

Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin's Legacy: 20 Years After His Assassination



This weekend there will be many commemorations and discussions on the 20th anniversary of the assassination of Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin by Yigal Amir, an extremist who killed him following a massive Peace rally in Tel Aviv on November 4, 1995. Thoughts linger about why Rabin's security detail was absent when by chance Amir shot him three times.

Controversy surrounds Rabin's assassination in this 20th year given incitement by the Palestinian leaders triggering the current wave of violence bordering on the brink of a Third Intifada, or "uprising". There were [remarks](#) by Israeli President Rivlin about throwing the key away keeping his assassin in prison for life. That triggered a response from Amir's brother Hagai who was arrested by Israeli police accused of inciting violence. Former UK Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks revealed a letter he received posthumously from Rabin extolling the patriotism of religious nationalist Zionists.

The left commemorates Rabin's assassination as both a personal loss to the Jewish nation and demise of the peace process. A peace effort virtually dead in the current context of what we have taken to call the al Quds or Jerusalem Intifada. An uprising fomented by PA President Abbas of PLO-Fatah-PL0, Hamas leaders Ismail Haniyeh in Gaza, Sheikh Hassan Youssef in the West Bank and jailed Sheikh Raed Salah of the northern Branch of the Islamic Movement. Then there was the complicity of the United Arab List Members of the Knesset like

Gattis, Tibi, Aymen and Zoabi riling Israel Muslims to act in solidarity with their Palestinian brothers.

There were also thoughtful articles in the *Jerusalem Report*, [“The Changing Tide,”](#) by Andrew Friedman and yesterday’s *Jerusalem Post* article [“Rabin’s True Legacy”](#) by deputy managing editor Caroline Glick. They were on the circumstances and context of Rabin’s assassination and his real legacy, ending the Oslo process. J.J. Goldberg in today’s *Forward* article on this 20th anniversary of Rabin’s assassination [“How Yitzhak Rabin’s Assassin Succeeded in Killing Historic Push for Peace”](#), gave the left’s perennially mistaken view that peace died with Rabin.

Friedman’s bottom line or tachlis is: “As Israel prepares to mark 20 years to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, society is no longer willing to risk a Palestinian state.” He notes the rise of Palestinian terrorism following the Oslo accords in the run up to Rabin’s assassination:

The mood of the religious Zionist community during the summer of 1995 reflected palpable, heart-stopping panic? and not only because of murderous Palestinian attacks.

More than 100 Israelis were killed between the day Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat signed the Oslo Accords on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993, and the night Rabin was gunned down by a Jewish assassin two years and two months later. But the fear in the right-wing community was far deeper than immediate questions of life and death.

Rather, the right wing sector was gripped by a nearly apocalyptic fury that the end of Israel as an independent, Jewish country was at hand. The then opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu furiously denounced the Oslo process, arguing that the PLO was an unrepentant terror group that would use any Israeli concessions to better its offensive capabilities.

Friedman contrasts the view of the left saying, “On the left

I don't think anyone has rethought the ultimate answer to our conflict with the Palestinians". He concludes citing former foreign and defense minister Moshe Arens, saying, "Most Israelis today understand the security risk that a Palestinian State would bring about, and they aren't willing to take the risk."

Glick's tachlis in her Rabin commemorative *Jerusalem Post* commentary is, "Rather than learn from his record, Israel has spent the past 20 years distorting his record." In her Facebook page, she noted, "the original essay appears in a collection of essays published last week by the Rabin Center in conjunction with Am Oved publishing house. It is titled *Three shots and twenty years*, and is edited by Prof. Anita Shapira and Nurit Cohen-Levinovsky."

Glick recounts the Oslo Accords were signed on a sun-splashed lawn at the White House on September 13, 1993 orchestrated by host former President Clinton. After tentative handshakes among Arafat, Peres and diffident Rabin, Arafat flew off to South Africa and spoke of Jihad with Israel instead of peaceful cooperation. Even in the run up to Rabin's assassination in November 1995, increasing Palestinian terror incidents occurred. They gave rise to skepticism and differences between Rabin and Peres, about whether the peace process should have been abrogated.

Her remarks underline the real intent of Arafat and the Palestinian leaders who returned in 1994 from Tunis:

In other words, Oslo didn't fail because Rabin was killed. Oslo failed – and continues to fail – because it was based on false assumptions about the Palestinians and the nature of their conflict with Israel.

Aside from the faith it placed in Arafat as a peacemaker, Oslo assumed that the absence of peace owed to the absence of a Palestinian state and was therefore Israel's fault. If Israel

would just give the PLO sufficient lands to make it happy, then there would be peace.

Shlomo Ben-Ami served as foreign minister when the Oslo process ended with the Second Intifada following the breakdown of negotiations at Camp David in July 2000. He said, that assumption was also wrong. The Palestinians were never interested in settling their dispute with Israel on any terms.

As Ben-Ami explained to *Ha aretz* in September 2000, "Arafat's concession vis-à-vis Israel [at Oslo] was a formal concession. Morally and conceptually, he didn't recognize Israel's right to exist. He doesn't accept the idea of two states for two peoples. Neither he nor the Palestinian national movements accept us... More than they want a state of their own, they want to spit out our state."

In other words, Oslo was never a peace process, because the Palestinians saw it not as a means to build their own national homeland but as a means to destroy Israel.

Glick notes what Rabin's daughter Dalia said about his attitude towards the Oslo process:

By the eve of his murder, due to mounting Palestinian terrorism, Rabin was seriously considering abrogating the Oslo process entirely.

In an interview on the 15th anniversary of her father's murder, Dalia Rabin explained that her father was on the verge of canceling the deal and turning back the clock.

In her words, "People who were close to my father told me that on the eve of his assassination he considered ending the Oslo process. He wasn't a blind man who sprinted forward."

Glick suggests that Rabin conceived a final deal with the Palestinians along the lines of the 1967 Yigal Allon Peace

Plan:

Rabin believed that the end-state of the peace process would involve an autonomous Palestinian governing authority rather than a state presiding over around half of Judea and Samaria and a large part of Gaza.

Jerusalem, in his view, would remain united under sole Israeli sovereignty. The Israeli communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza would remain in place. Israel would maintain its control over the areas not ceded to the Palestinians, including the international borders with Egypt and Jordan, in perpetuity.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but Rabin's vision of a final deal looked much more like current Bayit Yehudi (Jewish Home) diplomatic plan than the Labor Party's position.

Our usually astute European observer of developments in Israel and Turkey said that Peres had rejected the original Allon peace plan. Further, that Peres had orchestrated the Oslo negotiations behind Rabin's back with operatives like Yossi Beilin, who headed the Israeli negotiating team; MKs Haim Oron (Meretz), Amram Mitzna (Labor) and Avraham Burg (Labor).

Glick concludes:

Abbas is able to succeed at the UN in part because Israel refuses to acknowledge that there never was a peace process. Arafat lied to us, and to the world, about his intentions, and we lied to ourselves about the nature of the Palestinian war against us. So long as we continue to play along with this tired charade, we will be unable to conceive and implement a diplomatic defense that is coherent and effective against the mountains of lies and murder on which the PLO has based its war against Israel for the past 55 years.

Israel contributes to the PLO's diplomatic success at the UN because it refuses to do what Rabin recognized was necessary

20 years ago. Rather than learn from his record, Israel has spent the past 20 years distorting his record.

The time has come to do justice to Rabin and end the Oslo process once and for all.