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Occupied In a Flake Of History

By Abraham Rabinovich

JERUSALEM — The Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, which has held the Middle East in thrall for two decades, was a fluke of history, almost an afterthought. It might never have occurred had it not been for a news item on Egyptian radio and the bloodless takeover by a single Jordanian infantry company of a United Nations post in Jerusalem in the opening hours of the Six Day War.

It is difficult today to recall the trepidation with which Israel faced the prospect of war in 1967. Having decided after two weeks of hesitation that a pre-emptive strike against Egypt was the only route to take, the government and the military command prayed that the Jordanian and Syrian armies, poised on the borders, would not join in. With Israel's air force and the bulk of its army committed to desperate battle in Sinai, the worst thing possible would be the opening of another front.

Particularly vulnerable was the central front, where Tel Aviv and Jerusalem were within range of Jordanian guns. Within an hour of the air strike against Egypt at 7:45 A. M. on June 5, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol delivered a message to a UN official in Jerusalem for urgent transmission to King Hussein of Jordan, assuring him that Israel would not move against him as long as he kept the peace.

The king, however, could not sit out this war, as he had the 1956 Sinai campaign against Egypt, without serious risk of losing his crown, and perhaps his head, to his irate subjects. His first response was to launch his small air force against Israeli targets, albeit with negligible success. Jordanian artillery on the West Bank opened fire on Israeli urban centers.

The Israeli response was carefully measured. Front-line units were ordered to respond in kind: If the Jordanians in their sector were firing rifles, they were to respond with rifles and no more. The political and military leadership hoped that King Hussein's honor would be satisfied by this display of loyalty to his Egyptian ally and that full-scale battle could be avoided. Appeals by the commander of the Israeli central front, General Uzi Narkiss, to take advantage of the the Jordanian bellicosity for some border straightening by the capture of two small Jordanian enclaves were rejected by the chief of staff, General Yitzhak Rabin.

Shortly after noon, Israeli intelligence picked up an Egyptian radio broadcast that would mark a turning point. Citing sources in Amman, the Egyptian broadcast said that Jordanian forces in Jerusalem had captured Mount Scopus, a major Israeli position, and Government House Hill, be-

tween the Jordanian and Israeli sides of the city, site of UN Middle East headquarters. Almost simultaneously, Israeli lookouts reported a Jordanian force inside the UN compound.

The Israeli hierarchy had been willing to accept marginal air attacks and artillery bombardment as face-saving gestures by King Hussein. A ground attack was another matter, particularly in Jerusalem. Two Jordanian tank brigades had crossed the Jordan River onto the West Bank and one was preparing to move toward Jerusalem. No ground attack had in fact been launched on Mount Scopus, but in view of the correctly reported takeover of the UN compound, the Scopus announcement was taken by Israel as a clear statement of intent.

By midday on June 5 it was becoming apparent that the Israeli forces in Sinai were on the verge of breakthrough. The Jordanian threat was thus being perceived as serious just as Israel's need for restraint on the Jordanian front was giving way and reinforcements were becoming available. During the early afternoon, in an imperceptible, almost offhand manner, the decision to cross the Jordanian border began to take shape in the military and political hierarchy.

The cabinet met late in the afternoon in the basement of the Knesset building as shells exploded outside. Most ministers said that Israel could not pass up this chance to capture the Old City and the Western Wall. Three ministers expressed doubt that the international community would permit Israel to retain the Old City.

Defense Minister Moshe Dayan

had remained in the war room in Tel Aviv. Mr. Eshkol met him that evening and said, "The government wants the Old City." General Dayan was "autious. The army's two main tasks, he said, were to destroy Egyptian armor and capture the southern tip of Sinai so as to relieve the blockade of maritime traffic. Only third priority could be given the Jordanian front.

There would be no attempt to capture the walled Old City by direct assault, General Dayan said. That would be too costly in lives and too risky to the holy places and Israel's reputation. Instead, it would be surrounded and its garrison urged to surrender.

Reports that the UN Security Council was planning to order a cease-fire changed General Dayan's mind, however, and 48 hours after the Jordanian guns had opened fire, Israeli troops broke into the Old City.

When General Dayan heard on the army radio that an armored brigade was headed toward Jericho, he sharply ordered the brigade commander to turn his force around. But then intelligence reported that King Hussein had ordered a general retreat on the West Bank. General Dayan bowed to what appeared the inexorable urgings of history. The commander of the armored brigade, who had just turned his force around on the steep mountain roads, was ordered to turn once again and take Jericho.

Late that afternoon, June 7, senior officers gathered at Jerusalem headquarters. They sat in silence for several moments as they absorbed, in this first moment of tranquility since the war had begun, the astonishing events of

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Survivor wins libel action

JERUSALEM (JPFS) — Jerusalem historian and Holocaust survivor Erich Kulka recently won a personal libel action in a Prague court against the author and publisher of an anti-Semitic book, thus creating a legal precedent, he says, for such cases in communist states.

The defendants were Czech author Josef Sebesta and the publishers of his book, *In the Promised Land?* The book, which has been banned, claims that shortly before World War II, Levi Eshkol, Israel's third prime minister, made a deal in Berlin with the Nazis to send to concentration camps all Jews who did not want to go to Palestine.

Describing Zionist activity as "criminal," the book also calls Golda Meir "that bloody woman." Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial museum in Jerusalem, is termed a Mossad spy agency in the book.

Kulka, a Czech, sued for personal libel, because the book describes him

as a Gestapo agent, although it admits that he was in and out of concentration camps. Kulka, 76, did not attend the trial.

Kulka told the *Jerusalem Post* he thinks he was singled out for special slander because of his recent book, *Jews in Svoboda's Army in the Soviet Union*. In it, he shows that 70 percent of the 2,000 men initially forming that army were Czech Jews. "The communists don't like to admit that Jews took such an active part in defending their native land," Kulka said.

The court ordered all unsold copies of the 14,000-copy edition destroyed. It will rule later on Kulka's demand for an apology and financial compensation.

the previous three days. It was Mr. Rabin who focused the diffused impressions into a stark bottom line.

"How do we control a million Arabs?" he asked. It is a question that he and many others are still asking.

Mr. Rabinovich, a feature writer for the *Jerusalem Post*, contributed this article to the *International Herald Tribune*.

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מסכת
שמונה

ת.ד. 724 ירושלים, ת.ד. 30215, תל-אביב, 78 03-614050

קטעי עתונות

16 '11' 1988

בצורת בארה"ב

מספרים שבתקופת ראש הממשלה לוי אשכול, נכנס פעם פקיד בכיר לחורו ואמר לו: השנה תהיה שנת בצורת. אשכול זינק מכסאו ושאל: היכן, בארה"ב? לא - השיב האיש - בארץ. אשכול התיישב בכסאו ובאנחת רוחחה אמר: ברוך השם נרגעתי...

השרב הכבד שפקד את הארץ לפני מספר שבועות, גרם לנוקים למטעים שונים. החקלאים אף ידעו לנקוב במספרים של עשרות ומאות מליני דולרים, וזאת עוד בטרם הגיעה עונת הקטיף, וקודם שהתבררו הנזקים האמיתיים של השרב. יש להניח שכספי העונה ימצאו התקציב לפצות את החקלאים על הפסדים, כי בסופו של דבר יש ורי כסף למדינת ישראל.

הדבר שצריך להדאג מאד את קובעי המדיניות בארץ, היא הירידה המתפרסמת השבוע על בצורת קשה בארה"ב, שהתפשטה מאזרי הריטה בצפון-אמריקה לשדות הכותנה ברומה. הבצורת ייבשה את יבולי האביב של חיטה ושיבולת שועל, בלמה גידול החרים וגידולי הסויה באזורים שונים וייבשה כותנה בעקבות זאת עלו מחירי מוצרים אלה בארה"ב מחשש למחסור. החזאי הראשי הכריז כי "היה זה בארה"ב הצחיח ביותר מאז 34. והמצב הוא נואש". יש למעצבי המדיניות הכלכלית מקום לראגנה בצורת בארה"ב...

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המשמר

עמוד אחר

המשמר

אזמל/אמריקה

לבכות ולשמוח

בחורף שחון בשנות ה-60 בישרו לשר האוצר ראו, לוי אשכול, שיש בצורת. "איפה? שאל בדאגה. בנגב" ענו לו. "לא נורא", אמר המיניסטר באנחת רוחחה, "כבר פחדתי שיש בצורת באמריקה".

השנה יש אביב שחון בארצות הברית, וצופים שם בצורת שוקני קנזס לא זוכרים מ-1934. זה טוב ליהודים? לא ולא.

מחירי החיטה, הסויה והתירס, שישראל קונה בכמויות גדולות — ירדו לשחקים. זה טוב לחקלאים בישראל? אולי לפחות למגדלי החיטה יש סיכוי לתמורה גבוהה יותר בעד עמלם.

אולי זה לא כליכך פטוויטי, אבל אחרי שנים ארוכות שבהן ממשלת ישראל, וביחוד האוצר, "דאגו" כיעילות רבה להרס התקלאות במדינה, רשאים החקלאים לשמוח שמחה אגואיסטית ברזוח הצפוי להם,

גלסנוסט

חושדים ב"קוקה קולה" שפיוזה שוחד במקומות המתאימים כדי לזכות בשוק הסובייטי. זהו אירוע משמח, באותו מובן שבגללו ביאליק שמח כשנתפס הגנב הראשון בתל-אביב. "אנתנו עם נורמלי", צהל המשורר. אז אם חברת מטוסים בארה"ב שיתרה את ממשלת יפן, למה שחברת משקאות אמריקאית לא תשוד בברייה"מ? עוד הישג לגלסנוסט! זה לא שעד עכשיו לא היה שוחד כמעצמה הסוציאליסטית הבכירה. היה גם היה, אבל היה זה שוחד סוציאליסטי, שוק שחור, או שוחד לפקיד שיקדים בכמה שנים תור לידרה או מכונת. הפעם מדובר בשוחד קפיטליסטי מובהק, וזה, כמובן, סיפור אחר לגמרי.

עודד ליפשיץ