

JTA daily news bulletin

(212) 575-9370

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Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency / 165 West 46th Street / New York, N.Y. 10036-2574

Vol. LIX - 64th Year

Rosh Hashanah, 5742/1981

No. 187

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR 5741

By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, Sept. 28 (JTA) -- During the year 5741, Israel found itself in continuing isolation in the international community. Even the United States, which has been Israel's ally since the Jewish State was established, took a harsher attitude toward Israel during the year, and the governments of the two countries clashed, either openly or behind the scenes, on their foreign policies.

Israel's raid on Iraq's nuclear reactor in June and its raid on terrorist headquarters in Lebanon in July, both of which Israel said were actions of self-defense, were coldly received by the Reagan Administration. The U.S. supported a United Nations condemnation of the raid on the nuclear reactor and then suspended shipment of warplanes for more than two months, an unprecedented act by an American Administration.

The U.S. and Israel were at opposite ends over the proposal by President Reagan to sell highly sophisticated AWACS reconnaissance planes and enhanced equipment for F-15s to Saudi Arabia. The U.S. Administration claimed that this \$8.5 billion arms package was part of a "strategic consensus" in the Mideast against Soviet intervention, while Israel insisted that the AWACS would endanger its security.

Through all this, the peace process continued to gain momentum. Premier Menachem Begin of Israel and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt met twice this year; talks on normalizing relations between Israel and Egypt got under way; autonomy talks were resumed after a hiatus of 18 months; and the basic ingredients for a multinational peace-keeping force for the Sinai, after Israel's final withdrawal in April 1982, were falling into place.

Perhaps the brightest development for Israel was the initiation of strategic cooperation between the U.S. and Israel, announced by the Reagan Administration during Begin's talks with Reagan in Washington. The Israeli Premier termed that development "a new era" and a "turning point" in U.S.-Israeli relations.

THE MIDDLE EAST:

SEPTEMBER 1980 --

President Carter announces that autonomy talks will resume in a few weeks and that "there will be a summit later this year."

An attempt by Arab nations to deprive Israel of its membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) meeting in Belgrade is defeated.

The Palestine Liberation Organization is denied observer status at the annual meeting of the World Bank in Washington.

OCTOBER --

Autonomy talks are put off until after American Presidential elections in November and proposed summit talks between Premier Menachem Begin, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and President Carter are postponed indefinitely.

Israel's credentials to the 35th General Assembly are approved without objection.

NOVEMBER --

Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir holds talks with West German political leaders urging their government to step up actions against neo-Nazi-PLO joint cooperation.

The European Economic Community (EEC) decides to postpone any new diplomatic peace initiative until after Reagan's inauguration.

DECEMBER --

The UN adopts a resolution calling for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from "all the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem."

U.S. special Ambassador Sol Linowitz says autonomy talks could be concluded successfully "in a fairly short order" because there are no insoluble problems.

JANUARY 1981 --

Visit to Israel by Egypt's Agricultural Minister encourages hope that the normalization process will get in motion, after a three-year snag.

The Carter Administration, in its last days in office announces an arms sale proposal to Saudi Arabia.

The new Reagan Administration says it does not like Israel's settlement policy on West Bank nor does it welcome the Jerusalem Law. The Administration promises that a new Mideast policy will be initiated.

FEBRUARY --

President Reagan reaffirms U.S. "moral commitment" to Israel emphasizing that peace "starts with the acceptance of Israel as a nation" by those countries which refuse to recognize it.

Israel cleared of charges of mutilating bodies of five Palestinian terrorists killed last December. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim says charges were based on "incorrect statement of facts."

MARCH --

Bill to annex the Golan Heights is defeated by vote of 45-14 with five abstentions in the Knesset.

Israel officially makes known its opposition to the Reagan Administration's proposal to sell sophisticated weaponry to Saudi Arabia.

Reagan Administration officials say budget cuts will not affect military assistance to Israel.

APRIL --

U.S. ends talks with Israel on multinational force to police Sinai upon Israel's withdrawal, saying "the areas of agreement are far wider than the areas of difference" between the two countries.

Israel's participation in international trade fair in Cairo seen as "another step in the direction of full normalization" of relations between Israel and Egypt.

Secretary of State Alexander Haig visits Mideast countries and reaches "practical conclusions" with Israel's defense establishment.

Bitter fighting erupts in Lebanon between Lebanese Christians and Syrian peacekeeping forces.

Congressional opposition mounts as Reagan Administration announces approval of AWACS arms package to Saudi Arabia, then delays submission to Congress pending more congressional "input."

MAY --

U.S. special envoy Philip Habib starts round of Mideast shuttle diplomacy in effort to defuse tensions in Lebanon by Syria's placement of SAM-6 missiles in the northern sector and Israel's threat to remove them by force.

Begin lashes out at West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing as being greedy hypocrites willing to sell weapons to the Arabs for cheap oil.

Tri-lateral talks between Israel, Egypt and the U.S. are held in Washington to develop multinational force for Sinai. State Department acknowledges that the development through the UN of this force "would not be possible."

JUNE --

Begin and Sadat hold 90-minute meeting at Ophira in Sinai peninsula and say they have reached "important agreements and serious solutions" but decline to go into details.

Israeli Air Force stages raid on Iraq's nuclear research reactor outside Baghdad to prevent Iraq from developing a nuclear bomb. The Osirak reactor is completely destroyed.

The Reagan Administration holds up delivery of warplanes to Israel pending a "review" of whether the Iraqi raid was in violation of the arms contract between Israel and the U.S.

U.S. supports unanimous resolution in the UN Security Council condemning Israel for the raid on Iraq's nuclear reactor.

JULY --

Israel attacks PLO headquarters tucked within civilian population centers in Beirut killing a reported 300 persons.

Habib achieves a "cessation of hostilities" across the Israeli-Lebanese border while Syrian missiles still remain deployed in Lebanon.

AUGUST --

Saudi Arabia announces a seven-point peace plan proposal which is flatly rejected by Israel as "a phased program for the destruction of Israel," while Sadat says there is nothing new in it.

Sadat meets in Washington with Reagan and pledges to continue Camp David process while at the same time seeking U.S. dialogue with the PLO.

President Reagan lifts the embargo on 14 F-16 and 2 F-15 warplanes to Israel.

Defense Minister Ariel Sharon issues new conciliatory policy towards Arabs living in the administered areas.

Reagan officially informs Congress of the proposal to sell \$8.5 billion in arms to Saudi Arabia, including five AWACS reconnaissance planes and enhancement equipment for the Saudis 62 F-15s.

Begin and Sadat meet in Alexandria and announce the resumption of autonomy talks to begin in Sept.

SEPTEMBER --

Begin meets for the first time with Reagan and reaches agreement on a new strategic relationship between Israel and the U.S. Begin proclaims a "new era" in U.S.-Israeli relations.

UNESCO votes to place East Jerusalem on UNESCO's World Heritage List giving Jordan right to take part in the international supervision of cultural and historical sites in that area.

Normalization talks between Egypt and Israel conclude with noted progress, including overland postal deliveries on daily basis and direct telephone and telex links between the two countries.

Israeli, Egyptian and American delegations meet in Cairo for two days to resume autonomy talks and pledge to move "as rapidly as possible toward ... an agreement on understanding and principles."

AROUND THE WORLD:

Anti-Semitism, terrorist activities, the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union, Arab lands and Argentina were the focus of concern by the international

Jewish community. During the year, Palestinian terrorists bombed two synagogues -- one in Paris and one in Vienna -- and also hit Jewish and Israeli installations in other Western European cities.

The plight of Soviet Jewry continued to increase, as Soviet authorities harassed and imprisoned Jews who sought to emigrate or who sought to conduct Hebrew classes and courses on Jewish culture. The final emigration figures for August showed that the lowest number of Jews left the Soviet Union in a decade.

There was an upsurge in neo-Nazi activity in West Germany, along with a growing indication of a linkage between the PLO and neo-Nazi groups and their joint cooperation in Western Europe in terrorist activities against Jews, Israel, non-Jewish friends of Israel, and Western democracies.

Numerous incidents of anti-Semitism were also reported in the United States, Italy, Iran and Argentina

SEPTEMBER 1980 --

France outlaws neo-Nazi organization, the Federation for European and National Action.

Rumanian Orthodox Archbishop Valerian Trifa is stripped of U.S. citizenship in Detroit, ending a five-year-long case. Trifa was accused of inciting a pogrom in 1941 which killed 236 Jews and Christians.

Five Jewish institutions are assaulted in Paris by neo-Nazis within a 48-hour period, including a pre-dawn attack by unidentified gunmen who sprayed bullets into the entrance of the Great Temple.

OCTOBER --

A powerful bomb explodes outside the Rue Copernic Synagogue in Paris killing four persons, injuring 32, and causing extensive damage to the synagogue.

Pope John Paul tells an outdoor mass in Rome that the creation of Israel was responsible for the plight of the Palestinian people and appealed to Moslems and Jews to make Jerusalem a common home and "the crossroads of conciliation and peace."

Premier Menachem Begin lashes out at the French government for encouraging neo-Nazi attacks on Jews by their anti-Israel policies, and denounced the Soviet and Syrian governments for "sadism" toward their Jewish subjects.

Four American Jewish scientists win Nobel Prizes: Dr. Baruj Benacerraf, in the field of physiology; Paul Berg and Walter Gilbert share the prize in the field of chemistry; and Prof. Lawrence Klein wins the prize for his work in the field of economics.

NOVEMBER --

Simon Farzami, an Iranian Jew and editor of the French-language newspaper, "Journal de Teheran," goes before a revolutionary court in Teheran's Evin Prison on charges of spying for the United States.

A report released by the Interior Ministry in West Germany warns of the growing activity and cooperation among neo-Nazi organizations and their increased willingness to resort to violence.

DECEMBER --

Iranian Jewish journalist Simon Farzami is executed by firing squad in Teheran for alleged spying activities for the American government in Iran.

The International Commission of the Red Cross in Geneva announces the opening of its archives on the Nazi persecution during World War II to scholarly research for the first time since the end of the war.

The British Foreign Office official in charge of the Middle East, Sir John Graham, has a secret meeting with PLO chief Yasir Arafat as part of Britain's plans for closer ties with the PLO.

JANUARY 1981 --

Joseph Mengele, chief physician of Auschwitz concentration camp, is reported to be working in an Uruguay prison instructing prison authorities on ways to torture political prisoners.

West Germany reports that in 1980, 152 new war crimes cases were filed.

The Finance Ministry in Bonn discloses that 200 shipments of Nazi propaganda material from abroad were detected by customs officials during 1979, with the bulk of the material originating from the U.S.

FEBRUARY --

Iosif Mendelevich, the last Jewish imprisoned 1970 Leningrad highjack trial defendant, is unexpectedly released from a prison camp in the Soviet Union and arrives shortly thereafter in Israel.

Pope John Paul II and the Chief Rabbi of Rome, Elio Taoff, hold an unprecedented meeting in what is described as an "event of historical import."

Msgr. Jean-Marie Lustiger, a Jewish convert to Catholicism, is appointed by the Pope as Archbishop of Paris, the top post in France's Roman Catholic Church.

MARCH --

Ambassador Romuald Spasowski, Poland's envoy to the U.S., "unequivocally" condemns all anti-Semitic manifestations in Poland, most recently a rally where speakers in Warsaw denounced Jews as a "Zionist clique."

The Vatican's Secretary of State, Augustine Casaroli meets with head of the PLO's political department, Farouk Kaddoumi, at the Vatican in Rome.

Anthropologist Claude Levi Strauss and philosopher Raymond Aron, two French Jews are named by France's intellectual community as two main "trend setters" in the fields of science, letters, art and philosophy.

APRIL --

The well known Italian encyclopedia, "Enciclopedia Curcio," is sued for its definition of Jews as "a person who is stingy, greedy, sordid, and usurious."

MAY --

Francois Mitterrand, a Socialist, wins the French Presidential elections and expresses plans to improve Franco-Israeli relations and adopt a more balanced French policy in the Mideast.

French government announces it will continue to honor all existing international agreements, including arms contracts with Arab nations in the Middle East.

Ten Iranian Jews, including acting Chief Rabbi Barauch Cohen Tzedek, are detained by Iranian authorities for allegedly helping Jews to leave the country.

JUNE --

European governments virtually unanimously condemn Israel's raid of Iraq's nuclear reactor as "barbarous," "intolerable" and a violation of international law.

7,000 Holocaust survivors meet in Jerusalem for the first ever gathering of its kind.

JULY --

Hermine Braunsteiner Ryan is sentenced to life imprisonment in Dusseldorf ending a five-and-one-half-year trial, West Germany's longest war crimes trial in history.

Kurt Ashe is sentenced to seven years imprisonment by a court in Kiel for complicity in the deportation of 25,000 Jews in Belgium to the Auschwitz concentration camp where they died in gas chambers in 1941 to 1942.

French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson confers with Farouk Kaddoumi, foreign affairs spokesman for the PLO.

AUGUST --

The Jewish Agency announces new measures to reduce the number of Soviet Jewish dropouts (noshrim) by referring to HIAS only those Jews for settlement in countries other than Israel who have first degree relatives in other Western countries.

Ghazi Hussein, the first PLO representative to be recognized by a Western government is booted out of Vienna.

Palestinian terrorists set off bombs at the El Al office in Rome's airport, outside the Israel Mission in Athens and in the garden adjacent to the Israeli embassy in Vienna.

Two people are killed and 18 wounded as two terrorists launch a gun and grenade attack on a crowded synagogue in Vienna.

SEPTEMBER --

The House of Representatives adopts resolution granting honorary citizenship to Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat-businessman who is credited with rescuing some 100,000 Hungarian Jews during World War II. Only the signature of President Reagan is left to make Wallenberg the second foreigner to be granted such status.

Only 430 Jews arrived in Vienna in August from the Soviet Union, the lowest monthly figure in the decade.

THE AMERICAN SCENE:

The United States was in a severe economic crisis which President Reagan said could be solved only by massive budget cuts and economic reforms. The organized Jewish community found that the budget cuts were affecting some of their communal programs.

Concern was expressed in some Jewish quarters that the increasing influence of such conservative religious groups as the Moral Majority was posing a danger to the pluralistic nature of American society, while others welcomed this development because of the avowed pro-Israeli statements by some of these organizations.

In addition, a greater number of Jews expressed concern over the growth of neo-Nazi groups and the Ku Klux Klan. There was an increasing number of anti-Semitic acts, including synagogue vandalism, daubings of synagogues and Jewish-owned buildings or buildings where there were Jewish organizations, and the proliferation of hate literature. The Jewish community was also active in pressuring the Justice Department to ferret out and prosecute Nazi war criminals living in this country.

SEPTEMBER 1980 --

Georgetown University accepts an endowment of \$1 million from the government of Kuwait for its Georgetown Center for Contemporary Arab studies, raising the total contributions to the center by eight Arab governments to \$3,305,000 since its founding in 1975.

Denaturalization hearings start in the case of Nazi War criminal Wolodymir Osidach who is alleged to have beaten, shot and killed unarmed Jewish civilians while serving as commandant of the Ukrainian police in Rawa Ruska between 1941-1945 and to have rounded up and transported Jews to extermination camps during the war.

Leading Baptist Ministers and educators in several states strongly deplore Dr. Bailey Smith, president of the 13-million member Southern Baptist Convention, for his public remark that "God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew."

OCTOBER --

Thousands gather in Evanston, Ill. on the Northwestern University campus in a community-wide interfaith demonstration of solidarity with traditional American values to counter a rally staged by American Nazis just three miles away at Lovelace Park.

The Rev. Jerry Falwell, head of the Moral Majority, disavows his statement that only those redeemed by Jesus Christ could have their prayers answered.

NOVEMBER --

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith expresses deep concern over the results of two congressional races — in California and Michigan — in which avowedly racist and anti-Semitic candidates received a total of 75,000 votes in the national elections.

DECEMBER --

A fire set by arsonists ravaged Temple Beth David in the San Gabriel area of Los Angeles county causing over \$130,000 in damage.

Annual survey by the ADL indicates a sharp increase in anti-Semitic incidents during 1980 as compared to 1979.

JANUARY 1981 --

Vandals spraypaint swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on the outside walls of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies in Los Angeles.

The U.S. Supreme Court rules that Feodor Fedorenko violated U.S. law in his application for U.S. citizenship 11 years ago and he is no longer a U.S. citizen. The ruling opens the door to deportation proceedings against the alleged Nazi war criminal.

FEBRUARY --

Georgetown University returns to the government of Libya a gift of \$600,000 which that country contributed over the past four years to the University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies.

104 members of the House ask Reagan to put aside \$3 million in the new proposed U.S. budget for the continuing persecution of Nazi war criminals living in the U.S.

MARCH --

President Reagan is wounded in an assassination attempt, along with three others, including White House Press Secretary James Brady, by John Hinckley, Jr., who is linked to the neo-Nazi Socialist Party of America and to Posse Comitatus, a right-wing, racist group.

Nazi war criminals Wolodymir Osidach and Feodor Federenko are ordered stripped of their U.S. citizenship in two separate cases in Fort Lauderdale and Philadelphia.

APRIL --

The House Judiciary Committee restores \$118,000 that Reagan had cut from the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigation budget for the 1982 fiscal year starting Oct. 1.

The House rejects the Reagan proposal to rescind \$12.5 million in appropriations this year to help Soviet Jewish refugees settle in Israel.

MAY --

\$1 million is committed to the Harvard Divinity School by the Albert A. List Foundation to establish the first endowed professorship in Jewish studies in the U.S. at a Protestant or Catholic seminary.

JUNE --

Reagan meets with Avital Shcharansky and Iosif Mendelevich and promises to do all he can to help Prisoner of Conscience Anatoly Shcharansky.

The Administration condemns Israel for its raid on Iraq's nuclear reactor and halts delivery of military planes to Israel.

Federal District Court judge in Cleveland rules that the citizenship of John Demjanjuk be "revoked, vacated and cancelled" for lying about his past wartime activities upon entering the U.S.

Reagan is asked by 142 members of Congress to seek release of some 5,000 Jews in Syria.

JULY --

Although anti-Semitic incidents are on the rise in the U.S., a report issued by the American Jewish Committee finds that anti-Semitism has declined in this country since the last poll in 1964.

AUGUST --

Karl Linna, accused of supervising the execution of prisoners in the concentration camp in Tartu, Estonia, has his citizenship revoked by a Federal District Court judge in Long Island, N.Y.

SEPTEMBER --

Sen. Barry Goldwater (R. Ariz.) asserts he would be in favor of opening a dialogue with the PLO if that would help reduce international terrorism.

INSIDE ISRAEL:

Israel had its national elections and reelected Premier Menachem Begin and his Likud government by giving him 48 seats in the Knesset to 47 seats for the Labor Alignment. In order to achieve a majority of 61 seats in the 120 seat Knesset, Begin formed an alliance with the National Religious Party, Agudat Israel and Tami to acquire the necessary mandates.

The religious parties obtained a coalition agreement that the controversial "Who is a Jew" amendment to the Law of Return would be dealt with within two years. The Law of Return with the proposed amendment stirred a controversy among Reform and Conservative Jews in Israel and in the diaspora.

Settlement policies continue despite opposition of international governments and the United Nations. Ariel Sharon, the new Defense Minister, announced a new conciliatory policy toward the Arabs on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Terrorist attacks on Israel's northern towns and settlements continued unabated until a cessation of hostilities was signed, with the aid of the U.S.

The Finance Minister undertook a series of economic reforms which he said would reduce triple digit inflation to double digit inflation. Israel also celebrated its 33rd anniversary.

JANUARY 1981 -- Finance Minister Yigael Hurwitz resigns from the Cabinet.

FEBRUARY -- The centrist political party, the Democratic Movement for Change, founded by Deputy Premier Yigael Yadin, which surged to prominence by winning 15 seats in the 1977 Knesset elections, is dissolved by its founders.

APRIL -- Former Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan announces he will run in the Knesset elections at the head of a new party, Telem, (Movement for National Renewal).

MAY -- Religious Affairs Minister Aharon Abu Hatzeira breaks away from the National Religious Party and announces he will head a new religious party called Tami (Movement for Israel's Tradition.)

JUNE -- Israel, Egypt and the U.S. open another round in Jerusalem on the creation of the multinational peacekeeping force to patrol Sinai after Israel's final withdrawal in April 1982.

JULY -- The Central Election Committee announces official results of elections -- Likud, 48 parliamentary seats, to Labor's 47 -- almost assuring Begin of another term as Premier although coalition is expected to be barely enough to last the full four years.

The 11th Maccabiah Games are played in Israel. AUGUST -- Begin signs a coalition agreement bringing the National Religious Party, Agudat Israel and Tami into the Likud bloc to form a bare majority of 61 seats in the 120-seat parliament. Begin calls for a defense treaty with the United States.

SEPTEMBER -- The Israeli Supreme Court rules that the rabbinate has no legal right to determine state policy. The ruling, which could have far-reaching effects, stems from the controversy between religious groups and archaeologists over the City of David excavation.

Israel's population at the beginning of 5741 was 3,968,000. Of this, 3,315,000 are Jews and 653,000 non-Jews.