

56-90

DAYS OF DECISION:

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Traditional ceremony accompanies the State opening of Parliament - the most momentous session since the end of the 2nd World War. The Irish Coach brings Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret through crowded streets from Buckingham Palace to Westminster.

The Royal drive to Parliament is always a popular event; but on this occasion, behind the pageantry is an awareness that Parliament faces grave issues on which the peace of the world may depend. For Israel and Egypt are at war; and Her Majesty's Government have set themselves the task of bringing that war to an end.

From the Sinai Desert, we bring you the first newsreel pictures of the battlefield - pictures which tell a graphic story of Egyptian defeat. Israeli troops and aircraft move towards the front, past abandoned guns and ruined tanks. The Egyptian Army, which for so long has been raiding the Israeli border districts, has proved itself unequal to a major defensive campaign against the Israeli advance.

Grimly the Israeli forces pursue the fleeing enemy. Army transport is supplemented by carts and tractors - for in the frontier districts, farmers and soldiers have for many years been two names for the same people.

Here was no "strategic withdrawal", but headlong flight. The Egyptian gunners did not wait to disable their guns before they ran - some of them did not even open fire. So much for Nasser's early boasts that the Israeli attack was being held.

Among the jubilant Israeli troops are many women soldiers - further evidence that this is not merely an army, but a people in arms.

Two Egyptian generals are brought in, captured during the battle of the Gaza Strip - Mohammed Fouad Al Digwi, who was in command of the Gaza defence, and Youssef Abdallah El Agroudi.

Back to London, where a Trafalgar Square meeting called by the National Council of Labour protests against the Government's intervention in the Middle East conflict. Aneurin Bevan's speech is interrupted by a smoke bomb, and as the meeting progresses, feelings run high and arguments in the crowd grow more heated - exploding here and there into fights which the police have to break up.

One or two people are arrested, but the biggest clashes are yet to come. After the meeting, thousands of demonstrators move down Whitehall to Downing Street. Mounted Police cordoning the street move forward to stop them, and before the scuffle is over the total of arrests has mounted to twenty-seven.

A sad footnote to the Mediterranean crisis - seven people lose their lives when a Hermes airliner crashes in a pine forest near Blackbushe Airport. The big plane was bringing home 73 women and children, all servicemen's families, on a chartered flight from Tripoli; including the crew, there was 80 people on board.

2-2PEFO1
2-FPEFO1
2-8PEFO1
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Eye-witnesses say the Hermes lost height in a fog -
plunged into the trees, and caught fire. The 73 survivors, young
and old, kept their heads magnificently otherwise the death roll
might have been much larger.