

## Surprise

by Lesley Dawson

“This misfortune, you find, is of your own manufacture”. This is what we are being told. You surprised them and they don’t like to be surprised. They are embarrassed that such a small group of ruffians from Gaza could negotiate the separation fence without them knowing. They have such a sophisticated intelligence system that such an invasion was unthinkable. After all they export their intelligence services and equipment to the rest of the world.

But was it really such a surprise? Didn’t I hear that the Egyptians had warned the Israelis that something unusual was up and they ignored it. Or so they say. There are rumblings amongst Arab countries around that it was a deliberate ignoring to provoke just what happened, to give legitimacy to such a retaliation.

“Keep hold of what you have, it will harm no other, for hatred comes home to the land that chose it”.

This we are also told by friends and enemies alike. Of course, we are finding out the truths and untruths in that statement in some of the news trumpeted around the “so-called” free world. It all happened so fast it seems like a dream. No, not a dream, a nightmare, the worst nightmare you could ever have experienced.

Yes, we killed those we considered to be our jailors for the past 30 years. There they were enjoying a music festival, living in beautiful surroundings with their children happy and healthy, running around. What a contrast to our lives behind the separation fence when we have no time for anything but earning enough money to feed our children, no medicines to heal the sick and no space for parks. I could see the envy, the anger in the eyes of our young men. They were seeing the same men who had walked arrogantly down our destroyed streets and pointed their guns at our children,

There was no way I could control either myself or my men. We were out for revenge. We remembered those killed when bombs destroyed apartment blocks and teenagers were shot as they threw stones over the border. There was undoubtedly rape committed that day, in fact I saw it myself, but despite the chaos, I don’t remember seeing any babies being beheaded. The order then came “Back to Gaza. Take at least one person with you. The Israelis will pay well for the return of hostages.”

The retreat was even more chaotic than the attack, with men, women and children being dragged over the rough ground at the border screaming and kicking.

We kept looking back over our shoulders to see if the IDF were formed up and following on behind, but there was nothing, only empty space. We had no doubt they would come and in huge numbers with blood lust in their eyes. How could they not? We had invaded their land, Eretz Israel. Given to them by God they believed but lived in by our people for generations before 1948. We had touched those who believed they were God's chosen people.

Back inside Gaza, we discussed what to do with the hostages. They must be dispersed so they will be difficult to find. We will hide them among our own people. Not a difficult task in one way because families and buildings are everywhere. No planning rules apply here. Quite difficult in another way as there is not enough food for our families; so how will we feed extra people? They tell us some of them have need of special medications that we have to provide for them. Do they not understand that their soldiers and the Egyptians have blocked all avenues for access to supplies of any kind?

Now we wait. They will come. We know. They always come. But this time it will be the worst that has ever happened. Things will never be the same for us again, or for them.