

(2) In the Speech to the Knesset, how does Sadat address the Palestinian issue, and on what matters does he appear to caution the Israelis?

(3) To what extent does Sadat employ the moral/religious dimension in making his appeal? Explain using specific examples.

21-4

A Palestinian rejoinder to the Camp David Accord.

President Sadat's peace initiative and the talks that followed were not well-received by everyone within the Arab World. Many Palestinians, whose problem Sadat had placed at the crux of Arab-Israeli tensions, thought Sadat's actions to be ill-advised, or at best, inadequate. In the opinion of certain intellectual Palestinian leaders, the problems of the West Bank had been given little more than cosmetic attention.

Source: W. F. Abboushi, "Changing Political Attitudes in the West Bank after Camp David" in Emile A. Nakleh ed., *Palestinian Agenda for the West Bank and Gaza* (Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Public Policy Research, 1980), pp. 6-14.

The visit to Jerusalem by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in 1977 and the ensuing Camp David talks have introduced new elements into the politics and attitudes of the people of the West Bank. Generally speaking, these attitudes change with the circumstances that surround the Arab-Israeli conflict. When there is hope that a peaceful settlement is in the offing, attitudes tend to be positive. Inhabitants of the West Bank, however, become militant and united when there is little hope of a solution.

THE INITIAL REACTION TO SADAT'S JERUSALEM VISIT

Both Israelis and Arabs were stunned by Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. They watched television in disbelief as he landed at Lod Airport, entered the King David Hotel, prayed at the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, and delivered his famous speech to the Knesset, Israel's parliament. It took some time before it became clear that most people would support his effort to reach an agreement with the Israelis. A minority, however, composed mainly of the pro-PLO mayors and politicians, the young, and the educated, was opposed from the beginning.

The majority's position was influenced by the following arguments:

- The Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be solved by military means because the Arab states are either unwilling or unable to challenge Israel on the battlefield. Some argued that Israel was unbeatable, others that the United States would not allow the Arabs to defeat Israel.

- Life in the West Bank has become so intolerable that an immediate solution is necessary. Many argued that Jewish settlements in the area would soon succeed in changing the demographic composition of

the occupied Arab territories, others, that neither fellow Arabs nor Israelis were treating Palestinians humanely and that, in consequence, the West Bank and Gaza had become the largest prison in history.

- Historically, Arab negativism was an important reason for Arab loss of those parts of Palestine that in 1948 became the state of Israel; more negativism would result in the permanent loss of the rest of Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza).

Some of the arguments of the minority opposed to the Sadat visit were:

- Israel will never give up the occupied territories, particularly the West Bank and Gaza, because it has always wanted all of Palestine, including the east bank of Jordan and southern Lebanon. Since Israel's objective is ideological, there is no point in negotiating with a fanatic like Begin. Only force can ultimately restore Arab rights in Palestine.

- A solution confined to the West Bank and Gaza would not be fair to Palestinians in the older territories who lost their homes to Israel, and who constitute about two-thirds of all Palestinians.

- Imperialism conspires with Israel to put down the Arabs. The United States has interests in an expansionist Israel. Consequently, America's objective is to keep the Arabs militarily weak, and it is using Sadat to accomplish its aims. This argument is strongest among leftists, especially Marxists and communists, but various nationalists also use it.

- Some believe the United States is sincere in its desire to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict but cannot force Israel to accept a reasonable and just solution. They believe the Jewish lobby in the United States is too strong for President Carter to challenge; as he is not a popular president, he will need the Jewish vote.

• Sadat and the United States have ignored the PLO because Israel refuses to negotiate with it but no solution is possible without it. Israel's attitude toward the PLO is not motivated by the PLO's "terrorism" or militancy but by its desire for the weakest, that is, the least costly solution. Immediately after Sadat's visit, the pro-PLO mayors felt the foreign press was ignoring them and giving the world the impression that the West Bank supported Sadat. In terms of population, the mayors represent the majority of the people of the West Bank. The leaders in this group were the mayor of Nablus, the West Bank's largest city, and the dynamic mayor of Ramallah. On the issue of Sadat's visit, however, the mayors did not represent the majority. The general sentiments of their own cities and towns, as well as of the rural population, were for Sadat's peace initiative.

REACTION TO THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS

Before Camp David, it was clear that Sadat had already influenced the issues involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Most West Bankers no longer objected to Israel's right to exist. They had also forgone their requirement that Israel make concessions to Palestinians in territories that had become part of the Jewish state. They still insisted, however, that refugees from inside Israel would receive compensation for their losses in the 1948 war, and perhaps some would be allowed to return.

Before Camp David there was a more dramatic change in the attitudes of the people of the West Bank. The most immediate issue became Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The majority of people living in the West Bank were willing to forgo their hoped-for Palestinian state provided the Israelis withdraw from the occupied territories. The issue of who should rule the West Bank—Hussein or the PLO—was no longer an issue as long as Arab sovereignty was established.

In other words, the people of the West Bank, with the exception of a determined minority, would have accepted any solution that (1) required Israel to withdraw its troops and political authority from all occupied territories, and (2) restored any Arab sovereignty over them. It was assumed that Jewish settlements would be dismantled and that Israel would not be allowed any military presence in the West Bank and Gaza. In other words, a majority of the people of the West Bank were willing to forget the Palestinian losses of 1948 if Israel were willing to forget its gains of 1967.

The Camp David accords changed all that. After a lively discussion of the two agreements, it became clear that West Bankers would not accept the one affecting the West Bank and Gaza. They saw in this agreement a great deal of ambiguity, and they suspect-

ed the ambiguity was intentional.

Two factors did not help the new situation. First, Begin's public statements made clear that he did not intend to withdraw from the occupied territories nor to discontinue, let alone dismantle, the Jewish settlements. Secondly, Hussein's opposition persuaded many people that the agreement was so bad that America's best friend in the region could not accept it. Even a visit to the area by Harold H. Saunders, deputy assistant secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State, could not change Hussein's mind. Ironically, the controversy surrounding the agreement eliminated the rivalry between the PLO and Hussein and opened the door for a rapprochement between the two, who until then had been staunch political enemies.

The pro-Hussein people in the West Bank were less vehement in their opposition to the Camp David accords while they waited for Hussein's position to crystallize. They knew that the king was usually low in reacting to important events. When Hussein did not come around to support Sadat, his allies in the West Bank became part of the opposition to the Camp David accords.

The majority which had supported Sadat after his visit to Jerusalem became, after Camp David, a minority. Only a few politicians were willing to continue their support for Sadat, and they were keeping a low profile in their public utterances and political activities.

In spite of the overwhelming opposition to the Camp David accords, however, there was interest in the idea of a transitional "autonomy" for the West Bank and Gaza. This idea was embodied in the agreement regarding the West Bank and Gaza, though the details were not sufficient for West Bankers to take a definite position. West Bankers wanted to know what would happen after the transitional period. Specifically, would the Israelis withdraw? Would the settlements be dismantled? Would the territory revert to Arab sovereignty? They tried in desperation to get answers to these questions, to no avail.

Americans, both officially and privately, were visiting the area in large numbers to drum up support for the self-rule concept, but none could give definite answers to the questions asked by West Bankers. They were noncommittal but hopeful that Arab cooperation and U.S. support could produce results that would satisfy the Palestinian people. West Bankers did not share in the American optimism. Consequently, the PLO became the rallying force behind the opposition to Sadat and his peace initiative, a fact which soon became apparent to American officials.

The area was visited by British officials who seemed to carry the same message as their American counterparts, but they also failed to persuade the people that Camp David was good for the Palestinians. In fact, if the British persuaded anyone of anything, it was that they were the instrument of American policy in the Middle East.

The most interesting role was played by the Israeli and foreign mass media. Many people in the West Bank felt the media were attempting to set up a new leadership for them. Indeed, scores of foreign journalists and television people converged upon the West Bank. They came not only from the United States and England but also from nearly every European country and Japan. Some represented leftist journals, but most represented the larger, well-known newspapers and magazines. All the American national TV networks were present. The BBC was active, and so were the French and the Italian networks, to a lesser degree.

It appeared that a few individuals were receiving more coverage than others. Few journalists showed any interest in the average person in the West Bank. Indeed, most of them came to the West Bank only during demonstrations, strikes, and other troubled periods.

With the exception of the mayor of Ramallah, and occasionally some others, the individuals most frequently interviewed by the Israeli and foreign press were the "moderates." These moderates had the following elements in common: none of them was pro-PLO; with the exception of the mayor of Bethlehem, none of them had been elected in recent years; few had ever been elected to any office; and they appeared to be flexible and had a reputation of never taking a position on anything.

This leadership, by grace of the mass media, had no power base and was doomed to fail. Its main problem, however, was not its lack of support. That, in an occupied area ruled by force, is not a decisive factor. Its biggest difficulty was that the plan was no plan at all. Begin continued to make statements indicating that "self-rule" was no more than an administrative device, void of any commitment about the political future of the area. In other words, the Israelis gave the leadership no opportunity to build a power base. As a result, many of its members were seen as collaborators, self-seeking politicians or even traitors, at least among a segment of the population.

Some of the negative attitudes of the opposition hardened during the post-Camp David period. For instance, distrust of Sadat increased. There were strong feelings in the West Bank that Sadat had sold out the Palestinians. People believed there was an American conspiracy to extract Egypt from the Arab world and isolate the opposition, mainly the PLO and Syria. In this way, an Egyptian-Israeli alliance could protect American interests in the region. This alliance would later win over Saudi Arabia and other conservative Arab regimes.

The revolution in Iran and Khomeini's Islamic leadership gave West Bankers the hope that no matter how impossible the situation, miracles do happen. For these West Bankers, the Iranian revolution was a miracle. Unarmed people brought down a despotic emperor, supported by a well-equipped army of 450,000 sol-

diers and by an imperialist superpower, who had at its disposal a network of secret police. It was not Khomeini's religious fervor but his kind of people's revolution that gave hope to the Palestinians about their own situation.

It will be very difficult for President Carter to change Palestinian attitudes toward Sadat and the Camp David accords. A change in the attitude of Palestinians would require a fundamental change in the attitude of the Israelis toward peace. Such a change seems extremely difficult and filled with psychological elements that Sadat could not isolate or neutralize.

SOME ASPECTS OF PALESTINIAN PSYCHOLOGY

The first thing to understand about Palestinian nationalism is that it might be a transient phenomenon. Whether or not it is depends largely on how much other Arabs support the Palestinian cause.

Historically, the Palestinians have felt Arab, not Palestinian. In the 1930s, the report of the Peel Commission stated that neither Jews nor Arabs identified with Palestine as a country, a truism that could not be challenged. Palestine was a British creation, which the Arabs could not accept as the basis of a new national identity, especially with the Balfour Declaration as a part of it. Later the Jews changed the name of the country to Israel, indicating that they too did not want to be Palestinian.

The Arabs of Palestine continued to consider themselves Arabs first and Palestinians second, even after they had lost Palestine, indeed until about 1967. That year was the beginning of Palestinian nationalism because of two important factors. First, the Arab people of Palestine discovered that the Arab countries were weak and unprepared to restore Arab rights in Palestine by force. This was not a sufficient reason, however, to give rise to a Palestinian nationalism separate from an Arab nationalism. What made the Palestinians opt for a nationalism of their own was the second factor: the feeling that Arab nationalism was not strong enough to deter Arab regimes from mistreating Palestinians. Hussein's battles with the PLO in 1970 and Hafez Assad's encounters with them during the Lebanese civil war, without protest from the Syrian and Jordanian rank-and-file, convinced Palestinians that other Arabs were apathetic to their cause. In fact, many Palestinians felt that the provincialism of Jordan and Syria was stronger than their Arab nationalism. Their greatest disappointment was with the Syrians, who had long supported the Palestinian cause.

Thus, to a large degree, Palestinian nationalism was influenced more by Arab attitudes than by Israel. It was only when the Palestinians had been rejected by fellow Arabs that they became Palestinian nationalists. This is why today Palestinian nationalism has much in

common with Zionism. They were both largely the outcome of rejection and persecution by host countries.

The Palestinian dilemma is complicated by emotional and psychological factors. Immediately following Camp David, the people of the West Bank felt trapped, isolated, and deserted. They had lost confidence in the Arab countries. Today they have no love either for Sadat or for the rejectionist leaders. To a large extent, they have given up on the Arab masses; they no longer believe these masses can throw out their "corrupt" and unpatriotic leaders. This is why West Bankers are divided between the ideology of the extreme left, which advocates the complete overthrow of Arab regimes through revolution, and the extreme religious right, which either prays for salvation or advocates a return to the true religion of the prophet.

The people of the West Bank no longer want to hear or read statements made by Hafez Assad (president of Syria), Saddam Hussein (president of Iraq), or Muammar Qadhafi (leader of Libya), whom they consider farcical. King Hussein of Jordan is considered highly intelligent but less patriotic than any other Arab leader. He is even more despised than Sadat. He has a following in the West Bank and Gaza, however, because of the self-interest of particular groups and politicians. His strongest support is in the commercial community and the landed gentry, who fear the influence of socialist ideologies and unsettling revolutionary fervors in the PLO. Also, these groups believe it is politically easier to return the West Bank to Jordan than to give it to the PLO. Geography and international politics are important elements in this pragmatic argument.

If the West Bank were to vote today between Hussein and the PLO, Arafat's PLO would win easily. Hussein, however, would be acceptable if the choice were between him and the Israelis. In other words, Arafat would be dumped if Israeli withdrawal depended on West Bankers backing Hussein.

This point merits reiteration. If West Bankers had a free choice, they would opt for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza under the PLO. If this option were not available, they would not oppose a connection with Jordan. They would probably insist, however, on greater local autonomy.

West Bankers' attitudes toward the PLO and Arafat seem very complex. Because they are Palestinians, West Bankers do not see them merely as political choices in the spectrum of negotiations and peace, but as the natural elements in the makeup of Palestinian solidarity. The PLO's connection with West Bankers transcends political considerations. It is integral to the patriotism of all Palestinians, including those who criticize it and find faults in its politics.

The PLO is the symbol of Palestinian resistance even though it is weak and beset by problems. It reminds the people of the West Bank of their brothers in the diaspora and of their sufferings. To betray the

PLO is to betray the two-thirds of the Palestinian people who live outside the West Bank, a betrayal that would instill perpetual guilt. This is why the United States was unable to persuade the Palestinians to forget the PLO. For many West Bankers, it seemed the Americans were asking them to commit treason. It is not an exaggeration to say that West Bankers would be for the PLO in spite of the PLO—that is, in spite of its weaknesses and its mistakes.

There is little enthusiasm for Arafat. To understand this, one should separate the symbols from the politics of West Bankers. While the young people chant PLO songs and shout Arafat's name during anti-Israeli demonstrations, they remain ambivalent about the man himself. They like him and respect him as a person. He does not have a bad personal reputation, as other Arab leaders do. His image is that of a decent man, but many people wonder about his leadership and his politics. He heads a revolutionary movement, and yet he does not seem revolutionary enough. He appears to be more of a politician than the head of a *fidayeen* movement. There is a widespread belief in the West Bank that Arafat is a very good politician, but the question very much on the minds of many West Bankers, especially the young, is, "Who wants a politician?"

Some West Bankers criticize Arafat for neglecting the military side of PLO activity. They believe Arafat's political victories, such as his appearance at the UN and the recognition his PLO has received from many countries, have not been backed up on the battlefield. Arafat's political pyramid seems to have been built on such shifting military sands that it could easily fall.

Some see contradictions in Arafat's policies. He is supposed to be a revolutionary leader, and yet he depends on ultra-conservative regimes for money. This leads to the belief that Arafat may have lost his independence to Assad, who is disliked in the West Bank as much as Hussein, Sadat, and the Persian Gulf rulers. Nevertheless, many people feel sorry for Arafat and his PLO. They are unable to trust anyone, yet they must deal with almost everyone.

The anguish goes beyond the PLO's dilemma. West Bankers seem to feel that not only the PLO but also all Palestinians are suspect in the eyes of others. This feeling has become an important element in their solidarity. Again, like the Zionists, they are developing the world-hates-us complex.

Palestinians, in general, cannot understand how the world can hate those it has made miserable. They feel that they have suffered enough and that the world should help them instead of hating them. There is enough frustration among Palestinians with the "other world" to transform them into a time bomb that could explode not only against the Israelis and Western interests but also against other Arabs.

The strongest factor working against such an

explosion is the family. Interviews with individuals who have served time in Israeli prisons for working with the PLO show dramatically how family feelings inhibit the performance of "patriotic duties." When a young man goes to prison, his father may become angry and his mother may weep, but when he returns home he is treated as a dependent, sometimes as a child. Joining the PLO or throwing a bomb at the Israelis may result from a young man's need to prove his manhood or a young woman's need to feel liberated.

Ironically, some ex-prisoners want to return to prison where they can feel independent and important. This is even more true of women than of men because of the female's inferior status in the family. It is interesting to note that Arabs detained in the Ramallah prison, allegedly for activities harmful to Israeli securi-

ty, have for months refused to see their families. The prisoners called this refusal a strike to dramatize their desperate situation, but its psychological implications made it more than a strike. The prisoners wanted to avoid the emotional effects of seeing their families and remembering how totally dependent they were on them.

Any leader who can separate the son and the daughter from the father and the mother can unleash a tremendous fighting force against the Israelis and other perceived enemies of the Palestinian people. Such an effort, however, would require efficient organization, dynamic leadership, and especially money, to be made available to the youth of the West Bank. The PLO has not been able to accomplish this objective, but for the West Bankers it remains their greatest hope for the future.

Questions

- (1) On what particular points does Abboushi indicate that the Palestinian Arabs were most critical of President Sadat's initiative? On what points were they more supportive?
- (2) What does Abboushi indicate about a Palestinian Identity? In what terms does he believe that the Palestinian Arabs define themselves?
- (3) How does Abboushi state that the Palestinians viewed Yasser Arafat in 1977?
- (4) In what ways, according to Abboushi, did Camp David serve as an agent for change?

21-5

Saddam's invasion of Kuwait: two rationales.

Saddam Hussein's military expedition to Kuwait speedily resulted in the subjugation of that oil-rich Emirate, and precipitated a lengthy crisis which was only (and then perhaps only temporarily) ended with Iraq's defeat by Allied forces in the 1991 Desert Storm War. As in other crises that have historically escalated into warfare, the question of "why?" is complex and multi-faceted. Saddam, in a "Victory Day" speech to his people (A), and the scholar Bishara Bahbah (B) offer their explanations.

Sources: Ofra Bengio, ed., *Saddam Speaks on the Gulf Crisis: A Collection of Documents* (Tel Aviv, The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, The Shiloam Institute, Tel Aviv University, 1992), pp. 110-116.

Bishara A. Bahbah, "The Crisis in the Gulf—Why Iran invaded Kuwait" in Phyllis Bennis and Michael Moushabeck, *Beyond the Storm: A Gulf Crisis Reader* (N.Y.: Olive Branch Press, 1991), pp. 50-54.

A

Message from President Saddam Husayn "on the occasion of the great victory day on 8 August 1988"—read by announcer. *Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT, 7 August 1990.*

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

O great Iraqi people, O sons of the glorious Arab nation, on 8 August 1988 matters were settled after eight years of dueling. That day was the day of days, and the communiqué that was issued on that day was

the communiqué of communiqués. That day was truly the day of days because every day, beginning with the first day in the book of the second al-Qadisiyya that began on 4 September 1980 and ending with the last day of that eternal and great book of our people's life that preceded the day of days on 7 August 1988 has a share in the day of 8 August 1988. The communiqué broadcast on 8 August was the communiqué of communiqués because every communiqué issued from 4 September 1980 to 7 August 1988 is a vital part of the fruits of the record from which the banner of victory was raised high on 8 August 1988. From this we can see