

Israel Routs Irgun Rebels; Crisis Is Over

Legislative Council Backs Cabinet, 24-4

Two Ministers Who Quit Return, as Jewish State Weathers First Storm

By Kenneth Bilby

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TEL AVIV, Israel, June 24.—

Palmach shock troops loyal to the government of Israel penetrated Irgun Zvai Leumi's headquarters stronghold today and routed the rebel forces with their leader.

There was no resistance as hundreds of Irgun troops scattered from their small enclave in southeastern Tel Aviv. When the Palmach column of jeeps and armored cars approached at 4:30 p. m. and fired over the heads of the dissidents, Menachem Beigen, Irgun leader, slipped out the back door of his headquarters and disappeared.

All of the capital city was under control of the provisional government, and arrests of Irgunists and their sympathizers in the Revisionist political party spread through Natanya and Haifa, north of here, and Rehovot, to the south. More than 100 dissidents were reported under arrest.

Vote of Confidence

The government's military success was matched politically by a vote of confidence it received from provisional Legislative Council, convened in emergency session here this evening. By a vote of 24 to 4, with five abstentions, the Council, which represents all political parties in Israel, approved a resolution indorsing the government's action in the Irgun revolt.

Premier David Ben-Gurion's regime thus weathered its first important crisis, and any hope the Irgun may have had of an immediate political upheaval seemed to have been dashed. The Council also voted to put four of its members on a commission with three Cabinet members, including Mr. Ben-Gurion, which will investigate the Irgun uprising.

The government's position was further strengthened when the two Cabinet ministers who resigned yesterday agreed to return to the
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Israel Holds

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administration after it had received the vote of confidence. They are Rabbi Yehuda L. Fishman, Minister of Religion, and Moshe Shapiro, Minister of Immigration. Both said they had received assurance the government would grant amnesty to the rank and file of the Irgunists and would free foreign Jews who had come on the Irgun's gun-running ship Altalena to help defend Israel. The ministers said they had resigned because of the government's incarceration of some Irgun sympathizers.

Arab Attacks Reported

There were disturbing indications that irregular Arab forces were trying to capitalize on the Jewish conflict. United Nations truce observers here were told that 200 Arabs from the old Liberation Army of Fawzi Kaukji, Arab commander in Palestine, attacked Jewish forces at Birwa in western Galilee this morning.

The attacks were launched from the village of Damun, south of Birwa, and continued until noon, according to information received by Colonel Thord Bonde, of Sweden, head of the U. N. supervisory commission. Observer teams were sent by jeep and plane to Birwa, six miles east of Acre, and to Nazareth, headquarters of the Arab irregulars operating in Galilee.

U. N. observers had previously reported that Fawzi Kaukji was in Nazareth, and it was believed he might have inspired the assault. The remnants of the Liberation Army, which was soundly trounced by the Jews before the British mandate in Palestine expired on May 15, have never officially recognized the four-week U. N. cease-fire agreement.

In pursuance of its new policy of non-resistance, the Irgun made no effort to resist arrest or to halt the advance of government troops. The Palmach column which moved along Yehuda Halevy Street found that the armored cars and barbed-wire barriers of yesterday had been removed.

Irgunists Unarmed

The Irgun men and women soldiers grouped in the streets were unarmed. When Palmach, which is the striking force of Haganah, the Jewish Army, began sending rifle and automatic-weapon fire overhead, the Irgunists slipped around corners and disappeared in the heavy traffic.

The Palmach column, halted in front of the two-story gray building which the Irgun high command had used as a headquarters since the attack on Jaffa, the Arab city adjoining Tel Aviv on the south. A few unarmed dissidents loitered around the entrance, but they were ignored as the helmeted Palmach men entered the building in search of the elusive Mr. Beigen, for whose capture the British once posted a heavy reward. He was apparently forewarned, and with several of his commanders moved out a rear door to safety. An Irgun staff car in front of the building was commandeered.

The government began releasing foreigners among the prisoners seized on the 4,000-ton Altalena, which the Irgunists beached here on Tuesday and which started burning when mortar and machine-gun fire struck it. Other Irgun soldiers who offered to join the Israeli regular army and sign an oath of allegiance to the new state also were being offered amnesty.

Milton Fein, American captain of the Irgun ship, was being detained in an Army prison, and some of his associates said he had begun a hunger strike. The commander of the troops aboard the vessel, an Irgun leader known as Benjamin, also was reported fasting in prison.

Ship May Be Sunk

The ship, now a blackened, charred hulk, smoldered slowly today, and Israeli Army officials informed the U. N. Truce Commission that they intended to board the vessel and determine whether it could be towed to sea and sunk. In preparation for the boarding, several near-by houses were vacated, streets leading to the coast were barricaded with

barbed wire and civilian were shooed away from the beach, since it was considered certain that all of the ship's munitions cargo has burned.

At 8 p. m. two small motor launches approached the Irgun vessel from the direction of Jaffa. Government troops opened fire on them and they swerved out to sea and proceeded northward along the coast. The identity of the boats was a mystery, but the government guards said they had orders to fire on any unauthorized vessel or person approaching the Irgun ship.

The Irgun withdrawal from headquarters indicated strongly that Mr. Beigen and his commanders had decided to return to their traditional role as an underground force. This time, apparently, the provisional government of Israel rather than British occupation forces will be the target, although it is unlikely there will be a campaign of violence until the war with the Arab states ends.

Mr. Beigen had announced yesterday that his forces were withdrawing from the regular army and no longer recognized the provisional government. His cease-fire order to Irgun troops was replete with denunciations of the governments "bloody regime of oppression and terror." The order

said Mr. Ben-Gurion's regime must fall eventually, but it gave priority to defense against the Arab armies.

Cease-Fire Order

"Taking into consideration," the rebel leader said, "that the British enemy and its Arab mercenaries continue to attack the very existence of our nation, and in order to prevent bloodshed between Jews in these critical days, the order has been issued to the soldiers of the Irgun Zvai Leumi not to put their arms to use, under any circumstances, within the State of Israel."

Mr. Beigen apparently took it for granted that government troops would not try to penetrate his headquarters enclave.

The few rank-an-file Irgunists who loitered around their erstwhile headquarters after the Palmach raid had removed their armbands and carried no weapons. "We have been instructed for the time being to behave like Gandhi—to adopt a policy of non-violent resistance to the government," one of them said.

Mr. Beigen seems determined to withdraw every Irgun battalion from the front. Whether he will decide again to engage Arab forces in conjunction with government troops is a question which every one in Tel Aviv now asks.