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OSLO TWO: WHERE WILL IT LEAD?

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The Next Stage in Israel-Palestinian Relations: Separation or Cooperation? / The Internal Political Struggle: From the Bitter Could Come Sweet / The Jewish Dimension: Will Solidarity Hold?

The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin brings us all up short in our evaluations of the peace process and where it might lead. Those among its supporters who thought that any decisions by the Israeli government would be accepted even if unhappily by the people of Israel have now discovered that at least a handful of those people are capable of doing anything, even things that are terrible, in their efforts to stop the process. It will not help that 99 percent of the Jews in Israel and the world, whatever their views of any particular government or of the peace process itself, treat their acts with abhorrence. Nor is it of any consequence that the acts themselves are, for them, counterproductive; that is to say, they do not bring them closer to their goal but, rather, make that goal impossible to achieve, whether through rational political debate or violence.

If anything, the reaction to Yitzhak Rabin's death in Israel and the world has accelerated the peace process. The response of the world and its leadership was clearly a result of the changed status of Israel in the world, a very strong secondary

benefit of the process, and the response of the Arab states and their leaders suggested that the process had taken hold among many of them even more than the advocates of peace had hoped. Israelis, perennially optimistic about such things, will hardly be dissuaded from feeling more confident as they move down the path toward peace, even as those in the peace camp feel the necessity to conciliate those who are doubtful about the process.

At the same time, this dastardly and dreadful act and the response to it have opened up new possibilities for a cooperative peace rather than a separationist one.

The Next Stage in Israel-Palestinian Relations: Separation or Cooperation?

The signing of "Oslo Two," the interim agreement between Israel and the PLO during the last week of September, at the beginning of the Jewish New Year 5756 and two years after the signing of "Oslo One," the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (13 September 1993), represents a massive further concret-

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ization of the Israeli and Palestinian effort to develop a relationship that will permit the sharing of the land that both claim in an equitable and satisfactory manner. Under Oslo Two, Israel will begin a staged relinquishment of powers over heavily settled Palestinian territories in Judea and Samaria to the Palestinian Authority.

The IDF will redeploy outside of the seven main cities in the area, all completely or overwhelmingly Palestinian Arab in population (Area A in the agreement), and also from some 450 villages containing 68 percent of the total Palestinian population of the West Bank (Area B). The PA will assume full responsibility for internal security within the cities, and will share responsibility for security in the villages and surrounding areas with Israeli security forces. Only in Area C, the unpopulated areas, those reserved by the Israeli military for its use, and the Jewish settlements, will Israel continue to have full responsibility for security.

The Israeli civil administration will be disbanded. The Palestinian Authority will assume those responsibilities for domestic self-government that have not already been transferred to it on a functional basis. Even in Area C, it will assume responsibility for those functions to be provided to the Arab population that are not territorially connected.

All this is to take place within the first six months, along with elections to a Palestinian Council with both executive and legislative powers. Most of the public discussion is focused on these first six months of this new arrangement. Little attention has been paid to the commitment in the agreement that transfers will continue in the remaining territories periodically thereafter, reserving to Israel only those matters and territories requiring resolution in the final agreement. Thus the three areas into which Judea and Samaria will be divided each have arrangements for both separation and cooperation among the two parties to the agreement during the interim stages.

The matter goes beyond that, however. While he was alive, Prime Minister Rabin continued to speak forcefully on every possible occasion on the need for separation, by which he meant clearly political separation between the Palestinians and Israel, for the sake of maintaining peace. Rabin wanted the two peoples to pursue a separate existence — Israel as a state, and the Palestinians as "an entity," at least for now. Stated simply, Rabin's position calls for maximum separation, with the Palestinian Authority controlling some two-thirds of the West Bank within a short time and, in all likelihood, more in the final agreement; Israel's security border remaining on the Jordan; Israeli security forces

able to move with varying degrees of freedom in the territory of the PA; Jerusalem entirely within Israel's hands; and no return to the 1967 borders (at least not precisely) even with the extensive relinquishments proposed.

That was Rabin's position. The agreement is another matter. It both requires far greater cooperation than Rabin desired, and also far greater opportunity for the Palestinians to acquire greater political power or even a return to the 1967 lines except for cosmetic alterations. None of this is settled as of yet, but there are lines of potential development that need to be noted at the very outset of the new venture.

For example, while Rabin called for political separation, the agreement makes that separation impossible, even in the long run. The entire territory is to remain an economic union. While the Palestinians want greater economic separation in the hope of developing their own economic base, the realistic possibilities for that are small and the agreement does not really provide for them. By now we know from experience in the rest of the world that economic union requires a political dimension of some kind for maintenance.

Much the same is true in matters of security. As long as the Israeli security forces keep the ultimate responsibility for security in their hands throughout the territories, proximate responsibility for it in Area C and a share of the responsibility in Area B, with regard to that function as well there will have to be extensive Israeli-Palestinian cooperation anchored in the agreement itself.

A third class of areas/functions in which there will have to be continued institutionalized cooperation as provided for by the agreement is in connection with religious sites, i.e., the holy places. Mentioned specifically are the Tombs of the Patriarchs in Hebron, Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem, and Joseph's Tomb in Shechem. All three of these cities are otherwise to be turned over to PA civil and security rule within six months, but in these three cases, arrangements for Jewish access and security must be maintained. In the case of Bethlehem and Shechem, Jews visit but do not live on the site, although the yeshiva at Joseph's Tomb in Shechem presents a special situation of its own. In Hebron, Jewish families not only live in the satellite city of Kiryat Arba which remains totally under Israeli jurisdiction, but in the heart of Hebron itself, to the great unhappiness of the Palestinians. At least at this point, Israel will not move those residents, and so their security must be provided for. The arrangements established involve institutionalized cooperative action.

Nor is that all. Implicit cooperative relationships are built into the paragraphs on freedom of movement for Israelis, legal issues, and water (a joint water committee to manage water resources and enforce water policies). In the section on cooperation and economic relations there are specific references to cooperation in matters relating to the environment, economics, technology, and science, as well as fostering dialogue and relations between the two peoples, and especially in the educational field with "joint initiatives" in the development of curricula, the training of sports instructors, youth exchange programs, drug abuse prevention, etc. One might say that both parties are being dragged into institutionalized cooperative relationships, in some cases kicking and screaming.

Of course, at this moment there is a lack of clarity about the meaning of these provisions because of contradictory statements by the principals involved. While Rabin called for separation, Peres seems to be pursuing a variant of the functional solution that he and the late Moshe Dayan advocated in the fifteen years after the Six-Day War. He wants the Arabs to have self-rule on matters of domestic concern on the territory that they immediately occupy and shared rule with Israel in the rest. The agreement which he negotiated makes as much provision for Peres's functional solution as it does for Rabin's separate development. That is why it often seems to be inconsistent from one of those perspectives or the other since it tries to combine both, something that may be well-nigh impossible.

Peres seems to have accepted the use of the Benelux model first proposed by Arafat to describe the likely end result, although the Benelux model is not nearly as far-reaching and it is almost totally submerged by now in the European Union. Arafat and his colleagues, on the other hand, speak of detachment from Israel, of a Benelux model like the real Benelux model, i.e., limited connections in the economic realm where the Palestinians will benefit and open borders, and detachment in every other possible way.

Does this bode well for the cooperative dimensions of the agreement? It is hard to say. The very fact that the Palestinian Covenant, which was to have been repealed under Oslo One, is still a subject of contention and equivocation in Oslo Two (where it is not required to be abolished until two months after the Palestinian Council has been elected and begun to meet), is a case in point. The Palestinians sold Israel that one twice. Israel seems to be giving up its bargaining chips very quickly and, given its interests, not preserving much for the final round of negotiations.

Perhaps we need maximum separation for peace, given the culture of the peoples involved, but the realities on the ground do not permit maximum separation, for the same inexorable reasons. That is the reality in much of the contemporary world — the CIS, for example, has the same problem. Russia's former possessions, now independent republics, do not want to fall into the bear's grip once again, but even in the vast area that used to be the Soviet Union and is now the Commonwealth of Independent States, an area at least 800 times the size of Israel and the territories, economic and security matters require that they continue to be connected with Russia in one way or another and that those connections be institutionalized ones. This means that while we have advanced to a new stage in efforts to deal with the perennial problem in this conflict, that of two peoples living in and claiming one land, we have not eliminated it.

Nevertheless, that new stage may also be referred to as a new plane based upon expectations of a peaceful resolution of conflict which includes no small measure of institutionalized cooperation. This is a very canny game for both sides and neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians have demonstrated adeptness in playing that game, although on the whole it must be said that they have done better than expected. As long as Jews and Arabs remain in this land, we are fated to live together and must work out reasonable and peaceful ways for doing so. Both sides may wish for separation, but separation is not attainable in many fields. Hence, we must negotiate ways to share what must be shared even as we separate what can be separated.

The Internal Political Struggle: From the Bitter Could Come Sweet

Israel's worst problems are not those that they will have with the Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority, difficult as they will be, but the problems that are internal to Israel and the Jewish people. The truth is that the solidarity of both is being severely damaged by the way the process and accompanying phenomena are being conducted and understood, to create a greater threat than excessive concessions to the Palestinians alone would bring. One might fairly say that this is a product of the peace process, but not because of the acts most directly associated with the process.

The citizens of Israel, more than anything else, have signaled to their leadership that they are seeking a middle-of-the-road position on the critical issues facing the state — a peace process that will lead to the conclusion of successful peace negotiations but that will not

jeopardize Israel's security or require Israel to take excessive security risks. Israelis want a market economy but not one that will abandon the state's social safety net or undercut it. They want integration of Jews of different countries of origin and even people of different religions without establishing a melting pot. Israelis do not want religious coercion, but do seek the maintenance of a state that is duly rooted in Jewish tradition and civilization.

What Israel needs is a force in the center with enough strength in the Knesset to align itself with one party or another to pull them in the directions that they need to be pulled. Otherwise each will continue to be the prisoner of its more extreme elements as both have been.

Israel traditionally has been extremely resistant to centrist blocs, preferring to vote for what seem to be clear-cut positions even when they cannot be implemented. In the case of the present government, its center is pulled to the left by Meretz and its own left-wingers; while in the case of the Likud, its center is pulled to the right by its intransigents. Now, however, there appears to be an opportunity to develop such a bloc that could play a critical balancing role in all three of these dimensions. That center bloc has four as yet disparate components: the Movement for a Third Way that focuses on the peace process and a more limited territorial compromise that will not compromise Israel's security, the David Levy faction recently split off from the Likud that focuses on the social safety net, the Liberal faction still within the Likud that focuses on economic issues, and those members of the religious parties who are not happy with the political extremism that their parties represent.

The fact is that all of those components share in common the concern with a realistic peace process, the need for both privatization and a social safety net, while most of their leaders and activists come with a healthy respect for Jewish tradition and civilization. All represent a continuation of traditional Zionism, modified to address the issues of today rather than yesterday.

All are also dominated by or have heavy representation of Sephardim, most of whom share a common concern for these issues. If they were to be joined by Natan Sharansky and his predominantly Russian movement which Sharansky describes as a movement for the reinvigoration of Zionism, the possibility of forging a real centrist bloc itself becomes realistic, a bloc that will keep the state or its leaders from taking the kind of extreme measures that lead to extreme mistakes. In essence, this is the demand of the hour, but the obsta-

cles to it are probably too great. Let us hope that those who lead the groups described above have the vision and personal capacity to find their way to each other and achieve at least the electoral unity needed for the immediate future.

The Jewish Dimension: Will Solidarity Hold?

After 2000 years the Jews achieved statehood, only so that in one generation, instead of Romans or Babylonians or Assyrians or British or Arabs driving us out of our land, we Jews can take on the responsibility ourselves. Once again, we can be proud of Jewish energy. Just over fifty years after Herzl forecast a Jewish state, we achieved its birth. Now, just under fifty years later, we hold its future in our hands more than we may know.

I truly believe that Israel can attain a decent peace with the Palestinians, that both Israelis and Palestinians are ready for that step, and that there is a sufficiently high percentage of Palestinians who have the moderation, or who can acquire it, necessary to achieve peace.

It seems that the Semitic peoples, instead of reaching for the center, tend to reach for the extremes. They seem to prefer to be polarized rather than to find or build common ground. This Semitic approach to the issues is bad enough for what it is and when it appears among rivals, but it is disastrous when it appears among partners. What it means among rivals is that the only way to advance is when one side is prepared to virtually surrender to the positions of the other side in order to make progress.

Jewish history is replete with stories of how senseless hatred of one Jew toward another within our ranks has brought down the Jewish edifice of the times. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Zionist movement other than the rebuilding of the land itself was its ability to bring the representatives of such a wide range of ideologies, each with its own vision of what the restored Jewish homeland should be like, together in one movement and to, with one exception, hold them together until the common goal was attained. The WZO was able to preserve unity across large gaps for nearly 100 years of Zionism. The Zionist vision itself, coupled with the difficult position of the Jews in the world, brought about Jewish solidarity with all of our ideological and religious differences. Now, having reached the luxury of not being in danger of imminent annihilation by force, we have allowed those fissiparous forces to gain the upper hand from within.

Some examples not from the peace process itself: In the IDF itself, under the new doctrine, combat troops

have to do much more reserve duty every year than the "jobniks," those whose military duties are behind the lines in support roles and who are less needed but also less endangered when they are, a blatant injustice that could only have been thought as workable by professional generals who have forgotten what a citizen army is like. Anyone who knows a citizen army knows that it can work only when there is a sense of elemental fairness in its distribution of the burden, something that no longer exists in the IDF. Ehud Barak, whom the media portray as the bright light of Israeli politics, was the architect of that policy as Chief of Staff. Militarily, he may have been right, except that it does not preserve the solidarity necessary to make the IDF work.

Meanwhile, the assault on the Jewishness of the Jewish state continues to gather momentum, especially after the assassination. It is not only the ideological atheists on the left who are leading the assault, but perhaps in less obnoxious ways those who, looking at the settlers in the territories, have come to the conclusion that it is Judaism that is preventing peace with our neighbors, or those who are interested in becoming a normal part of the world scene for the sake of pleasure and profit. After 100 years of Zionism in which every Zionist leader, including the secular socialists who saw themselves as militant on the subject, carefully refrained from assaulting the biblical basis for the Jewish claim to this land and indeed used that basis to advance their claim in international forums, Rabin, on the occasion of the signing of Oslo Two, even announced on several occasions before the world that the Bible is not the *tabu* (the land registration record) of the Jews' right to Israel.

Judaism is constantly set up as if it is in opposition to democracy, rather than asking the true questions: What kind of Judaism do we want in Israel and what kind of democracy do we want? More and more, the

edifice erected by secular and religious leaders alike to preserve the alliance between both sides through a modicum of Jewishness in the state is being assaulted and torn down.

The Zionist movement was based on a synthesis between modern secular values and traditional Judaism and those who principally supported each. Even before the assassination, both sides were already challenging the synthesis. Secularists saw religious Jews as opposing the peace and religious Jews saw secularists as opposing the Jewish right to the Land of Israel. Moderates on both sides had begun to respond to their extremists rather than to each other. With the assassination, the tension between the two sides became even greater.

We have entered into a period of great promise, yet fraught with difficulties. While the promises are in the objective situation, the difficulties are mainly subjective; that is to say, can we Jews or, for that matter, the Arabs stand up under the pressures and resist the temptations to reach beyond, in one way or another, the establishment of a decent peace. Yitzhak Rabin, with all his commitment to the kind of peace that he was making as the only rational choice, had his own hesitations in his heart, if not in his mind, over the consequences of that peace. We would do well to retain both parts of his legacy to us, to recognize the necessities for peace, what those necessities will require from both parties, yet at the same time the problems as well as the opportunities that peace brings, particularly for the Jewish people of Israel. We can only hope and pray that we achieve the appropriate balance between the two.

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★ ★ ★ NEW BOOKS FROM THE JERUSALEM CENTER ★ ★ ★

**Community and Polity:
The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry**
Revised and Updated Edition

By Daniel J. Elazar

The organized life of American Jewry is of interest in its own right. It is the largest Jewish collectivity in the world today, perhaps of all time. For students of politics, the American Jewish community is an example of a voluntary political order that functions authoritatively for those who acknowledge their connection with it, but does not seek a monopoly on the loyalty of its members.

The first edition of *Community and Polity* offered a description and analysis of the developments in the American Jewish community through the first postwar generation — roughly, 1946 through 1976. Since the appearance of the original edition of *Community and Polity* in 1976, the aggressive advancing Jewish community of the late 1960s and early 1970s has given way to a far more quiescent and even troubled one.

This edition of *Community and Polity* explores in depth these and other issues. Like the first edition, it is designed to serve two purposes: to provide a basic survey of the structure and functions of the American Jewish community and to suggest how that community should be understood as a body politic, a polity that is not a state but is no less real from a political perspective.

This revised and updated edition of *Community and Polity* examines the transformations taking place in local community federations and in the countrywide federation movement, the decline of the mass-based organizations, the shift in the forms and organization of Jewish education, the changes taking place in the synagogue movements, and the problems of Jewish unity generated by inter-movement competition.

The book also looks at the new ambiguity in the sphere of community relations, the impact of demographic shifts on Jewish community organization, the institutionalization of new relationships between the American Jewish community and Israel, and the emergence of new model organizations to mobilize and serve the Jewish community.

This book is a product of four decades of study of the American Jewish community. It took its present form as a result of a growing need for an understanding of the importance of the structural and institutional aspects of American Jewish life. While the commitment of individual Jews and Jewish families to Jewish life is obviously a prerequisite to the life of a Jewish community, the character of Jewish life is ultimately shaped by the institutions that Jews create collectively.

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