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## **CAMP DAVID: BORN IN SIN**

ONE sometimes gets the impression that Likud spokesmen - who proclaim their undying devotion to the ideal of Eretz Yisrael, yet declare that their policy aims are the consummation of Camp David - have not read the agreement or have forgotten what it says. In so far as the agreement applied to Judea, Samaria and Gaza, its beneficiaries - Jordan and the Palestinian Arabs - never accepted it. Nor had they authorized Egypt, whose president signed it, to act on their behalf.

The agreement thus became a dead letter. To emphasize their disregard (to put it mildly), both Egypt and the US (whose president Carter acted as a "broker") were soon promoting quite different solutions. In 1981, the US produced the "Reagan Plan" - which proposed simply an Israeli "withdrawal" - phased according to the bizarre principle of "partial peace" for "partial withdrawal" and "full" peace only for total withdrawal.

As for the Egyptian government, just when the last slice of Sinai was about to be handed over by Israel, it announced its future policy: an 11-point program that contained precisely the original Arab plan for the dismantling of the State of Israel - not forgetting the "right of Arab return," not forgetting Jewish surrender of Jerusalem. How then can anybody in his senses, whatever his or her political opinions, suggest that Israel is "bound" by the Camp David agreement - even if we ignore the tremendous changes in Judea, Samaria and Gaza that have taken place since 1978? Israel should have denounced the agreement long ago. After all it was, or should have been, clear from the beginning that Camp David was a prescription for disaster.

It provided the infrastructure for a Palestinian Arab state in what it called "the West Bank" and Gaza. The only constitutional constraint that could prevent this development would be the proclamation of Israeli sovereignty over Eretz Yisrael. The Camp David agreement was born in sin.

As a prelude to it, prime minister Begin had announced that the question of sovereignty would be left "open." This was a negation of Zionism. Never had the Zionist movement agreed to the notion that the Jewish right to Palestine - grounded in history and internationally recognized in the Mandate of 1922 - was in any way diminished by Arab claims, or that Arabs were entitled to more than equality of civil rights. There were naive Zionist compromisers who were prepared to make concessions - but only "for the sake of peace." The Arabs, realizing the weakness of the case of a "Palestinian people," allegedly distinct from other Arabs, suddenly appearing on the scene in the middle of the 20th century, concocted over the years various imaginary histories, some going back to pre-biblical times, to provide grounds for their claim.

Begin, by leaving "open" the question of sovereignty, thus proposed abandoning the Zionist assertion that the Jewish people have an unchallengeable right to sovereignty over the national homeland; and offered the Arabs the status of legitimate contenders for that right. That is why there is not a single word in the Camp David agreement to suggest Jewish origin or inspiration. Its contents derive from the kitchen of Arab propaganda and the desks of the American State Department.

It is frankly devoted only to the "solution of the Palestinian problem." It announces as

its immediate objective "a peaceful and orderly transfer of authority" in "the West Bank and Gaza." To that end the Palestinian Arabs will for five years enjoy "autonomy" under a "freely elected" self-governing authority - which will "replace" the "existing [Israeli] military government and its civilian administration." Then, "a withdrawal of Israeli armed forces will take place, and there will be a redeployment of the remaining Israeli forces into specified security locations." To replace the Israeli armed forces "a strong local police force" will be established by the self-governing authority to keep law and order (and to look after Israeli security). It should have surprised nobody when Faisal Husseini, one of the prominent spokesmen for the Palestinian Arabs, already pounced on that specific clause in the agreement and proclaimed his intention of mobilizing 20,000 recruits for that police force, which will be trained in the use of small arms. He is just a little premature, but that is the way - understandably - his and his colleagues' minds are working.

The Shamir government ignored the Camp David clause requiring Israel to negotiate with elected Palestine Arabs. At American dictation it has been negotiating with a group avowedly answerable to the PLO. Now, with the negotiations taken over by the Rabin government, if they get over the hurdles of determining "the powers and authority" of the self-governing authority, there will arise in Nablus or Ramallah an Arab governmental executive, running day-to-day affairs and commanding a "strong" armed police force.

Camp David decreed that after three years of this government, negotiations will begin to determine the "final status" of Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Then the parties will contend for the crown of sovereignty - the Palestinian Arabs, backed by a coalition of Arab states and other supporters versus the Israel government which will have opened the door for them to sovereignty over the heart of the Jewish homeland. It is hardly conceivable that in the circumstances of 1992 this scenario will be consummated as planned.

Changes will certainly occur in the timetable. However, if the crucial stage is reached and a governmental body is set up, with a ready-made police force of trained and experienced terrorists in place, is there anybody so foolish as to believe that they will wait for the three years (laid down by the Camp David agreement) for the naive Israelis to sit down and negotiate with them over who is to have sovereignty? Within weeks, perhaps months, of settling into office, they will proclaim themselves government of an independent Palestinian state, demanding international recognition. Who or what will stop them? This is the witches' brew prepared 14 years ago by the Likud government.

Now, if the Likud leaders, realizing the magnitude of their blunder, wish to rehabilitate the party and restore its credibility, they must distance themselves from that agreement with the least possible delay. The contest for the party leadership provides the opportunity. The decision may be hard.

It involves an admission of serious error. It is the only way, however, to establish honestly a strong political opposition to the creation of a "Palestinian state" - which would signify the next step toward realization of the Arab dream of Israel's dismantlement.