

THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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Guest Editorial

The Importance of Jewish Community

By Rosalind Taranto

One of Webster's dictionary definitions of community is "a group of people with a common character or interest living together within a larger society." The definition of Jewish is "The cultural, social and religious beliefs and practices of the Jews—the whole body of Jews equals the Jewish people."

We are all members of the great Charlotte community—earning our livelihoods, enjoying cultural arts, sending our children to schools and universities, and taking part in many other community activities and events we all take for granted.

But—are we also a part of the smaller community, the Jewish community—or are we letting the Jewish community in Charlotte become a community in crisis? Are we each as active in our smaller Jewish world as we are in the larger world?

We learn who we are and what we want to do not only from the larger community as a whole but also from the microcosm of the Jewish community. Each of us has a share and a stake in its survival, not only for ourselves but for future generations.

As we American Jews have become more assimilated, we have begun to have many of the same problems that for years were not prevalent in Jewish communities. Now there are Jews dealing with alcohol abuse, drug abuse, child abuse and molestation. We have Jews living in single parent homes. And we have an intermarriage rate of 52%. Problems we perhaps used to think of as problems the non-Jews had are now problems existing within our own Charlotte Jewish community.

The survival of a strong Jewish community is a must. The will to survive, and to survive as Jews with roots in Jewish values, has always been central to the Jewish people. It was not just the shtetl Jews who needed a strong Jewish community in the past to survive. We American Jews need it too.

The Jewish community is often the only stability some family units have. It can provide an extended "nurturing family" for our children, as well as for ourselves. Sometimes, especially in these days so full of change and uncertainty in the world, it is the only constant denominator in our lives.

Those of us who serve on the Editorial Board of *The Charlotte Jewish News* want this paper to mirror this community. We want *The CJN* to be the place you turn to when you want to be informed about what is available and happening in our area. This paper can be a forum where ideas are shared, an educational tool, and an attention-getter for our Jewish organizations. But we need YOU to be part of our CJN community. We ask for your support so we can reflect what Charlotte Jewish community has been, is now, and will be in the future.

We know our past. We participate in the present. But each of us can ensure the future of the Charlotte Jewish community. Use *The CJN* as your link to our Jewish community. Give us your feedback and your input. Let's work together to make *The CJN* our "Charlotte Jewish Network."

Rosalind Taranto is cochair of The CJN Editorial Board.

Middle East Peace Talks: An Historic Opportunity

By Gad Yaacobi

NEW YORK (JTA) — At last, after four months, the Middle East peace talks have resumed. Various minor and marginal issues were finally removed to make room for the major issue: What kind of future will the people of the Middle East have?

After six wars, hundreds of thousands of casualties, immense human suffering and a catastrophic waste of precious resources, a window has opened for what is perhaps a unique and historic opportunity.

We must grab this opportunity before it slips away.

The most significant challenge for Israel and for the countries of the region is to make a breakthrough toward peace and reconciliation.

I believe that it is an irreversible process. Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians hopefully will not miss this opportunity. There is no alternative to peace, and especially not in the Middle East.

The changing of the guards and of the governments in the United States and in Israel were

ment of maintaining peaceful relations among states. The existence of a democratic government is the central guarantee for preventing violence and aggression.

Never has one democracy declared war upon another democracy. This was not a result of chance, rather, it was a result of the nature of democracies.

Therefore, democratization is not just a political and moral issue. It is directly tied to the existence of peace and stability. Just 40 to 45 of the 181 member states of the United Nations are democracies.

The Middle East might be called "the land of lost opportunities." Lost opportunities have carried a very heavy and painful price for the peoples of the Middle East. Now we have a chance to change the situation and to create a new and better future for all.

The potential fruits of peace are immense, such as a reduction in the cost of defense and in arms procurement, open borders, trade and tourism, and investment in educational, health and scientific development.

Instead of exchanging insults

With Jordan, a mutual working agenda was signed, and we believe that the differences between our two countries can be bridged.

The negotiations with Syria are focusing on the real issues of security, peace and borders. The prime minister has stated that Israel is ready for a partial withdrawal on the Golan Heights in the framework of a full peace treaty, based on U.N. Security Council Resolution 242.

For the first time, serious negotiations are being conducted, on the basis of the Camp David accords and new Israeli proposals, with the Palestinians.

The goal is to establish an interim self-governing autonomy for three to five years. Then, negotiations will take place concerning the final settlement.

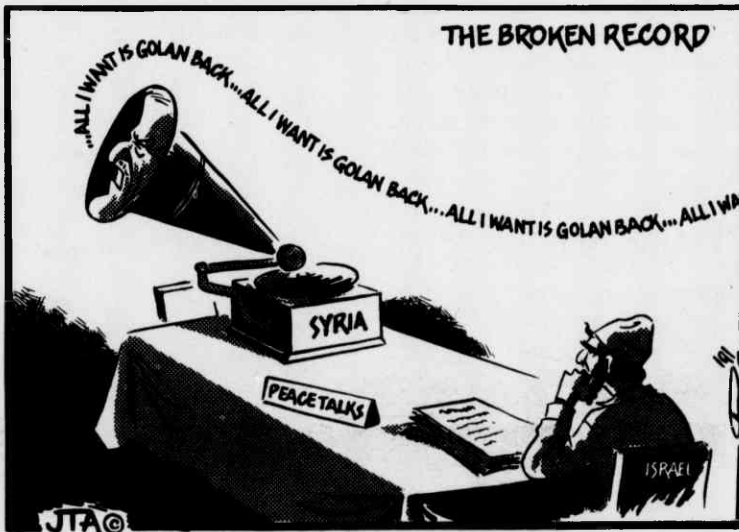
Israeli proposals envision democratic elections to an administrative council as part of the interim arrangements. The council members would be accountable to their electorate, and would discharge their designated functions in the framework of the agreement.

Such elections would be unprecedented for the Palestinians, and the mode of governing would be based upon the preservation of the right of free assembly, free expression and secret ballots.

The current opportunity to make progress toward peace is perhaps a one-time opportunity. I do hope that it will not be yet another missed opportunity.

It is the task of all the parties to create a new Middle East and a better future for its peoples. The time has come.

Gad Yaacobi is Israel's ambassador to the United Nations and a former cabinet minister and member of Knesset.



a change of agenda, which in Israel means a change in the scale of priorities.

The present government of Israel is committed to achieving peace and security, instead of to the Greater Israel approach. It is concentrating on absorbing new immigrants and building a modern economy and a progressive society.

Its goal is to maintain Israel as a democratic state and the homeland of the Jewish people, based on equality of human rights.

But too many states in the Middle East are still putting their resources, their human energies and their creativity to waste by continuing to pursue conflict.

If all those resources would instead be devoted to investment in human capital and economic development, we could be improving lives rather than ending them.

If we invest in health, education and science instead of military hardware, then the Middle East could one day be free from hunger and illiteracy.

The other key to progress is democracy. Unfortunately, Israel is negotiating with countries which are non-democratic. Democracy is an essential compo-

and bullets, the people of the Middle East could be exchanging technology and know-how. Instead of investing in the weapons of war, together we could be enjoying the prosperity of peace.

A peaceful environment could free up \$30 billion annually from the cost of defense for progress and development. Moreover, it will also allow development in six major new directions:

- The establishment of a Middle East Common Market.
- The creation of joint ventures, based upon integrated knowledge, capital and mineral resources from both inside and outside the region.
- The establishment of an integrated network of infrastructure for ports, airports, railways and energy plants.
- The opening of borders for tourism.
- The promotion of cooperation in the fields of health, professional training, knowledge, technology and agriculture.
- The removal of all sorts of boycotts.

Some progress has already been made in previous rounds of the peace talks between Israel and its Arab neighbors, but we still have a long way to go.

Jewish Poetry Award Entrants Sought

Writers wishing to enter the seventh annual Anna Davidson Rosenberg Award for Poems on the Jewish Experience write before July 31, 1993 for entry form and guidelines to Poetry Award, Judah Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94705, enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope.

The Rosenberg Award was established by the Magnes Museum and the descendants of community volunteer leader Anna Davidson Rosenberg to encourage poetry on Jewish themes and identity. Each year, poets from throughout the world enter the competition, open only to unpublished poems written in English.

Awards include a first prize of \$100, second prize of \$50, third prize of \$25, and Honorable Mentions. In addition, poets under age 19 may also be considered for Youth Commendations and poets 65 and above may also compete for a Senior Award. There will be an awards ceremony/reading at the Magnes during Chanukah.

NOTICE

There is no issue of *The CJN* in July
Deadline for August issue is July 9

We encourage our readers' viewpoints. Letters should be submitted typewritten, double-spaced and signed. Please include address and phone number. Names withheld upon request. We reserve the right to edit.