

# Deportations may Signal Israel Policy Switch

Jon Immanuel writes from Jerusalem

*The forcible expulsion of 400 Palestinians to a frozen no-man's land in Lebanon may signal the reversal of Israel's traditional policy of backing Islamic fundamentalism as a bulwark against Palestinian nationalism. But the PLO is under pressure to withdraw from the faltering Middle East peace process until the deportees are returned, or face a loss of support in the occupied territories.*

## The Deceptive Kaptai Blue

There is alarming news from the South. Perhaps to make it more poignant The Daily Star chose on Tuesday to headline the Rangamati report, 'Blue water of Kaptai Lake now contaminated'. One who hasn't been to the Rangamati of maximum water level soon after the monsoon has hit its peak, has missed one's chance of visiting a Venice floating on the Adriatic blue very close at hand. If Rangamati hasn't the Doge's Palace or the Plaza San Marco or the Bridge of Sighs, it more than makes up for that by its contrapuntal blue atop the hills girdled by the water. To say that this setting of heavenly beauty, made so chiefly by the man-made lake, is not a piece of Eden after all and that in its blue waters lurks death for those that live on the shores, is to remind one of Edgar Allan Poe's study in phantasy and morbidity based on the self-same Venice.

The Daily Star report claims that the Kaptai Lake with all of its 58 crore 38 lakh square-metre surface of water. God alone knows the volume and weight of it — is contaminated to the point of having 500 coliform bacteria in 100 millilitres of water. That is far too much for any useable large body of water in Bangladesh. And far too dangerous — as much as to cause diarrhoeal deaths to close to two hundred people in the span of only one year, besides being responsible for many other afflictions to great many people.

The Kaptai Reservoir Lake created as a result of building a mighty coffer dam across the Karnaphuli River came into being in an attempt to meet the power needs of our people through a hefty supply of hydro-electricity. Although Kaptai power continues to be the biggest source of energy in the country, the plant has been running into snags of all kinds perennially. The lake has been a pain in neck of the nation for a big reason beyond the familiar one — the harm done to human habitation and to ecology of the hills. Before the lake was allowed to be filled up with balked at Karnaphuli water, no one cared to map the contour of the bowl that now houses the lake. As a result for years on and it hasn't been possible to work out how much of that bowl has been silted up by the river — making the whole regulation operation of the lake practically uncertain. This has led to more than one serious flood in the adjacent areas of Chittagong — entirely man-made ones.

As if that were not enough, here comes this news of contamination. If such a large body of inland water is so much contaminated, there is bound to be evil effects on every living — even non-living — thing in the whole zone making a trifle of some hundreds of people dying from diarrhoea or whatever. And how can we be oblivious of the importance of the whole of Chittagong and the Hill-Tracts region, delicately balancing the whole ecology of the country?

It is not understandable how the Kaptai Lake with the sparsest of humans peopling its shores could get contaminated in a way possible only in a very crowded settlement. Our administration must hit at the right reasons and devise the most quick and surefire antidotes to make again the waters of the lake life-giving and not one that destroys it. The blue of the Kaptai water must not be allowed to be all deception. Beauty and purity must combine in our incomparable lake.

## Sanctity of Shab-e-Barat

This newspaper has carried the story under the headline 'Firework Frolic on Shab-e-Barat', others have been more or less critical of the ceaseless blasting of crackers. Indeed, the deafening sounds of fireworks robbed much of the sanctity and peace of the night. Better it would have been to call the nightly incident a firework frenzy. The report published in this daily says scores of people, most of them youngsters, were injured in the all-night fun fraught with danger to life. The danger became even more manifest with kids lobbing crackers and incendiaries at the passers-by.

If this is not a clear defiance of the authority, a violation of the law and outrage against the religious sentiment, what can be more desecrating in the name of this madness which has no religious sanction at all. Even more surprising is the fact that this year the Dhaka Metropolitan Police authority did not send the customary press release to the press asking not to go for the illegal practice. It seems, the trigger-happy young ones took full advantage of this lack of a warning. True, every year children set off crackers but this year's record seems to have surpassed those of the past. Specially noticeable is the use of more powerful incendiaries this time.

This night has been earmarked for prayers by the Muslims. When the Muslims pray all night to seek the divine blessings of the Almighty, the setting off of crackers by anyone should be considered a sacrilege. But this has been going on without any significant amount of social opposition. So are the young of our society remorselessly carrying on the practice of cracker blasting. Now two things ought to be brought into consideration: the first concerns the role of the guardians and the second is a law and order issue. If the guardians are responsible and teach their wards the religious lesson of the occasion properly, chances are that many youngsters will desist from this blasting of crackers. The law and order issue simply does not involve the police action when the crackers are abundant in the market but also their prompt step is what is necessary to ensure that the items are not manufactured or imported.

The fact that there is a strong demand for this blasting materials owes to a wrong interpretation of this night of all nights. Both religious teaching and lawful action must strike at the root of this illegal practice, if the sanctity of the night has to be preserved. A total supplication of the self cannot be possible in the chaos that the night becomes. To save all concerned of the distraction, let us be strict not to allow anyone to disturb the sanctity of Shab-e-Barat.

FOR a long time Israeli governments preferred Islamic fundamentalism to secular Palestinian nationalism, despite its radical opposition to a Jewish state. Now the expulsion of 415 Islamic activists means that assessment is changing.

For years the Cairo-based Muslim Brotherhood — from which Hamas, the Gaza-based Islamic Resistance Movement was born in 1987 — was considered by Israel the better of two evils. Its pan-Islamic beliefs undermined Israel's main enemy, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, more than they threatened Israel.

The military administration in the West Bank and Gaza Strip encouraged the Muslim Brotherhood to build mosques, open charitable foundations, and preach religion — all on the assumption that religion was an antidote to nationalism.

Matters changed at the beginning of the intifada, the Palestinian uprising in December 1987, when younger Brotherhood supporters called for their elders to initiate a military struggle against Israel. The elders accepted the demand because they saw that by remaining passive they would lose many hard-won supporters to the nationalistic PLO, which was quick to grab the reins of the intifada.

To their religious right the small pro-Iranian and more militant Islamic Jihad was already siphoning off young supporters. The Muslim Brotherhood's leader in Gaza, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, reluctantly founded Hamas (an acronym meaning zeal), in the knowledge that it might give Israel the excuse to crack down on his movement.

Yassin, 57, paralysed since a sporting accident in his youth and confined to a wheelchair, had been jailed for 13 years in 1984 for concealing weapons

in his home. One year later a mass prisoner exchange for six Israeli prisoners of war in Lebanon won freedom for him and more than 1,000 other Palestinians. Since then he had steered clear of violence, heading Islamic cultural and educational activities, seeing these as the best way to expand Islamic influence.

However, from the earliest days of the intifada Hamas put out leaflets in competition with the PLO's Unified National Leadership, calling for religious renewal. It observed different strike days from the PLO, and frequently took an anti-secular as well as anti-Israeli tone, but it did not support violence against Israelis.

The Islamic clerics considered the intifada more a struggle for religious purity through suffering than a struggle for political independence or human rights. For one year the PLO and Hamas competed relatively peacefully. However, after the PLO accepted UN Security Council resolution 242 and the idea of a Jewish state next to Palestinian one, they became violent antagonists.

Even if an Islamic state in all of Palestine was not imminent, Hamas argued, the PLO had no right to sign over Islamic land to the Jews. What had been a vague religious issue became a practical matter, fuelling political extremism.

Hamas began attacking PLO supporters, including Faisal Hussein, who headed support for peace talks, and called for

reassessing the intifada which he believed had become increasingly self-defeating.

Hamas continued winning support through the 1991 Gulf War. The expulsions from Kuwait following the PLO's support for Iraq and the PLO's financial problems made many more turn to religion.

In October 1992, PLO leader Yasser Arafat was so upset by Islamic attacks on his organisation that he called Hamas 'the Zulu Inkatha' of the Palestinians, comparing the fundamentalists with the black South African opponents of Nelson Mandela. Unlike Mandela, Arafat threatened to use violence against his opponents — after learning of non-Arab Iranian backing for Hamas, and of the distribution



Sheikh Ahmed Yassin Founder of Hamas

of leaflets proclaiming Hamas the 'sole legitimate representatives' of the Palestinians.

Just when the PLO and Hamas seemed headed for possible civil war, Hamas attacks, through its 'military' wing called the Ezzedin al-Kassam brigades, suddenly turned away from the PLO to Israel. The aim was evidently to decrease tension with the PLO, increase support for Hamas and provoke a violent Israeli reaction which would scuttle the chance of peace talks.

'The long-term goal of Hamas is a pan-Islamic state, but its immediate interest is to demonstrate the inhuman behaviour of the Israeli authorities. We do not trust the peace process,' said Sheikh Abdul-Atiz al-Rantisi, an associate of Yassin.

Al-Rantisi, a doctor, is now one among 415 Hamas activists deported to Lebanon, following the kidnap-murder of an Israeli border policeman on December 14, the fifth anniversary of Hamas. Though not accused of violent acts himself, after the murder of an Israeli secret service officer in Jerusalem on January 3 al-Rantisi was reported, as saying: 'The killing of this Shin Bet officer boosts the morale not only of the deportees but of the whole Palestinian people.'

Hovering between political pragmatism and religious extremism, al-Rantisi indicated hours before his arrest that despite his opposition to a Jewish state: 'The guns would

fall silent and Hamas would respect the (Palestinian) majority, if it accepts a peace treaty, but I would work to make my ideas those of the majority.'

However, on another occasion he said: 'the people must do what the religious leaders tell them.' Observers of Hamas note that its religious ideology can be interpreted in ways both more moderate and more extreme than the PLO and there may be developing moderate and radical wings.

In certain spheres Hamas can work peacefully with the PLO and with Israeli officials.

Hamas is outlawed, but Islamic lists running under the Hamas slogan 'Islam is the solution' have won several urban chamber of commerce elections during the past two years, and have consistently achieved 40 per cent of the vote in most others. Israeli civil administration officials say they work well with an all-Hamas chamber of commerce in Ramallah.

Hamas recently met PLO representatives in Sudan, but failed to persuade them to pull Palestinian delegates out of the peace talks. Since there is little doubt that support for Hamas increases and support for the PLO decreases as the momentum of the peace process declines, Hamas has pragmatic as well as ideological reasons for opposing it. This blurs the distinction between moderates and extremists.

This political fact of life may have motivated Hamas activists

to give the go-ahead or turn a blind eye to attacks on Israeli citizens and soldiers meant to undermine the peace process.

Few Palestinians condemned the killing of soldiers or the kidnapping of policeman Nissim Toledano as a means to secure the release of Sheikh Yassin, jailed last year for ordering Palestinian 'collaborators' killed. They were seen as legitimate if unfortunate acts against the Israeli occupation and retaliation for Palestinians shot by soldiers in demonstrations.

Few, however, except Hamas leaders in Jordan, justified Toledano's murder less than 36 hours later, before negotiations even began for Yassin's release. A wave of revulsion might have built up against Hamas. But by instantly deporting 415 Hamas activists the Israeli government touched a sensitive nerve for all Palestinians before that revulsion could take practical effect.

Now the paradox is that the PLO, which argues that it is the 'sole legitimate representative' of all Palestinians, is under pressure to back out of the peace talks until the Hamas opponents of the peace talks are allowed to return.

The deportations raise another question. If Hamas is more of a terrorist organisation than the PLO in Israeli eyes, maybe it should recognise the PLO as a legitimate negotiating partner. Several Israeli legislators, including some who voted for the expulsions, have hinted that this is direction to take.

— GEMINI NEWS  
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# Customer Satisfaction : New Way of Looking at Business

by Naseer Ahmed

marketing is gaining a dominant role day by day.

The success of a business is centrally a function of how effectively attentive it is to the needs and wants of the people it tries to attract to its offering. What we really should be concerned about is customer satisfaction. The satisfaction of a quick certain delivery may be as important to the customer as fewer defects. Customers not only buy quality — they also buy satisfaction. In a competitive world, getting and keeping customers require innovation. Because some body will always try to serve people better, you have to try better yourself. This requires innovative attitudes in all things — making products better, manufacturing them better and cheaper, improving dealings with customers and suppliers and thus improving total effectiveness in business.

Customers should be viewed as partners — if they do well, business does well. We should not think in terms of selling only products — rather we should sell the solution to all the customers related problems. So for any company thorough analysis is required on the way customers buy, stock, finance, handle and consume their products to determine unmet needs.

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For any business, sales secrets include working long hours, having an eye to the details, working on relationships and persistence. Most people think that when you close the sale you have accomplished your objective. But you are only half way done. What is important is building the long term relationship. In this context, we refer to an old maxim which says, 'before arguing with a customer consider his life time value to you.'

From industrial research (ref. In Search of Excellence by Thomas J Peters and Robert H Waterman) it was evident that the excellent companies really are close to their customers. Other companies often talk about it but the excellent companies actually do it. Service, quality, reliability are their major strategies for long term revenue stream.

Let's now look into the attitude and performance of some international companies in the context of above observations:

**Mc Donalds:** Mc Donalds has sold about 80 billion hamburgers in the past 40 years. Its sales have grown 12% a year in the last decade. It has continually increased market share and eliminated competitors. Mc Donalds sells customer satisfaction and it manages this religiously. It obsessively measures monitors and promotes customer satisfaction. Mc Donalds listens to its customers and it particularly listens for dissatisfaction.

**IBM:** IBM wants to give the best customer service of any company of the world. IBM is fanatic about its service beliefs. It answers every customer complaint within twenty-four hours. Years ago it ran an ad that said simply and in bold type IBM Means Service.

**Caterpillar:** With the better run companies there is no part of an enterprise that can't be touched by the customers. Caterpillar sends people from the plants out to the proving grounds to watch their big machines at play.

**Citibank:** Citibank lets 'backroom' operations people regularly visit customers and accounts officers to solve operational problems directly.

**Frito lay:** Frito lay sells well over \$2 billion worth of potato chips and pretzels every year and has margin that are the envy of the world food industry. Success lies on Frito lay's nearly 10,000-person sales force and 99.5% service level.

**Proctor and Gamble (P&G):** Excellent companies get immense benefit from market closeness. Most of their real innovations come from the market. Proctor and Gamble was the first consumer goods company to put the toll free 800 Phone Nos on all its packaging. In its 1979 annual report P&G says it got 200,000 calls on that 800 number calls with customer ideas or complaints. P&G responded to everyone of those calls and the calls were summarised monthly for Board meetings. Insiders say that the 800 number is the major source of product improvement ideas.

**Rank Xerox:** This world leader in photocopier market runs an ad which is as follows. 'Where can you find a world-wide commitment to service? Look no further. Throughout your country, you will find there is a well established network of Rank Xerox companies and distributors — all committed to understanding and supporting our customer needs. The result we believe is one of the most comprehensive after sales service network in the world'. The customer oriented attitude of the company is explicit through this lone advertisement.

**Coca Cola:** During Cola war (between Pepsi and Coke)

is, although philanthropic activities are mostly voluntary but they have financial involvements too. To be sincere, I won't like to involve in such matters alone or in group which may have different aim and objectives. I haven't yet involved myself in any sort of money-making matters other than my long teaching profession.

**Municipal tax**

Sir, The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) collects municipal tax in four equal instalments payable in September, November, February and April as per bill book supplied by DCC. A rebate of 5 per cent is allowed in case the payment is made within the specified months.

In the month of November '92, DCC gave notices in the daily newspapers that an additional 5 per cent rebate will be allowed if all the four instalments are paid at a time by 30th November '92. I paid the first instalment in September '92 like a good citizen but unfortunately when I wanted to pay the remaining three instalments at a time in November '92, the Janata Bank, the bill collection agent of DCC, refused to allow the 10 per cent rebate. The bank authority maintained that 10 per cent rebate was applicable in case of payment of all the four instalments at a time only.

I can simply request the LGRD Ministry to look into the matter. Under the above backdrop it shows our poor capability, although philanthropic activities are mostly voluntary but they have financial involvements too. To be sincere, I won't like to involve in such matters alone or in group which may have different aim and objectives. I haven't yet involved myself in any sort of money-making matters other than my long teaching profession.

From the examples of the companies it is evident that the secret of success is to make customers pay for the goods and services they receive. And if companies keep their promises, customers are more than willing to pay for value, services and convenience. So, goal of any company should be to turn every customer into a repeat customer. For this, the trick is to generate the kind of loyalty that keeps customers coming back. In this regard customer satisfaction through product and service excellence should be viewed as the prime objective of any modern business organisation which is naturally followed by profitability.

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## To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

### On the Record

Sir, Being encouraged by the write up 'Columnists should Discard Partisan Approach to National Issues' by Mir Abdus Sattar published in the 'Opinion' column of your esteemed daily on February 1, I feel to write the following:

In an earlier article in his 'On the Record' column, Shah A M S Kibria very biasedly criticised the Prime Minister for her oblique reference to AL as the 'defeated force' in her speeches in public meetings which he says is not in conformity with democratic tradition and norms.

Citing the recently held US presidential election, he drew the attention of our Prime Minister to newly elected President Bill Clinton's eulogy to defeated George Bush to emphasize what democratic behaviour should be like. But what Mr. Kibria very conveniently and may be deliberately avoided to mention in his article is Mr. Bush's statement accepting the defeat. Mr. Bush, in his statement, never tried to wriggle out of the responsibility of the defeat by trying, as our 'Leader of the Opposition' did, to find out 'subtle irregularities' in the election process and vowing to make government's life miserable and not allowing it to rest in peace. Perhaps this, to Mr. Kibria, is

not violation of democratic tradition and norms.

As it is, the political perspectives of USA and Bangladesh are so different that it is not only unwise but very silly to compare the two.

The trouble with some of our educated intellectuals who are fortunate enough to have access to the media to express their biased opinion is that they think our general public to be so naive and gullible that they will swallow their partisan sermons hook, line and sinker. SA Moazzam Dhaka

### AL and hartal

Sir, I cannot find language strong enough to protest against Awami League call of Hartal on 6th and again on 10th February. The whole nation is held hostage because they have narrowly lost one by-election at Mirpur which used to be a BNP seat. Awami League never complained about vote rigging when they won recent by-elections.

Awami League should be re-named after 'hartal' because as apparent that is the only thing they understand. In the name of democracy they are pushing our country backward. Sheikh Hasina seems to have no stake in this country when she does not have to earn her living here and her children are

studying abroad. People should protest against Hartal, any hartal.

Iskander Meah  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

### Ambulance

Sir, Thanks to Mr Andrew D'Costa for his kind suggestions (his letter, dt. 9-1-93 in 'The Daily Star'). However, I would like to put forward my observations from a different angle of view:

(1) Mr Costa avoided to write the name of 'Al-Markazul Islami' but only mentioned — 'ambulance of a philanthropic organization.....' He has even incorporated the name of Mirzapur Hospital/ School/ College as an example just to make the appeal of exemption of taxes on Markaz ambulance light. But as far as I know Mirzapur Kamudini Hospital/ School/ College takes tuition and other fees from the students. In this regard, I would like to assure that as far as I have been briefed by the Markaz officials, I am convinced that Markaz is purely a philanthropic organization engaged in social welfare activities for every section of people irrespective of cast and creed. They told me that their first ambulance in their very first trip carried a Hindu patient.

(2) Every head of the state/government is vested with some special powers to take actions on special considerations. As such appeal was made to the Prime Minister for the exemption of taxes on the ambulance of Al-Markazul Islami which they received as donation from a Saudi businessman. It may be indicated here that there is no fund

available to Markaz for paying the huge taxes. This organization does not collect subscriptions like many other philanthropic organizations. It is being run by the help/contributions of those who set it up and look after its management plus voluntary donations from others. Meanwhile, according to the Markaz officials, the appeal has been favourably considered by the authority and the case is now pending at NBR for disposal. It is gathered that the FM has recommended 7.5% taxes, but in the file, the decimal is not clearly printed. Hence the NBR is seeking clarifications from the Ministry whether the exemption has been made at the rate of 7.5% or 75%.

(3) Mr Costa writes — 'Thus such write-up will not increase the dignity of Bangladesh in the overseas countries, will it?' Well, in this regard my observation is that, there is no harm to make sincere and honest appeals especially to materialize good jobs. Moreover, with the development of the scientific information technology, every country knows the others' socio-economic conditions. Hence, by keeping our poor condition hidden under imitations, we cannot increase the dignity of Bangladesh in the external world, rather such ill-effects will create additional problems when we will be compelled to deviate from solving the original but the additional problems.

Mr D'Costa has suggested me to work out a philanthropic organization for the development of agriculture in Bangladesh. I would like to thank him once again for the valuable advice. But the point

is, although philanthropic activities are mostly voluntary but they have financial involvements too. To be sincere, I won't like to involve in such matters alone or in group which may have different aim and objectives. I haven't yet involved myself in any sort of money-making matters other than my long teaching profession.

ity in the running of a ministry by issuing such ridiculous, silly and inappropriate circulars! Let the Almighty give us enough intelligence!

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### BIWTC ferry service

Sir, Recently I had an opportunity to travel in Aricha-Nagarbari route with my wife and daughter. While crossing the river by BIWTC ferry, I chose a comfortable place i.e. 'Deluxe' class to spend the time in privacy.

But unfortunately there was no privacy at all. Both the doors were open and people were passing through this cabin continuously. One guard standing at one gate could not prevent it. All the drivers of coach services along with their helpers whom I could identify by their conversations were gossiping loudly and were raising hue and cry by using slang words ignoring the presence of lady passengers. They took their lunch, tea, betel reluctantly and smoked strong cigarettes without caring much about other non-smokers. Approximately among forty passengers, thirty were ticketless. When I asked the guard about the infiltrator, he replied that even the officers are helpless.

I was surprised, how these people got so much indulgence! I hope the authorities concerned will be strict enough to these people in order to give better service to the ticket holders.

Zafar Shaheen  
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