

# AFTER KIBYA, GAZA: Israel Suffers Another Defeat

By AL FINDLEY

Fighting on the Arab-Israel border is once more on the front pages, this time involving the Egyptian and Israeli troops. At least 37 Arabs and 8 Jewish soldiers died, and there were also a number of civilian deaths.

There is no doubt in the mind of this writer that Egypt is right in its charge that in the *immediate* issue the guilt for the main battle and for the deaths in the Gaza fighting falls on Israel. The attack on the army post in Gaza was deliberate and planned and had little or no connection with the series of other border incidents.

At the same time, there is also no doubt in my mind that Israel is correct in laying the *basic* cause to the state of war that the Egyptian rulers perpetuate and to the continued tensions and border incidents.

The act was a show of strength by Israel that was planned as both a retaliatory act and a "bold" move in the game of power politics. In this case the term power politics should be taken literally. The attack on Gaza took place a few days after the return of David Ben-Gurion to the post of defense minister, and it bears his trade mark. The so-called moderate and diplomatically oriented Sharett probably refused to carry out this "bold" plan unless the chief himself took direct responsibility, and this he did.

Ben-Gurion retired from the government a while back for many reasons, not the least of which was the Kibya incident, when Israeli troops attacked an Arab village and indiscriminately killed men, women and children. The Kibya outrage organized and carried out by Ben-Gurion turned out to be the greatest defeat for Israel on the diplomatic front and, more important, drastically undermined support for Israel in world public opinion and aroused tremendous indignation among the Arab masses. Many of the Jewish Zionist writers who defended the Kibya massacre at the time it occurred later agreed with such an analysis and decried the tremendous harm that it had done.

Ben-Gurion retired to Sdeh Boker under the cloud of Kibya, and has emerged in the "glory" of Gaza.

## BEN-GURION RIDES

It is true that Gaza is not Kibya, in the sense that no indiscriminate massacre was involved, that the main target was a military one; and it is also true that the Israelis undoubtedly considered themselves provoked by Egypt's execution of two Jews (whose crime was probably only that they were Zionists) as well as by continued border incidents; but even if this is said, the real question is this: Outside of satisfying some emotional need for revenge, what will such acts of retaliation accomplish even from the narrower point of view of Israel's interests?

In general, retaliation, whether by Jews or Arabs, is claimed, will "teach the enemy a lesson" and so stop the border incidents. The history of Arab-Jewish relations has long ago disproved this theory. Outside of satisfying ideas of "honor," it has accomplished nothing. For a solution to the Arab-Jewish strife, we must look elsewhere.

In the Gaza incident, there were other and broader motives involved. Ben-Gurion probably reasoned that with the current breakup of the Arab League, a show of strength, a hammer-blow followed by negotiations, could open the path to a peace settlement. A second and more important motive may have been the gamble that, by repeating the 1945-48 policy of "strength," he would prove to the West that it must reckon with Israel if it is to stabilize and organize the Near East into its camp against Russia.

What have been the actual results of the Gaza event?

It has not had the planned effect on the Egyptian rulers, and above all it has not increased the desire for peace among the Arab people. The contrary has happened. It has aroused the Arab rank and file and embittered them more than was necessary. The bloody riots that took place in Gaza as a result of the Israeli attack were not manipulated from above but were a spontaneous reaction.

Without popular grass-roots pressure, no Arab government has any desire for peace with Israel. The Israeli government, instead of acting to create such sentiment, has played into the hands of the Arab rulers, and has given them propaganda weapons to smother the weak sentiments for peace that do exist. No Arab government, precisely because all of them are so unstable, will now dare to move toward peace with Israel.

## POLICY A DUD

The hope that a show of strength would force the West to include Israel in their military plans also backfired. Israel has some cards to play to counter the Arabs' numbers, strategic position, and oil, in the game of power politics; but not enough. It needs the support of public opinion to sway the scales to its side. Until now Israel had a lot of public sympathy, but the government is fast destroying its fund of good will.

The result has been that a deputy assistant secretary of the State Department was able to destroy any hopes of the Israeli politicians for military help by citing nothing more than "Arab re-

iations" and "tension" as a bar to the Israeli government's diplomatic aims.

Israel's current diplomatic aim is either a new and stronger guarantee of its borders by each of the Big Three, or inclusion in a Western-sponsored military alliance. This shows how far its foreign policy has changed in the last few years.

The state started out with a policy of complete independence from either of the imperialist blocs; then it shifted to a policy of cooperation with the Western camp but was against identification with any bloc; then it went on to greater and greater integration with the West; and now it is on its hands and knees begging and pleading to be taken in as an ally by the unwilling big powers.

While Israel's foreign policy has changed, the basic premise on which it was built remains the same, namely, orientation toward reliance on the big powers. This was true from the start. The Israeli leaders had no perspective of composing their differences with the inhabitants of their region but looked to the outside for support.

At first they hoped for support from both the Stalinist and capitalist powers. As the cold war developed, two groups (Hashomer Hatzair and Achduth Avodah) began looking to the Russians, while the other parties moved toward Washington.

The Russians soon disappointed their supporters and, by wooing the Arabs and attacking the Zionists, drove the majority of Jews over to the Western camp's side. Only pro-Stalinist doctrinaire rigidity kept the Hashomer and Achduth Avodah loyal to Russia (to some extent). The double game of the Western powers aroused misgivings among their supporters, but, having no hope for an alternative policy, they kept throwing themselves into the arms of the West, only to be rebuffed and to feel doubly isolated.

It is true that the way to peace between Israel and the Arabs is a long and hard one, and there are no easy answers; but reliance on the big powers has already proved that it will not lead to peace. The only realistic alternative left is a radical turn in the direction of cultivating the peoples of the region and especially the Arab peoples, and to seek allies from among them, to build a desire for peace among the people.

Such a peace is absolutely necessary for both the physical existence and the well-being of Israel and for the rise in the standard of living of the Arab masses and the development of progressive movements in their midst.

## Jim Crow Front — —

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time we point out that, musically speaking, the tempo would be a lot faster if the orchestra was changed.

## WHO'S "UNEMPLOYABLE"?

Governor Stratton of Illinois was told last week that an increase in residence requirements would have little effect in lowering the state's public assistance

to the city. His mission was based on a similar claim.

Stratton and Rose both have said that the migrants are mostly "unemployable" (due to alleged illiteracy and lack of skill), and Rose claimed that this particularly applies to the Negro migrants.

Hilliard agreed that the relief problem is serious, but he said an increase in residence requirements would not help matters. Further he added New York