

Israel

ISRAEL IN 1983 WAS A country still reeling from the effects of the war it had launched in Lebanon in 1982. The nation was also struggling with runaway inflation, which was causing severe economic damage. Adding to Israel's problems was a religious-secular rift that was quickly overtaking ethnic divisiveness as a major source of concern.

In 1983 the Israeli leadership underwent a general overhaul, with the flamboyant populism of Begin-Sharon-Aridor being replaced by the low-profile pragmatism of Shamir-Arens-Cohen-Orgad. Yet this was more a change of style than substance, since all three members of the new triumvirate had been opposed to the peace treaty with Egypt. Whether they would be able to heal the country's wounds and restore a sense of national unity was an open question.

"I don't know whether Israelis have ever faced so many questions without answers," Yoel Marcus, one of the country's leading journalists, wrote in *Ha'aretz* at the end of the year. "People are just trying to live with the tension and the doubts until someone comes along who can illuminate the path for them, present them with a challenge, or offer them an alternative."

Speaking at his inauguration in the Knesset as Israel's sixth president, Chaim Herzog summed up what many felt when he stated that the real enemy is "within us": "It exists within every one of us citizens of Israel—Jews and Arabs, religious and secular, right- and left-wing, Sephardim and Ashkenazim. It is expressed in the lack of readiness to hear one's fellow man even when we don't agree with him." Israel, the president said, must not allow itself to reach a point where national unity will exist "only in the military cemetery."

The War in Lebanon

The tripartite talks between Israel, Lebanon, and the United States that commenced at the end of 1982, four months after the official end of Operation Peace for Galilee and seven months after the fighting began, were to drag on for nearly five more months before producing an agreement which, seven months later, at the end of 1983, had not yet been ratified by Lebanon, hence was not being implemented. Israel found itself in a situation where any meaningful change in the status quo on the ground was to a large extent dependent on forces beyond its control.

On January 13 Israel's chief negotiator, foreign ministry director-general David Kimche, announced that an agenda for the tripartite talks had been worked out, covering three main spheres: termination of the state of war between Israel and Lebanon; security arrangements; and a framework for mutual relations. Defense Minister Ariel Sharon gave journalists his assessment that an agreement would be reached that would provide both Israel and Lebanon with "security and normalization" and which "will definitely bring peace in the future—sooner, I believe, than is now apparent."

Peace, however, seemed a long way off for the Israeli soldiers who were stationed in Lebanon along the lines they had been holding since the previous summer. Virtually every day brought reports of attacks and ambushes against the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), whether by regrouped bands of Palestinian terrorists, local Lebanese elements, or a combination of the two. The impasse in Lebanon, along with the fact that the IDF itself was increasingly becoming one more element in the internecine strife in that country, led to calls even within the government for a major reassessment of policy. Such calls were consistently issued by the opposition. In mid-January former prime minister MK Yitzhak Rabin (Alignment-Labor) termed the government's use of force to try to impose a formal peace agreement on Lebanon a "mistake" stemming from an "illusion." Rabin said the government should drop all other aims and set its sights exclusively on attaining Israel's security needs in the north. Nothing, he stressed, could be salvaged from the "political illusions that underlay the war."

Yet another source of pressure on the government during the year was the Reagan administration in Washington. Speaking on television on January 14, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir denied that U.S. special envoy Philip Habib, who had arrived in Israel the previous day to resume his shuttle negotiations, had set a deadline for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanon. Shamir continued "The Americans are showing a lack of patience on this issue. We feel that the first step must be the removal of the remaining PLO forces from Lebanon."

In Lebanon jittery troops belonging to the IDF and the U.S. marine contingent participating in the multinational force (MNF) added to the tension in a series of incidents. According to the marines, the incidents, all of which took place in Beirut, were due to Israeli impingement on their territory, whereas Israel insisted that it had the right and duty to patrol the area in question because IDF units had come under attack from terrorists operating out of the U.S.-held zone. On February 2 marine captain Charles Johnson climbed aboard an Israeli tank that was on patrol along the line dividing the IDF and marine units, drew his pistol, and told the dumbfounded Israeli soldiers: "You are not coming through. You are going to have to kill me first." U.S. secretary of defense Caspar Weinberger told a congressional committee that Johnson deserved a medal for his "heroic action"; President Ronald Reagan said that the Marine had done the "only thing he could do." However, an Israeli officer dismissed the U.S. reaction to this and similar incidents as overblown, claiming that it was being engineered by officials with "ulterior motives."

The tripartite talks were bogged down at this time in the wake of Israel's insistence that it be permitted to set up a number of early-warning stations in southern Lebanon that would also serve relatively large IDF units as command posts for anti-terrorist policing activities in the area. Both the Lebanese and the Americans rejected this idea. Among the other areas of dispute in the talks were Israel's demand that the PLO withdraw all of its remaining forces in Lebanon as the first step of a larger process; the status to be accorded the UN interim force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in the security zone north of the Israeli border; and the role to be played by Major Sa'ad Haddad, the Israeli-supported militia commander in southern Lebanon.

Meanwhile, the Kahan Commission of Inquiry held its final hearings on January 16 and retired to draw up its report. Appointed by the government on September 28, 1982, in the wake of the massacre perpetrated by Lebanese Phalangist forces in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps in Beirut, the commission was composed of two of Israel's most eminent jurists—president of the supreme court Yitzhak Kahan and supreme court justice Aharon Barak—and a highly respected retired major general, Yona Efrat.

On February 8 the commission's final report was made public. Its repercussions, both short- and long-term, were comparable only to the chain of events sparked off by the Agranat Commission of Inquiry on the Yom Kippur War, nine years earlier. While the overt impact was felt chiefly in the political sphere, the report undoubtedly also had an effect on Israel's subsequent pursuit of the war in Lebanon. Critics of the war felt themselves vindicated by the report, its strictly circumscribed findings notwithstanding, while the war's proponents sensed that their position had in some way been undercut. The fact that the IDF seemed to get the short end of the stick again vis-à-vis the political echelon (the same feeling had prevailed after publication of the Agranat Commission findings), combined with the extraordinarily high moral standards laid down by the report, was bound to have an effect on the senior officers corps in the army.

While determining that "direct responsibility for the perpetration of the acts of slaughter rests on the Phalangist forces," the commission, in a chapter entitled "The Indirect Responsibility," argued:

If it indeed becomes clear that those who decided on the entry of the Phalangists into the camps should have foreseen—from the information at their disposal and from things which were common knowledge—that there was danger of a massacre, and no steps were taken which might have been taken to prevent this danger or at least to greatly reduce the possibility that deeds of this type might be done, then those who made the decisions and those who implemented them are indirectly responsible for what occurred, even if they did not intend this to happen and merely disregarded the anticipated danger. A similar indirect responsibility also falls on those who knew of the decision: it was their duty, by virtue of their position and their office, to warn of the danger, and they did not fulfill this duty. It is also not possible to absolve of such indirect responsibility those persons who, when they received the first reports of what was happening in the camps, did not

rush to prevent the continuation of the Phalangists' actions and did not do everything within their power to stop them.

The commission invoked "the obligations applying to every civilized nation and the ethical rules accepted by civilized peoples" in its ascription of "indirect responsibility." In this connection the report cited Deuteronomy 21:6-7; it also pointed out that when Jews in the Diaspora suffered pogroms, the stand of the Jewish community was that "the responsibility for such deeds falls not only on those who rioted and committed the atrocities, but also on those who were responsible for safety and public order, who could have prevented the disturbances but did not fulfill their obligations in this respect."

Of the nine persons whom the commission had warned the previous November that they might be "harmed" by the findings of the final report, only one, Avi Dudai, a personal aide to Defense Minister Sharon, was found to bear no culpability of any kind, due to the doubtful nature of the evidence in his case. With respect to the others, the Kahan Commission found and recommended as follows: *Prime Minister Menachem Begin*—" [We] find no reason to exempt the prime minister from responsibility for not having evinced, during or after the cabinet session [of September 16, when he first learned of the Phalangists' entry into the camps], any interest in the Phalangists' actions in the camps." There was no place for "this indifference" given the prime minister's awareness of the possible results of such a move. Moreover, had he manifested the requisite interest, the military might have been moved "to take the appropriate measures" to forestall the danger. "The prime minister's lack of involvement in the entire matter casts on him a certain degree of responsibility." The commission made no recommendation with respect to Begin; *Defense Minister Ariel Sharon*—"It is our view that responsibility is to be imputed to the minister of defense for having disregarded the danger of acts of vengeance and bloodshed by the Phalangists against the population of the refugee camps, and having failed to take this danger into account when he decided to move the Phalangists into the camps. In addition, responsibility is to be imputed to the minister of defense for not ordering appropriate measures for preventing or reducing the danger of massacre as a condition for the Phalangists' entry into the camps. These blunders constitute the non-fulfilment of a duty with which the defense minister was charged." In the light of this, the commission stated: "In our opinion, it is fitting that the minister of defense draw the appropriate personal conclusions arising out of the defects revealed with regard to the manner in which he discharged the duties of his office—and if necessary, that the prime minister consider whether he should exercise his authority under . . . the basic law . . . according to which 'the prime minister may, after informing the cabinet of his intention to do so, remove a minister from office' "; *Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir*—After declaring that it was "regrettable and worrisome" that poor personal relations between cabinet ministers could lead to such results (Shamir had been informed at an early stage by Communications Minister Mordechai Zippori that something was amiss in the refugee camps, but had

taken no further action on the matter), the commission asserted that "it is difficult to find justification for such disdain," given the source of the information and the circumstances in which it was conveyed. The foreign minister should have shown "sensitivity and alertness" to what he was told by another minister, and he "erred in not taking any measures" once he had the information. The commission made no recommendation with respect to Shamir; *Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan*—"We find that the chief of staff did not consider the danger of acts of vengeance and bloodshed being perpetrated against the population of the refugee camps in Beirut; he did not order the adoption of the appropriate steps to avoid this danger." Moreover, even after he had been led to understand that the Phalangists were "overdoing" things in the refugee camps, Eitan took no action, and, indeed, actually supplied the Phalangists with one or more bulldozers so they could continue their operation. These acts of commission and omission "constitute a breach of duty and dereliction of the duty incumbent upon the chief of staff." Despite these "grave conclusions," the commission made no recommendation with regard to the chief of staff, since he was about to complete his term of office.

As for the other principal actors in the drama, the commission made no recommendation with respect to the director of the Mossad—his identity is not revealed while he holds office—largely because he had assumed office only four days before the massacre; it recommended the dismissal of the director of military intelligence, Major General Yehoshua Saguy, who provided perceptive analyses of the situation, but failed to press his viewpoint, adopting instead a passive role; it made no recommendation with respect to the O.C. northern command, Major General Amir Drori, though holding him responsible for not persisting in the actions he had begun to take when he learned that something was wrong in the refugee camps; and it recommended that Brigadier General Amos Yaron, the Beirut divisional commander at the time of the massacre, "not serve in the capacity of a field commander in the Israel Defense Forces, and that this recommendation not be reconsidered before three years have passed."

In an appearance before the cabinet on February 9, Chief of Staff Eitan stated that the general staff felt that the commission's findings and recommendations were disproportionate to the actions of the officers as described in the report. On February 10 (the day on which the cabinet voted to accept the report) the two officers most harshly dealt with, generals Saguy and Yaron, told the cabinet that the implications of the Kahan Commission's findings concerning them would produce a negative effect within the IDF. Yaron averred that the upcoming generation of IDF officers would be hesitant to assume responsibility for difficult decisions, given the report's severity. Saguy joined a long list of IDF directors of military intelligence who had their careers cut short. He resigned his position at the demand of the new defense minister, Moshe Arens, and left the IDF in August. On April 15 Major General Ehud Barak, head of the general staff's planning division, was named the new director of military intelligence. Arens also relieved General Yaron of his divisional command and initially refused to accede to the recommendation of the new chief

of staff, Lieutenant General Moshe Levy, that Yaron be appointed chief of the IDF's manpower branch with promotion to the rank of major general—this in line with a legal ruling by the attorney general that such a move would violate the spirit, if not the letter, of the Kahan Commission's recommendations regarding Yaron. However, Arens eventually approved the appointment, after Yaron asked Prime Minister Begin to intercede on his behalf.

Public disenchantment with the war was high even before the release of the Kahan Commission report. A poll published in *Ha'aretz* at the beginning of February showed that only 40.7 per cent of the public justified the course of the war, as against 65.9 per cent who had expressed their approval in July 1982. The Israeli presence in Lebanon continued to exact a heavy price in soldiers killed and wounded as anti-IDF terrorism increased. In the Shouf mountains, the IDF found itself in the unwelcome role of policeman striving to keep Christians and Druze from each other's throats. The PLO and Syrians were using the prisoner exchange issue as a lever to conduct psychological warfare against Israel, demanding the release of thousands of Israeli-held prisoners for the eleven Israeli soldiers they were known to be holding. On March 16 yet another aspect of the Israeli presence in Lebanon was brought strikingly home when, in a scene that recalled similar incidents in the West Bank over the years (leading some to dub southern Lebanon the "North Bank"), a demonstrator was shot in the leg as Israeli troops dispersed a violent protest rally staged in front of IDF headquarters in Sidon by some 500 women from the nearby Ein Hilweh refugee camp. It was against this gloomy background that the tripartite talks continued, and not even a visit to Washington by the foreign ministers of Israel and of Lebanon (the two men met separately with administration leaders) produced a breakthrough.

One of the major stumbling blocks to progress in the tripartite talks was the inability of the parties to agree on the role to be played by militia chief Sa'ad Haddad. Since Israel had by this time dropped its idea of IDF-run, anti-terrorist control stations in southern Lebanon, Israel regarded the continued presence of Major Haddad as a key element in securing the northern border once the IDF withdrew. However, the Lebanese, supported by the United States, balked at the plan, arguing that it would create a permanent autonomous zone in the south over which the Beirut government would, effectively, lack sovereignty, and that, in addition, Haddad was a defector from the Lebanese army and as such had to stand trial.

On April 22 President Reagan announced that he was sending Secretary of State George Shultz to the region in order "to bring to a successful conclusion the negotiations in Lebanon." Reagan stressed two "basic goals" of Washington's Middle East policy that Shultz would be trying to achieve—secure borders for Israel and the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, so that Beirut could "assert its sovereignty and begin real reconstruction."

By the eve of the Shultz mission, it was abundantly clear that no matter what Jerusalem, Beirut, and Washington decided, the key to Lebanon's future lay in

Damascus. Syria, which had taken a military drubbing from Israel in the 1982 fighting, had, after being reequipped by the Soviet Union, emerged within months as the dominant power not only in Lebanon but, in some ways, the entire region, given its ability to take the initiative and force Israel to respond to its moves, both actual and psychological. Outfitted with state-of-the-art Soviet war materials, such as SAM-5 ground-to-air missiles (manned by Soviet personnel), Damascus felt itself sufficiently secure to artificially escalate tension with Israel almost at will. One such round of heightened tension came in late March and April, in the form of Syrian troop movements in Lebanon's Beka'a Valley, which led the IDF to take precautionary measures. This in turn provoked a Soviet warning to Israel not to attack Syria, leading Prime Minister Begin to deny any such intention. Thus, as the Shultz mission got under way, Israeli-Syrian tension was high, and that tension formed a constant backdrop to the secretary of state's efforts, affecting the accord that was finally achieved.

On May 6, nine days after Shultz launched his shuttle negotiations between Jerusalem and Beirut, and eleven months to the day since the start of Operation Peace for Galilee, the cabinet voted 17-2 to approve a draft agreement with Lebanon. In a television interview, Defense Minister Arens rejected criticism that the agreement was "too little, too late," explaining, "We have finally reached an agreement with the Lebanese government after 35 years of a state of war and over ten years of attacks launched from Lebanese territory." Arens denied that Israel had abandoned Major Haddad, noting that the militia commander would have "major responsibilities" as a "senior officer" in the Lebanese army in southern Lebanon, with 30 men under his personal authority. The defense minister expressed hope that a full-fledged peace treaty with Lebanon would be signed in the future. He also pointed out that since the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon was, by the terms of the accord, contingent upon the simultaneous evacuation of PLO and Syrian forces, their refusal to withdraw had been taken into account as a "potential" development. (Syria, in fact, rejected the agreement out of hand when Shultz met with President Hafez al-Assad in Damascus on May 7.)

The split within Israel over the war in Lebanon was clearly manifested when the Knesset debated the proposed agreement on May 11. Foreign Minister Shamir, expressing hope that the IDF could soon return home from Lebanon after completing its "magnificent operation" there, said that Israel had achieved its main goal in the war—the liquidation of the PLO's "pirate state" in Lebanon. A byproduct of the agreement, he said, was that Israel's contacts with the United States during the negotiations had helped put an end to misunderstandings between the two countries that had arisen during Operation Peace for Galilee. Replying for the Alignment, Labor party chairman Shimon Peres contended that Israel had effectively given the Syrians and the PLO the final say about the future of Lebanon. Syria, he said, should be given a time limit for accepting the agreement, failing which the IDF should execute a unilateral pullback to a 45 km. security belt. On May 16, following eight

more hours of repetitive debate, the Knesset approved the agreement by a vote of 57-6, with 45 abstentions, chiefly from the Alignment.

On May 17 the agreement—"between the government of the State of Israel and the government of the Republic of Lebanon"—was signed in separate ceremonies at Khalde, near Beirut, and in Kiryat Shemona. Although it was far from the peace treaty that had been envisioned by Israeli policy makers just one year earlier, it did contain notable language. Both sides declared their desire "to ensure lasting security for both their states;" asserted that they "consider[ed] the existing international boundary between [them] inviolable;" and confirmed that "the state of war between [them] has been terminated." Article 4 stated:

1. The territory of each party will not be used as a base for hostile or terrorist activity against the other party, its territory, or its people.
2. Each party will prevent the existence or organization of irregular forces, armed bands, organizations, bases, offices or infrastructure, the aims and purposes of which include incursions or any act of terrorism into the territory of the other party, or any other activity aimed at threatening or endangering the security of the other party and safety of its people. To this end all agreements and arrangements enabling the presence and functioning on the territory of either party of elements hostile to the other party are null and void.

An annex on security arrangements spelled out the dimensions of a security region that was to be created north of the Israeli border, and detailed which forces would be permitted to enter the zone. Major Haddad's militia (though not named explicitly in the text) would be made part of the Lebanese "auxiliary forces" and "accorded a proper status under Lebanese law to enable it to continue guarding the villages in the security region." Israel undertook to withdraw all its forces from Lebanon "within 8 to 12 weeks of the entry into force of the present agreement . . . consistent with the objective of Lebanon that all external forces withdraw from Lebanon."

As many in Israel had foreseen, Lebanon, under heavy pressure from Syria and Syrian surrogates in Lebanon, failed to ratify the agreement by year's end. The central government in Beirut was, in fact, as yet incapable of implementing its part of the agreement even if it had been ratified. Aggravating the situation was a sharp increase in terrorism—a tactic employed by elements opposed to the agreement—in the period immediately following the signing of the accord; Israel alone had 16 soldiers killed and dozens wounded in about 100 incidents. Damascus, which was thought to be behind the explosion of a booby-trapped car at the U.S. embassy in Beirut on April 18 which took 47 lives, put on a display of its by now traditional brinkmanship. On May 23 Syrian forces fired shoulder-launched Strella missiles at an Israeli helicopter, and two days later Syrian jets fired missiles at Israeli planes on a routine reconnaissance mission; the Syrians missed their targets, and Israel did not respond. On May 27, as the Syrians staged extensive military maneuvers in the Beka'a Valley and on the Golan Heights, Prime Minister Begin called in Alignment leaders to brief them on the deteriorating situation.

On June 1 Prime Minister Begin, replying in the Knesset to an agenda motion by MK Michael Bar-Zohar (Alignment-Labor) entitled "one year of the war in Lebanon," delivered a speech that was strikingly muted in content. Begin thanked the opposition's leaders for the understanding they had shown in their recent meeting with him, called for national unity in the face of Syrian threats, and added: "I feel the pain, and so do all members of the Knesset, and so do all loyal citizens of Israel, at the difficult and terrible losses in human life [in Lebanon]. There are undoubtedly those who feel the pain as much as we do, but there is no one who feels it more than we do."

Three days later the anti-war protest movement hit a peak when Peace Now conducted a mass rally in Tel Aviv, attended by about 150,000 persons, to mark the first anniversary of Operation Peace for Galilee. Smaller groups, formed as a direct response to the war, such as Yesh Gvul (There's a Limit/Border) and Parents Against Silence, held their own demonstrations earlier in the day and then joined the Peace Now gathering. Pressure on the government did not let up during the following week, which saw the deaths of five more soldiers, bringing the war's toll to exactly 500 on June 10, with nearly 2,800 wounded. From about mid-May Prime Minister Begin was having anti-war sentiment brought home to him every time he entered or left his residence by the presence of a permanent anti-war demonstration, whose focal point was a large poster bearing the number of Israeli soldiers killed in Lebanon since the fighting began. On June 16 the prime minister received a delegation from the Parents Against Silence group who presented him with a petition containing 10,000 signatures calling for an immediate IDF withdrawal from Lebanon. A week earlier (June 8) the Knesset had defeated (55-47) an Alignment motion calling for just such a unilateral IDF withdrawal in the western and central sectors of Lebanon.

In the absence of Syrian or Lebanese forthcomingness on the agreement, Israel soon began consultations with the United States on the feasibility of an IDF pull-back to a new defensive line in Lebanon. On July 4 Secretary of State Shultz arrived back in the Middle East for a brief round of talks. He met in Damascus with the Syrian leadership, reportedly obtaining Syrian assurances that their troops would not move into any area evacuated by the IDF, and then travelled to Jerusalem. The secretary of state informed Israeli leaders of Beirut's apprehension that civil strife would erupt in any areas Israel evacuated, particularly the Shouf mountains. In addition, both Beirut and Washington feared that a mere partial withdrawal by Israel would lead to the permanent partitioning of Lebanon by perpetuating a situation in which both Israel and Syria occupied large areas of the country. In response, Prime Minister Begin stated that Israel's primary concern was the safety of its own soldiers.

On July 20 the cabinet, meeting in special session, approved a plan for the IDF's redeployment in Lebanon. Four days later, following the regular weekly cabinet meeting, it was announced that Defense Minister Arens and Foreign Minister Shamir had been invited to Washington for urgent talks about the deteriorating

situation in Lebanon. Lebanese president Amin Jemayel had just concluded a visit to the United States, against the background of Israel's redeployment decision. Shamir and Arens, accompanied by senior military advisers and experts on Lebanon, held intensive talks in Washington from July 26–28. Taking part on the American side was Robert McFarlane, deputy national security adviser, who on July 22 was named by President Reagan as his new special envoy to the Middle East, replacing Philip Habib, whose efficacy as a mediator had ended when the Syrians refused to receive him in Damascus. On July 31 Foreign Minister Shamir denied reports that Washington was trying to get Israel to call off or at least delay its redeployment. "The Americans know we have no intention of partitioning Lebanon," he told journalists. President Reagan, speaking on television, said that the Israeli redeployment "represents no major problem at all. In fact it's welcome." His stated reasoning was that the move would increase pressure on Syria to follow suit.

The new U.S. envoy and his aides arrived in the Middle East at the end of July for what proved to be an arduous, month-long round of talks aimed at either getting Syria to change its mind about withdrawing from Lebanon or at least working out a *modus vivendi* among the rival factions in the areas to be evacuated by the IDF so as to prevent the renewed eruption of the Lebanese civil war. Israel twice postponed its redeployment—originally scheduled, it later emerged, for August 28—to give McFarlane more time. Finally, on September 3–4, the IDF executed the move, pulling back about 30 km. from its forward positions in the western and central sectors to a line along the Awali River, about 45 km. north of the Israeli border. The new line meant that Galilee would still be out of range of katyusha rockets. The IDF gave up control of the Beirut-Damascus highway for which it had fought so fiercely, at a heavy cost in lives, just a year earlier. However, Israel retained the strategic heights of Jebel Barukh, overlooking the Beka'a Valley and large parts of Syria. The ceasefire line with the Syrians, just 23 km. from Damascus, also remained unchanged. Overall, military observers said, the redeployment would enable the IDF to reduce its troops in Lebanon while providing greater safety for those who were stationed there. In a Jerusalem *Post* interview (September 9), Defense Minister Arens said that although the new line was "not permanent at all, certainly in terms of our intentions," neither would Israel return to the international boundary "until we have a reasonable assurance that the areas we evacuate will not be filled by elements hostile to Israel." Heavy fighting between Druze and Christians, accompanied by sporadic massacres and the flight of refugees across the new Israeli lines, broke out in the Shouf mountains as soon as the IDF left. Reinforced IDF patrols ranged north of the Awali line to make sure that the fighting did not spread southward. Israel welcomed a ceasefire that was worked out in Lebanon under Syrian aegis. However, Israeli officials expressed concern that the Israel-Lebanon agreement now stood virtually no chance of ratification by Beirut since several of the accord's fiercest detractors were prominently represented on a "national reconciliation committee" that President Jemayel was compelled to create in return for a lessening of pressure by the Druze and their Syrian allies. On October 19 President Reagan deplored the Syrians' "destructive role" in Lebanon, putting

an end to reports that Washington was now courting Damascus, as the dominant power in Lebanon, at Jerusalem's expense.

On October 24 truck-bomb blasts at the U.S. and French military compounds in Beirut claimed over 300 lives and left scores wounded. Israeli hospitals were placed on an emergency footing, but the United States decided to send its wounded as far afield as West Germany for treatment, in a move that was roundly criticized as politically motivated. Israel's new prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir, blamed Syria and "terrorist elements" for the attack; some observers thought that Iran might have been involved as well. Defense Minister Arens said on October 28 that the United States had "distanced itself" from Israel as far as a strategy for Lebanon was concerned. Israel, therefore, "had to concentrate on [its] own most important interests," whatever the consequences.

Meanwhile, a series of incidents that claimed the lives of four Israeli soldiers within a week showed that Israel was hardly immune from terrorism either, its pullback to the Awali notwithstanding. Then, on November 4, a booby-trapped van broke through the checkpoints at IDF headquarters in Tyre and exploded inside the military compound. Sixty-one persons were killed, including 29 members of the Israeli security forces; 40 people were wounded, 28 of them Israelis. There was harsh criticism within Israel of the apparent complacency and lax security which had allowed the attack to take place less than two weeks after almost identical operations against U.S. and French military installations in Beirut. Within hours of the attack, Israeli planes carried out two separate bombing missions against what the IDF described as "terrorist headquarters and objectives" in the Beirut area—the first such air action in Lebanon since October 1982. Prime Minister Shamir again held Syria accountable for the attack, charging also that Damascus was seeking to torpedo the Lebanese reconciliation conference that was then underway in Geneva. Shamir reiterated the Israeli position that the IDF would remain in Lebanon until it was certain that northern Israel would no longer come under rocket attack.

Defense Minister Arens appointed a military commission of inquiry to examine the events surrounding the Tyre attack. Headed by retired major general Amnon Reshef, the commission submitted a report that was rejected as inadequate by the cabinet on November 13, with some ministers charging a cover-up. An amended report, which detailed security negligence at the Tyre installation, was accepted on December 18, and the chief of staff was instructed to implement its recommendations.

On November 11 the IDF reopened the Awali River bridges for southbound traffic after they had been closed for a week, following the Tyre attack. The closing of the bridges disrupted normal life for thousands of persons. Even after being resumed, southbound traffic continued to move at a snail's pace as the IDF carried out preventive searches of all vehicles, a move which did not endear the Israelis to the local population.

At home, the Young Herut executive and a group of retired army generals called on the IDF to take harsher measures against reservists who refused to serve in Lebanon for political reasons. By year's end about 100 men had been jailed, usually

for one month, for refusing to go to Lebanon. Yesh Gvul claimed that hundreds of other cases had been dealt with internally, with unit commanders arranging alternative service for soldiers who would not go to Lebanon. In a case that was heard by the supreme court, the legal counsel for the state said that the IDF was duty-bound to fight this "new phenomenon of organized and systematic refusal" to serve because it lowered morale in the army and increased the burden of those who did serve.

In mid-November Syrian defense minister Mustafa Tlass said that his country's new Soviet-supplied missiles could hit any target in Israel, including "the nuclear reactor in the Negev." Tlass's tough talk came amidst air strikes by Israel on November 16, and by France the following day, against bases of a fanatical Shi'ite Muslim terrorist organization operating from Syrian-controlled territory in Lebanon. On November 20 the Israeli air force struck at terrorist positions east of Beirut following a series of attacks on IDF troops in Lebanon. In that operation an Israeli pilot who bailed out when his Kfir jet was downed by ground fire was returned to Israel within hours by the Lebanese army.

On November 24 six Israeli soldiers who had been held for over a year by Yasir Arafat's Fatah branch of the PLO returned home, where they received a jubilant reception. The six had been among eight soldiers captured on September 4, 1982 at an IDF outpost at Bahamdoun; the other two were in the hands of Ahmed Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command. The price of the exchange was high: the release of some 4,500 prisoners from the Ansar detention facility in Lebanon; the freeing of 63 terrorists serving long sentences (over half of them life terms) in Israeli jails; and the return of 36 terrorists who had been detained by the Israeli navy while en route from Cyprus to Tripoli, in northern Lebanon.

Defense Minister Arens denied that the negotiations which had led to the exchange signalled any change in Israel's attitude toward the PLO. Attorney Shmuel Tamir, minister of justice in the first Likud government, who served as Israel's chief negotiator, said that Israel was compelled to make "very painful concessions" in the negotiations because the situation of the captive soldiers had become extremely precarious due to the fierce fighting between PLO factions around Tripoli, where the Israelis were being held. Among those who provided behind-the-scenes help in working out the exchange were the International Red Cross, the French government, former Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky and his aide Herbert Amry, and PLO official Issam Sartawi.

One person who had no cause to celebrate the prisoner exchange was Ziad Abu Ain, who had been scheduled to be released from an Israeli jail, but was not. Ain had been extradited from the United States to Israel, where he was sentenced to life imprisonment. In mid-December a defense ministry spokesman said that Israel would not release Ain—whose failure to be included in the prisoner exchange was, the spokesman said, the result of a series of technical errors originating with the list of prisoners given to Israel—despite a December 5 communiqué issued by the International Red Cross stating that it "expected the terms of the agreement to be strictly respected" and charging further that Israel was holding "several" other Palestinian prisoners who were to have been freed as part of the exchange.

On December 3 Israeli planes struck at terrorist bases in Lebanon in retaliation for attacks on Israeli soldiers. The following day U.S. jets bombed Syrian military targets in Lebanon—losing two planes in the process—giving rise to reports of a “secret pact” between Israel and the United States, since Prime Minister Shamir and Defense Minister Arens had been in Washington for talks on the eve of the back-to-back air strikes. On December 2 Shamir had stated that both Israel and the United States regarded “Syrian aggression, which is massively supported by the Soviet Union,” as the chief obstacle to any settlement in Lebanon.

The tail end of 1983 saw yet another of the many ironic twists of the Lebanon war. As international efforts got under way to evacuate PLO chief Arafat and his men, who were under siege in Tripoli by Syrian-backed PLO rebels led by Abu Moussa, the Israeli government expressed anger at UN involvement in the evacuation scheme and instructed the navy to shell Fatah positions around Tripoli, effectively blocking any move to rescue the Arafat loyalists. Cabinet ministers issued conflicting statements about Israel’s intentions; some demanded that Israel seize the opportunity to capture Arafat. The issue was one of the items on the agenda when the new U.S. special envoy to the Middle East, Donald Rumsfeld (the third special envoy during the year, Rumsfeld having replaced McFarlane, who was appointed national security adviser), arrived for talks in mid-December. In a radio interview, Defense Minister Arens called on “civilized democratic countries” to demand, at a minimum, that Arafat “lay down his arms and abandon terrorism” in return for being saved for the second time in little over a year. Nevertheless, on December 20 Arafat and 4,000 of his loyalists were evacuated from Tripoli aboard Greek ships flying the UN flag, with French naval protection. Speaking in the Knesset on December 21, Prime Minister Shamir expressed “protest and amazement” that the UN had given the PLO chief its protection, especially following a murderous bomb attack on a Jerusalem bus just two weeks earlier which had claimed six lives. There was criticism within Israel to the effect that the government’s vacillating policy had given Arafat a political victory. The Israeli leadership was further exercised when Arafat was welcomed in Cairo by President Hosni Mubarak in a move that had United States support.

In the final week of the year two Israeli soldiers were killed and 12 wounded in clashes in central and southern Lebanon, bringing the total since the start of the war to 563 dead and 3,200 wounded. Israel was holding 2,800 sq. miles of Lebanese territory, containing 520,000 people—65,000 Christians, 30,000 Druze, 60,000 Sunni Muslims, 95,000 Palestinians, and 270,000 Shi’ites. The Israeli front line was 115 km. long from the coast to the eastern sector; the Israeli navy patrolled 62 km. of Lebanese coastline.

A poll published in late December by the weekly *Koteret Rashit* showed that for the first time a majority (51 per cent) of the public thought that the war should not have been fought at all, as opposed to 84 per cent who supported it shortly after it began, 18 months earlier. However, there was less consensus as to what Israel should do, given the situation that currently existed.

Foreign Relations

Following the pattern of recent years, Israel's relations with its chief ally, the United States, underwent a fairly dizzying cycle of ups and downs in 1983. This was due in no small measure to U.S. policy vacillations over Lebanon, combined with unclear short-term Israeli goals in that country, all of this compounded by the unbending attitude of the Syrians.

The year began on a positive note with a ten-day visit to the United States by President Yitzhak Navon, in which he met with President Reagan and other administration leaders, as well as with numerous politicians, intellectuals, and Jewish community leaders. Returning home on January 16, Navon said he had not sensed any attempt to exert pressure on Israel in his meeting with President Reagan, although the latter had expressed support for his September 1982 peace initiative, which Israel had rejected. Reagan was a "friend of Israel," the Israeli president said.

Nevertheless, the first part of the year was marked by strained relations between the two countries due to friction between U.S. marines and IDF troops in Lebanon—this against the background of relentless United States pressure on Israel to be more forthcoming in the tripartite talks aimed at securing an Israel-Lebanon agreement. The situation was somewhat alleviated on March 21, when Defense Minister Arens announced that Israel would supply the U.S. with secret military information it had acquired in the course of the war in Lebanon, even though no formal agreement to that effect had yet been concluded. (A draft agreement worked out in 1982 had never been approved due to Israel's insistence that the information not be passed on to other countries, including NATO members.) The very next day the United States announced that it was resuming arms sales to Israel—200 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles worth \$16 million—for the first time since the start of the Lebanon war. Yet, ten days later, with the Lebanon talks at an impasse, President Reagan stated that he would not authorize the shipment of 75 F-16 fighters to Israel as long as IDF troops remained on Lebanese soil. Although Israeli diplomats in Washington were assured that this was a technical matter and did not constitute any meaningful U.S. policy shift, Foreign Minister Shamir expressed regret over the decision, the more so as Israel had made it clear to the United States that it had "no territorial designs on Lebanon." The following week Shamir lashed out at U.S. policy in the Middle East, arguing that it was "just the opposite of what is required to advance the cause of peace in the region." He charged that U.S. negotiators were out to thwart an agreement in Lebanon that came "too close to peace" and was therefore likely to rile other Arab countries.

Jerusalem was also upset by two U.S. statements at this time concerning other territory being held by Israel. On April 10 the cabinet deliberated the significance of an administration pledge to Jordan that it would apply pressure on Israel to freeze its West Bank settlement program if King Hussein joined the peace process. Following the meeting, the cabinet secretary told reporters that the government would not alter its settlement policy. Off the record, Israeli officials said that the U.S. statement

was a "desperate attempt" to salvage the 1982 Reagan initiative. Two weeks later Israel said it would seek "clarifications" from Washington regarding a letter from President Reagan to Syrian president Assad calling for talks on Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Prime Minister Begin asserted that the area, under Israeli law since the end of 1981, would always remain so.

Tension with the United States notwithstanding, the Senate foreign relations committee approved an aid package for Israel of over \$2.6 billion for 1984—\$460 million above what the administration had originally proposed, and \$35 million more than the amount passed by the House of Representatives earlier in the month. Half of the military aid figure of \$1.7 billion was in the form of a grant.

Relations between the Reagan and Shamir administrations took a marked turn for the better following the signing of the Israel-Lebanon agreement on May 17. Just three days later President Reagan announced that he was lifting the ban on the sale of the 75 F-16 planes. (The formal contract was signed on August 19; all the planes were to be delivered by 1989.) In another policy shift, the administration announced that it would support the increased aid voted Israel by the Congress. On June 10 President Reagan told the delegates to the national B'nai B'rith convention that the United States would maintain Israel's "qualitative edge" over the Arabs in weaponry; the United States, he said, would be "a rock of support" for Israel.

Support, however, was not forthcoming for one of the linchpins of Israeli policy. In August, a state department spokesman, replying to reporters' questions concerning Kuwait's refusal to accept the U.S. ambassador-designate because he had served previously as United States consul-general in Jerusalem, declared that the U.S. did not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Washington, the spokesman said, "considers East Jerusalem as occupied territory in accordance with UN resolution 242 and international law." Retorting, a spokesman for the foreign ministry in Jerusalem issued a statement asserting that "Jerusalem is one city, indivisible, the capital of the State of Israel."

The thorny issue of Israeli settlement policy in the administered areas also came up in August, when the United States vetoed a UN security council draft resolution calling on Israel to dismantle its settlements. State department spokesman John Hughes, explaining the vote, said such a demand was "impractical"; moreover, he added, "sterile argument as to whether the settlements are legal" under international law only "deflects attention from the basic issue: the harmful impact of settlement activity on efforts to achieve a fair and peaceful resolution of the conflict over the occupied territories." Despite its latter part, Foreign Minister Shamir welcomed the U.S. explanation, saying that the "legal reality" embedded in the U.S. position would now have to be accepted by others.

Clarifying matters a few days later, Secretary of State George Shultz said there had been no change in United States policy regarding the future of the settlements. The comments by the state department spokesman, Shultz remarked, were "perfectly consistent" with the Reagan initiative of September 1982, "namely, that in so far as the settlements on the West Bank are concerned, one could foresee them

staying right where they are, but the residents of those settlements would live under the legal jurisdiction of whatever jurisdiction resulted from the negotiations." As for further settlement activity, however, the secretary of state reiterated the U.S. position that "new settlements on the West Bank are not constructive. They don't help us at all in our search for peace." Toward the end of August, President Reagan also termed the establishment of new settlements an "obstacle to peace." For Israel, and for the entire region, he averred, "permanent security" could come only "with the achievement of a just and lasting peace, not by sole reliance on increasingly expensive military forces."

That Jerusalem and Washington did not always see eye-to-eye on the meaning of "security" was shown in October, when Israel let it be known that it opposed an administration plan to set up a Jordanian rapid deployment force for possible intervention in the Persian Gulf. Israeli officials expressed concern about the matter following Washington's confirmation that elements of the proposed Jordanian force had already received U.S. training. Israel, however, decided to pursue the matter via quiet diplomacy. The fact that the Shamir government did not make waves at this time may have been instrumental in securing the Reagan administration's agreement, in mid-October, to develop parts for Israel's Lavi jet fighter in the United States. About a month later, the Senate endorsed a House of Representatives decision to allow Israel to spend up to \$550 million in foreign military sales credits to help develop the Lavi.

In mid-November Chaim Herzog became the second Israeli president within a year to come to the United States. His 11-day visit closely followed the pattern set by his predecessor, Yitzhak Navon, at the beginning of 1983. Upon his return home, Herzog said that even though he had found a very positive attitude toward Israel in Washington, no "undue expectations" should be held out for the visit to the U.S. by Prime Minister Shamir and Defense Minister Arens that was to take place the next week. Yet Shamir, upon his return to Israel, called the visit "one of the finest hours" in Israeli-U.S. relations, adding that "with the help of the United States, I hope we shall surmount all our difficulties—military, political, and economic." Shamir noted that negotiations on the creation of a "free trade zone" between the two countries were to be intensified. More dramatically, he announced that Israel and the United States had agreed on plans for strategic cooperation, including the formation of a joint political-military committee to coordinate policy in various spheres. The cooperation, Shamir said, was designed "to strengthen Israel and deter threats to the region." President Reagan seemed to take rather a broader view of the matter when he told reporters in Washington that the new committee, besides considering operational matters, would also "give priority attention to the threat to our mutual interests posed by increased Soviet involvement in the Middle East." Addressing the Knesset on December 7, Prime Minister Shamir was at pains to assert that no secret agreements had been concluded between Israel and Washington during his visit. (A similar "memorandum of understanding" on strategic cooperation between the two countries, agreed upon in 1981, had been mutually suspended in the wake of Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights.)

Despite the highly optimistic tone of the prime minister's statements, the year ended on a somewhat frosty note when Israel denounced Washington's support of a meeting between Egyptian president Mubarak and PLO chief Arafat, following the latter's expulsion from Tripoli. Prime Minister Shamir told the cabinet on December 25 that he had sent a strongly worded cable of protest to Secretary of State Shultz. Speaking with visiting U.S. senator Christopher Dodd, Shamir complained that Washington had failed to grasp the significance of the Arafat-Mubarak meeting, which would serve to legitimate terrorism and Arafat's standing despite his defeat in Lebanon.

Israel's relations with Europe remained unchanged during the year, despite sporadic friction concerning the role of the multinational force in Lebanon, in which France, Great Britain, and Italy, besides the United States, were participants. A scheduled five-day visit to three European countries by Foreign Minister Shamir in February was cut short when he returned to Israel following publication of the Kahan Commission report. Shamir described the talks with his West German counterpart as "friendly and cordial," although public statements by both sides strongly suggested that the by now traditional differences of outlook regarding Middle East policy continued unchanged. The issue of West German arms sales to Saudi Arabia, which was to have been aired during a scheduled visit to Israel by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, was confined to quieter diplomatic channels during the year when Kohl cancelled the visit due to the resignation of Prime Minister Begin virtually on the eve of the German leader's arrival. (Some political observers believed that one of the reasons for Begin's resignation at that particular time was his last-minute recoil from having to officially greet a German chancellor. The Kohl visit was subsequently rescheduled for the first part of 1984.)

Israel utterly rejected a new European Economic Community (EEC) statement on the Middle East that was issued on March 22. Focusing on Israeli settlement policy in the territories, the EEC declaration termed the settlements both illegal and a "growing and major obstacle" to peace in the region. The EEC also called on Israel to "show that it stands ready for genuine negotiations." In response, Foreign Minister Shamir asserted that of all the countries in the region, Israel alone "has incessantly demanded peace negotiations." In the next month Israel took Britain to task following a meeting between Deputy Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and PLO senior official Farouk Kadoumi, the first meeting ever between a British minister and a top PLO figure. Israel also protested to Sweden following the visit there of Yasir Arafat, as a guest of that country's Socialist party, and to Finland for allowing the PLO to open an office in Helsinki.

In an unusual flurry of diplomatic activity in July, two European foreign ministers—Claude Cheysson of France and Hans Van den Broek of Holland—were in Israel at the same time as U.S. secretary of state George Shultz. Cheysson paid a lightning visit of several hours as part of a Middle East tour, meeting with Foreign Minister Shamir. Van den Broek told a press conference, following a three-day visit, that Israel's settlement policy in the West Bank was "not a positive signal to the Arab world to resume negotiations." However, the Dutch minister "commended" Israel

for having signed the agreement with Lebanon that was worked out two months earlier.

While persistent reports of a breakthrough in Israel's relations with Spain proved unfounded (the two countries did not maintain diplomatic relations), Iberia, Spain's national airline, began flying to Tel Aviv in July, a move that was reciprocated by El Al a month later.

Foreign Minister Shamir paid a three-day visit to Rumania in August, telling reporters on his return home that his talks were a "contribution" to Israel's efforts to resume diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Israel and Rumania agreed to further strengthen trade relations between them by expanding the authority of a joint Israel-Rumania economic commission. Shamir asked Rumanian president Nicolae Ceausescu to use his good offices to obtain Syrian and PLO agreement to a prisoner exchange with Israel.

Austrian defense minister Friedhelm Frischenschlagger paid a brief visit to Israel in August within the framework of a tour of inspection of the Austrian contingent to the UNDOF mission on the Golan Heights. He told Israeli officials that his country would intensify its efforts to bring about a prisoner exchange agreement.

In September, Delek, an Israeli fuel company, signed a contract to purchase 500,000 tons of oil from Norway in 1984. Israel had been seeking such a deal for years, but Oslo had demurred because of Arab pressure. Earlier in the year Norwegian foreign minister Sverre Stray had paid a four-day visit to Israel; the focus of his discussion was the UNIFIL force in southern Lebanon, which included a Norwegian contingent.

Europe's growing involvement in Middle East peacekeeping was underscored yet again at the very end of the year when Italian foreign minister Giulio Andreotti visited Israel. Andreotti told Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shamir that Italy would reduce its troop strength in Lebanon, as agreed upon in Beirut. Shamir used the occasion to raise the issue of the serious damage that would be done to Israeli agricultural exports to Europe when Spain and Portugal entered the EEC; he urged that concrete measures be taken to minimize the damage.

Israel's relations with Africa were expanded when Liberia became the second country on that continent in two years to resume diplomatic relations with Israel, following a decade-long rupture in the wake of the Yom Kippur War. Foreign Minister Shamir expressed "great satisfaction" following a statement issued in Monrovia on August 13 explaining that the decision to renew relations had been made because "the continued estrangement and isolation of Israel undermines the prospect for a peaceful solution of the Middle East problem." On August 22 Liberian president Samuel Doe, heading a large delegation, became the first black African leader in ten years to visit Israel in an official capacity. Prime Minister Begin lauded Doe's "courageous decision" to resume diplomatic relations. A series of agreements was signed between the two countries, covering agriculture, medicine, road construction, cultural exchanges, and an Israeli undertaking to restructure Liberia's internal security services. Doe also met with President Herzog and

addressed an American UJA mission. Although Liberia had initially stated that it would reopen its embassy in Jerusalem, second thoughts evidently prompted a decision in favor of Tel Aviv.

At the beginning of the year, Defense Minister Sharon led a large Israeli delegation on a four-day visit to Zaire, the first African country to resume formal ties with Israel. Upon returning home on January 21, Sharon said that while a number of military agreements had been signed, Israelis helping to reorganize the Zairean army would not take part in any fighting within that country or "in any war between states." He noted that the sale of arms and equipment to Zaire would "contribute to Israel's exports." In February, Zaire's defense chief headed a military delegation that visited Israel for five days.

Relations with Latin America continued on a generally good footing. Costa Rica's minister of public security visited Israel in early January as the guest of Defense Minister Sharon, seeking military and agricultural aid for his country. In August, El Salvador followed the lead of Costa Rica in announcing the return of its embassy to Jerusalem. (All the foreign embassies in Jerusalem moved to Tel Aviv following passage of the Jerusalem law in 1980.) Late November saw visits by Chilean foreign minister Miguel Schweitzer Walters—"to improve the already good relations between our two countries"—and Haitian foreign and religious affairs minister Jean-Robert Estime, who requested increased Israeli agricultural and medical assistance. Relations with Argentina were marked by growing demands in Israel that Buenos Aires account for Jews who had disappeared in recent years.

Normalization of Relations with Egypt

Relations with Egypt remained very cool throughout the year. Talks on the Taba issue, which reopened on March 2 in Ismailiya, resulted in the creation of a subcommittee to "determine areas of agreement." Seemingly, there were few of these, as the issue of the 700-meter strip of beach south of Eilat remained unresolved at the end of the year. Egypt sporadically detained Israeli yachtsmen who entered Egyptian waters off the Taba coast.

Israeli hopes that Egypt would return its ambassador to Tel Aviv following the signing of the Israel-Lebanon agreement on May 17 were disappointed. (Ambassador Sa'ad Mortada was recalled to Cairo in the wake of the Beirut refugee camps massacre in September 1982.) However, an optimistic note was sounded by Leaman Hunt, director-general of the multinational force and observers (MFO) in the Sinai. He stated that "the success of the MFO in its first year is a result of the commitment of the governments of Egypt and Israel to the observance of both the spirit and the letter of the peace treaty."

In an interview with the *Jerusalem Post* in July, Ahmed Gomaa, who was concluding a three-year term of duty at the Egyptian embassy in Tel Aviv, presented the Egyptian point of view on the troubled relations between the two countries. He said that since the signing of the peace treaty, Israel and Egypt had been moving

from "crisis to crisis," citing the Jerusalem and Golan Heights laws, the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, "the dishonoring of pledges on settlements," and Lebanon. Gomaa termed the Lebanon war "a failure of the Israel-Egypt peace process" in that "the essence of that process was to . . . convince Israel that through peace it can obtain security."

In late August, Energy Minister Yitzhak Modai became the first Israeli cabinet minister to visit Egypt in well over a year. Upon his return home he told reporters that his talks with President Mubarak and with his Egyptian counterpart had indicated the possibility of a "thaw in the cold peace" between the two countries.

Defense Minister Arens failed to see any grounds for optimism when he was interviewed by the *Jerusalem Post* at about the same time as Modai's visit. Arens stated bluntly that "Egypt is in clear violation of the [peace] treaty," explaining: "We have given up the Sinai, but we do not have diplomatic relations on an ambassadorial level. They have recalled their ambassador. This was their *quid pro quo*, and they have clearly violated it." The defense minister repeated this assertion in a ceremony (October 3) marking the official opening of the 15,000-acre Nevatim air force base in the Negev, one of three such bases constructed to offset the IDF's loss of the Sinai, where Israel had maintained 11 airfields and 18 runways.

In a policy statement to the Knesset on October 10, upon assuming the position of prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir called on Egypt to return to the autonomy talks and on Jordan and "the Arabs of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza" to participate as well, arguing that "the Camp David agreements are the only agreed document, and hence the only way of continuing the [peace] process." Shamir's remarks were promptly rejected by Egyptian foreign minister Kamal Hassan Ali, who urged Israeli "flexibility," adding that the autonomy talks had collapsed due to Israel's "wrong interpretation of the Camp David provisions on autonomy."

Early in November, foreign ministry director-general David Kimche became the second top-ranking Israeli official to visit Cairo in 1983. Kimche told reporters in the Egyptian capital that both sides were determined to improve relations. However, at the end of November the Egyptian weekly *October* reported that Israel had been banned from the Cairo international book fair (scheduled for January 1984) for the second consecutive year, due to its position on Lebanon. Israeli athletes were also refused permission to take part in the world amateur karate championship tournament in Cairo.

As the year drew to an end, Cairo and Jerusalem traded accusations that each was damaging the peace process by its actions. Egyptian president Mubarak said that the Israeli-U.S. strategic cooperation agreement was a further obstacle to peace in the region, and that it would only serve to anger moderate Arab governments. Two other ranking Egyptian officials, Prime Minister Fuad Mohiedin and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butros Ghali, were also scathing in their criticism of the agreement. Israel's turn came two weeks later, when PLO chief Arafat visited Cairo, following his expulsion from Lebanon. A statement issued by the foreign ministry said that the meeting between Mubarak and "the head of the

murderous PLO" was "a severe blow to the peace process in the Middle East." Prime Minister Shamir told the Knesset's defense and foreign affairs committee that the Arafat-Mubarak meeting constituted "a violation of the Camp David accords" and was detrimental to "the understanding which forms the basis of Camp David."

Still, on December 29, Egyptian assistant secretary of state Shafi Abdel Hamid arrived in Israel to reciprocate David Kimche's Cairo visit of the previous month. Hamid told reporters that he had received a "warm reception" from Prime Minister Shamir and other officials, and that his discussions "were characterized by frankness in order to speed up the peace process."

Israel and the Middle East

Israeli leaders made several references during the year to the possibility of negotiations with Jordan's King Hussein. They came against the background of great, though ultimately unfulfilled, American expectations that Hussein would announce his intention to enter talks in the wake of his own contacts with PLO chief Arafat, who paid a number of visits to Amman in 1983.

On January 7 Prime Minister Begin informed U.S. senator Paul Tsongas, who had met with King Hussein before coming to Israel, that since the Camp David accords called for the Jordanian monarch to participate in peace talks, Israel would welcome him without any preconditions. Tsongas told Begin that Hussein wanted Israel to halt its settlement program in the West Bank before he entered into discussions. In the same week Foreign Minister Shamir said that even if Hussein got a green light from the Arab world to negotiate with Israel, no Israeli, not even the most moderate, would be able to accept his proposals.

In mid-January Defense Minister Sharon declared that Israel would not countenance any PLO participation, "whether covert or overt," in peace talks. He stated that Israel would negotiate only with "Arabs of Judea, Samaria and Gaza" who were genuinely interested in peaceful coexistence with the Jewish state. Sharon thus implicitly rejected, in an evident Israeli policy switch, possible participation in peace talks by Arabs identified with the PLO but not formally belonging to it.

At about the same time that Sharon was making his remarks, three Israelis belonging to the Council for Israel-Palestinian Peace—Major General (res.) Matityahu Peled, former finance ministry director-general Yaacov Arnon, and journalist Uri Avnery (the latter had already met with Arafat in Beirut in the midst of the Lebanon war)—were meeting in Tunis with PLO chief Arafat, his aide Issam Sartawi, and others. The meeting sparked off fierce denunciations in Israel, including calls for criminal prosecution of the Israeli participants. However, the attorney general ruled that no grounds existed for such prosecution. (Sartawi, who had been meeting with Israelis for years, was shot dead a few months later in Portugal, while attending a meeting of the Socialist International. Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres, who was also at the conference, said that while he opposed the PLO, he

respected Sartawi's efforts "to swim against the stream." The killing, Peres said, had been prompted by the fact that Sartawi was a "moderate.")

In a briefing before the Knesset's defense and foreign affairs committee at the end of January, Prime Minister Begin noted that the Palestinian National Council, the PLO "parliament," which had just concluded a meeting in Algiers, had failed to change the Palestinian covenant and had not decided to abandon terrorism. On March 3, Foreign Minister Shamir, referring to a comment by King Hussein that Jordan and the PLO had made great progress "toward establishing close federal relationships that will realize the common hope of the Jordanians and the Palestinians to rescue the Palestinian land and people," told the Knesset that while Israel would welcome Jordanian participation in peace talks, Israel must be watchful for "traps . . . designed to get us to cede part of the homeland without advancing us toward peace."

After a protracted series of meetings over several months, King Hussein announced on April 10 that his country would not join peace talks at the present juncture, either on its own or "in lieu of anyone else." In reaction, Foreign Minister Shamir told reporters that the Reagan initiative of September 1982 was "no longer alive." He said that it was "utterly absurd" for anyone to believe that a peace agreement could be achieved under PLO aegis.

Israel continued to view Syria as its main military threat. Toward the end of the year it was confirmed that the Soviet Union had installed advanced SS-21 surface-to-surface missiles in Syria, in addition to the SA-5 ground-to-air missiles and the state-of-the-art aircraft and other equipment it had supplied. The introduction of the new missiles was accompanied by a further influx of Soviet advisers and other military personnel into Syria.

Speaking in the Knesset in November, Defense Minister Arens stated that with the aid of Saudi financing and Soviet weaponry, the Syrians had established an army of over 400,000 troops, whose aim was to bring about the creation of "Greater Syria," encompassing not only Lebanon, but also Jordan and Israel. In an address delivered in Jerusalem about a month later, Arens asserted that the Syrian and Israeli armies were equal in manpower potential, and that Soviet weapons were continuing to pour into Syria without letup. "Therefore," he concluded, "we must continue to allocate one-quarter, or even one-third, of our GNP for security purposes. We must do this even if it means cutting back on such vital needs as housing, education, and health care."

Political Affairs

The Lebanon war, both directly and indirectly, played a significant role in the dramatic political developments that occurred in 1983. By year's end, the country had a new prime minister, a new defense minister, a new finance minister, and a new president. Yet all these personnel changes took place within the framework of the same government. Thus policy content remained largely unaffected, although the style of the new leadership was different.

At the beginning of February, President Navon ended months of speculation by announcing that he would not seek re-election when his term of office expired in May. Political observers felt that the announcement was timed with a view to the forthcoming release of the Kahan Commission report, whose expected consequences had the potential of producing a new national election by the end of the year. Such a situation might lead Navon to try to wrest the Labor party leadership from Shimon Peres in order to head the Alignment ticket.

The Kahan Commission report's conclusions and recommendations—particularly with respect to Defense Minister Sharon—plunged the government and country into a major crisis, unleashing a furious debate that resulted in a political murder. From the outset, Sharon made it clear that he would not resign of his own accord. Backed by parts of the government coalition and sections of the Herut party, he asserted that he could not accept the Kahan Commission report as it stood. Sharon was particularly vexed by the chapter on “indirect responsibility” which, he said, would give Israel's enemies license to stigmatize the Jewish state with the “mark of Cain.”

The cabinet held three emergency meetings in three days on whether to accept the Kahan Commission report and its recommendations. As the last of these cabinet sessions was being held on Thursday evening, February 10, several thousand people took part in a march in Jerusalem organized by the Peace Now movement to protest Sharon's refusal to go and to demand the resignation of the entire government. As they walked through the streets of downtown Jerusalem, the marchers were cursed and reviled by spectators and passersby, who called them “fascists” and “PLoniks” while chanting “Be-gin! Be-gin!” and “Arik [Sharon], king of Israel!” Not content with hurling verbal abuse, some members of the crowd attacked the marchers. Arriving stunned and shaken in front of the prime minister's office, the demonstrators pulled themselves together and began chanting anti-government slogans which were audible in the cabinet room.

At approximately 8:30 P.M., as the demonstrators were dispersing after singing the national anthem, a hand grenade was hurled into the crowd. It took the life of Emil Grunzweig, 33, a longtime Peace Now activist, a paratroop officer in the reserves, and a researcher at Jerusalem's Van Leer Foundation. He was the first Jewish fatality of a political demonstration in Israel's history. Ten persons were injured in the blast, including Avraham Burg, the son of Interior Minister Yosef Burg.

At the cabinet session itself, Defense Minister Sharon tried to stave off a decision, at least temporarily, by suggesting that a committee be set up to examine the Kahan Commission report. However, he was unable to find the required four ministers to back him in order to put his proposal to a vote. Prime Minister Begin, who had taken virtually no part in the previous cabinet discussions of the matter, now stated that there was “no choice” but to accept the report, despite the “pain and grief” involved. The cabinet voted—minutes after the grenade went off just across the street from where they were sitting—16 to 1 (Sharon) to accept the Kahan Commission's recommendations in full.

At the regular weekly cabinet meeting on February 13, Prime Minister Begin read aloud a letter he had received from Sharon asserting that he would "abide by the Cabinet decision" to divest him of the defense post, but indicating that he planned to remain in the cabinet. The cabinet accordingly entrusted the defense portfolio to the prime minister in a caretaker capacity, a move which was approved in the Knesset the following day by a vote of 61-56, with one abstention. In the wake of a legal opinion submitted by the attorney general that Sharon's removal from the defense ministry was sufficient to fulfill the Kahan Commission's recommendation, Sharon did in fact remain in the cabinet as a minister without portfolio. He was soon co-opted, amid renewed public protest, to the key ministerial defense committee and to the ministerial steering committee on the negotiations with Lebanon.

In the Knesset debate on February 14, Prime Minister Begin, in a show of support for Sharon, took the opportunity to demand that *Time* magazine apologize for a report that Sharon had met with members of the Jemayel family after the assassination of Bashir Jemayel to discuss revenge. According to *Time*, the meeting took place before the refugee-camp massacre and was described in the unpublished secret appendix of the Kahan Commission report. Begin denied the entire story, terming it "barefaced lies and slander." Speaking in the debate, Labor Party chairman Peres said that while the IDF was paying the full price, Sharon had arranged a "partial amnesty" for himself. Peres pointedly quoted from Begin's own Knesset speech following the publication of the Agranat Commission report after the Yom Kippur War: "Shall the minister of defense resign but the prime minister stay on? The supreme responsibility—the true moral, political and parliamentary responsibility—devolves upon the entire government." On February 28 Sharon brought a \$10 million libel suit against *Time* in Tel Aviv district court, and in June filed a \$50 million suit against the magazine in the U.S. district court in New York.

The political split within the country was well reflected when the Knesset held a special debate on the Grunzweig murder on February 15. Although all sides deplored the killing and spoke, with varying nuances, in defense of freedom of speech, coalition and opposition members were unable to agree on a united resolution to sum up the discussion. The police set up a special team to investigate the Grunzweig killing. However, despite the offer of a one million shekel reward for information, and the detention of several suspects, the murder remained unsolved at the end of 1983.

On February 16 the ruling coalition survived three no-confidence motions based on the findings of the Kahan Commission report. The three motions—presented by the Alignment, Shinui, and Hadash (Communists)—were voted on together and defeated along strict coalition-opposition lines (64-56). The voting constituted a rare occasion in that all 120 MKs took part. One week later the Knesset approved the appointment of Moshe Arens, who was then holding the post of ambassador to Washington, as the new defense minister.

In some ways, the government, and particularly Prime Minister Begin, never seemed to recover from the ramifications of the Kahan Commission report and the

days of unrest that attended its release. Begin, who had been visibly downcast since the death of his wife the previous November, became even more morose and introverted with the passage of time. His public appearances grew increasingly rare, and while his close aides and advisers, as well as cabinet ministers, insisted that he was continuing to perform his duties effectively, two events in the spring of the year suggested that Begin had, perhaps, lost his political touch, with all that this entailed for the operation of the government. On March 15 a special rabbinic electoral college elected Avraham Shapiro, 65, and Mordechai Eliahu, 52, as the new Ashkenazic and Sephardic chief rabbis, respectively, despite Prime Minister Begin's declared support for an amendment to the law which would have enabled the two incumbents, Rabbi Shlomo Goren and Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, to remain in office for a second term. Exactly one week later Prime Minister Begin sustained an even more painful defeat when the Knesset elected MK Chaim Herzog, the Alignment's choice, as the new president of Israel. Herzog, 64, was sworn in on May 5, the sixth person to hold the office of president.

The difficulties experienced by Prime Minister Begin infused new hope in the Alignment that a change of government might be effected without new elections. The Labor party had picked up some additional strength when it merged with the Independent Liberal party in March. The resurgence of the Labor Alignment was further manifested in an unusually large turnout at the annual May Day parade. A public opinion poll published in *Ha'aretz* on May 6 showed the Alignment leading the field for the first time since the 1981 election (41.4 per cent to the Likud's 37.3). On June 25 Mapam, the left-wing, kibbutz-based party, voted (albeit narrowly) to remain within the Alignment framework.

In marked contrast to the Alignment's comeback, the Likud-led coalition continued to be marked by internal bickering and public squabbling. Much of the internal ferment originated in the Liberal party, which was characterized by vicious infighting over who would assume the cabinet slot "owed" the Liberals by the terms of the party's agreement with Herut. The death of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture Simcha Ehrlich on June 19, at the age of 67, merely aggravated the situation, by depriving the Liberals of their only acknowledged leader. Eventually, on July 5, the Knesset approved the appointment of Sara Doron as minister without portfolio.

During this period another coalition group, the ultra-Orthodox Agudath Israel party, was pressing for an amendment to the law of return, whereby only conversions performed "according to the halakhah" would be recognized as binding. The amendment, aimed against Conservative and Reform Judaism, had suffered its most recent Knesset defeat on March 21, by a vote of 58-50. Agudath Israel was also seeking to pass the "archaeology bill," which would give religious authorities the right to stop any archaeological dig where human remains were found.

On July 19 it was officially announced that Prime Minister Begin had cancelled a visit to Washington scheduled for the end of the month. In a phone call to President Reagan to inform him of the decision, Begin offered no explanation other

than "personal reasons." One senior minister was quoted by the press as saying that Begin was "steeped in depression." His appearance, gaunt and expressionless, raised painful questions about his ability to run the government. Still, a poll published by the *Jerusalem Post* at the beginning of August showed that the public continued to regard Begin as the person "best suited to be prime minister." The popularity gap between Begin and any other Likud figure was pointed up in mid-August in another *Jerusalem Post* poll, which found that 78 per cent of Likud supporters preferred Begin as the party leader, followed by Ariel Sharon with 3.7 per cent, and Ezer Weizman (the former defense minister who had resigned from Begin's first government and was subsequently expelled from Herut) with 3.2 per cent.

Thus there was no natural successor at hand when Prime Minister Begin stunned his party and the nation by announcing to the cabinet, on August 28, that he intended to resign. As with the cancellation of his Washington visit, Begin offered no public explanation of his decision. Intensive efforts were made by the Likud, and particularly by the leadership of Herut (the party founded and led by Begin since the establishment of the state), to get him to change his mind. On August 30 the entire Knesset coalition met with Begin to try to dissuade him from his course of action. At one point in the three-hour session the prime minister said: "None of you is to blame. I just cannot go on any longer. If I had any doubts about that, I would stay on. I cannot go on." Nevertheless, Begin agreed to put off his formal resignation announcement to the president in order to give Herut time to pick a successor; he himself refused to intervene in the choice.

On September 1, the Herut central committee met in Tel Aviv to choose between Deputy Prime Minister and Housing Minister David Levy, 45, of Moroccan origin, and Polish-born Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, 68. In what the *Jerusalem Post* described as "a remarkable show of comradeship and good grace, not often seen in the life of Israeli political parties," Herut elected Shamir as its new leader by a vote of 436-302. As Prime Minister Begin continued to delay his formal resignation announcement—drawing criticism for flouting the spirit if not the letter of the law in not carrying out his intention immediately—Shamir commenced talks with representatives of the outgoing coalition, with the aim of reconstituting it under his own leadership. After acceding to the request of six MKs, including four from the Liberal party, that he ask the Alignment to join the coalition in a government of national unity, Shamir was able to muster the majority he required.

On September 15 Prime Minister Begin sent a letter to President Herzog, via cabinet secretary Dan Meridor, formally declaring his resignation. Begin himself was closeted in the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem, from which he had not emerged since August 30. On September 21 President Herzog formally charged Shamir with the task of forming a new government. Even though the Alignment was the largest Knesset faction, with 50 seats, it had been unable to muster the support of an additional 11 MKs needed to ensure a majority. On September 25 the Labor party bureau voted (37-24) to enter into talks with the Likud leadership on the possibility of establishing a national unity government. However, the negotiations

broke down within less than a week. The two parties found themselves unable to agree on such issues as settlement policy in the administered areas, the terms for an IDF withdrawal from Lebanon, and the Reagan peace initiative. Thus the way was cleared for the Knesset, on October 10, to express its confidence in Shamir's new government. The vote was 60-53, with one abstention (former finance minister Yigael Hurvitz). Begin, who, though relieved of his duties as prime minister, continued to serve as a regular Knesset member, did not attend; nor did Aharon Abuhatzzeira, the leader of the Tami party, who was serving a jail sentence. Other than the premier, who continued to hold the foreign affairs portfolio as well, the only new office holder in the cabinet was Pessah Gruper (Likud-Liberal) who replaced the late Simcha Ehrlich as agriculture minister. The government coalition consisted of the Likud (46 seats), four other parties—the NRP (5), Agudath Israel (4), Tehiya (3), and Tami (3)—and three one-man factions—Mordechai Ben-Porat, Yigael Hurvitz, and Rabbi Haim Druckman (who had bolted from the NRP).

Begin, who had dominated Israeli political life for six years, remained in total seclusion, even failing to attend a memorial service for his wife on the first anniversary of her death. He broke his public silence only once during the rest of 1983, taping a brief radio interview in which he welcomed the return home of six Israeli POWs. On December 10, following the end of the Sabbath, the former prime minister emerged from his official residence for the first time in 102 days, to move to a rented apartment in Jerusalem.

As the year ended, Labor—despite having done less well than it expected in the countrywide municipal elections held at the end of October, immediately after the government crisis—was engaged in intensive efforts in the direction of an early general election if a change of government within the present Knesset proved unfeasible. Party chairman Peres signed an agreement with Yitzhak Rabin formally ending their longstanding feud. Some observers saw this as a first step toward a Peres-Rabin alliance against a leadership threat to both of them from Navon. The latter, for his part, hinted again that he might soon return to the political arena.

Economic Developments

The year witnessed a number of major collapses on the Tel Aviv stock exchange. On January 20 unconfirmed media reports about imminent treasury measures that would affect mutual funds led to a run on the stock exchange, generating losses of over 1.5 billion shekels. Then, in mid-May, the announcement of an all-time high single-month inflation rate (at that time) of 13.3 per cent, combined with a statement by Bank of Israel deputy governor Yakir Plessner that there was too much money in the hands of the public and that measures were needed to counteract this situation, touched off a massive demand for foreign currency and a renewed wave of selling on the stock exchange. In a trend that was to continue for the rest of the year, billions of shekels were withdrawn from savings schemes to purchase U.S. dollars or durable goods, as the shekel became increasingly worthless. Sporadic efforts by

the treasury around this time to curb spending, reduce imports, and halt the hoarding of dollars had no perceptible effect. In June the International Monetary Fund took Israel to task for not speeding up the shekel devaluation rate, and thereby aggravating Israel's balance of payments deficit.

One of the reasons for the massive printing of money was the government's social welfare policy, which was prompted by the three-man, Sephardi-oriented Tami Knesset faction. Thus when the Knesset on March 23 approved a state budget of over one trillion shekels (about \$29 billion) for fiscal 1983, it included one billion shekels for increased child allowances that had not been part of the original bill presented two months earlier. The money was to be raised by a newly imposed \$50 travel tax on every Israeli leaving the country.

In early July Finance Minister Yoram Aridor came under fierce attack from within his own Likud party, particularly by MK Yigal Cohen-Orgad, head of the Likud faction on the Knesset's finance committee. However, seizing the opportunity presented by a relatively low (3.6 per cent) inflation rate for June, the finance minister began pressing for a sweeping budget cut of some 55 billion shekels (\$1.1 billion). On August 10, as negotiations on the budget reductions continued between the treasury and each individual ministry, the shekel was devalued against the U.S. dollar by 7.5 per cent. Two weeks later, following highly acrimonious sessions of the ministerial economic committee and invective-laden meetings between individual ministers—notably between Aridor and Defense Minister Arens, who finally agreed to trim the hitherto almost sacrosanct defense budget by 16 billion shekels over a two-year period—the finance minister was able to announce some decisions. Beside a budget cut of 40 billion shekels (not yet including all the ministries), the measures included an increase in the purchase tax on most items, abolition of the maternity grant, a 45 per cent tax deduction at source on moonlighting jobs, and civil service cutbacks. However, the resignation of Prime Minister Begin and the ensuing political turmoil put a brake on the economic deliberations, as well as the implementation of some of the moves already decided on. The stage was thus set for what was later described as Israel's "economic Yom Kippur," which hit exactly ten years after that traumatic war.

At the end of September reports that Israel was encountering growing difficulties in obtaining credit on the international market due to its huge foreign debt generated speculation that the government would soon impose drastic curtailments on foreign currency transactions and/or carry out a major devaluation of the shekel. Denials by Finance Minister Aridor were unavailing. The first week of October saw large-scale selling of blue-chip bank shares by the public in order to raise money with which to purchase dollars as a hedge against the anticipated government measures. The large commercial banks, which for years had been propping up their own shares on the stock exchange, were now forced to import dollars from their subsidiaries abroad in order to meet the public demand and to continue to maintain their shares at artificially high rates. Since the public's appetite for dollars proved insatiable, the situation quickly got out of hand. The banks, in panic, turned to the government for help.

On October 9 trading on the Tel Aviv stock exchange was suspended. The public, which had an estimated \$7.5 billion tied up in bank shares, was dumbfounded. Following an all-night meeting of the cabinet (the first session under Prime Minister Shamir), the government announced on October 11 a 23 per cent devaluation of the shekel and a 50 per cent average increase in the price of subsidized goods. At the same time, an arrangement was worked out whereby bank shares would in effect become interest-bearing government debentures, dollar-linked and redeemable in five years. The week's drama was not yet over. On October 13 *Yediot Aharonot* headlined a story that the treasury had a plan for the "dollarization" of the Israeli economy, involving linkage across the board to the U.S. dollar. Finance Minister Aridor indicated that the report was essentially correct and that he planned to bring up the proposal at the next cabinet meeting. As the public intensified its already wild rush to the dollar, opposition to the plan was voiced in virtually all political and economic sectors; an urgent cabinet session was called. Fifteen minutes before the session was due to open, Aridor submitted his resignation to Prime Minister Shamir. The latter went on television that evening to try to calm the public by announcing the death of the "dollarization" scheme.

Herut MK Cohen-Orgad was quickly chosen as Aridor's successor. Confirmed by the Knesset on October 18, he had to reply to three no-confidence motions the very next day; all three were defeated, 61-54. One of Cohen-Orgad's first moves was to request that the cabinet replace Bank of Israel deputy governor Plessner, the originator of the Aridor policy of creeping devaluation and small regular reductions in government subsidies for basic commodities.

As the run on dollars tapered off, the stock exchange was reopened for partial trading on October 20. When the trading of bank shares resumed on October 24, they immediately lost 17 per cent of their nominal value and nearly double that in dollar value. However, there was no panic, as the treasury simply took over from the banks, pumping some \$150 million into the stock exchange to prevent a more precipitous decline. This policy continued for some time until the stock market was relatively stable, effectively enriching the holders of bank shares by \$600 million. Individuals were given three months to decide whether they wanted to join the new bank shares scheme or to hold their shares on the open market.

With fears of a recession replacing the country's boom atmosphere almost overnight, new measures were implemented in furtherance of what Finance Minister Cohen-Orgad described as his "export-oriented austerity policy." As of November 1 Israelis were barred from purchasing foreign currency other than \$3,000 for travel abroad. On November 7 the cabinet passed a series of revenue-raising measures, including an annual education tax (never ratified), a tax on child allowances for small, high-earning families, a tax on early pensions, and higher income tax for those in the top bracket.

On November 15 the nation was stunned by the announcement that the inflation rate for October had been 21.1 per cent, the highest monthly figure by far in Israel's history. Widespread fears were expressed that Israel was entering a "South American-like" hyperinflationary cycle. At the beginning of December Finance Minister

Cohen-Orgad stated that Israel required a "controlled recession." In yet another attempt to cut down on the public's buying power, the treasury raised the price of subsidized basic commodities by a further 15–25 per cent. The November consumer price index rose by 15.2 per cent, meaning that the coming cost-of-living increment, including a 17.9 per cent advance to be paid at the end of December, was wiped out in advance. Renewed marathon deliberations on budget cuts produced a so-called "framework budget" of over 1.4 trillion shekels. However, some experts contended that the ostensible \$600 million in budget reductions (down from the originally planned \$1 billion) actually amounted to no more than a redistribution of spending.

Statistically, 1983 produced some figures that Israelis had never seen before. Following a December increase of 11.6 per cent in the consumer price index, the inflation rate for the year came to a devastating 190.7 per cent, nearly 60 per cent higher than the previous all-time high set in 1980; inflation during the last three months of the year ran at an annualized rate of 486 per cent. In the course of the year the shekel was devalued by 223.2 per cent against the U.S. dollar. The intensified devaluation rate seemed to have no significant effect on the trade deficit, which increased by nearly \$500 million, to stand at \$3.5 billion, a 17 per cent rise over 1982. The balance of payments deficit grew by \$400 million, to \$5.1 billion. Equally worrisome was the country's gross foreign debt, which totalled some \$22 billion. Israel's foreign exchange reserves fell by \$121 million, and stood at a dangerously low \$2.87 billion. Foreign currency from tourism, which increased by about 17 per cent over 1982 (a particularly bad year due to the Lebanon war) and three per cent over 1981, was not enough to make up the difference. Among the 1,166,000 tourists who visited the country were 350,000 from the United States, the highest annual figure ever registered, up 32 per cent from 1982; tourism from Europe was about the same as in 1982, but 18 per cent below the 1981 figure.

The GNP grew by just under one per cent in 1983, slightly better than the previous year's zero growth, but considerably poorer than the five per cent growth in 1981. Private consumption increased by nearly five per cent. Imports of goods and services shot up by 16 per cent, while exports increased by only one per cent. Unemployment declined for the year as a whole, averaging slightly less than five per cent. Average gross salaries were eroded by 18 per cent, in dollar terms, during the year.

Yet grumble as they might, many Israelis, particularly the self-employed, were living with the feeling that they never had it so good. Warnings that a veritable chasm existed between the economic situation of the individual and the country went unheeded. Experts were convinced that it was only a matter of time before the bubble burst; the average Israeli acted as if only the present mattered.

The Administered Areas

On the West Bank the government-sponsored settlement program continued apace. In January the civil administration issued orders for the expropriation of

some 5,000 acres at various sites for the establishment of new settlements, the expansion of already existing ones, the construction of new roads, and the creation of nature preserves.

One of the most controversial of the new settlement sites was the para-military outpost of Bracha, overlooking the large Arab city of Nablus. Bracha was to be transformed into a civilian settlement and become the town of "Upper Nablus." The Labor party's view was that the government's settlement policy would cause Israel to lose its character as a democracy and/or a Jewish state by greatly increasing the Arab minority under Israeli rule. Toward the end of April, Defense Minister Arens, replying in the Knesset to an urgent motion for the agenda on the Bracha settlement submitted by the Alignment, enunciated three of the government's underlying conceptions vis-à-vis Jewish settlement in the areas. Bracha, he said, was "of supreme strategic importance," since it formed part of a "strategic triangle" with the settlements of Elon Moreh and Horon. Secondly, such settlements, far from being an obstacle, provided a strong incentive for King Hussein to come to the negotiating table. Third, Jewish settlements were not a "provocation" to the surrounding Arab population; rather they made it possible for Arabs and Jews to "cooperate peacefully and make progress together."

A 30-year plan for the West Bank drawn up by the land settlement department of the World Zionist Organization envisioned no less than 165 Jewish settlements, including five large towns with populations of up to 30,000 each. The program would require an annual construction rate of some 6,000 housing units, while its cost, including infrastructure development, would be (in April 1983 prices) \$300 million per year. The plan envisaged a Jewish population of 1.3 million in the territories by the early twenty-first century, with ten per cent of that figure being reached by 1986.

Whether these ambitious plans were realistic was called into question in mid-April, when a campaign launched jointly by the government and the WZO to sell nearly 4,000 apartments in Judea-Samaria and Gaza failed to live up to expectations. In May the justice ministry's expert on land ownership in the territories indicated that some lots in Judea-Samaria being offered for sale by private construction companies, and being bought by Israelis either as a speculative venture or in the hope of eventually owning a home in the new "suburbia," were not legally owned by the companies, or were not part of any authorized government settlement plan.

In the Jordan rift valley, which was included in Labor's "final map," about 5,000 acres along the Jordan River were being reclaimed for agriculture in what was said to be the largest project of its kind since the draining of the Huleh swamp 30 years earlier. The area, hitherto a military zone, had been almost completely quiet since Jordan expelled the PLO in 1970; it bordered on equally ambitious Jordanian land reclamation projects on the other side of the river. Raanan Weitz, co-director of the WZO's land settlement department, told reporters during a tour of the area, "I see intensive agriculture on both banks of the river within ten years serving as a guarantor of peace."

Peace, however, was not readily apparent in the rest of the territories in 1983. Indeed, some observers thought that the unrest was discouraging "non-ideological" settlers, with possible long-term negative consequences for the government's settlement program.

In January a civil administration spokesman denied an allegation by officials at An-Najah University in Nablus that IDF roadblocks around the campus were effectively keeping the university closed, this following a student rally to mark the anniversary of the founding of the Fatah terrorist organization. The roadblocks, the spokesman stated, were intended to make sure that only *bona fide* students entered the campus and that foreign faculty members had the required work permits, issued only after the teachers declared that they would not support the PLO.

On February 16 a 22-year-old Beit She'an woman, Esther Ohana, died of head wounds sustained about three weeks earlier when the car in which she was travelling was stoned as it passed through the village of Dahariya, near Hebron. Speaking at a gathering of some 500 Jewish settlers and Beit She'an residents held in a field at Dahariya following the woman's death, Rabbi Moshe Levinger, leader of the Jewish settlement in Hebron, warned: "Whoever does not mete out death to murderers, to those who throw stones, is himself responsible for the death of Esther Ohana. God is the Lord of vengeance . . . There comes a time for revenge, and that time is now." In May, five Dahariya residents, aged 17-21, were sentenced to 11-13 years' imprisonment for the stoning.

A few days after the Dahariya gathering, two Hebron residents were slightly wounded and two cars were destroyed when a bomb went off next to a mosque in the city. The incident occurred during Friday prayer services, and Hebron mayor Mustafa Natshe indicated it was only the chance delay of the prayers that had averted a large-scale tragedy, since the bomb was evidently timed to explode as the worshippers were emerging from the building. Natshe said he thought that Jewish settlers were probably responsible for the attack.

On February 26 unidentified persons fired shots intermittently for a period of several hours at Arab houses near Kiryat Arba, the urban Jewish settlement adjacent to Hebron. A few days later settlers burst into a boys' school in the village of Yatta, near Hebron, after their car was stoned; firing into the air, the settlers took two boys to a police station. In the same week Jewish settlers blocked the main road to Jerusalem outside the Dehaishe refugee camp at Bethlehem, in a demonstration designed to warn both the inhabitants of the camp and the security authorities that they would not tolerate stone-throwing from the camp. Nevertheless, Arab unrest continued throughout the West Bank, spreading to Jerusalem.

On March 9 Defense Minister Arens toured Hebron and other locations in the administered areas. In what was to be a recurrent theme throughout the year, angry Jewish settlers complained that the IDF was not properly protecting Jewish road traffic. For his part, Arens warned the settlers not to take the law into their own hands, even though, as he told the Knesset (March 8), Jews would do well to continue to bear firearms when travelling in Judea-Samaria. Earlier, the defense

minister had ordered that the illegal settlement of El Nakam, established by members of Rabbi Meir Kahane's Kach movement, be dismantled. Police were also holding several Kach members in connection with recent shooting incidents in the areas.

On March 10 attention focused on the Temple mount in Jerusalem when the police detained 45 persons, many of them from a Kiryat Arba yeshivah, on suspicion of trying to seize the site as a protest against the ban on Jewish worship there. Among those taken into custody was Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, former head of the Yamit yeshivah and the number-two man on Kach's Knesset list in the 1981 elections. In mid-March the Jerusalem district attorney's office filed indictments against Ariel and 28 others on a number of counts, including conspiracy to incite hostility between Muslims and Jews and entering a holy site without permission. All of the accused were placed under house arrest, although allowed out to attend synagogue services. In September they were acquitted by Jerusalem district court judge Yaacov Bazak, who termed the charges "grossly exaggerated" and rejected the contention that the group constituted an "underground."

By April there had been over 700 violent incidents reported on the West Bank. To cope with the situation, security forces imposed curfews of varying duration on nine refugee camps; closed down 20 schools, some indefinitely; made over 1,000 arrests; sentenced about 300 people to prison terms of up to nine months; and handed out fines amounting to millions of shekels. In an interview published in *Ha'aretz* on March 18, Chief of Staff Eitan responded to a question as to whether Israel was fated to live by the sword: "It's better for the sword to be in our hands than on our throats. Against the Arabs in the territories you don't need a sword—a stick is enough."

The chief of staff testified in the continuing trial of a number of soldiers who were accused of systematically maltreating Arabs in the territories. Eitan confirmed that he had issued orders for dealing with troublemakers that included deportation, collective punishment, penalizing parents for their children's misdeeds, indiscriminate harassment, and economic sanctions. For their part, the accused soldiers stated that they had acted in accordance with such orders, which generated a certain "atmosphere" in the territories. On February 17 the military court of the central command in Jaffa sentenced four of the soldiers to prison terms of two to six months, while acquitting three others, including an officer who at the time of the incidents served as deputy military governor of Hebron. The court also found that orders issued by Colonel Yaacov Hartabi, the regional battalion commander, had been "blatantly illegal," but no action was taken against him. As for the orders issued by the chief of staff, they were found to be within the bounds of the military code and international law, although the judges expressed demurrers about deportation and punishing parents for their children's actions.

In his final appearance before the Knesset's defense and foreign affairs committee before retiring from the military in mid-April, Chief of Staff Eitan asserted that for every stone-throwing incident, Israel should establish ten new settlements in the

territories. In a remark that was harshly criticized in political circles and the media, Eitan observed: "Once we have settled the entire land, all the Arabs will be able to do about it is to scurry around like drugged cockroaches in a bottle."

One of the most bizarre incidents ever in the administered areas took place in the early spring. Beginning on March 21 and continuing through the early part of April, some 950 people, most of them schoolgirls, about half from the Jenin area, were hospitalized with complaints of dizziness, weakness, abdominal pains, headaches, and blurred vision. Some Arabs charged that Israel was attempting to poison the population or to make Palestinian women barren. Israeli officials countered by suggesting that an "environmental irritant" might be involved, or perhaps even political agitation. Virtually all of the girls were found to be healthy and were quickly released from hospitals. At the end of April two doctors from the Centers for Disease Control in the United States, who were sent to Israel to investigate the incident, concluded that it was an "epidemic . . . induced by anxiety." While they "failed to detect the consistent presence of environmental toxins," they also found no evidence of "malingering or deliberate falsification of symptoms." A World Health Organization team which also investigated the incident concurred, informing the organization's annual conference that it had been "unable to find any indication of a specific organic cause" of the symptoms. Nevertheless, a group of Arab, Communist, and third world countries inserted the "poisoning" charge into a resolution condemning Israeli policy in the territories.

At the beginning of May a local Arab resident died of a heart attack and two others were shot in a clash with Israeli border police sparked by a land ownership dispute at a site where work was under way for a new Jewish settlement near Bracha; one border policeman was shot and stabbed in the incident. The violence also spread to Gaza, where an Israeli was shot dead while shopping in the marketplace on May 10; another Israeli had been killed in the same marketplace several weeks earlier. In May an anonymous caller told Israeli radio that a secret Jewish organization called the "Fist of Defense" was responsible for a series of attacks against Arabs and Arab property in the West Bank, including mass vandalism of cars in several towns, and the bomb attack on the Hebron mosque in February.

In mid-May Deputy Attorney General Yehudit Karp resigned from a committee she had chaired to investigate charges by Arabs in the administered territories that their complaints to Israeli authorities about Jewish settlers who had harmed them or damaged their property had not been properly handled. The committee had been set up by the attorney general in 1981 in response to a letter to him from 14 Hebrew University legal scholars, warning about the deterioration of the rule of law in the territories and about "private police actions" by Jewish settlers. Beside Karp, the committee included the Jerusalem district attorney and representatives of the police and the IDF. After interviewing dozens of witnesses, as well as senior police officers and civil-administration officials, the committee submitted its report to the attorney general in May 1982, with copies going to the police, the O.C. central command, and the civil administration.

According to press information, the report focused on the "two systems of justice" in operation in the territories—one for Jews, the other for Arabs. The report was said to detail the difficulties of conducting investigations in the territories due to lack of cooperation by the settlers, the absence of clear-cut procedures, and poor coordination among the various security branches. In some cases, investigations were actually halted because of outside intervention, while others ran into unwarranted delays. The committee also reportedly made recommendations for improving the situation.

Karp had initially asked to be relieved of her duties at the end of 1982 because nothing practical had come of the report, but she was dissuaded from this course of action by Attorney General Yitzhak Zamir. A political storm erupted when the existence of the report and Karp's ultimate resignation became known; there were calls from various quarters for the report to be made public. Zamir, however, informed the chairman of the Knesset's constitution, law, and justice committee that it would be "inadvisable" to have the report undergo public discussion "at this time," noting that a committee consisting of the ministers of defense, justice, and the interior had been set up to consider the findings and to formulate policy for maintaining law and order in the administered territories. By year's end the committee was reported to have drawn up a document to be presented to the cabinet "in the near future."

Events on the ground, however, had long since overtaken the deliberations of committees. On July 7 Aharon Gross, an 18-year-old yeshivah student, was stabbed to death in the Hebron marketplace. When residents of Kiryat Arba learned of the killing, they stormed into the area, setting the torch to virtually the entire marketplace as the panic-stricken shopkeepers fled. Israeli authorities imposed a curfew on Hebron and dismissed the appointed mayor, Mustafa Natshe, along with the entire municipal council; an Israeli official, Zamir Shemesh, was appointed to administer the city's affairs. No action was taken against the Kiryat Arba settlers. Defense Minister Arens stated that Natshe's dismissal was due to the anti-Jewish feeling he and his council had whipped up in Hebron in recent months. Arens added that he could not condone the actions of the Jewish settlers who took the law into their own hands. (In September, Shemesh revoked a petition to the supreme court which had been filed by the previous Arab municipal council. The move, which was condemned by jurists and the Peace Now movement as showing contempt for due process of law, cleared the way for intensified Jewish settlement in Hebron.)

Three weeks after the Gross stabbing, several gunmen, their faces covered by *keffiyehs*, carried out a rifle and grenade attack on the Islamic College in Hebron. Three students were killed and about 30 wounded in the midday raid. No one claimed responsibility for what Prime Minister Begin called a "loathsome crime." President Herzog, comparing the killings to the murder of the yeshivah student, said, "The Torah does not differentiate between blood and blood." Both the police and the general security service (*Shin Bet*) set up special teams to investigate the incident.

In an article in *Davar* in August, the former head of the general security service, Avraham Ahituv, declared that the West Bank settlements were a "psychological hothouse for the growth of Jewish terrorism." Ahituv, who had headed the *Shin Bet* at the time of the still unsolved attacks on the Arab mayors in 1980, intimated that Jews had been responsible for those events as well as for the recent Islamic College incident. He charged that Jewish settlers in the administered territories had at times engaged in "rebellion against the IDF," and that the situation had become aggravated after the Likud came to power, because of backing from above, even for illegal acts.

On August 23 Defense Minister Arens met separately, in his office, with three leading figures from the administered territories—the mayor of Bethlehem, the president of Nablus's An-Najah University, and the mayor of Khan Yunis. These were the first such meetings at this level since Ezer Weizman's resignation as defense minister three years earlier. The following day Arens visited mayor Elias Freij at his office in Bethlehem and promised him help in solving some of the town's municipal problems. Bethlehem, Arens said after the meeting, was a showcase of how "Jews and Arabs, Muslims and Christians" could live together harmoniously. However, even in Bethlehem harmony was not yet the natural condition. Following disturbances there on November 2—the anniversary of the 1917 Balfour declaration—the Catholic University of Bethlehem was closed for two months. On November 12 two residents of a refugee camp in Tulkarm were shot dead by members of the border police when they refused to obey orders to halt in the midst of a violent demonstration. The coordinator of activities in the administered areas, Brigadier General Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, said that the renewed unrest at this time was linked to the plight of Arafat's branch of the PLO in Tripoli, Lebanon. More optimistically, he said that the PLO's evident collapse "opens up new options."

On November 28 a resident of Bracha suffered injuries when he was attacked by an ax-wielding assailant in the Nablus marketplace. In response, a group of settlers occupied Joseph's tomb, declaring that they sought to create a permanent Jewish presence in Nablus, along the lines of Hebron; they left ten days later after meeting with the prime minister and defense minister. The tension in Nablus culminated on December 8, when a gunman burst into an Arab-owned bakery and opened fire with an Uzi machine gun; an 11-year-old girl was killed, and her nine-year-old sister was seriously wounded. Two Jewish settlers from Elon Moreh were soon arrested in connection with the incident; a third Israeli was detained as an accessory after the fact.

As talk of Jewish "vigilantism" in the administered areas became more widespread, Chief of Staff Moshe Levy, in an appearance before the Knesset's defense and foreign affairs committee in December, said that he did not know whether an actual Jewish underground existed. However, he did express concern at the possibility that "some kind of dangerous movement" was afoot. Addressing the same committee a few days later, Defense Minister Arens said that the problem of stone-throwing in the territories could not be eliminated because "Israel does not

want to adopt measures that conflict with its norms." Arens again cautioned Jewish settlers against taking the law into their own hands, as such actions merely worked to the advantage of Arab agitators. On another matter, Arens said that even though the longstanding policy of demolishing the homes of terrorists was regarded by experts as a highly effective deterrent measure, the subject was currently under study in order to arrive at "clearer conclusions." The issue had come up in the committee in the wake of demolitions, about a week earlier, of a number of houses in the Hebron and Ramallah areas belonging to members of a Muslim fundamentalist cell who were in custody on suspicion of having perpetrated the murder of Aharon Gross. In a Knesset debate on the issue, initiated by MK Yair Tzaban (Alignment-Mapam), Arens said that he had authorized demolitions only after careful consideration. Tzaban contended that such actions constituted collective punishment and as such should be barred; moreover, as in the present case, the demolitions were usually carried out before any trial had taken place. The motion was struck from the agenda by a vote of 40-33.

Statistics released by the civil administration at the end of October suggested that even if all was not well politically on the West Bank, economically the picture was absolutely rosy. The total budget for the area for 1983-84 was 5.7 billion shekels, with Israel contributing 42 per cent of the total, down from 45 per cent in 1981. A 250 per cent increase in the development budget since 1981—to 1 billion shekels—had to a large extent been made possible by intensified tax collection on the part of the civil administration. The GNP in the West Bank was continuing to grow by five per cent per annum, well above the Israeli rate; private consumption was also up. In the social welfare sector, 43 per cent of the population now benefited from health insurance coverage.

On the Golan Heights, scene of a virtual civil revolt by many Druze inhabitants in 1982 because of the government's insistence that they carry Israeli identity cards, Druze religious authorities stated that they would revoke a ban imposed on those who cooperated with the Israelis. The Druze were still paying the price of their revolt, as Israel had barred meetings between Golan Druze and relatives in Syria; the authorities were also refusing to allow Druze high school graduates to pursue their studies at Damascus University, and had cut back funding for local municipal projects.

Terrorism

Terrorism inside Israel in 1983 was not confined to Arab attacks on Jews. As in the West Bank, where Jewish "vigilantism" surfaced, the end of the year saw disturbing manifestations of Jewish "counter-terrorism" in the Jerusalem area.

Early in the year, Rafi Eitan, Prime Minister Begin's adviser on Arab terrorism, stated that Israel could "expect another hundred years of . . . terrorism." Explaining his comment after it had been severely criticized in political circles, Eitan said that his intention had been to warn that terrorist attacks would continue as long as the

Zionist enterprise had not completed its mission. At the same time, he indicated that Israel had the wherewithal to guarantee that any attacks would be no more than sporadic.

On January 8, 12 persons were wounded when a hand grenade was thrown into a bus in Tel Aviv. Within less than two weeks security forces arrested a number of Gaza Strip residents in connection with the incident, the first of its kind in Tel Aviv in eight years.

As in the past, Jerusalem proved to be the most inviting target for terrorist activity. In mid-January a bomb went off at Zedekiah's cave outside the old city, wounding an Arab municipal worker. On June 4 police demolition experts defused two large bombs at a shopping mall opposite the old city's Jaffa gate. The devices, which police said would have caused "a tremendous catastrophe" had they gone off, were spotted by a passerby. Toward the end of the month two teenage girls were slightly wounded when an explosive device went off in a Jerusalem supermarket. In mid-July an improvised bomb was neutralized close to the gas cylinders of a warehouse in Jerusalem's Atarot industrial zone.

By far the worst outrage of the year occurred in Jerusalem on December 6 when a bomb went off in a crowded bus in one of the city's western neighborhoods, killing five people, including two teenage sisters, and wounding 46; a sixth person, an American tourist, died of wounds two weeks later. It was the worst terrorist attack in Jerusalem since 1978. The PLO claimed responsibility, alleging that the target was "an Israeli military bus." Prime Minister Shamir declared sardonically that the incident demonstrated the PLO's "moderation" and "renunciation of violence." However, in an unusual move, five leading West Bank Palestinian Arabs issued a statement deploring the attack as "detrimental to any Israeli-Palestinian understanding," adding that it could not have been planned by the PLO's "legitimate leadership" since it conflicted with the organization's "current political trend."

On December 9, three days after the bus attack, five booby-trapped IDF-issue grenades were discovered and dismantled at four Christian and Muslim sites in and around Jerusalem. The following evening an IDF-issue grenade exploded on East Jerusalem's main street; no one was hurt and no damage was caused. A group calling itself "TNT" (Hebrew acronym for "terror against terror") claimed responsibility for the incidents. Noting the origin of the grenades and the professional manner in which they were planted, police suggested that a highly proficient Jewish terrorist cell was behind the incidents. There were other "TNT" attacks during the remainder of December: a Muslim priest and a Christian nun were wounded when a grenade went off next to a mosque in an Arab village just outside Jerusalem; and three cars owned by Arabs were set afire in East Jerusalem. The anonymous persons who phoned the media to claim responsibility for the attacks ended their announcements by declaring, "Jewish blood is not cheap."

Other terrorist incidents during the year included a Katyusha rocket attack on Beit She'an from Jordanian territory, in which no one was hurt and no damage was caused; the attempted murder of an IDF officer by three Arabs, one from Israel and

two from the West Bank, after they had given him a lift near Afula; the dismantling of three anti-vehicle mines discovered by an IDF patrol in the Negev, not far from the Egyptian border; and the defusing of a booby-trapped car which had entered Israel from Lebanon.

In the final week of the year a West German and a French national, both in their twenties, were remanded in custody on suspicion of endangering state security and planning to join the PLO in Lebanon. On December 23 a gunman fired five shots at Israel's chargé d'affaires in Valetta, Malta, slightly wounding her.

Among the trials of terrorists during the year, two were of particular interest. On July 7, six Bedouin received prison terms—two for life—for the murder of a Jewish settler at Herodion. On December 28 legal experts were taken aback when a military court in Lod handed down a death sentence against two Israeli Arabs, for the 1980 murder of an Israeli soldier whom they had picked up as a hitchhiker near Hadera. In keeping with official policy, the prosecutor had not demanded the death penalty. While the trial was held *in camera*, the judges' decision to keep the verdict secret was overturned by the defense ministry. The sentence still required the approval of the chief of staff; moreover, the two convicted men were expected to appeal.

Other Domestic Matters

At the end of 1983 Israel's population stood at approximately 4,140,000, a 1.9 per cent increase over the previous year. Jews continued to account for about 83 per cent of the population—3,430,000 individuals, an increase of 1.7 per cent over 1982—while the non-Jewish population stood at 710,000, a rise of 2.8 per cent as compared to 1982. In what was perhaps a significant long-term trend, the fertility rate among Jewish women continued to increase in 1983, reaching an average of 2.85 children per woman (2.79 in 1982), while the rate among non-Jewish women continued to fall, though it was still far greater, averaging 4.65 children per woman (4.97 in 1982).

In November the first data gleaned from the 1983 general population census were released. The figures showed that Israel's population had increased by 948,000 (29 per cent) since the last census, conducted a decade earlier, and that nearly 90 per cent of the population resided in cities.

The Council for Road Safety reported that traffic accidents were up in 1983; 427 people were killed (386 in 1982) and about 20,000 injured—3,500 seriously—in nearly 14,000 road accidents.

In January the Jerusalem district court upheld the conviction two years earlier of former MK Shmuel Flatto-Sharon, for election bribery. His nine-month jail sentence was deferred, however, as Flatto-Sharon appealed the verdict to the supreme court.

A criminal case with immediate political ramifications was that of MK Aharon Abuhatzzeira, leader of the Tami party, who had appealed his four-and-a-half-year suspended sentence to the supreme court following his conviction in 1982 for

larceny, fraud, and breach of trust. At the same time, the state had appealed Abuhatzeira's acquittal on three other counts, and had asked that an actual jail sentence be imposed. The supreme court rejected the state's appeal, but decided to hand down a harsher sentence on one of the other charges. The result was that Abuhatzeira was sentenced to three months in prison. An agreement was reached whereby he would do "outside work," reporting to a police facility each morning and returning to his residence in the afternoon following each day's labor. This arrangement was denounced by Joshua Weisman, dean of the law faculty at the Hebrew University. Weisman also expressed amazement that a leader of a political party could be found guilty of crimes, yet retain his standing in government circles.

On June 26 Amos Baranes, who in 1976 was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of a woman soldier—following the arrest and subsequent release of another suspect—was released from jail. Baranes, who had become a *cause célèbre* in Israel, had his sentence reduced from life to 12 years by President Herzog at the recommendation of the justice minister, and one-third of that was then cut for good behavior. Among those who were convinced of Baranes' innocence were former supreme court justice Haim Cohn and MK Amnon Rubinstein, former dean of the Tel Aviv University law faculty.

The news was less heartening for another famous prisoner in Israel, Udi Adiv, who was seeking to have one-third of his 17-year prison sentence reduced for good behavior. Adiv, at the time a kibbutz member, was jailed for meeting with Syrian intelligence officers in Damascus. While he had the support of a broad gamut of political personalities, the head of the general security service told the Knesset's defense and foreign affairs committee that his department could not recommend Adiv's release, his excellent prison record notwithstanding, because he had not changed his radical views.

Almost one year to the day after he went on a shooting rampage on the temple mount, Alan Goodman was sentenced by the Jerusalem district court to life plus two 20-year terms for murder and attempted murder. Goodman's legal fees were paid by the Kach movement.

Religious-secular strife was rampant in Israel in 1983, most notably in Jerusalem. On Friday evening, April 1, a Hebrew University geneticist was struck on the head by a rock and seriously hurt while driving—inadvertently, it later emerged, because the usual police barrier had not been set up—through a religious neighborhood in Jerusalem after the start of the Sabbath. In June a 13-year-old boy was arrested as the culprit. In mid-June three yeshivah students were sentenced to two weeks in jail and fined for throwing rocks at passing cars on the Ramot road in Jerusalem on the Sabbath; hope was expressed that the unusually harsh sentence would serve as a deterrent. Religious fanaticism took a different form that same month when students from the Mercaz Harav yeshivah in Jerusalem disrupted a performance of Handel's *Messiah*, which included the participation of a Mormon choir from Utah.

As in previous years, the main rallying point for religious zealots was the city of David archaeological dig in Jerusalem. The start of the dig's sixth season was

accompanied by several nights of rioting and arson in the capital's ultra-Orthodox Mea She'arim neighborhood. Zealots also desecrated the graves of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the "father" of modern Hebrew, and the parents of archaeologist Yigael Yadin (who had no part in the city of David dig). In the midst of all this, the Agudath Israel party tried to pass the controversial "archaeology bill" in a late-night parliamentary maneuver, even though the item had not been included on the Knesset agenda. As Alignment MKs stalked out of the chamber in protest, the bill was given its first reading by the few coalition members present. The following day Knesset speaker Menahem Savidor drew the wrath of his Likud colleagues when he nullified the vote, arguing that the procedure used had "seriously debased" the Knesset. Prior to Savidor's action, five of the country's leading archaeologists had called a press conference to condemn the bill.

In 1983 warnings were heard about a serious decline in higher education in Israel, particularly in the natural sciences. During a ten-year period, the proportion of the state budget earmarked for higher education had fallen by 44 per cent—from 7.9 per cent in 1973 to 4.4 per cent in 1983. The country's institutions of higher learning even threatened to shut down completely, claiming that they were on the verge of bankruptcy.

Project Renewal, the five-year-old joint government-Jewish Agency program of rehabilitation of poor neighborhoods throughout Israel, ran into financial difficulties. The Jewish Agency, which channeled funds for the project from abroad, said that the failure of Diaspora communities to raise the money they had pledged would bring a halt to construction projects in nine neighborhoods. The United Jewish Appeal hoped to deal with the situation by raising sufficient funds in its 1984 campaign to cover the program's overall deficit of \$24 million.

The country suffered through a prolonged doctors' strike in the spring. The Israel Medical Association, claiming that its members were grossly underpaid and forced to work under intolerable conditions, launched the strike on March 2. Initially, the doctors continued to man hospitals and clinics at full staff, but charged 600 shekels for treatment. Following the issuance of a court order barring the doctors from charging a fee while utilizing public health facilities, the Israel Medical Association declared a full-scale strike. By mid-March hospitals were working at about one-quarter of their normal capacity, while doctors were setting up their own clinics in rented locations. The government agreed to restructure the pay scale for doctors in line with other wage agreements, and to reorganize their work schedules, but refused to accede to the Israel Medical Association's demands for a higher raise, contending this would touch off a chain reaction in other sectors.

Finally, in June, after all else had failed, the medical staff at Beersheba's Soroka Hospital launched a hunger strike. This quickly spread to hospitals across the country, crippling even the partial services that were being offered. Some doctors were themselves hospitalized after collapsing from lack of food. With nearly 3,000 doctors taking part in the hunger strike and virtually all hospitals handling only life-or-death cases, Prime Minister Begin intervened. After obtaining cabinet

approval, he turned the issue over to agreed arbitration. The striking doctors then returned to work. In September the arbitrator, David Shoham, director of the Israel General Bank, recommended a salary increase spread out over a period beginning, retroactively, in September 1982, and terminating in June 1984. In addition, about half the country's doctors had their work week cut from 45 to 42 hours. Various other benefits were given to younger doctors.

In contrast to the ferment in the medical sector, the situation at El Al, Israel's national airline, was stabilized. Operations were partially resumed, after a four-month hiatus, on January 12, and shortly thereafter the pilots, who had been the main stumbling block to the company's rehabilitation plan, voted to return to work on a full-time basis. As part of a cost-cutting process, El Al reduced its staff by 1,000, saving some \$30 million annually in salaries, a figure that was offset by an annual \$30 million loss incurred due to the cessation of flights on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays.

At a joint press conference held in Washington in August by Israel Aircraft Industries and the Grumman Corporation, it was pointed out that Israel's Lavi jet fighter project would provide some 12,000 jobs in Israel and three times that many in the United States. The first test flight of a prototype was scheduled for early 1986. The Israeli air force had undertaken to purchase 300 Lavis as its front-line plane of the 1990's.

In February the *Jerusalem Post* marked its 50th anniversary as Israel's only daily English-language newspaper. Another jubilee was that of Youth Aliya, originally established to send Jewish youngsters to Palestine, but now focused on educational projects in Israel involving disadvantaged youth and the children of new-immigrant families.

Soul of a Jew, a play by Yehoshua Sobol depicting the final hours of a "Jewish antisemite" in turn-of-the-century Austria, was invited to open the Edinburgh Festival. At home, the play, a critical and popular success, won the prestigious Meskin Prize. Prizes also went to Jeffrey Kahane of the United States, who won the fourth Arthur Rubinstein international piano master competition, held in Tel Aviv in April; and V.S. Naipaul, the novelist and essayist, who was awarded the Jerusalem Prize, presented in conjunction with the eleventh Jerusalem international book fair.

Israel and World Jewry

Early in January the Knesset's aliyah and absorption committee was informed by government officials that the Soviet Union had launched a ruthless campaign against Jewish activists seeking to immigrate to Israel. The committee also heard about the arrest, for the third time, of Josif Begun, a 50-year-old mathematician who had been harassed by the Soviet government since 1970. In May, Knesset speaker Savidor complained that the Israeli public was "apathetic" about Begun's plight. Still, when Begun was sentenced in October to seven years' imprisonment and

another five years of internal exile, a mass demonstration was held in front of the Knesset building, which was addressed by the prime minister, the chief rabbis, and others.

The third international conference on Soviet Jewry was held in Jerusalem in March, with the participation of about 1,500 delegates from 31 countries. Two Soviet "refuseniks" who arrived during the year were Wolf (Ze'ev) Wilensky and Eitan Finkelstein, who had been seeking to leave the Soviet Union for 11 years.

In May the coalition representatives on the Knesset presidium, acting on government instruction, rejected an Alignment request for an urgent debate on the fate of missing Jews in Argentina, on grounds that this constituted interference in the internal affairs of another country. However, following additional public pressure, including a demonstration by Israeli relatives of missing Jews in front of the Argentine embassy in Tel Aviv, the Knesset did debate the issue on June 29. Foreign Minister Shamir indicated that he had raised the problem with Argentine officials during his visit to that country at the end of 1982, and that he was still pursuing the matter. In October the aliyah and absorption committee decided to dispatch a parliamentary delegation to Argentina for a first-hand look at the problem. At the very end of the year, foreign ministry director-general David Kimche, who was in Argentina for the inauguration of President Raoul Alfonsin, received assurance that the new government in Buenos Aires would do all in its power to discover the fate of the missing Jews.

In March the Public Council for Ethiopian Jewry, headed by Beersheba mayor Eliahu Nawi, held its inaugural meeting. This followed visits to Ethiopia by several Israelis as part of a World Jewish Congress delegation, and by MK Dror Zeigerman (Likud-Liberal), who joined a group of American students and became the first MK to visit Ethiopia since that country broke relations with Israel in 1978. Zeigerman called for intensified efforts to bring the 20,000 Falashas to Israel. In the meantime, press reports alleging discrimination against some Falashas who were already in the country were denied by Jewish Agency chairman Arye Dulzin. Jewish Agency officials indicated that a Falasha community was to be created adjacent to the Negev town of Kiryat Gat, but the director-general of the immigrant absorption ministry said that his office was bent on dispersing the Falashas throughout the country.

The dispute over the allocation of portfolios in the World Zionist Congress executive continued. Finally, at the end of June, six months after the closing of the World Zionist Congress meeting, the formation of a new executive was announced. Nevertheless, the key aliyah and absorption portfolio remained under a cloud. Raphael Kotlowitz (Herut), who had held it for six years, was said by Diaspora members of the Jewish Agency assembly to be "unable to communicate" with Jews abroad. But Kotlowitz initially refused to resign, even requesting a court injunction to prevent the Jewish Agency board of governors from appointing a replacement. He soon withdrew his request, however, paving the way for his ouster. Observers noted that this was the most ringing assertion to date of the power vested in Diaspora members of the Jewish Agency establishment.

In a similar development, the conference of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (Reform), held in Jerusalem, resolved that Diaspora Jews had the right to "exercise a vigorous involvement in those issues which concern their fellow Jews living in the Jewish state." Addressing the delegates, President Chaim Herzog called on the Reform movement "to place Jewish unity above all other considerations and not to do anything that might . . . cause a split in the Jewish people." For their part, the delegates cautioned against just such a split, which could result if the Knesset passed the proposed amendment to the law of return that would recognize conversions to Judaism only if they were performed "according to the halakhah."

In August, Israel hosted the Israel Bonds annual conference. Other major conferences held in the country during the year were those of the Jewish National Fund of America and the World Union of Jewish Students.

"Operation 1,000," a plan to bring 1,000 North American Jewish families to Israel during the summer as a possible prelude to their immigration, was a great disappointment. Only about 250 families registered for the project. In November Jewish Agency chairman Dulzin announced a 15-year plan, costing \$500 million, aimed at intensifying Jewish education in the Diaspora. At present, the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization were spending only about ten per cent of their budgets on education-related matters.

A study by two American graduate students put the number of Israelis in the U.S. at no more than 130,000. The figure was rejected as far too low by Shmuel Lahis, former Jewish Agency director-general, who headed a voluntary "anti-emigration" group; he put the number at nearly 500,000. The central bureau of statistics also made a contribution to the debate by announcing that between the establishment of the state in 1948 and the end of 1982 a total of 391,000 more persons had left the country than had entered it. Whatever the correct figure, it certainly dwarfed the immigration figure for 1983, which, while showing a 20 per cent increase over 1982, still totalled no more than 16,440.

Personalia

In April Meir Rosenne, Israel's ambassador to France since 1979, was appointed the new ambassador to Washington, replacing Moshe Arens, who became defense minister. On April 15 Major General David Ivri, former commander of the Israeli air force and head of Israel Aircraft Industries, was named deputy chief of staff of the IDF. Three days later Major General Moshe Levy, promoted to the rank of lieutenant general, took over from retiring Rafael Eitan as chief of staff. On June 19 Yehuda Avner, the prime minister's adviser on Diaspora affairs, was appointed ambassador to Britain, succeeding Shlomo Argov, who was incapacitated in an assassination attempt a year earlier. On September 19 Major General Dan Shomron was appointed commander of the newly created ground forces command. On October 20 Brigadier General Amnon Shakak, promoted to major general, took over from Major General Ori Orr as O.C. central command; the latter was appointed

O.C. northern command on November 9, replacing Major General Amir Drori, who went on study leave. On November 28 Justice Meir Shamgar was sworn in as president of the supreme court, replacing Yitzhak Kahan, who retired after 33 years on the bench; Justice Miriam Ben-Porat was sworn in as the new deputy president.

Personalities who died during the year included Yitzhak Olshan, second president of the supreme court, on February 5, aged 87; Shimon Bar, one of the country's most popular actors, on April 2, aged 55; Major General (res.) Avraham Yoffe, head of the Nature Reserves Authority, on April 11, aged 69; Arye Kroch, head of the Israeli scout movement for 46 years, on April 27, aged 91; Simcha Ehrlich, deputy prime minister and Liberal party leader, on June 19, aged 67; Moshe Medzini, dean of Israel's editorial writers, on August 16, aged 86; Yisrael Zmora, literary figure, on November 5, aged 85; and Jacob Doron, veteran diplomat and attorney, on December 16, aged 69.

RALPH MANDEL

Jews in the Middle East

DURING THE PERIOD under review (1977–1984), the remaining Jewish communities in the Middle East continued their steady decline. Sweeping geopolitical changes—the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the overthrow of Shah Reza Pahlavi in Iran, and Israel’s invasion of Lebanon—had deleterious effects on the condition of Jews in the region. Given the ever-decreasing number of communities remaining intact, world Jewry’s attention turned to the tasks of rescuing and preserving communal assets and property to the extent possible—particularly in countries where the Jewish presence was close to nil—while providing for the physical and spiritual needs of those Jews remaining in place.

Paradoxically, while the centuries-old Jewish communities in Muslim lands were steadily dwindling, Middle Eastern Jews residing in Western Europe, North and South America, and Israel were experiencing a political and cultural revival. Their new dynamism and growing ethnic consciousness were matched by a tremendous upsurge in scholarly interest in the heritage of the Jews of the Middle East.

In several countries in the region the Jewish presence had almost completely disappeared by the end of 1983. Only about a dozen Jews remained in Libya out of a pre-1948 population of 38,000. The majority had left before the country achieved independence in 1952, while most of those remaining behind had fled after anti-Jewish riots broke out in June 1967, resulting in the death of 18 Jews, the disappearance of several others, the internment of the survivors, and the destruction of much Jewish-owned property. Sla El-Kebira, the great synagogue in Tripoli, had been turned into a mosque; a highway was built over one of four Jewish cemeteries in the city. After Colonel Muammar Qaddafi’s coup in 1969, Jewish (and Italian) property was nationalized. In response to a statement by Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin in 1981, calling on Libya to pay \$1 billion in compensation to former Libyan Jews, the government declared that it was “prepared to help these Jews and . . . receive them back . . . as Libyan citizens.” However, it was added that the “alignment of these Jews with Israel, the Arab nation’s enemy, has forfeited their right to compensation.”

In Afghanistan, where approximately 5,000 Jews lived in 1948, an estimated 100 remained 30 years later. Most Jews lived in Kabul, the capital, with a handful in Herat and Balkh near the Soviet border. Jews were generally well-off financially, serving as merchants and traders. In Kabul there was one functioning synagogue—without a rabbi—as compared to nine that had existed in earlier years. A *shochet*

provided the community with kosher meat. Following the pro-Soviet coup in 1978, news of the Jewish community reached the outside world mainly through the small trickle of Jews who managed to make their way from Afghanistan to Israel via Iran. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 did not result in any apparent deterioration of Jewish life there, although the number of Jews had shrunk to around 80 people; there were nine families in Kabul, four in Herat, and a widow and two children in Balkh.

Only 300, mostly elderly, Jews remained in Algeria out of a pre-1948 population of more than 130,000. About a third lived in Algiers, with the remainder scattered throughout the country. In January 1977 the one functioning synagogue in Algiers, used only on Saturdays due to difficulties in assembling a *minyan*, was looted and desecrated. Community president Marcel Said reported the break-in and robbery to the authorities, who condemned the incident. Algerian president Houari Boumedienne received Said in a private audience, and asked him to convey to the Jewish community his "sympathy at the loss they suffered;" Boumedienne indicated that he had ordered the police to use all available means to catch the culprits. In April of that year, an Algiers criminal court sentenced 12 local youths to suspended prison sentences for committing the crime. In mid-1978 a group of 100 Algerian Jews living in France returned to Algeria for a ten-day visit—the first such occurrence since the mass exodus of the early 1960's. The government welcomed the group, whose visit was promoted by an organization of Jews from Oran, and extended such courtesies as setting up a temporary synagogue and providing kosher food. The group was told that Algerian Jews living in Israel would be allowed to visit the country if they traveled with a collective passport issued in France. A survey of cemeteries and synagogues in areas no longer inhabited by Jews, conducted by a delegation of French rabbis in 1983, found that some of the cemeteries had been desecrated, while all the synagogues had either been taken over or destroyed.

Iraq

The Iraqi Jewish community, with a history going back to biblical times, was reduced to a mere shadow of its former glory. Anti-Jewish legislation, the sequestering of Jewish property, and hangings and terror over a period of four decades had resulted in the near disappearance of Jews by 1978. Out of a pre-1948 population of 130,000, only an estimated 200–250 Jews remained, most of them in Baghdad, with approximately eight to ten in Basra and some 15 in Hit. The vestigial Jewish community was tolerated by the Ba'ath regime of President Saddam Hussein, but it lived in constant fear that the government's hostility toward Israel and Zionism would lead once again to active persecution.

The continued vulnerability of the Jewish remnant in Iraq was demonstrated by two incidents. In 1977 Salim Cohen, a Jewish businessman in Basra who had hoped to leave Iraq to join his wife and daughter, who had emigrated a few years earlier, was murdered by unknown persons. In 1981, just a few weeks after Israel bombed

an Iraqi nuclear reactor, an army colonel bought a house in Baghdad from Moshe Obadya, an elderly Jew. On the day the sale was to be completed, the colonel killed Obadya, but went completely unpunished.

In 1979 it was learned that Yusuf Navi—one of two former Iraqi Jews living in Israel, who had accepted a 1975 Iraqi government invitation for Jews to return to their homes—had left Iraq with his family after only a few months. While in Iraq, Navi worked in Baghdad Radio's Hebrew section as a broadcaster. Upon his return to Israel, he was arrested and sentenced to four years in prison for spreading anti-Jewish propaganda.

Anti-Jewish measures still in force in Iraq in the late 1970's included a ban on emigration, restrictions on travel abroad—including the confiscation of property and loss of citizenship of those who failed to return within three months—prohibitions on the sale of property, and an imposed limit on the amount of money that could be drawn from frozen bank accounts. Jews were subject to dismissal from employment in both the public and private spheres. The government had seized the bulk of Jewish communal assets—estimated to be worth about £250 million—and had taken over the community's schools, hospital, and clinics.

In February 1983 some of the restrictions on the Jewish community were lifted. On occasion the authorities permitted Jews to regain control of property that had been frozen; Jews were also able to sell their property and other assets without hindrance, although the funds still had to remain in the country. There was also news of financial compensation paid to a Jewish family by the Iraqi government. After 30 years of trying to claim money from the estate of the Ezra Daniel family—a prominent Iraqi Jew and former member of the Senate—a surviving distant relative received 600,000 Iraqi dinars (more than \$1.5 million) and was told that another million would be paid in due course.

The major problem facing Iraqi Jewry was the continued ban on emigration. However, since the outbreak of the war with Iran in 1980 this had become a general measure, aimed at preventing all draft-age men from leaving the country. According to Western journalists, a number of Jews were serving in the Iraqi armed forces. While the authorities allowed a few Iraqi citizens to travel abroad for business or health reasons, only two Jews were given such permission. The two, Abdallah Obadia and his wife, an elderly couple with ties to government officials, were permitted to sell their possessions and leave the country in 1982.

In Baghdad, the Jewish community council, headed by Naji Elias, continued to administer religious and charitable trusts. About 50 per cent of the Jewish population was supported partially or in whole with these funds.

Tunisia

There was a growing concern about the uncertain situation of Tunisia's approximately 3,500 Jews, due to the failing health of President Habib Bourguiba and a series of antisemitic incidents. Bourguiba, who had led Tunisia since it gained

independence in 1956, was known as a political moderate regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and as a staunch protector of the Jewish community. Thus, the absence of a successor to the ailing leader, combined with rising tensions reflecting the country's economic problems in the late 1970's and early 1980's, contributed to a general sense of unease in the Tunisian Jewish community. More specifically, there was a series of antisemitic incidents that began in 1979. On May 9 of that year, a fire broke out in the ancient Bezalel synagogue on the Tunisian island of Djerba—the famed “Ghriba”—just a few days before the traditional May pilgrimages were to begin. Seven Torah scrolls, the ark, and prayerbooks were lost in the fire. The incident was barely mentioned in the Tunisian press; the government tried to quash all talk about it by deeming the fire an “accident”—an assertion that no one in the Jewish community believed. The May pilgrimages were cancelled and tourism to Djerba in general, consisting mainly of Jewish visitors originating from Tunisia who returned to the country in order to see family or make use of blocked assets, was down markedly.

The Djerba Jewish community—numbering around 1,000—was commonly regarded as the oldest in the Diaspora, and tradition had it that the Bezalel synagogue contained stones from Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. The synagogue was venerated by both Jews and Muslims, who lived side by side on the island. Thus, its burning was seen as a telltale sign that the favorable attitude exhibited toward the Jewish community in the past was changing. Another reason for concern was the transfer of the Arab League headquarters from Cairo to Tunis following the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and Egypt's subsequent suspension from membership in the League. In August 1979 there were reports that the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a notorious antisemitic forgery, was being circulated in Tunis and that anti-Jewish articles were appearing in the Tunisian press. Such manifestations were attributed variously to the Arab League's activities, the rise of Muslim fundamentalism among Tunisia's disaffected youth, and Libyan influence.

The Djerban Jewish community was further shaken in October 1980, when a 14-year-old Jewish boy, Gabriel Haddad, was sentenced to five years in prison for allegedly destroying an Islamic religious manual during a schoolyard scuffle between Jewish and Arab boys that had occurred in May 1978. The school authorities had attempted to settle the matter without involving the police or the courts, but had been unsuccessful. Court cases were brought in Djerba and another city, but the judges dismissed the matter as a children's quarrel. At that point, an Arab in Sfax stirred up popular sentiment by falsely charging that a copy of the Koran had been burned, and a judge in the city imposed the five-year prison sentence on Haddad. The boy's family and representatives of the Jewish community appealed to the government for a pardon. Finally, in December 1980 the authorities relented and Haddad was released from detention and sent to school in France.

In the aftermath of Israel's invasion of Lebanon, there was a fresh outbreak of anti-Jewish incidents, due in part to the presence in Tunis of the PLO's headquarters, after the organization had been forced to leave Beirut. News of the massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps broke on the eve of Rosh

Hashanah. In order to prevent any possible acts of reprisal, the government asked Chief Rabbi Franji Uzan not to open the synagogues for services on the second day of the holiday, as well as on Yom Kippur. During the next week the government seized copies of a Tunisian weekly magazine that reported in detail on the massacre, prevented the staging of an anti-Jewish demonstration in Tunis, and posted armed police around the main synagogue. Still, on Yom Kippur homes and shops belonging to Jews in Ben Gardane, Zarzis, and Djerba were ransacked and set on fire; several Jews were injured. Official Tunisian sources stated that the attacks were carried out by opposition elements belonging to extremist Islamic organizations. A government communiqué noted that more than a dozen demonstrators had been arrested.

President Bourguiba issued a message on Yom Kippur calling on Muslims, Jews, and Christians to unite to achieve peace in the Middle East. Bourguiba also personally assured France's chief rabbi René Sirat, when they met at the Tunisian embassy in Paris shortly afterward, that the government would take all necessary measures to protect the Jewish community and its institutions. Another positive sign was the publication in the ruling party's newspaper *al-Aman* of a declaration by 190 prominent Tunisians, condemning "all forms of racism" and deploring the incidents in Zarzis and Ben Gardane. Nonetheless, a number of Jews left the two cities and moved to Djerba, while some 300 Jews—a somewhat higher figure than normal—departed the country.

Just one year later, at the end of October 1983, the synagogue in Zarzis was completely destroyed in a fire. Although the authorities ruled it an accident, the 100 remaining Jews in Zarzis suspected that the fire had been deliberately set, either by Palestinian elements or Muslim fanatics. Several days after the incident, Chief Rabbi Uzan and leaders of the Jewish community met with the minister of the interior, who promised a full investigation. However, neither the minister nor any other government spokesman issued an official statement of regret or sympathy—the first time this had happened. Fortunately, the Jews in Zarzis were able to use the synagogue's side rooms, which were relatively undamaged by the fire, for prayer services and Hebrew classes.

At the beginning of 1984 there were about 2,500 Jews in Tunis and some 800 in Djerba, with the rest scattered throughout the country. A small number were quite well-off, but the vast majority were aged, sick, and needy. While Jewish community schools continued to function, the number of children who were enrolled had fallen sharply, due to emigration. Once they reached a certain age, young people were generally sent to France to continue their education. There was no restriction on emigration or travel. Close contact was maintained with the Jewish community in France, where many Tunisian Jews now lived.

Egypt

The celebration in August 1984 of the first Jewish wedding in Egypt in 19 years poignantly demonstrated the sorry state of Egyptian Jewry. Only 250–300 elderly

Jews remained out of a community that once numbered more than 80,000. There were some 120 Jews in Cairo and a similar number in Alexandria; Cairo also contained a Karaite community numbering perhaps 40. In all of Egypt, there were no rabbis and only two functioning synagogues. Following the signing of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in March 1979, the Jewish community was able to renew its ties with coreligionists in Israel and elsewhere, thus leading to some improvement in its situation. In 1981, for example, the World Sephardi Federation contributed funds to renovate and restore Sha'ar Ha-Shamayim, Cairo's main synagogue. Israel regularly dispatched Egyptian-born rabbis to Cairo and Alexandria to lead services on the high holy days and other special occasions. Israeli diplomats maintained informal contact with the Jewish community and occasionally participated in the *minyan* at Sha'ar Ha-Shamayim. Israeli officials on state business, including former president Yitzhak Navon, included a visit to the synagogue in their itineraries. In addition, services were held at a synagogue in al-Maadi, a Cairo suburb that was home to many diplomats, including Israelis.

While they had once been the target of attacks and demonstrations, Egypt's Jews, in recent years, had been well treated. The government posted riot police to protect Jewish institutions and took various measures to insure the safety of the members of the Jewish community and the Israeli diplomatic corps. In February 1981, three Palestinians and two Egyptians were put on trial for conspiring to bomb the Israeli embassy and the Cairo synagogue. Since 1974 Egyptian Jews had been permitted to draw fixed sums from blocked bank accounts, although the money had to be spent in Egypt. This policy applied to former Egyptian Jews as well, and many took advantage of the opportunity to pay nostalgic visits to Egypt. The only Jew known to have been arrested of late was Shehata Haroun, a lawyer and leftist sympathizer, who was detained in April 1980 along with 30 other left-wing political activists for allegedly setting up a Communist party.

A distinctly negative development was the reappearance in the Egyptian press of antisemitic cartoons and articles. This material surfaced as a response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982, which also prompted Egypt to withdraw its ambassador from Tel Aviv. Still, despite the subsequent freeze in Egyptian-Israeli normalization and the opposition of many Egyptian intellectuals to the Camp David peace process, the Jewish community remained relatively unaffected.

Serious concern was expressed about the future of Jewish cultural treasures in Egypt, since the community lacked the resources and manpower to take care of them. The issue was discussed in 1979, following the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, in meetings that American Jewish leaders held with top Egyptian officials. Felix Iscaki, head of the Cairo Jewish community, also submitted a petition on the matter to Jihan Sadat, wife of President Anwar Sadat. The situation became more acute as much abandoned property was sold by community officials in order to generate sufficient revenue to meet communal welfare needs.

Over the period of a decade, six of the ten ancient synagogues in Cairo's old Jewish quarter had been sold, some with their interior furnishings intact. The remaining synagogues, among them one known as the synagogue of Maimonides,

were in varying states of disrepair. The cemetery at Basatine, near Cairo, had reportedly been vandalized, with many tombstones and monuments being defaced or removed. Ironically, some of the grander mausoleums were preserved because people were living in them, as was the case in other Cairo cemeteries. The synagogues, cemeteries, and archives of the Alexandria Jewish community were in somewhat better condition, reflecting the relative affluence of Jews there.

No trace had ever been found of some 50 torah scrolls confiscated by the Egyptian authorities as they were being taken out of the country in 1967.

Yemen Arab Republic

Although it had been widely assumed that all of Yemen's Jews left the country *en masse* in 1949–1950, when a ban on emigration was lifted, recent reports indicated that 1,200–1,500 Jews still remained in North Yemen. (There were, at best, only a few left in Marxist-run South Yemen.) Jews were reported to be living in scattered communities in areas north of the capital city of Sana'a; only a handful of Jews were thought to be residing in Sana'a itself. Information about the Jewish community was scant, because of a lack of contact with the outside world.

The authorities in Yemen were extremely sensitive to any inquiries about the status of the country's religious minorities. This was demonstrated by the arrest in February 1980 of two American citizens and seven Yemenites, including three Jews, on charges of spying for the United States and Israel. One of the Americans, DuWayne Terrell, had lived in Israel for four years while working for a church organization, and had become friendly with Yemenite Jews there; this sparked his interest in visiting Yemen. Terrell was arrested while examining the Taiz burial site of Salaam Shabazzi, the famed seventeenth-century Yemenite Jewish poet; he was carrying letters in Hebrew to be mailed to Israel. William Thomas, Jr., the second American, was arrested after Terrell, under torture, confessed to spying and implicated Thomas. The Yemenite Jews were apparently arrested because Terrell had established contact with them. After a year in Sana'a's general prison, where they were beaten and tortured, the two Americans and three of the Yemenites, including two Jews, were released from jail. Terrell subsequently returned to Israel, having decided to convert to Judaism and settle in the country.

The situation of the remaining Jews in Yemen was said to be deteriorating, with Jews reportedly being harassed by Palestinians who had moved to Yemen after being forced out of Beirut in August 1982. However, as far as was known, Jews were allowed to practice their religion in private. Representatives of Neturei Karta, the Jewish, anti-Zionist, ultra-religious group, visited the Yemenite Jewish community in the late 1970's—the trip having been arranged by the PLO—and distributed Jewish ritual objects and books. The tribal sheikhs, under whose authority Jews lived, took seriously their obligation to protect the scattered Jewish communities.

In April 1984 the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith announced plans to ask the Yemen Arab Republic to allow a delegation of American Jewish leaders to

visit the Yemenite Jewish community. For its part, the American Jewish Committee called on the Yemen government to allow Jewish families to be reunited, and to eliminate prohibitions on the receipt of mail.

In the wake of the mass emigration of Yemenite Jews in 1949–1950, ancient synagogues and cemeteries had been abandoned. Many of the synagogues were taken over by local elements or destroyed. There were reports that the 1,000-year-old cemetery in Taiz had been razed.

Morocco

The approximately 18,000 Jews living in Morocco in 1983 constituted the largest single Jewish community in the Arab world. More than half resided in Casablanca, with several thousand in Rabat and Marrakesh, and the rest in such cities as Meknes, Fez, Tetuan, and Tangier. The Jewish community benefited from the moderate and benevolent rule of the Moroccan government, which in critical times protected its Jewish citizens. Upon attaining independence in 1956, Morocco gave Jews full citizenship, and one Jew even became a government minister for a time. Morocco also permitted Jews—except for certain short periods years ago—to leave the country, and to take along belongings and assets. The members of the Jewish community were mainly middle-class, although a significant minority required welfare assistance.

There was no bar to the full expression of Jewish religious life and Jewish education. ORT, Ozar Hatorah, the Lubavitch movement, and al-Ittihad, the successor organization to the Alliance Israélite Universelle, operated schools that had government support. Jews had their own religious courts, with jurisdiction over matters of personal status, including marriage and divorce. In addition to legally recognized Jewish councils in each of the local communities, there was an overall Council of Jewish Communities, headquartered in Rabat and headed by David Amar, a wealthy businessman with close ties to King Hassan II. Among the responsibilities of the Council was making arrangements for the assets of vanishing Jewish communities to be taken over and managed by neighboring communities. In some cities, such as Fez, however, the local authorities had taken over some Jewish-owned property without compensation. Virtually all Moroccan Jews had relatives in Israel, France, or Canada, and experienced no difficulty in keeping in touch with them. While there was no large-scale emigration *per se*, Jewish young people tended to go abroad to study when they reached higher education levels, and often did not return to Morocco.

If Moroccan Jewry felt relatively secure, it was due to the policies of King Hassan II, who, like his father before him—Sultan Muhammad V—consistently maintained a clear distinction between Arab attitudes toward the State of Israel and attitudes toward the Jewish community. In periods of tension, when popular opinion was stirred up by developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Moroccan government took active steps to protect its Jewish citizens. On a number of occasions, the

government also made public overtures to the Jewish community, as when seven government ministers and a personal representative of the king attended the August 1977 funeral of Morocco's first Jewish minister, Leon Benzaquen. In 1976 Morocco issued a public invitation to former Moroccan Jews to return to the country, stating that any who did so would be welcome. About 100 Jewish families responded affirmatively. The Moroccan government also took the unusual step of permitting representatives of the Council of Jewish Communities to participate in meetings abroad of the World Jewish Congress. Moreover, in November 1979 the Council became an affiliate of the World Jewish Congress—a noteworthy first for a Jewish community in an Arab country.

King Hassan's friendliness to Jews and moderate stance vis-à-vis Israel had been demonstrated in various ways over the years: statements urging Arab-Jewish cooperation in the Middle East; his role as a mediator between Egypt and Israel prior to President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem; and his policy of fostering visits to Morocco by leading Jewish personalities from Israel, the United States, and Europe. In 1977 two prominent Israelis of North African origin—Shaul Ben Simchon and André Chouraqui—visited Morocco, with Chouraqui being received by the king. A number of American Jewish groups toured Morocco in 1979 by official invitation. The Moroccan government co-sponsored a 1978 conference on Moroccan Jewish history and culture that was organized by former Moroccan Jews living in France. The government even sanctioned the participation of an Israeli delegation—consisting of Moroccan-born Jews—in the May 1984 biennial congress of the Moroccan Jewish community, held in Rabat. Crown Prince Muhammad and other top government officials attended the state dinner that ended the two-day meeting. Speaking at the dinner, Minister of State Ahmed Alaoui proposed the formation of an Arab-Jewish association to “promote peace in Palestine.” A number of Arab countries were sharply critical of Alaoui's statement, which was seen as a Moroccan move toward recognition of Israel; in response, Syria recalled its ambassador to Rabat.

The Moroccan Jewish community had experienced some brief periods of tension in recent years, and felt that its continued safety was very much dependent on the personal good will of King Hassan II. On occasion—as, for example, when Israel annexed East Jerusalem in July 1980—Moroccan media carried anti-Zionist and anti-Israel stories, and there were hostile demonstrations as well. This, together with a downturn in the economy, led some Jews to leave the country. King Hassan responded by taking steps to quiet the fears of the Jewish community. Thus, in 1980 he ordered a member of the cabinet to represent the monarchy at synagogue services in Casablanca on Yom Kippur, with the visit being featured on Moroccan television. Following Israel's invasion of Lebanon, when Jewish individuals and institutions received anonymous threats, extra police protection was provided. In August 1984, after several interventions by the Jewish community, the Moroccan government freed Sion Assidon, a Jewish mathematician and self-confessed Marxist activist, from prison; Assidon had served 12 years of an 18-year sentence. This pardon left one other Jew in jail—Abraham Serfaty, who had also been charged with Marxist subversion.

Lebanon

At the beginning of the period under review, Lebanon had already experienced a brutal civil war of two years' duration. Nonetheless, the Jewish community, numbering around 400—there were approximately 300 Jews in Beirut (evenly divided between the Muslim West and Christian East sectors), 25–30 in Bhamdoun, another 25 or so in Jounieh, 40 in Mansurieh, and one family in Aleyh—managed to maintain a relatively normal life. Most Jewish families were headed by prosperous businessmen, although some experienced financial hardship linked to the devastation brought about by the fighting. The last rabbi in Lebanon had left, and in Beirut religious services were being held only irregularly in a small side room of the main synagogue. Only the synagogue in Bhamdoun, a village in the mountains outside Beirut where many Jews had summer homes, was operating more or less normally. There was no *shochet* residing in the country, and arrangements had to be made to have a *shochet* visit periodically from Damascus in order to assure a supply of kosher meat. There continued to be a trickle of departures for Israel, via Cyprus.

The small size of the Jewish community made it difficult to administer records and communal property. A small committee was established to handle welfare assistance, burials, and weddings. The Talmud Torah school was closed for lack of students; approximately 30 children attended other lay or religious schools.

By 1981 the Lebanese Jewish community had grown to an estimated 600–700 people. This reflected an improved economic situation, which led Jewish businessmen and their families to re-settle in the country. Synagogues were full on holidays and a community council, officially recognized by the government, was functioning. While Jews were subject to the same dangers and difficulties as other Lebanese, they found themselves being protected by all sides—the government of Lebanon, the Syrians, and the Palestinians. Thus, a Jewish couple who had been picked up and held in a Palestinian camp for a week after being denounced as spies—the result of a business deal gone sour—were released through direct Syrian intervention and Palestinian cooperation. Similarly, when an abandoned synagogue was taken over by refugees from the south seeking shelter, Palestinian officials forced them to leave, replaced the broken lock, and gave the keys to the Jewish community with apologies.

As a result of the June 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the siege of Beirut, the situation changed once again. Many Jews in West Beirut, including members of the community council, fled their homes and moved either to East Beirut, Jounieh, or out of the country entirely—leaving about 150 Jews in Lebanon. Israeli shelling of West Beirut, where the PLO forces were concentrated, resulted in some damage to the synagogue and Jewish homes. Some 40 Jews, mostly elderly, remained in West Beirut throughout the siege, enduring periodic cutoffs of water, electricity, and food. Reportedly, however, they were not subject to harassment by either their Muslim neighbors or the Palestinians. Some contact was established with the Israeli army, which renovated abandoned Jewish sites in the south of the country. The Beirut synagogue was repaired in time for high holy day services, in which some Israelis also participated.

As the fighting subsided and the new Lebanese government began to assert itself, former Lebanese Jews returned to visit and look around, some with an eye toward reestablishing themselves in the country. However, continued fighting and uncertainty about the future served to keep the size of the Jewish community quite small. The long-term prospects for Lebanese Jewry were quite bleak.

Turkey

The Jewish community in Turkey remained one of the more stable and prosperous in the Muslim world. Out of a total of 23,000–25,000 Jews, some 18,000–20,000 lived in Istanbul, with about 2,000 in Izmir, several hundred in the capital city of Ankara, and the rest in such cities as Edirne, Adana, and Canakkale. The majority of Jewish household heads were businessmen or professionals, who were relatively prosperous. At the same time, between 500 and 1,000 Jews—the number varying in accordance with the general state of the Turkish economy—received welfare assistance from communal funds. There were few restrictions, except for currency regulations, on travel abroad, including to Israel, where some 48,000 Turkish Jews had settled. Turkey maintained low-key diplomatic contacts with the Jewish state.

Synagogues, a Jewish hospital, an old-age home, and day schools operated fairly normally. There were occasional difficulties due to bureaucratic regulations, but these were not specifically directed against Jews. Thus, no central Jewish organization was permitted to exist, and the various local communities were forced to run their affairs autonomously. The *hahambashi* (chief rabbi), however, was the spiritual leader of the entire Jewish community. There was a shortage of qualified Hebrew teachers and religious functionaries; two young cantors and *shochetim*, who had been trained by Chief Rabbi David Asseo, left for Israel in 1979. Few young people wanted to pursue careers in Jewish communal work, while the government did not permit the importation of teachers from Israel.

The chief problem facing the Turkish Jewish community in the late 1970's was the potential breakdown of governmental authority and democratic institutions in the wake of the deterioration of the economy and the proliferation of extremist groups on both the right and the left. Political murders and terrorist acts, while not directed against Jews, were commonplace, particularly in the universities, leading many Jewish families to send their children abroad to study. Other disturbing factors were the anti-Zionist stance of extremist groups, such as the pro-Islamic National Salvation party, and the August 1979 decision of the Turkish government to accord diplomatic status to the PLO. The statement announcing this decision stressed Turkey's "continued support for the legitimate cause of the Palestinian people, struggling for Israel's withdrawal from occupied lands and their legal rights, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian state." At the same time, Turkey rejected a PLO demand that relations with Israel be broken. On the whole, diplomatic ties with Israel remained as they had been since the 1956 Sinai campaign, when they were downgraded from the ambassadorial level to that of *chargé*

d'affaires. El Al continued to operate direct flights between Istanbul and Lod; commercial contacts and maritime links were very much in evidence.

The general situation in Turkey took a turn for the better after the military coup of September 12, 1980. The army, headed by Chief of Staff Kenan Evren, dissolved parliament, arrested extremists on both the right and the left, and imposed martial law throughout the country, pledging to restore democracy once order had been reestablished. Shortly after the coup, Evren, who became acting head of state (and later president), broadcast a radio message in which he promised to end sectarianism and incitement to violence. The Jewish community generally welcomed the military takeover; in the months following the coup, Jewish emigration slowed to a mere trickle, reflecting the improved security situation. Relations with Israel were maintained, although they were downgraded further in response to "provocative" Israeli actions, such as the passage of the Jerusalem law in 1980 and the 1982 war in Lebanon.

In the aftermath of the military coup, a number of Jewish institutions were revitalized and improved. In May 1984, Zeki Dushi became the first Jew in 20 years to be elected to the Istanbul district council; there were no Jews in parliament. Another first was the granting of permission for Jewish communal representatives to attend international gatherings, such as the meeting of the World Jewish Congress. It was reported that several dozen Turkish Jews living abroad had returned to the country.

Syria

Life continued to be difficult for Syria's 5,000 Jews—approximately 3,500 in Damascus, 1,300 in Aleppo, and 200 in Qamishly—who were subject to harassment, periodic repression, and ongoing surveillance by the *Mukhabarat* (secret police). There was a total ban on Jewish emigration, even for purposes of family reunification. Of particular concern was the plight of some 400 Jewish women who were unable to marry in Syria and sought to emigrate. The few Jews permitted to travel abroad for business, health, or family reasons were required to post a cash bond of approximately \$5,000 and to leave behind close family members as hostages for their return. Jews caught attempting to flee Syria illegally were imprisoned; there were also a number of deaths resulting from failed escape attempts. Beyond that, Jews, along with the general population, suffered under the brutal rule of the Ba'ath regime headed by President Hafez al-Assad. Syria was a country in which illegal searches, acts of torture, jailings without trial, and summary executions were commonplace.

President Assad, in a meeting with Jewish community leaders late in 1976, promised to improve the situation of Syrian Jewry. Assad indicated that there would be no change with regard to the ban on emigration, but that a number of other restrictions would be removed: abolition of the designation *Musawi* (Jew) on identity cards; cancellation of the requirement that Jews get written permission from the

Mukhabarat to travel from one city to another; and relaxation of the conditions under which travel abroad would be permitted for purposes of obtaining medical treatment or visiting relatives. In fact, however, not all of these actions were carried out. Thus, while Syrian officials told Western reporters early in 1977 that *Musawi* was no longer stamped in large red letters on the identity papers of Jews, it was known that Jews were still required to carry documents which bore the same stamp in small blue letters. Similarly, Jews were able to move about more freely within Syria, but still were required to notify the *Mukhabarat*. (This requirement was reimposed after several groups of Jews crossed the border into Turkey.) On the other hand, some restrictions on the acquisition and disposition of property were relaxed.

Regular services were held in 19 synagogues in Damascus and three in Aleppo. Kosher meat was available. About 1,000 children were enrolled in the community's elementary and secondary schools, where religious studies, including Hebrew, were taught. According to Rabbi Ibrahim Hamra, principal of the Ben Maimun secondary school, there was a shortage of religious textbooks, and appeals for such materials were issued to Syrian Jewish communities in the Diaspora. The Jewish community undertook to repair and restore the synagogue in Aleppo that had been looted and burned in 1947. Most Jewish household heads were merchants, with a few being permitted to receive import/export licenses; there were also some Jewish professionals and artisans. Government jobs were effectively closed to Jews.

In March 1977 two representatives of the Syrian Jewish community in Brooklyn, New York visited Syria to examine Jewish communal needs. They found widespread poverty, particularly in Qamishly. The *Mukhabarat* patrolled Jewish neighborhoods, and most Jews avoided any public contact with foreigners, unless it had been authorized by community spokesman Selim Totah, who served as liaison with the police.

One of the most pressing problems facing the Jewish community was the fate of the approximately 400 single Jewish women who could not find husbands. Their tragic situation had come about because many young Jewish men had secretly fled the country, and a good many of those remaining behind were unwilling to marry and start a family under prevailing conditions. Intensive efforts were made by the Syrian Jewish community in Brooklyn, aided by Representative Stephen Solarz and American Jewish organizations, to arrange for the emigration of the women, so that they could find husbands among the 25,000 Syrian Jews living in the United States. President Jimmy Carter personally raised the issue—as well as the broader question of Syrian Jewish emigration for purposes of family reunification—when he met with President Assad in Geneva in May 1977. Assad promised that the Syrian government would give consideration to applications presented on a case-by-case basis. Carter again mentioned the subject to Assad in two follow-up letters; moreover, the incoming U.S. ambassador to Syria, Talcott Seelye, raised the issue when he presented his credentials. In late July 1977, 14 single women were permitted to leave Syria after receiving marriage offers from American residents. However, no additional applications were ever approved.

Additional interventions with regard to Jewish emigration were made by United States government representatives and human rights organizations in 1979, after it had become apparent that the situation of the Jewish community had worsened. Following the escape of one large family, a requirement was added that Jews notify the *Mukhabarat* as soon as they arrived at any destination within Syria. Jews also faced new difficulties with regard to inheritance and the disposal of property, requiring special permission to sell cars or homes. Property belonging to Jewish families that had left the country was sequestered by the government. Jews wishing to engage in foreign trade were advised to bring in Muslim partners to head their companies; the government appointed Muslim directors to supervise Jewish schools. *Mukhabarat* agents were present at synagogue services, and Jews were warned that homes not lit up at night would be immediately searched. The minimum penalty for attempting to escape the country was raised to six months' imprisonment. Particularly tragic was the case of a Mrs. Barakat, mother of four young children, who was gravely wounded by border guards as she attempted to flee Syria in August 1979.

In February 1979 a Syrian Jew who, together with his family, had recently escaped to Israel, appeared at a press conference in New York. Masked in order to conceal his identity, "Mr. Albert" charged that a wave of repression had swept the Syrian Jewish community in the aftermath of several successful escapes by Jews. The *New York Times* report on the press conference noted that some 20 Jews in Damascus and Aleppo had been detained by the secret police on suspicion of having helped Jewish families to leave. Syria's ambassador to the United Nations, in a letter to the newspaper, denied the claim that Jews were being mistreated, calling it a ploy by "Zionists" to influence the Carter administration's Middle East policy. The Syrian spokesman insisted that restrictions on emigration applied to non-Jews as well, and reflected a desire to "prevent a brain drain."

In September 1979 the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution, introduced by Congressman Solarz, calling on the Syrian government, on humanitarian grounds, to allow Jews to leave. A similar resolution was adopted by the Senate in October. In November a delegation of the American-based Legal Coalition for Syrian Jewry presented a petition and bill of particulars to United Nations secretary general Kurt Waldheim. Waldheim was requested to intervene with the Syrian government to protect the human rights of Syrian Jews, including emigration. Several months earlier a similar plea had been addressed to the secretary general by Alain Poher, president of the French Senate and chairman of the International Conference for the Deliverance of Jews in the Middle East.

In 1980 Syrian Jewry became further imperilled, as the Assad government launched a campaign to eliminate the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. In one incident in July, a Jewish woman in Aleppo was raped by a soldier belonging to the defense brigades, whose responsibility it was to search homes for suspected Brotherhood members. A protest to the authorities elicited a promise of an investigation, but none took place. There were reports that one or two other Jewish women in

Aleppo had been raped, and that a Jew in Damascus had been wounded in crossfire between government troops and Brotherhood fighters. While these incidents did not result from actions specifically directed against Jews, they did prompt renewed escape efforts. In October, seven Jewish men, including the husband of Mrs. Barakat, were sentenced to six months in prison for allegedly attempting to escape, although a judge in Damascus had ordered their release. Some Jews did succeed in leaving the country despite increased vigilance on the part of the authorities. As a result of these departures, as well as some internal migration, the distribution of the Jewish population shifted; there were now some 4,000 Jews in Damascus, 750 in Aleppo, and 150–200 in Qamishly.

Since Qamishly no longer had a resident rabbi or Jewish school, Jews in that community were gradually moving to Aleppo; there were reports that several synagogues in Qamishly had been taken over or demolished. In Aleppo a synagogue was razed to make way for an urban renewal project, but the Jewish community was able to save the Torah scrolls and other religious items, and was paid some token compensation by the government.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982, which led to fighting between Syrian and Israeli forces, gave rise to new uncertainty among Syrian Jews, who feared that at any time they could be made scapegoats. Further cause for concern was the return to Syria of armed Palestinians after they were expelled from Beirut in August. In fact, however, the Syrian authorities did act to protect the Jewish community. This was in marked contrast to what had occurred during previous rounds of Arab-Israeli fighting, when Syrian Jews had been detained and beaten by the *Mukhabarat*, and the entire community had been placed under particularly tight control. In 1982 even foreign travel continued; some 50 Syrian Jews were permitted to go abroad for brief visits.

At the end of 1983, the Jewish community was shocked to learn of the brutal murder and mutilation of Lillian Abadi—who was pregnant at the time—and her two young children in Aleppo. The Syrian government promised a full investigation, and provided police protection. The killings aroused denunciations and protests from the Israeli government, U.S. officials, American Jewish organizations, and the Syrian Jewish community in Brooklyn. American Jewish Committee president Howard Friedman called on Syria to allow unrestricted Jewish emigration. On January 31, 1984 the Syrian Jewish community in Brooklyn held a mass protest rally.

Iran

The 1979 overthrow of Shah Reza Pahlavi and the triumph of the Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini led to dramatic changes in the situation of Iranian Jewry. The 2,500-year-old Jewish community experienced a sharp decline in numbers. For Jews who remained in place, there was great uncertainty about what the future would be like in a country ruled by strict Shi'ite law, which treated

Jews and other non-Muslims as, at best, second-class citizens. The Khomeini regime's implacable hostility to Israel and Zionism, and the frequent blurring of the distinction between Zionist and Jew, contributed to the possibility that revolutionary Iran might prove to be a place in which it was impossible for Jews to live.

In the last years of the Shah's rule, the Jewish community numbered around 80,000, with about 60,000 Jews residing in Teheran, 8,500 in Shiraz, 3,500 in Isfahan, and the remainder scattered throughout the country. Jewish religious life flourished; educational, cultural, and welfare work was conducted by major Jewish organizations, including the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Lubavitch movement, Ozar Hatorah, and the Alliance Israélite Universelle. More than 11,000 children attended some 23 community schools. Another 11,000 Jews were enrolled in Iranian schools and universities, with Jews enjoying the highest percentage of university students among any ethnic group in the country. There was full freedom of movement; some 62,000 Iranian Jews had emigrated to Israel since 1948. The Jewish community's standard of living steadily improved, and individual Jews even found opportunities for advancement in government. Except for Turkey, Iran was the only Muslim country to maintain extensive, though unofficial, relations with Israel. El Al provided direct air service between Teheran and Lod.

Ayatollah Khomeini, though known for his fierce anti-Zionist views, issued statements reassuring the Jewish community prior to his triumphant return to Iran after years in exile. Khomeini reiterated to American Jewish representatives what he had told a visiting Iranian Jewish delegation some months previously: Jews would have "full rights and protection, as did all other religious minorities, and need not fear for their future." The rabbis of the Jewish community welcomed Khomeini at the airport upon his return to Iran; in a meeting with him after the revolution, they were again told that religious minorities would be treated equally with Muslims. At the same time Khomeini reiterated his intention to "break off relations with Israel because we do not believe there is any legal justification for its existence. Palestine belongs to the Islamic space and must be returned to the Muslims." Indeed, the severing of diplomatic ties with Israel was among the very first acts of the new regime. In February demonstrators entered the unofficial Israeli legation building in Teheran, ransacked it, and ran up a PLO banner; the building was later presented to PLO chief Yasir Arafat—the first official guest of the Khomeini government—as crowds shouted "Death to Israel."

During the early stages of the Islamic revolution, some 15,000 Iranian Jews went abroad, about half to Israel and the remainder to Western Europe and the United States. However, only around 2,000 opted to settle permanently in Israel. The rest waited to see how events would unfold in Iran.

In May 1979 Habib Elghanian, a prominent Jewish businessman and former president of the *Anjoman Kalimian*, the umbrella organization of the Iranian Jewish community, was executed by order of a revolutionary court. Elghanian had been accused both of spying for Israel and of "corruption on earth." Over the next year or so, ten other Jews were executed on various trumped-up charges, including spying

for the United States and Israel, Zionism, drug dealing, "corruption on earth" and "warring against God." The fact that Zionism was one of the charges placed many Iranian Jews in danger, since they had relatives in Israel or had visited the country during the shah's reign. In at least one case, an execution was carried out in violation of established juridical procedures; Albert Danielpour, a prominent member of the Teheran Jewish community, was summarily put to death, even though his sentence had been commuted to three years' imprisonment.

The reign of terror which the Jewish community experienced led to a public protest by a group of young Iranian Jewish intellectuals, who had earlier supported the Islamic revolution and the government's pro-Palestinian policy. In an open letter to then president Abolhassan Bani Sadr, published in *Tammuz* in May 1980, they stated:

We do not wish to side with those Jews who are opposing the revolution and have been or are being tried by the revolutionary courts. . . . The methods of preparation of the letters of accusation in the revolutionary courts clearly indicate certain prejudices and biases which have caused grave anxiety among the Jewish population. . . . If affiliation with the Jewish community is an act of felony, then the entire Jewish community of Iran [is] to be considered at fault. . . . You fully realize that the government of Israel was one of the closest allies of the deposed shah. Thousands of Iranian merchants have had trade relations with that country. Apart from that, every day hundreds of people went to Israel for medical treatment or religious pilgrimage. We consider relations with capitalistic sources an act of felony, but importation of honey from Israel or receiving letters from relatives resident in that country surely cannot be a ground for conviction in the revolutionary courts, because such unjustified accusations will help to undermine any other factually based acts of felony.

A recent estimate placed the number of Iranian Jews at about 35,000, with the majority in Teheran, some 5,000–7,000 in Shiraz, 1,600–2,000 in Isfahan, and 3,500 in scattered towns and villages. Since the outbreak of the war with Iraq in September 1980, Jews living in cities in the battle zone had reportedly sought refuge in safer areas. Virtually the entire Jewish upper class had fled Iran, with their substantial holdings being confiscated.

The Jewish community continued to be led by the *Anjoman Kalimian* and the chief rabbi. Jews had their own elected representative in the *Majlis*, the Iranian parliament. Synagogues and Jewish schools still functioned in Teheran, Shiraz, and other cities, and synagogue attendance was up. Communal leaders encouraged this trend for two reasons: to draw the Jewish community together and to legitimate Jewish religious observance in an increasingly theocratic state. Government officials spoke at public meetings held in synagogues, such as a gathering organized in February 1981 by the *Anjoman Kalimian* in Teheran's Abrishami synagogue to commemorate the second anniversary of the revolution. Along with other Iranian schools, Jewish elementary schools were nationalized and placed under the jurisdiction of the ministry of education, which supervised the curriculum and provided financing for teachers of approved subjects. Religious education was compulsory;

Jewish children not enrolled in Jewish schools had to take supplementary religious courses. As a result, afternoon Hebrew schools were set up, teachers were trained, and prayerbooks and textbooks were published, all with the ministry of education's approval. Increasing numbers of Muslim children enrolled in Jewish schools and Muslim religious instruction was provided for them. Jewish high schools continued to function normally, as did other communal institutions, such as hospitals and old-age homes. In Teheran the Jewish hospital provided medical care to Jews and non-Jews alike.

Iran's economic plight affected Jews no less than others. Oil production had come to a near halt as a result of the war with Iraq, and there was a critical shortage of foreign currency with which to purchase food and other basic commodities. The government confiscated foreign currency as a way of shoring up the economy and preventing the flight of capital—affecting many Iranian Jews in the import-export business. A ban on non-essential travel abroad was imposed. Most Jews who had served in government posts under the shah were either dismissed or left their jobs after the revolution; nearly all Jewish university professors lost their positions. Most Jews were members of the middle class, with some five per cent being wealthy, and approximately ten per cent requiring financial aid from the community.

The Jewish community maintained a low profile and sought to cultivate good relations with the Khomeini regime. Khosrow Naghi, the first Jewish representative in the *Majlis*, repeatedly emphasized that Iranian Jews opposed Zionism and were loyally serving in the army. "Our nationality is Iranian and our religion is Jewish," Naghi declared. Over the long term, however, such pronouncements were not likely to shield the Jewish community from the excesses of Iran's Islamic revolution.

In Israel and the Diaspora

Even as the Jewish communities of the Middle East continued to decline, Jewish emigrés from these countries and their children, whether living in Israel or the Diaspora, began a process of preserving and revitalizing their diverse religious and cultural heritages. A number of international conferences dealing with the history of various Middle Eastern Jewish communities were held in France, Israel, United States, and elsewhere. A worldwide political organization dedicated to advocacy of the rights of Middle Eastern Jews—the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC)—was established. In Israel, where more than half the Jewish population was now of Middle Eastern origin, the cultural legacy of Middle Eastern Jewry, particularly Moroccan Jewry, was gradually being absorbed into the national consciousness.

The WOJAC, founded at a meeting in Paris in November 1975, claimed to represent more than 1,750,000 Jews from Arab lands. The organization concentrated on two goals: publicizing the situation of the remaining Jewish communities in the Arab world and the events which led nearly one million Jews to flee their homes in the 1940's and 1950's; and pressing for international recognition of the

emigrés' claims to compensation for property and other assets left behind. The WOJAC achieved a major success in 1976, when U.S. president Carter stated that the condition and claims of Jewish refugees from Arab lands had to be considered along with those of Arab refugees in implementing U.N. resolution 242.

In November 1983, the WOJAC held its second international conference, in London; former U.S. supreme court justice Arthur Goldberg delivered the keynote address, in which he called for the creation of an international juridical commission to catalogue the losses of Jews from Arab lands. The conference adopted a number of resolutions dealing with economic and political issues. Thus, Egypt and the other Arab states were asked to compensate Jews "for the extensive private and communal property of which they were dispossessed by the freezing of assets by nationalization, expropriation, and confiscation." The conference also called for the return to Jewish control of "Jewish religious and cultural properties, to permit their restoration and to guarantee free access to Jewish historical sites and holy places." In the political realm, the WOJAC called on the Arab states to cease their cynical exploitation of the Arab refugee problem and to adopt a "constructive attitude" in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. There was also a special resolution urging Syria, on humanitarian grounds, to grant young, unmarried Jewish women permission to leave the country.

In addition to the WOJAC, which was an umbrella group, there were organizations geared to specific Middle Eastern Jewish communities. Egyptian Jews and North African Jews each held mass gatherings in Israel in 1982-1983. In mid-1976, a group of former Moroccan Jews living in France established Identity and Dialogue, an organization that strongly affirmed the cultural kinship of Moroccan Jews to Morocco, and sought to have the Moroccan government tacitly recognize the attachment of Moroccan Jewry to Israel. Identity and Dialogue's position was eloquently expressed in its founding statement:

While loyal to the Jews who were persecuted and despoiled in certain Arab lands of the Middle East, the Jews from Morocco firmly refused to be considered refugees, expelled from their country of origin; and refrained from any claims, both for the past and present. If the situation is made clear and the legitimacy of the position of each is admitted and respected, there is a profound desire among the Jews from Morocco again to find their authenticity and roots in a friendship with Morocco. This wish could be transformed into dialogue and fruitful cooperation.

Identity and Dialogue leaders held meetings with high government officials in Morocco, including the prime minister. The Moroccan government lent its support to a scholarly conference on Moroccan Jewish history that was organized by Identity and Dialogue.

Since 1977, when the Likud had come to power in Israel, Jews of Middle Eastern origin had taken on more highly visible roles in all areas of Israeli life. Nearly every university in Israel had a program or center for the study of Middle Eastern Jewry,

and scholarly books and articles on the subject proliferated. The ministry of education emended textbooks and revised school curricula to reflect the history and traditions of the various Middle Eastern Jewish communities. On a more popular level, Israel Television presented a miniseries based on the novel of a Syrian-born author, dealing with upper-class Jewish life in Syria from the 1920's through the 1940's.

LOIS GOTTESMAN