

ISRAEL'S ELDER STATESMAN



DAVID BEN GURION
1886 - 1973

of Soviet advisors and experts."

To further hamper a definite peace treaty, "The Karthoum Arab Summit Conference in August, 1967, in which Saudi Arabia, Libya and Kuwait promised Egypt and Jordan generous subsidies, resolved that there would be no peace with Israel, no negotiations with Israel, and no compromise at the expense of 'the rights of the Palestinian people'. Yasser Arafat, leader of Al-Fatah, was elected head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which was subsidized by the Arab governments, and provided with facilities to operate from Syrian, Jordanian, and later, Lebanese territory."

In light of these events, Israeli skepticism about the willingness of the present Egyptian leaders to follow the cease-fire agreement with authentic peace talks is well-founded.

Events continued which furthered the distrust of Egypt's attempt at peace. Despite the cease-fire, Egyptians regularly fired across the Suez Canal at Israeli positions. "Land, sea, and air clashes culminated in the sinking of the Israeli destroyer on October 21...Al-Fatah detachments trained and organized in Syria, tried to cross the Jordan to carry on the war."

A resolution proposed by the Security Council, dated November 22, 1967, was only conditionally accepted by Egypt and Jordan, and completely rejected by Syria, while "Al-Fatah opposed any agreement whatsoever, calling for the 'liberation of Palestine' by force...Meanwhile, the military situation deteriorated on both fronts. Explosive charges planted by infiltrators on the outskirts of the villages and in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and other places killed and injured civilians and did damage to property. Along the Jordan River, mine-laying; firing at Israel forces by Palestinian irregulars, often with support from Jordanian military posts; shelling of Israel villages...and attempts by Al-Fatah and other detachments to cross the river were almost daily occurrences."

Egyptian aggression, in the form of severe bombardment along the canal, took its toll on the Israelis in September and October of 1968. And, relates the Encyclopaedia Judaica, on March 30, 1969, "Nasser announced that Egyptian troops would no longer be bound by the cease-fire."

Under Nasser's sanction, the fighting continued, and the Security Council imposed a new cease-fire, "but on its very first day, Israel intelligence discovered that a number of missile sites in the standstill zone west of the canal had been moved forward, and further violations of the agreement were discovered on succeeding days...confirmed by the U.S. from its own intelligence sources." This blatant disrespect of the cease-fire furthered Israel's doubt of Egypt's "readiness to observe any agreement to which she might set her hand."

The Arab position toward peace agreement remained consistent. After Israel's War of Independence, armistice agreements were signed in 1949 by all parties involved in the fighting. Serving as mediator, Ralph Bunche presented four separate, but identical agreements, to the respective parties.

The Encyclopaedia Judaica reports Israel "putting the agreements in the context of the United Nations Charter, considered that they terminated any possible state of war." But the Arabs' interpretation of the agreement differed. "The Arab governments regarded the armistices as incidents in war, which left intact their general belligerent rights. The most spectacular illustration of this was Egypt's refusal to raise the blockade of the Suez Canal and its later extension of the blockade to the Gulf of Akaba, actions which earned the censure of the Security Council..."

Judging from the Arab response to peace treaties thus far, the significance of the recent cease-fire remains to be seen. Its ultimate effect depends on the Soviet Union. If they change their present attitude, of encouraging Arab aggression, and instead focus on establishing harmony in the Middle East, the current cease-fire may mark the beginning of an enduring peace.

PARIS (WNS) -- Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi called on all European states to halt the emigration of Jews from their territory to Israel "as their contribution to Middle East peace."

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US Maccabim Reborn

For more than 2100 years, the eight days of Chanuka have been among the most joyous of the Jewish calendar. Not only because it is the Festival of Lights and the season of gift-giving, but more important because Hanuka celebrates the winning of Jewish national independence. Jews throughout the centuries have taken renewed hope from the story of the small group of Jewish fighters led by Judah Maccabee and his brothers who won freedom for Israel against an overwhelming force.

This Chanuka we also celebrate the victory of the new Maccabees who for the fourth time maintained Israel's independence against a larger force. But our joy in victory is tempered by the high price Israel had to pay. As Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban told American Jewish leaders, the Yom Kippur War resulted in the Jewish nation's "most decisive victory," but "it was a technical victory without celebration, a triumph along with bereavement, deliverance along with grief."

We all know the cost of the war.-- 1854 dead, the disruption of what was a prosperous economy, a staggering tax burden for Israelis, the decline of the vital tourist trade. Even more important Israel on the diplomatic front may be more in peril this Chanuka than it was on the military front on Yom Kippur. Isolated in most of the world and under severe pressure from its only ally, the U. S., Israel can only take comfort from the support of world Jewry and its own efforts in keeping its freedom and dignity.

Less than a century after the Maccabees regained Israel's independence, it was lost again not to be rekindled for nearly 2000 years. But the modern Maccabees have vowed that never again will Israel lose its freedom. And we must add our vow to help them.

Bearers of Bad News

By Robert E. Segal

"The first bringer of unwelcome news Hath but a losing office, and his tongue Sounds ever after as a sunken bell, Remember'd tolling a departed friend."

—Henry IV

Now comes the National Citizens' Committee For Fairness To The Presidency to declare that "the media have found President Richard M. Nixon guilty! They have scandalized him, they brutalized him, they savaged him day after day, night after night, and now they have come to bury him, draped in infamy, with the White House for a coffin."

Then the punch line: "History will judge them for what they are--assassins."

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Basically, the theme of the National Citizens' Committee For Fairness To The Presidency has been that America has found Mr. Nixon guilty without giving him any kind of a trial. If this be a sin of the public, is it not strange that the Citizens' Committee For Fairness duplicates the sin? Serving as instantaneous judge and jury, the Citizens' Committee has found the media guilty without trail, without reliable evidence, and --above all--without much understanding of the American doctrine of press freedom.

All of which recalls what happened so lamentably to the King's messenger: he brought bad news to the King, so the King had him shot instantly.

Warning to the challenging task of flushing out a huge newspaper ad with a thunderous tirade against the press, the Massachusetts rabbi who founded the National Citizens' Committee For Fairness To The Presidency, along with his associates, tells us what's really wrong with the press: Powered by new technological advances, the modern press is no longer a servant of the people; the "vast corporate giants" controlling the press use their new-found strength to hold the government captive."

When you read that, doesn't it make you wonder why so many newspapers with so much circulation and so firmly committed editorially to the re-election of President Nixon in 1972 are now scolded and condemned by the Citizens' Committee for putting handcuffs on the administration? What happen? and can it really be true, as the co-called Fairness outfit asserts, that these lords of the press have been using blackmail (that's the Fairness word) against agencies of the government? Who's hiding what? Where's the blackmail loot?

"A free press is not a privilege but an organic necessity in a great society," Walter Lippmann said years ago. That truth is valid still and it is one more sad commentary on the Watergate matter that a citizen's committee setting out to try to extricate the President from his troubles decides to attack an important segment of our democratic existence. The press is bridled in Spain, in Greece, in many Latin American countries. Hitler killed all press freedom in Germany as he vaulted to the top of his bloody throne; Mussolini, an old newspaper hand himself, realized a controlled press was requisite for dictatorship. And Lenin--has the Fairness Committee forgotten that the Communist genius asserted: "Why should a government which is doing what it believes to be right allow itself to be criticized? It would not allow opposition by lethal weapons. Ideas are much more fatal things than guns."

Precisely. And undoubtedly, that helps explain why the Fairness Committee has roared off after a free press as the handiest object of its muttering wrath.

A Fragile Truce

Another cease-fire has been called in the Middle East. A truce has brought an end to the horrendous "Yom Kippur War." Yet, observers of the pattern of the Arab-Israeli conflict tend to question its significance.

History validates the uncertainty of such cease-fires. The Encyclopaedia Judaica relates the sequence of events following the cease-fire called by the Security Council in June, 1967. The truce was jointly accepted by Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Ostensibly, the cease-fire was the initial step toward peace negotiations. However, "...the Soviet Union undertook to rehabilitate the Egyptian and Syrian armies, initiating a vast airlift of planes, tanks and other equipment to replace their losses and sending in thousands