Day War and the occupation of all of the cis-Jordanian Land of Israel was Jerusalem restored as a center of development in its own right. The capital burgeoned in population and in enterprise because it was reconnected with its hinterland — its Arab hinterland as much as that reestablished by Jewish settlement. As Jerusalem thrived materially, so, too, did it thrive spiritually. Moreover, treated from a strictly geographic perspective, the Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria are natural extensions of metropolitan Jerusalem, the conventional expansion of a metropolitan age.

Any return to the 1949 boundaries will again cut off Jerusalem at the end of a corridor and detach it from its hinterland, certainly for Jews. If this is allowed to happen, Jaffa will triumph again, in its hedonism and paganism as well as in its commerce and industry. As Jerusalem's spiritual influence is diminished, the Jewishness of the Jewish state will be further diminished. Thus, this is a critical struggle that manifests itself geographically as well as in more spiritual ways.

From Commonwealth to Civil Society

In the last analysis, all of this is part of the sea change in Israel on the part of those who seek to transform the Jewish state from a commonwealth to a civil society. That, indeed, has been the history of modernism. It is not a struggle between democracy and something else. Both commonwealth and civil society are species of democracy. Both can be just as faithful to democratic principles or just as abusive of them.

The difference is in the manner in which each combines communal solidarity and individualism. The commonwealth ideal seeks a more homogeneous society, especially in its values, where individuals express themselves through being parts of a community with which they show great solidarity and a willingness to accept its obligations in order to maintain their rights. A civil society, on the other hand, is far more heterogeneous. It does not seek communal solidarity, except in a minimal sense, but rather seeks to foster the individual's private pursuit of happiness almost without regard to the communal whole.

Since the emergence of modern democratic republicanism in the Protestant Reformation, both of these have been democratic and republican in their character but based on very different fundamental principles as to how society should be structured and what the relationships within it should be like. For Jews, the matter goes even deeper since Jews organized themselves as a commonwealth from their very beginning over three thousand years ago, giving democratic and republican expression to that commonwealth but requiring communal solidarity built around Jewish monotheism and its extensions. The modern Zionist movement attempted to secularize that commonwealth but not to replace it. Its leaders thought that modern ideology, particularly socialist ideology, could provide a substitute for the older religious ideology as a source of communal solidarity, not to reject the commonwealth ideal.

But as the Zionist ideologies lost their potency, both because of success and of changing times, the heirs of those secular ideologists tended to adopt highly individualistic Western, particularly American, ideas of social organization and relationships, and to seek to reduce the amount of communal solidarity required in favor of the individual pursuit of happiness, particularly in the material sense but also in the sense of personal freedom to pursue more hedonistic ends. This squares well with the modern idea of civil society, in which the polity framed an essentially private social order and in which government was drastically limited on its powers of intervention in those matters deemed to be the private preserve of individuals.

From the first, civil society placed religion in the realm of the private. By the late twentieth century, most moral standards and issues had been placed in the private realm as well and were denied the support of public reinforcement. This was quite different from the commonwealth ideal which held that at least matters of morality, if not matters of religion, had a large public dimension, and often the latter as well.

At least in a general way, the Western world, led by the United States, embraced the idea of civil society as opposed to that of commonwealth much earlier in the modern epoch. Israel has only now reached the point of open struggle between the two. The peace process makes that struggle possible since it apparently removes one of the major props supporting the Jewish pursuit of solidarity, namely the external threat. The elimination of that threat may be an illusion; we hope

that it is not. Nevertheless, one of the consequences of its elimination is the removal of a major support for communal solidarity among those for whom more traditional supports are not compelling.

The struggle will be decided over the next generation. In part it will depend upon the degree of success of the peace process, but in most respects it will depend upon Israeli Jews' own expectations. It will be a struggle regardless. It is important for Israeli Jews and, indeed, the entire Jewish people to understand what exactly is the struggle that awaits us.

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Daniel J. Elazar is President of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

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