

A homeland can't be put up for sale

Israel Eldad

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ZIONISM – the moral, historical, political and practical basis of the State of Israel – has known many differences of opinion over methods to achieve the Return to (and the Return of) Zion; money, settlement, a charter or military conquest constitute these options. There were arguments over the timing of these methods, but never were there doubts about our right to the Land of Israel and never was there support for the abandonment of what had already been obtained by money or blood.

Moreover, what became ours through a just war of defence against Arab aggression – whether from evil Syria which attacked from the Golan Heights or from the “peace-pursuing” Hussein who attacked us from the heights of Ramallah, Shechem and Hebron – surely was to be kept. It was these highlands which decided who ruled the country in the days of Joshua, the Judges, David and up until the time of the Crusaders who, living on the coast, were expelled by the hill-dwelling Moslems.

We gave up territory only as a result of military defeat and neither willingly nor by agreement. Today, however, we possess the Land of Israel and the danger of territory being surrendered is real. There has already been a breach concerning negotiations with the PLO – Hanna Siniora as a guest at a Jewish rally in Jerusalem.

All this is taking place in an atmosphere of intellectual, cultural and media absurdity: cynicism regarding our “historic rights” and our “right of return,” whereas all respect is extended to the Arab Moslems as regards their emotional and religious feelings for this land.

What is developing is the crumbling of the fundamentals of Zionism. The state that arose as a result of no other alternative is heartily defended. What is rejected is Zionism as a movement of national liberation and a return to a homeland, the perception of the moral basis for Zionism clouded by nihilism. Eretz Yisrael won out over Uganda and Birobidjan because the national ethos increased the pathos of suffering which was the means of obtaining a foothold in this country. Surrendering vital areas of our country is the beginning of the end for Zionism.

Politically and tactically, the Sinai withdrawal heralded this demise. And if Begin didn't consider Sinai as part of historic Eretz Yisrael, it surely presented no demographic problem. However, readiness to withdraw to the “international” boundary is boomeranging on us. For the first time the principle of “returning” all, and to an enemy who crossed that boundary, was es-

tablished. In other words, an aggressor has nothing to lose. If Israel is vanquished, so much the better; and even if it is not, nothing is lost for it will eventually return everything.

KING HUSSEIN and President Mubarak deserve our thanks for burying the Camp David Accords. Prime Minister Shamir's insistence on Camp David, with autonomy as an interim phase, will only strengthen our enemies' demands for us to follow our Egyptian example and retreat to former borders. The tactical advantage of such a move, however, is not worth the strategic harm that will be done when the PLO takes over in the autonomous areas.

When this happens, as it surely must, Arab sovereignty will be legitimized de facto by the flying of flags, singing of anthems and holding of elections. Needless to say, no further Jewish settlement will be permitted. Begin, in a moment of euphoria, thought that the Camp David agreements assured the future of Judea and Samaria. By recognizing, for the first time, a “Palestinian” entity which had historic rights to these areas, he was in fact relinquishing them.

Yitzhak Shamir has trapped himself in the Camp David net, aided by American pressure and the sense of defeatism that has permeated the Alignment. The Zionist activist core of the Labour Zionist movement no longer exists. As Shimon Peres runs amok, nothing remains of the Allon Plan. Shamir presumed that he was gaining a few more months out of the coalition, whereas elections, if held now, would be a much-needed plebiscite that would halt the diplomatic avalanche. They would also illustrate the healthy strength of will that exists in broad sections of the populace.

What is needed is a Zionist counter-attack. If our historic and just demands are deemed inadequate then our basis is the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations ratification of the Mandate. If that is not enough, then we will put forward our two-fold experience in giving up territory in 1922, when

Transjordan was ceded to Abdallah, and in 1947 when the United Nations decided on partition.

For the truth is that territorial compromise did not help. Our 1949-1967 borders were violated and served as a springboard for a war of destruction. Our bottomline demand must be that the territorial status quo continues for that is our minimum security need.

The slogan “Territory for Peace” has never been applied, anywhere in the world, to a people's homeland. The United States may have withdrawn from Vietnam, but I doubt if it would surrender Alaska to Russia or Texas to Mexico. Russia may retreat from Afghanistan but not from Latvia. A homeland is not for sale, not even for peace.

Peace is a situation; a homeland exists. Unlike the Arabs, this existence is all we possess in the face of exile and the assimilation or annihilation that it would lead to.

Is the choice difficult? It certainly is. But it is less difficult today than it was in the past when conditions were harsher. It is also less difficult than what can be expected from a future where a “Palestine” is created in the highlands of our country. Now is the time to free Judea and Samaria from Camp David. Before it is too late.

The writer is a leading ideologue of the right and was a leader of the pre-state Lechi underground.



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