The period under review in this article, as in most articles in this volume, is July 1, 1955, through June 30, 1956. The significant political and military developments that took place after the cut-off date (Israel's "invasion" of the Sinai desert on November 6, 1956, the subsequent "police action" by Great Britain and France, and the consequences of these actions) will be treated at length in the American Jewish Year Book, 1958 (Vol. 59).

Population

Israel's population of 1,823,000 on June 1, 1956, included 1,621,000 Jews and 202,000 non-Jews. In 1955, the population rose by over 71,000, of whom 64,000 were Jews. The first five months of 1956 added 34,000 (more than 30,000 Jews and more than 3,000 non-Jews). In 1955 the net surplus of persons entering the country over those leaving was over 31,000. In the first five months of 1956, net immigration was 17,000.

Whereas from 1949 to 1951 net immigration had supplied over 80 per cent of Israel's population increase, over 80 per cent of the rise in the next three years came from natural increase. But during 1955–56, net immigration contributed 47 per cent of the population increase. This was due mainly to renewed mass immigration from North Africa. Of 22,000 immigrants during the first five months of 1956, almost 20,000 came from North Africa (over 17,000 from Morocco). Most of the immigrants were in the younger age groups. Only 4.5 per cent were over sixty, and more than 40 per cent were under fifteen. Emigration from Israel appeared to be on the decrease. Fewer than 4,000 declared emigrants left Israel in 1955. In 1952 the number had been over 11,000, but it gradually decreased in the following years. The Americas, and especially the United States, continued to be the chief goal of emigrants.

Vital Statistics

The Jewish birth rate in Israel in the first half of 1956 was 26.73, as against 27.22 in 1955, 27.35 in 1954, and 30.23 in 1953. The birth rate of the non-Jewish minorities, especially Moslems, continued to be among the highest in the world—52.20 in the first half of 1956, 50.10 in 1955, and 45.08 in 1954. It was still rising, while the Jewish birth rate was starting to fall. Infant mortality among Jews was 33.59 per 1,000 births in 1955, as against 34.12 in 1954 and 35.66 in 1953. Infant mortality among the minorities remained about 60 per 1,000 births. Jewish life expectancy rose for males from 65.2 years in 1949, to 67.3 in 1951, 67.5 in 1954, and 69.4 in 1955; for females it was 67.9 in 1949, 70.1 in 1951, 70.5 in 1954, and 72.1 in 1955.
Men outnumbered women by 1,031 to 1,000 at the end of 1955. The excess was mainly in the younger age groups. Israel had a young population, with 33.5 per cent under fifteen years of age, 43.5 per cent from fifteen through forty-four, 18.3 per cent from forty-five through sixty-four, and 4.7 per cent over sixty-five. Those under fifteen rose from 28.7 per cent in 1948 to 33.5 per cent in 1955. Since those over forty-five increased from 18.9 per cent in 1948 to 23.0 per cent in 1955, the proportion of persons of normal working age fell from 52.4 per cent in 1948 to 43.5 per cent in 1955.

Population Movement and Distribution

Major movements of population inside Israel continued. In 1955 270,000 persons moved. Some 170,000 of them migrated from one part of the country to another. The chief shift was into the Greater Tel Aviv area, Galilee, and the Negev, and from the coastal plain between Hadera and Rehovoth (except for the Greater Tel Aviv area). There was little change in the Jerusalem and Haifa areas. But the shift into the Tel Aviv area was only 2.5 per cent of its population, while gains from migration to the Negev and Galilee in 1955 amounted to 14 per cent and 10 per cent of their respective populations. The Jewish population of the Negev rose from less than 3,000 (0.4 per cent of Israel's Jews) in 1948 to over 83,000 (5.3 per cent) in 1956. In 1948 some 7.7 per cent of the Jewish population (53,000) lived in Galilee and the northern valleys; in 1956, almost 11 per cent (170,000). The Greater Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem areas accounted in 1948 for over 80 per cent of the Jewish population, but in 1956 for less than 60 per cent. The agricultural sector gained at the expense of the urban. In 1956, rural settlements contained almost 24 per cent of the Jewish population. Growth was especially marked in cooperative settlements (moshavim ovdim and moshavim shitufim) rather than in communal settlements (kibbutzim and kvutzot). The population of the former rose from 30,000 in 1948 to almost 100,000 in 1955, while communal settlements increased only from 54,000 in 1948 to 78,000 in 1956. The proportion living in kibbutzim tended to fall steadily, despite the establishment of many new kibbutzim. The total number of settlements of all kinds at the end of 1955 was 884. Of these, 111 were non-Jewish, mainly Arab villages. Fifty-one were urban, 26 of them cities and townships with more than 10,000 inhabitants, including Tel Aviv with 364,000, Haifa with 158,000, and Jerusalem with 146,000. The remainder were rural, including 300 cooperative settlements and 225 communal settlements. The number of Jewish rural settlements more than doubled from 1948 to 1956.

Agricultural Settlement and Development

There were 720 Jewish agricultural settlements in Israel in 1955. Of these, 446 had been established since 1948. Their 31,000 families cultivated 1,500,000 dunams (375,000 acres) at the end of 1955, and their output was 40 per cent of the total agricultural production of Israel. In 1955, twenty new settlements with 1,100 farm units were established in the Negev. Settlement activities during 1955 were concentrated mainly in the Lakhish area, the model for a new type of settlement treating each region as a unit in planning cultivation, water usage, and public buildings. From January 1955 to May 1956,
twenty-five agricultural settlements were established in the Lakhish area, for a total investment of £15,000,000. In addition, a village center was established for the region, including educational, health, and economic facilities. The foundation was laid for an industrial urban center, with additional services and industrial facilities for processing the agricultural output of the region—especially cotton. An irrigation network covered 100,000 dunams (25,000 acres). A smaller regional settlement area was established in the Ta’anakh area near the Jordanian frontier, where six settlements were founded covering 60,000 dunams (15,000 acres). In both regions most of the settlers were immigrants from North Africa, brought to their new homes directly from the ships on which they arrived. Full employment in development work, soil preparation, and irrigation, was assured to these settlers until they could live on the production of their soil.

Agricultural development work in the older settlements came to £66,500,000. In July 1956 a special marketing company was set up to aid the new Negev settlements. For mainly defensive reasons, a number of border settlements were established for army veterans with agricultural training.

In the hill region, development centered in the Upper Galilee and Judean areas. The Jewish National Fund published a five-year plan for the reclamation of 300,000 dunams in the hill region for tillage and 150,000 dunams for afforestation, and for the settlement of 12,000 families of new immigrants in work villages and other hill settlements. In addition to agricultural settlements, small towns were established in the development areas. Their inhabitants were to subsist on development work and part-time farming. Such towns were founded at Dimona near Sodom, at Ofakim, and at Shderot and Azata in the Western Negev. Several hundred families of North African immigrants were settled at Eilath during 1955–56. To encourage settlement at Israel’s Red Sea port, the government exempted inhabitants and investors at Eilath from income tax.

Domestic Politics

Prolonged negotiations for a new coalition followed the July 1955 elections to the third Knesset (“parliament”). On November 2, 1955, David Ben Gurion formed a sixteen-member cabinet, with himself as prime minister. Represented in the cabinet were Mapai, Achdut Ha'avoda, Mapam, the recently merged Hapoel Hamizrachi and Mizrachi, and the Progressives. Mapai had nine ministers; Achdut Ha-avoda, Mapam, and Hapoel Hamizrachi-Mizrachi, two each; and the Progressives, one. The new government’s platform did not differ basically from that of previous cabinets. Special emphasis was laid on Israel’s defense and her sovereignty and territorial integrity. The work of the coalition proceeded without any major clashes. The question of civil service salaries (see below) led to the temporary withdrawal of the Progressives, but this crisis and the friction with Hapoel Hamizrachi-Mizrachi over the appointment of a deputy minister of education and over Sabbath observance were solved without basically endangering the government. Poale Agudat Israel usually supported the coalition, with Agudat Israel’s representatives abstaining in Knesset votes on foreign affairs and defense. In May 1956 it was decided that a minister, if unable for reasons of conscience to
support the cabinet on a question of confidence, must resign before the vote (see below).

In June 1956 Moshe Sharett resigned from the post of foreign minister which he had held since 1948. This resulted from differences of opinion between Sharett and Ben Gurion on the coordination of foreign affairs and defense policy; there was also a background of personal differences. On June 18 Golda Myerson (who subsequently Hebraized her last name to Meir) was appointed foreign minister to replace Sharett.

The third Knesset opened its first winter session on October 17, 1955. In July 1956 the Knesset started to debate a basic law to codify its rules and mode of election. The only major innovation proposed was to give parliamentary investigating commissions the right to subpoena witnesses.

In view of criticism leveled against luxurious living and high personal expense accounts, the Mapai executive on January 26, 1956, called on its representatives in the Knesset and in various public bodies to live a life of austerity. The eighth congress of the Histadrut (whose membership was 852,000, 53.6 per cent of the total Jewish population) decided in March 1956 to decentralize its subsidiary organs, including its health services, Kupat Holim, and to increase the workers' share in managing the Histadrut enterprises. The executive of the Histadrut appointed a twenty-one member committee, under the chairmanship of Israel Guri, to revise its constitution, which had remained unchanged for many years.

Within Mapai, differences of opinion arose over Sharett's resignation and a proposal to name him secretary general of the party. Another subject of controversy was the demand of the group known as the Young Generation for decentralization and for a cut in the power of the party officials. The party's eighth congress was to have taken place in July 1956, but was postponed to August 26, 1956, to permit preparation of an economic program and the formulation of proposals for a wage policy.

In May 1956, Mordecai Oren, a Mapam leader, was released from a Prague prison after more than four years of imprisonment on charges of Zionist espionage against the Czech regime (see American Jewish Year Book, 1955 [Vol. 56], p. 416). After his return, Oren explained that his imprisonment had been due to the "degeneration of the personnel" of the Czech regime. He gave a detailed description of the tortures he had suffered; at the same time he renewed his expressions of faith in the future of the "world of socialism." Mapam expressed its shock at Oren's treatment, and at the fact that despite his release he had not been rehabilitated by the Czech authorities. These developments, as well as the arming of Egypt by the Soviet bloc (see below), brought Mapam closer to other Zionist socialist parties than to the anti-Zionist Communists; there was some discussion of a possible merger of Mapai, Achdut Ha-avoda, and Mapam.

Prolonged discussions took place between the two main parties of the right—Herut at the extreme and the General Zionists in the center—on the possibility of a merger. A liberal group within the General Zionist Party, especially those elements represented in the World Federation of General Zionists, opposed a merger, as did the workers' group of Herut. The workers'
section of the General Zionists, which had participated in the elections to the eighth Histadrut congress, split away from the party.

On June 20, 1956, the Hapoel Hamizrachi and Mizrahi merged to form the National Religious Party. It was decided that the united party would deal with all questions except labor and settlement problems, on which the Hapoel Hamizrachi would continue to pursue an independent policy.

After the twentieth congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February 1956 (see p. 305) the Israel Communists also attempted a change of line, including a popular front approach to the socialist parties. They even went so far as to request the World Jewish Congress to be allowed to join that body. They also started to condemn Stalin’s crimes against Soviet Jewish culture.

On the other hand, there was a purge of Communists who were discontented with the unconditional support given to Gamal Abdel Nasser’s regime in Egypt; at the same time Arab nationalists were also removed. Following the anti-Stalin ideological crisis, many members left the Communist ranks.

**Foreign Relations**

Israel’s policy in 1955–56 was dominated, as always, by the search for security in the face of Arab threats. Israel felt increasingly that she could expect no help from the great powers in obtaining a peace settlement on any basis which did not involve major territorial concessions and the return of the Arab refugees. In Sir Anthony Eden’s Guildhall speech of November 9, 1955, the British prime minister called for a compromise between Israel’s present frontiers and the much smaller limits proposed in the United Nations (UN) 1947 partition plan. Soviet hostility to Israel showed itself both by official statements and propaganda, and by Soviet voting in the Security Council. After the signing of the Baghdad Pact in the spring of 1955 (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1956 [Vol. 57], p. 512), Iraq had become the main recipient in the area of Western arms, American as well as British. Britain had always supplied Jordan and Egypt, and continued arms deliveries to the latter. France continued her traditional supplies to Syria, as well as to Egypt until the Suez crisis (see p. 398). And above all, the Czech arms deal with Egypt (see p. 205) gave the Arab states their first force approaching the proportions of a modern army. Israel had long sought a mutual defense treaty with the United States that would guarantee her borders. But a statement by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in August 1955 indicated that United States willingness to guarantee the borders between Israel and the Arab states was dependent on prior agreement between the parties concerned (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1956, [Vol. 57], p. 283-84). After the entry of the Soviet Union into the area by the arms deal with Egypt, Israel feared that the United States and Britain would try to prevent a conflagration in the area by quickly imposing a peace settlement in which Israel would have to make all the concessions. When Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett visited the United States at the end of 1955, the subject of peace terms came up repeatedly. Israel reiterated that at the peace table she would be prepared to discuss mutually convenient economic and transport arrangements between herself and her neighbors, as well as minor and mutual border adjustments and some in-
ternationally backed resettlement scheme for refugees. But Israel was not prepared to make unilateral territorial concessions or permit large-scale repatriation of refugees. Sharett's visit to the United States came after his unsuccessful appeal to the Big Four foreign ministers at Geneva in November 1955 (see p. 206) to restore the arms balance which had been upset by the Czech arms deal. Neither at Geneva nor in Washington was this plea granted.

The Czech arms deal and the increasingly close relations—political, economic, and cultural—between the countries of the Soviet bloc and the Arab world (except Iraq) brought about a deterioration in these countries' relations with Israel. This was shown by Khrushchev's speech of December 1955 and articles in the Soviet press denouncing Israel as a tool of imperialism. But there was a more cautious (and balanced) tone to Soviet statements on the Middle East between February and April 1956, reflecting Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalinism at the twentieth Communist Party Congress in February. A considerable increase in immigration to Israel was permitted by most Soviet bloc countries, including the Soviet Union, usually under a family reunion scheme. (Poland came closest to allowing free immigration.) Commercial relations with the Soviet bloc improved (e.g., the Israel-Soviet fuel agreement of the spring of 1956). Relations with Czechoslovakia improved after the release of Mordecai Oren (see p. 323). The worst clash with the Soviet bloc came when the Bulgarians in July 1955 shot down an El Al civil airliner which had accidentally strayed from its course. There were large casualties, and a wave of indignation passed across Israel; matters were not improved by the slowness of the Bulgarian authorities in dealing with Israel's claims for compensation and in punishing those responsible.

Israel continued to seek close relations with the former colonial countries in Asia and Africa. After the visit of Burmese Premier Nu to Israel relations between Burma and Israel became close in all fields—including the economic. Israel also established closer relations with other Asian-African countries, including Ethiopia (on the consular level) and Japan.

Guatemala and Uruguay decided to establish their legations in Jerusalem, a special mark of friendship, since most foreign diplomatic representatives continued to reside in Tel Aviv, refusing to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

France increasingly supported Israel's position, largely because she was in conflict with Egypt in North Africa.

Guerrilla Warfare

During 1955–56 it was mainly Egyptian forces which carried on the “small war” against Israel. A special force of Palestinian refugees, mainly in commando units, penetrated a considerable distance into Israel for purposes of murder, sabotage, and espionage. In August 1955 the Egyptians started a series of concerted attacks against Israel frontier patrols, against border settlements, and against settlements deep within Israel territory. On the night of August 31, 1955, Israeli forces attacked the training camp of the fedayeen (Egyptian suicide squads) at Khan Yunis, destroying all the military installations
Following the Egyptian-Czech arms deal in September 1955, the Egyptians placed large forces along the Sinai frontier, although the armistice permitted only small check-points in the “defensive zone” between Abu Aghila and Nitsana (El Auja); the Egyptians also removed the frontier markers along the boundary in the Nitsana zone. Israel forces then moved into the Nitsana demilitarized zone. After UN intervention, an agreement was reached in October 1955 whereby only Israel police forces were to be left in the Nitsana zone, while the Egyptians were to cease their violations of the armistice agreement in the area.

In spite of the cease-fire agreement reached after the Khan Yunis incident, the Egyptians continued their fedayeen activities. After an Israeli soldier was kidnapped and murdered by Syrians in October, an Israel force captured a Syrian officer, a noncommissioned officer, and three soldiers, in retaliation.

On October 26, 1955, Egyptian forces entered the Nitsana zone and attacked an Israel checkpoint. Two days later Egyptian forces started to entrench themselves in the demilitarized zone. An Israel force then attacked the Egyptian post at Kuntila, on the approach route to the demilitarized zone, and overran it. After four UN appeals had failed to make the Egyptians leave the demilitarized zone, where they now had artillery and armored forces, Israel attacked the Egyptian base at Es-Sabha. Two major Egyptian positions were captured.

In the meantime, the Syrians had violated the armistice agreement by attacking Israel fishing and police vessels, and by penetrating into the thirty-three foot strip of Israel territory on the eastern shore of Lake Tiberias. There were twenty-six attacks against Israeli fishermen several hundred meters from the shore, and on December 10, 1955, the Syrians fired on fishing and police vessels one kilometer from the eastern shore of the lake. Two nights later, Israel forces attacked Syrian positions situated at least partly within Israel territory and destroyed them.

In March and April 1956, guerrilla warfare against Israel was renewed both by the Egyptians and the Jordanians. On April 5, five settlements near the Gaza strip were shelled by the Egyptians; the Israel army then shelled the military camps in the Gaza strip and the Egyptian headquarters at Jebel Muntar in retaliation. Following a cease-fire, the Egyptians, between April 7 and 11, sent hundreds of fedayeen into Israel. They carried out attacks on vehicles, houses, and water installations, as well as sabotaging the railway lines. The Israel security forces killed eleven of the terrorists, and five were captured. The captured terrorists said that most members of the organization were Palestinians, many with criminal pasts, who had been forced to enter the Egyptian Intelligence Service and to carry out murder and sabotage in Israel. They said that they had been recruited, trained, and sent into Israel by the officer in charge of Intelligence in the Gaza strip, Colonel Mustafa Hafez. In July 1956 Mustafa Hafez was killed in mysterious circumstances in an Egyptian camp near Gaza. On April 12, Israel Air Force planes discovered four Egyptian planes over the southern Negev and shot down one.

In July 1956 Jordan concentrated large forces, in excess of the limitations imposed by the armistice agreement, in the Jerusalem area, and Jordanian infiltrators attacked border settlements in the center and north. Major-Gen-
eral Eedson L. B. Burns, chief of staff of the UN Truce Supervision Organization, issued a grave warning to the Jordanian authorities to refrain from such attacks; a period of relative quiet followed, prior to Hammarskjöld's second visit on July 18, 1956.

Arabs

Arabs constituted about 90 per cent of Israel's total minority population, which in 1955–56 exceeded 200,000. The total number of Moslem and Christian and Moslem Arabs in Israel was estimated at 180,000, the remaining minorities consisting mainly of Druzes and European and other non-Arab Christians. The economic, social, and cultural position of Israel's Arabs improved steadily during 1955–56. No marked changes, however, took place in their political status. The tension along Israel's borders and the nationalism aroused throughout the Arab world tended to postpone the date when the government felt that the Israel Arab minority could be fully assimilated into political life as citizens sharing political duties and privileges. A commission was appointed in November 1955 by Premier David Ben Gurion to investigate the possibility of limiting military government in certain minority areas. Military rule was one of the major complaints of the Arab minority. The commission reported in March 1956 that it was necessary to continue military government to avoid grave security problems in border areas populated by Arabs, and that this necessity would probably continue as long as there was no peace between Israel and the Arab states. The commission, however, called for improved standards for the personnel and methods of functioning of the military government, as well as for a relaxation in granting movement permits to Arab workers employed outside their villages. The commission also found that many Israel Arabs maintained unlawful contact with members of their families resident in enemy countries, and that these contacts were frequently exploited by hostile powers for the purpose of espionage and smuggling. The commission found that many Israel Arabs had joined the Communist Party; not necessarily because they sympathized with the party's aims, but rather because the party carried on a propaganda campaign against the Israel government and appealed to the nationalism of the minority, which identified the government with the Jewish state. Nevertheless, the attraction of the Communist Party in the Arab sector declined in the elections to the third Knesset. Arab Christians, and especially the Greek Catholics under the leadership of Bishop George Hakim, tended to recognize the institutions of the state and to reduce propaganda against it. They also showed a feeling that the present status was a permanent and stable one by increasing their building activities—especially in the case of churches. Three churches were completed during 1955–56, and four more were under construction. The elders of the Arab Christian community encouraged young men from Haifa, Nazareth, and the Arab villages in Galilee to volunteer for the armed services, where special units were established for them. During 1955–56 work was started on conscripting members of the Druze minority for the regular national service period of two and one-half years. Some Druze elders objected to conscription (Druze volunteer units had participated in the Israel defense forces since the establishment of the state), but this was due mainly
to internal differences among the Druze leadership on other matters. This factor also delayed recognition of the Druzes as a religious entity separate from the Moslem community; however, the government was fully agreed on this step, and the necessary sums were already budgeted for the support of Druze institutions (as for all recognized religious communities in Israel).

In spite of difficulties due to Arab political traditions and to security considerations, great progress was made in granting local self-government to Arab towns and settlements, and in arranging for local tax collection and for Arab participation in the establishment of cultural, health, and social institutions. There were two Arab municipalities (Nazareth and Shfar'am) and sixteen Arab local councils. The government conducted short courses in local government laws for Arab officials. The collection of income tax from Arab citizens improved, although the average Jewish citizen still paid almost twenty-five times as much in taxation as the average Arab citizen (in 1954–55 he had paid almost forty times as much). In the 120 settlements of the minorities there were 129 schools (apart from mixed Arab-Jewish areas), nine of them secondary schools, with a total of 29,000 pupils. More than sixty Arab students (including one girl) were studying at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and about a dozen were studying at the Technion in Haifa.

More than 6,000 Arabs were members of the Histadrut, and almost 18,000 (including dependents) were insured in its health services. More than £750,000 of frozen Waqf funds (Moslem religious benefices) had been released by the development authority and invested in religious, health, and social enterprises serving the 140,000 Moslems in Israel. The funds served to repair mosques, to maintain Moslem cemeteries, to pay the salaries of Moslem religious judges, to construct an Arab old age home, to provide scholarships for thirty young Moslem girls studying in the Jaffa Arab teachers' seminar, and to construct regional health centers at Tira and at Baq'ah el Gharbieh in the Little Triangle (the Samarian hills). In May 1956 the Tira regional health center was opened; the ministry of health also contributed funds towards its construction. It was to serve some 15,000 inhabitants of the six Arab villages of the area. The Israel Broadcasting Service increased its Arabic service to three hours daily.

Jewish Agency

According to a report to the twenty-fourth Zionist Congress, the Jewish Agency from May 1948 to December 1955 spent $708,600,000 on the absorption of 800,000 new immigrants, the development of 216 settlements founded before the establishment of the state, and 395 settlements founded subsequently, the maintenance and education of more than 40,000 children and adolescents, and other economic, educational, cultural, and propaganda activities. During 1954–55 the agency spent £122,000,000 of which £5,400,000 went to immigration, £7,200,000 to the absorption of immigration, £8,200,000 to the immigration of children and adolescents, £72,200,000 to settlement, £5,500,000 to education, culture, and youth work, £9,900,000 to the cancellation of debts, and £13,600,000 to other activities. The agency's budget for the current Jewish year (September 15, 1955 through September 5, 1956) was increased in January 1956 by £13,000,000 to £157,000,000, to assist
increased immigration from North Africa and to absorb 45,000 immigrants. The agency undertook the exclusive responsibility for housing immigrants, which was previously also dealt with in the state budget.

The twenty-fourth Zionist Congress opened in Jerusalem on April 24, 1956, with 500 delegates, 300 of them from abroad. The congress, held under the chairmanship of Joseph Sprinzak, lasted ten days, and devoted most of its attention to political problems and the dangers threatening Israel from the Arab states, as well as the need for increased immigration from North Africa. Organizationally, the congress decided to base itself on the national territorial grouping of Zionist bodies, and to open its doors to non-Zionists.

Nahum Goldmann was elected president of the World Zionist Organization, and it was decided to abolish the distinction between a chairman of the Zionist executive resident in Jerusalem and a chairman resident in New York. Eighteen members were elected to the executive of the Jewish Agency.

During 1955–56 the agency persuaded several hundred youngsters from the United States, the United Kingdom, the Union of South Africa, and Latin America to come to Israel for a year's service in border settlements or for a year's agricultural training.

**Economic Developments**

During 1955–56 defense expenditure on such items as emergency stocks, arms acquisition, and the building of fortifications and shelters increased considerably. The drought of the winter of 1955, which reduced local food production, the increase in the import of capital goods, and a 6 per cent increase in prices on the world market brought about a large expenditure of foreign currency. Wages and salaries increased by £60,000,000. There was a considerable growth in the consumption of food and durable industrial goods. The population changed its consumption habits, spending more money on food, which was now plentiful, though at higher prices, and less on clothing and footwear. This depressed the textile and leather industries, and reduced the incentive to produce for export in other branches. Net national income in 1955 increased by 7.5 per cent to £1,663,000,000. The gap in the trade balance (in products and services) rose from $240,000,000 in 1954 to $303,700,000 in 1955. At the end of 1955 there was a 20 per cent rise in money in circulation and bank credit. During the first three months of 1956, the national output rose by 8 per cent, as compared with the same period in the previous year. There was a 10 per cent rise in agriculture and also in work financed by the government. There was, however, a 15 per cent decline in building, because of a restriction on government building work.

A rise in demand brought about a rise in the cost of living. The index rose from 228 in January 1955 to 238 in January 1956. By July 1956, the index had risen to 249 points (a rise of 11 points in six months, as compared with a rise of 10 points in the whole of 1955). The rise in prices led to demands for wage and salary increases. In spite of the population increase and a 6 per cent rise in the working population in 1955, there had been no increase in unemployment since 1954. In the first half of 1956, however, there was an increase in the average number of unemployed.
FOREIGN TRADE AND FINANCE

Imports in 1955 were $433,000,000, against $375,000,000 in 1954. Exports rose to $189,000,000 from $135,000,000 in 1954. During the first six months of 1956, exports were $65,000,000, against $54,000,000 in the same period of 1955. Agricultural exports were $35,600,000 as compared to $27,800,000, while industrial exports rose by $1,000,000. Imports were $183,000,000, an increase of $21,000,000 over the 1955 period.

Citrus fruit was still the leading export. Next in order came diamonds, followed by textile products, metal goods, vehicles, and building materials, especially cement. Israel's leading customers were the United States (mainly because of the increase in diamond exports), Britain (the main customer for citrus fruit and products), Turkey, and Finland. These countries took 60 per cent of her exports in 1955. Turkish import restrictions limited Turkish-Israel trade. In 1955 Israel was a party to fourteen commercial agreements, one payments agreement, and one barter agreement. Israel export goods were sent to more than eighty countries, ten of which bought more than four-fifths of all Israel's exports.

The Israel Bank, opened in November 1954, reached 360,600,000 in property and commitments. The bank advised the government in November 1955 that a further rise in the means of payment might endanger the stability of the currency and of the country's economy, and recommended balanced budgets, limiting credits in proportion to real output, and the prevention of any rise in personal incomes without corresponding rise in productivity. The government decided to end credit financing of its expenditure, limit public works, and increase taxes and efficiency in tax collection. In January 1956 the Bank Leumi raised its interest rates from 8 per cent to 9 per cent, and the rates of the Post Office Savings Bank were raised from 2 per cent to 3 per cent in April 1956. In April 1956 the governor of the bank advised an increase of bank credit by 3 per cent over the period of credit freeze in November 1954. This proposal was accepted by the ministerial economic committee, which granted £7,500,000 additional credit to agriculture and export industries.

An effort was made to absorb inflationary money surpluses and finance development through various savings plans aligned to the cost of living or the exchange value of the dollar.

The regular budget for 1955–56 estimated income at £775,400,000 and expenditure at £778,200,000. The defense budget also included a deficit. Income tax fell £3,000,000 below the estimate, and indirect taxes were £12,000,000 short. However, other sections of the state revenues brought a surplus of £9,000,000 over the estimate, mainly from higher excise collections on cigarettes, alcohol, and building materials. On March 22, 1956, the 1956–57 budget of £769,300,000 was approved. Of this, £306,700,000 went to the development budget. The foreign currency budget for 1956–57 was $480,000,000 (against $402,000,000 for 1955–56).

On May 27, 1956, the Knesset approved a special defense fund of £55,000,000. This was financed by £19,000,000 contributed or pledged to the defense fund, from additional income tax of up to 8 per cent, and from increased indirect taxation. In addition the cabinet decided to cut the expendi-
ture of the various ministries—except for education and health—by up to 2 per cent to cover the increased expenditure on civil service salaries.

Foreign Aid

Grants-in-aid and other unilateral contributions totaled $224,000,000 in money and goods during 1955—$9,000,000 less than in 1954. Private transfers by residents and immigrants supplied $9,200,000, private investments from abroad $24,200,000, personal restitution from Germany $18,800,000, gifts $9,500,000, German collective restitution $88,700,000, United States grants-in-aid and technical aid $23,100,000, American United Jewish Appeal (UJA) and other fund-raising organizations $38,200,000, the Consolidation Loan $6,300,000, and transfers by the government and official organizations in goods $6,400,000. The total indebtedness of the state in foreign currency rose from $403,700,000 at the end of 1954 to $450,000,000 at the end of 1955.

In 1955 Israel Development Bonds brought $40,500,000, a 20 per cent increase over 1954. During the first six months of 1956 bonds brought $24,000,000, compared to $17,500,000 during the same period of 1955. The emergency fund of the UJA brought in $17,500,000, while a loan to the value of $20,000,000 was received under a guarantee extended by the Jewish communities of the United States.

UN technical aid to Israel was raised in 1956 from $366,000 to $401,366. Through Keren Hayesod (Palestine Foundation Fund), Israel received a seven-year loan of 2.25 million pounds sterling from British banks for the purchase of goods, especially transport equipment, in Britain.

Agriculture

Despite the drought, 1955 agricultural output rose 5 per cent to £342,850,000 (at 1954 prices), and food imports fell £2,400,000, in spite of the population increase. Total investment in agriculture in 1955 was £127,400,000. Of this, 33.9 per cent came from the government's development budget, 38.2 per cent from the Jewish Agency, and 27.9 per cent from the farmers themselves. At the beginning of 1956 the irrigated area was about 950,000 dunams, an increase of some 200,000 dunams over the previous year. There were bumper grain, plantation and field crops.

Some 370,000,000 cubic meters of water were available to agriculture. A national water plan was completed in February 1956, by which an estimated expenditure of £350,000,000 would place 1,800 million cubic meters of water annually at the country's disposal in ten years' time. This would make it possible to support a population of some three million. Work on the Jordan enterprise continued outside the demilitarized zone near the Syrian border; in March the 800-meter Ilabun tunnel was completed as part of the line to bring Jordan waters to the Bet Netufa reservoir and from there to the south of the country. Work was started on a seven-kilometer tunnel under the Samarian hills. In the Negev work continued on branch lines from the main Yarkon-Negev water line, on which work started in 1954–55. The search for underground water resources continued in all parts of Israel. Rich wells were discovered on the slopes of Mount Tabor and the Bet Govrin hills, previously considered arid regions. But wells in the coastal plain region
were turning brackish, endangering the water supply of a flourishing agricultural area and of Tel Aviv itself. Excessive pumping was banned, and steps were taken to supply the affected areas with water from the Yarkon springs.

In May 1956 some 250 delegates and observers from twenty countries, including the Soviet Union and Arab countries of North Africa, attended the Fourth International Congress of Citrus Growers in the Mediterranean region at Tel Aviv. The same month a congress on problems of planning agricultural settlement was held in Israel under the auspices of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. This meeting drew representatives and observers from Finland, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, France, Sweden, Cyprus, India, the Philippines, and Burma, as well as Israel.

Industry

Industrial output in Israel in 1955 rose to IL1,045,000,000 from IL860 million in 1954 (a 12 per cent rise at constant prices). Imports of raw materials for industry rose 4.2 per cent in 1955 and the use of local raw materials in industry also rose. Industrial employment increased 7.9 per cent in 1955, while per capita production rose 4.2 per cent. The rise in output was due to increased investment in industry, including new industrial equipment, mainly from the United States and Germany; to bonuses for output; and to increased vocational training. Government and bank credits to industry in 1955 reached IL58,700,000, 10.3 per cent above 1954; investment in industry in 1955 totaled IL60,800,000.

The output potential of the Israel Electric Company in 1955 rose considerably. Sales of current in 1955 rose 17 per cent. This increase showed itself in the supply of current to waterworks and the irrigation system, as well as in the inclusion of new settlement areas within the electric network. The electric company's investments in 1955 were more than three times those of 1954, reaching IL32,800,000. The company engaged in the construction of two new power units of 20,000 kilowatt hours each, as well as the construction of two additional units, near Tel Aviv (40,000 kilowatt hours), and near the mouth of the Lakhish River (150,000 kilowatt hours). A high tension line to the settlements of Upper Galilee was also under construction.

Potash production at the Dead Sea works did not exceed 3,000 tons monthly. During 1955 IL16,300,000 were invested in mining and related fields, and the number of persons employed in this sector reached 1,700. The building of a railway from Beersheba to the north, and the construction of facilities for loading bulk goods at the railway and at Haifa port reduced transport costs for Dead Sea potash, for bromides (the production of which started), and for phosphates from the Oron Works. The output of the phosphates enterprise in 1955 rose by approximately 73 per cent to 72,000 tons annually, a level at which production was commercially profitable. Phosphate output was expected to reach 10,000 tons monthly in 1956–57. All phosphates were sold to the Haifa Chemical and Fertilizer Plant, which produced superphosphate fertilizers. In 1955 the output of this enterprise increased 19 per cent to 101,000 tons, of which 10 per cent was to be exported in the near future, mainly to Cyprus. In December 1955 Chemicals and Fertilizers put
into production a new IL£8,000,000 plant, to manufacture 60,000 tons of ammoniac and ammonium sulphate. Work continued on the construction of a copper smelter at Timna near Eilat, where copper reserves of one million tons had been discovered. The enterprise was to begin output in 1957, processing 1,500 tons of ore daily and producing 7,000 tons of copper annually. The first productive oil well was discovered in September 1955. Oil prospecting continued near the Dead Sea, in the southern Negev, in the southern coastal plain, in other parts of the coastal plain, and in the Carmel area and Haifa bay, but the only oil discovered was still that at Heletz, where the first well was struck. Investments in oil prospecting in 1955 reached IL£9,900,000. The saving of foreign exchange from the Heletz oil in 1956 was estimated at IL£1,000,000. Prospecting in the Heletz area continued, and it was hoped to have twelve wells producing by the end of the year.

The value of building completed in 1955 was IL£46,500,000 (32 per cent) more than in 1954. The construction of housing for immigrants, which received priority, almost doubled. Building for other settlers was restricted and dropped by a half.

**Labor**

Between June 1954 and November 1955 the number of gainfully employed rose 6.8 per cent to 585,000; in 1955, 33 per cent of the population were gainfully employed, against 32 per cent in 1954. The number of unemployed in 1955 was 45,500. This was 7.2 per cent of the total labor force, a drop of 0.8 per cent from June 1954. Unemployment was highest among unskilled laborers, while skilled workers were unemployed in building and industry. Unemployment was greatest in the three chief cities, and in towns settled by immigrants who refused to leave for agricultural settlements.

Major strikes took place in the textile industry and among state employees with academic training. In October 1955 academically trained employees of the state and public institutions—doctors, engineers, lawyers, economists, etc.—put forward claims for salary rises and for the creation of a larger gap between their own remuneration and that of nonacademic employees. After warning strikes, the cabinet agreed to a salary rise in line with the recommendations of the 1955 salary committee set up by the Knesset. In February 1956, after the cabinet stated that it could not fulfill these promises in view of the dangers to the state from the Egyptian-Czech arms deal and the need for preparing against all eventualities, the academic employees in the civil service struck, and were joined by doctors, engineers, and lawyers in other official positions. The strikers rejected the government’s proposal that during the current financial year they should receive only 50 per cent of the increases promised by the Guri committee. On February 6, 1956, the Knesset rejected a proposal by Herut, the General Zionists, and the Communists to debate the question, and the same day the Progressives left the cabinet in protest against the government’s stand. On February 13, the Knesset rejected three motions of no-confidence by the opposition on the same subject. In this vote the Progressives abstained. On February 21, the strike ended with a compromise giving the academic workers two-thirds of the increase immediately, with 13 per cent more to come in 1957, and 20 per cent in 1958. The
ministry of finance demanded a wage freeze during the emergency, except for wages below the national minimum and raises based on increased output. But the trade union section of the Histadrut demanded the full payment of the cost-of-living bonus every three months, as agreed with the Industrialists’ Association in December 1953. Wage claims led to some stoppages and to the textile strike of July 1956. Some 15,000 work days were lost in these strikes, which were ended by a temporary agreement to solve the question by negotiations without pressure. In the meantime, negotiations between the industrialists and the Trade Union Confederation on the subject of the cost-of-living bonus continued. At the end of July 1956 the agreement was renewed, and it was agreed that the bonus would be paid in full and new negotiations started on the possibility of changing the method of determining its amount.

Education

During 1955 the number of pupils in all educational institutions rose to 435,500, as compared to 406,000 in 1954. Of this number, 72,000 were in kindergartens, 283,600 in elementary and special schools, 24,000 in secondary schools and evening classes, 10,800 in schools for working youth, 5,900 in agricultural schools, 6,100 in other vocational schools, 3,600 in teachers’ and kindergarten teachers’ seminaries. In higher educational establishments there were 6,500 (the Hebrew University, the Haifa Technion, Bar Ilan University and the Tel Aviv School of Law and Economics) and 22,000 in other educational establishments, including those of a religious character (yeshivot, etc.) with 5,000 pupils, schools for nurses and social workers, commercial schools, and Christian schools with 9,000 pupils (including 1,000 Jews).

All state schools received a uniform schedule of studies and a similar schedule was started for the secondary schools. The ministry of education allotted £500,000 to secondary school scholarships, of which £100,000 went to children of new immigrants and those of oriental origin. An additional 1,000 trained teachers were needed. Training schools were graduating only 700 teachers annually.

In 1956, some 5,250 new pupils entered the vocational schools, 12.5 per cent more than in 1955. Agricultural schools, including boarding schools, had 10,000 pupils, of whom 2,400 were new entrants. An Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT) vocational training center was under construction in Tel Aviv, to accommodate 700 pupils at a cost of $500,000. The twenty-four ORT vocational schools had 2,400 pupils from the ages of twelve to eighteen in 1955, and some 800 adults took part in their courses. In Jerusalem a vocational center for 120 trainees was set up by the ministry of labor in cooperation with the United States Operations Mission. In March 1956, the Abba Hillel Silver agricultural secondary school was officially opened near Ashkelon in the south. The Mikveh Israel school—the country’s first agricultural school, established by Baron Edmond de Rothschild—became a government school by agreement with the Alliance Israélite Universelle. The Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Haifa Technion had record registrations of new students in all faculties. Both institutions engaged in widespread building activities in the areas assigned to them in Jerusalem and on Mount Carmel, respectively. Considerable work was also done by
both in adult education. In the academic year 1955–56 the six faculties of
the Hebrew University had 3,150 students, as against 2,958 in 1954–55. The
Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School accepted 50 out of 280 appli-
cants for admission. It added a faculty of forensic medicine and one of pub-
lic health and the history of medicine. A students' strike over tuition fees
was averted when the fee was fixed at £210 by the students' organization
and the university authorities, with the provision that it should be aligned
to the cost-of-living index. There were 1,751 students at the Technion; for
the new school year of 1956–57 some 400 pupils out of 900 applicants were
admitted. The Technion's evening classes for working people had 240 stu-
dents. Courses were also given for people in local industries on subjects such
as industrial organization and engineering.

One hundred students (including some twenty from North America) were
enrolled at the Bar Ilan University near Ramat Gan, established and sup-
ported by the Mizrachi Organization of America. A committee of the Tel
Aviv municipality decided in June 1956 to gather under one roof all the as-
pirants to higher education in the area in what was named the Tel Aviv
University.

The ministry of education also continued its efforts to impart a working
knowledge of Hebrew to adults—mainly new immigrants. Twelve new books
were published for special Hebrew and local geography classes conducted in
all parts of the country, mainly by volunteer teachers. Special lunch hour
Hebrew classes for factory workers were also started. In Beersheba a regional
adult education center was established by the Hebrew University and the
education department of the Histadrut. It gave courses in such subjects as
economics, history, geography, the Bible, and social sciences, to 170 students
from the Negev and Beersheba.

Religious Affairs

Disputes over Sabbath observance, the sale of pork, and other religious
matters arose several times during 1955–56, but they did not cause a crisis in
the coalition, in which the religious groups were represented. In January
1956, after the rabbinate had refused to allow a marriage between a Karaite
from Rehovot and a non-Karaite Jewish girl, Prime Minister Ben Gurion
asked the rabbinate to find a solution in the same spirit of national unity in
which the state had agreed to give the rabbinate sole jurisdiction over mar-
riage and divorce. The question was raised in the Knesset, where the deputy
minister of religions, Zerach Warhaftig, replied that the question of the re-
turn of the Karaite community to the Jewish people was not a real issue be-
cause the Karaite community itself did not wish integration. The problem
was one of individual Karaites who wished to marry Jews. The course for
them to take was to apply to the rabbinical court, which would decide each
case on its merits. The question aroused major interest, since some 1,500
Karaites of Egyptian and Iraqi origin were resident in Israel. In March 1956
the Knesset prolonged the terms of office of the religious councils for another
four years after speakers from all parts of the House had demanded the in-
roduction of a bill which would permanently delimit their powers. At the
same time, the Knesset passed a bill granting the religious courts the same
authority exercised by commissions of inquiry and other quasi-judicial bodies
to summon parties and witnesses and compel them to give evidence. Mapam
and the Communists voted against the bill.

Religious questions became a matter of public controversy when excava-
tions were started near the grave of Maimonides in Tiberias, as part of the
plan to establish a mausoleum there. After bones and previous grave sites
had been dug up, patrols of religious groups, mainly the Neturei Karta sect,
prevented the orderly execution of the work. The work was stopped for some
days and resumed after the chief rabbinate had made sure that the plans
would be changed so as not to disturb ancient graves.

In May 1956 demonstrations against the opening of the Haifa industrial
exhibition on Sabbath led to clashes between demonstrators and police.
Sympathy demonstrations of religious elements took place in Tel Aviv and
Jerusalem. The government's refusal to intervene led to the tabling of non-
confidence motions in the Knesset on May 9, 1956 by Herut and by Agudat
Israel. Premier Ben Gurion explained that the cabinet had no power to in-
tervene against the opening of the exhibition, which was a purely municipal
enterprise, just as it could not intervene against the Sabbath openings of the
amusement park and zoo of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, a municipality ruled by a co-
alition of religious parties, Herut and the General Zionists, or prevent foot-
ball games on a Sabbath. The no-confidence motions were rejected, with
Hapoel Hamizrachi and Poale Agudat Israel abstaining. The Agudat Israel
representatives on the Haifa municipality resigned in protest, but returned
after the industrial exhibition ended.

The question of the sale of pork in Jewish towns and cities arose after the
high court of justice annulled municipal bylaws banning the sale of pork in
butcher shops. The government coalition agreed to place before the Knesset
a bill authorizing each local authority to decide for itself whether it wished
to impose a complete or partial ban on the sale of pork in the area under its
jurisdiction. The Knesset passed this bill on July 25, 1956. Another religious
question arose in July 1956 when the religious representatives in the Jeru-
salem municipality objected to letting Nelson Glueck establish an archaeo-
logical institute which would also include a reform synagogue. Permission
was granted over their opposition.

A Rashi Month was inaugurated at Elijah's cave on Mt. Carmel on Febru-
ary 12, 1956, in commemoration of the 850th anniversary of the death of the
celebrated talmudic commentator. In Jerusalem a seminar headed by Chief
Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim was established in memory of the late Rabbi Uziel to
train religious judges and spiritual leaders for Sephardic communities abroad.
The ministry of religions and the department of religious education of the
Jewish Agency established an academy for rabbis and religious leaders for the
diaspora. In Pardess Hannah a yeshiva and secondary school for 150 pupils
were established with the aid of contributions from Britain. In Nethanya
work started on a center for 600 Chasidim from Telz, headed by the Rabbi of
Klausenburg. A congress of religious teachers on problems of religious educa-
tion in Israel took place at Bar Ilan University in March 1956. To mark the
300th anniversary of the return of Jews to Britain, the Rabbi Kook Institute
in Jerusalem published the works of Rabbi Elijah Menahem of London in
collaboration with the Jewish Historical Society in London. An arrangement was made with Yeshiva University of New York to bring to Israel the manuscript of the works of Rabbi Joseph Rosen of Dvinsk, known as the Roga-shover Gaon. The manuscript of 9,000 pages, some in microfilm, was brought to New York on the eve of the Nazi invasion of Poland. The Institute of Religious Songs of the Ministry of Education continued collecting religious songs of various Jewish communities, recording 250 religious songs of the Jewish communities of Tunisia.

Scholarship

In 1955 and 1956 the archaeological group organized by the Hebrew University and the James de Rothschild Fund, under the leadership of Yigael Yadin, made important discoveries at Tel Hatzov. Sites of other diggings included: an area near the kibbutz of Ginossar in Galilee; Bet Shearim; Athlit; the Rehavia quarter of Jerusalem; ancient Jaffa; and the Negev.

One of the Dead Sea scrolls, known as the Scroll of Lemech, was deciphered by Yigael Yadin and Nachman Avigad of the Hebrew University. It was found to contain an interpretation of the Book of Genesis in which the patriarchs tell their story in the first person. The Bialik Institute published Yadin's research into another of the scrolls—The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness—with many details of warfare in Israel in the days of the Hasmoneans. The eleventh annual meeting of the Palestine Exploration and Antiquities Society was held in October 1955 at Tiv'on and lasted four days. The Society for Biblical Research met in Jerusalem in the spring of 1956, and attracted more than 1,000 participants. The society published on this occasion the first of its quarterlies called Bet Mikra. The fourth volume of the Biblical Encyclopaedia appeared. The Bialik Institute published the first volume of the Book of Jerusalem edited by Michael Avi-Yonah, including nineteen articles by various experts outlining the history of the city from 3,000 B.C.E. to the destruction of the second Temple. Much public interest was also aroused by the congress of the Israel Historical Society, and the exhibition of historical documents from its archives which took place in Jerusalem in July 1956.

Work started on the construction of the Hebrew Language Academy on the grounds of the Jerusalem university center. On January 7, 1956, the centenary of the birth of the great Hebraist Eliyzer Ben Yehuda, an exhibition of his manuscripts was held in Jerusalem. David Yellin prizes for Jewish Studies were awarded to Professor Yitzhak Be'er for his book Israel Among the Nations, a study of the sources of Jewish law and its relationship to the laws of other nations, and to Moshe Atias for his Spanish Romancero, a collection of one hundred songs in Ladino.

Weizmann prizes for science were awarded to J. H. Jaffe for his research on the spectroscope of infra-red rays, to Z. Tabor for his research on the exploitation of solar energy, and to Professor Markus Reiner for his pioneer work on rheology. After eighteen months of preparatory work an electronic brain was constructed at the Weizmann Institute. The Beilinson Hospital in Rehovot established an institute for medical isotopes. The government virological laboratories at Jaffa started production of samples of the Salk vaccine.
against polio, according to a new method. It was estimated that this institute would be able to manufacture the necessary quantities for vaccinating all Israeli children from the ages of one to four by the autumn of 1956. In April 1956 an international symposium at Rehovot on macromolecular chemistry attracted the participation of 200 scientists from all over the world.

Cultural Activity

During the 1954–55 season Israel’s three main theatres, the Habimah, the Chamber Theatre, and the Ohel gave more than 1,600 performances before more than 1,000,000 spectators. Habimah attracted the largest number. Habimah established a drama school, accepting 30 out of 100 applicants. The Chamber Theatre issued a monthly publication called Stage Art. The Chamber Theatre participated in the Paris Theatrical Festival in July 1955 with great success.

The film industry devoted itself mainly to the production of documentaries. An Israel film festival was held in October 1955 in Haifa.

In 1954–55, 1,000 new Hebrew books were published in Israel (three-fourths were original works, one-fourth translations), an increase of 5 per cent over 1953–54. The Bialik literature prize was awarded to Moshe Shamir in December 1955. The Ussishkin prize for literature was awarded to Zalman Shazar and to the young writer Milla Ohel. The Shlonsky Poetry Prize was awarded for the first time, going to Leah Goldberg.

The Engel Music Prize was awarded to Yitzhak Edel for his cantata Laban, to H. Alexander for his piano works, to Y. Wohl for his first symphony, and to Y. Ne’eman for his book on biblical music. Israel, like other countries, celebrated 1956 as Mozart year. The most distinguished visiting artists were the Martha Graham Group, the London Festival Ballet, and the Polish Wilkomirski String Trio.

An Israel prize for acting was awarded to Hannah Rovinah for her performance in Medea. The prize for Jewish studies went to Yigael Yadin for his research on the Dead Sea scrolls, and to Professor Naphtali Herz Tur-Sinai for his research into Semitic philology and the Bible. The prize for social studies went to Yaacov Talmon for his work The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy. The prize for natural sciences went to Professor Avraham Fraenkel for his research into theory of sets and foundations of mathematics.
Middle East

Political and Economic Developments

The most dramatic aspect of the period under review (July 1, 1955, through November 30, 1956) was the Anglo-French-Israel attack on Egypt at the end of October 1956. This attack led to major political shifts and realignments, not only in the Middle East, but throughout Asia and the Western world. The decline of their influence in the Afro-Asian world led England and France to attempt by force to maintain some part of their former dominant role in the East. But they succeeded only in furnishing the Soviet Union an opportunity to exploit the situation to its own advantage.

The attack was the culmination of a long series of recriminations and incidents between the British, French, and Israelis on the one hand, and the Egyptian government on the other. These centered around Egypt's nationalization on July 26, 1956, of the Suez Canal, formerly under Anglo-French ownership, her refusal to permit Israel ships to use the canal and the Straits of Tiran, attacks on Israel settlements from Egyptian-held territory by Arab guerrillas, and Egyptian support for Algerian rebels against French rule.

Nationalization of the canal was itself the consequence of rapidly deepening rifts between Egypt and the Western world, particularly Great Britain and France, and to a lesser extent the United States. These rifts were but one manifestation of the growing Asian revolt against the West. Hence Egypt received the support of the Asian nations, especially in the United Nations (UN), after the invasion. The Soviet Union utilized the situation to build its own influence in the area. Even before the Suez dispute came to the UN, Moscow gave its full support to the Egyptian position. When the dispute erupted into warfare, the Soviet Union not only backed Egypt diplomatically, but early in November 1956, also threatened military intervention against Great Britain, France, and Israel if they failed to heed UN resolutions.

Throughout 1955–56, the Soviet Union moved toward its goals in Asia and the Middle East with diplomatic, economic, and to some extent ideological weapons. It avoided any frontal attack on such Western defensive alliances as the Baghdad Pact and the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), seeking to bypass the Western wall of military alignments by exploiting Asian grievances against the West.

In 1955 Moscow began a large-scale effort to seize the initiative in economic competition with the West. Both directly and through its satellites, the Soviet Union offered Asian nations things they needed or wanted—arms, industrial equipment, factories, and raw materials. No direct gifts were made, but payment was facilitated by granting long-term credits and accepting surplus products which were often difficult to dispose of on world markets. The
most spectacular of these deals was the exchange of Egyptian cotton, to be delivered over a period of several years, for well over $250,000,000 worth of military equipment.

It took only a few months for the Russians to burst into an area from which they had been barred for nearly 200 years. In November 1956 Soviet officers and technicians were reported in Egypt and Syria, and several Soviet pilots were working on the Suez Canal, a waterway considered the jugular vein of the British Empire.

The shift of political and economic orientation from West to East seemed greatest in Syria and Egypt. During 1955–56, several agreements brought Egypt into closer contact with the Soviet bloc. These included a most favored-nation trade agreement with Czechoslovakia enabling Egypt to buy machinery in exchange for cotton, rice, and textiles (July 19, 1955); the arms deal, also with Czechoslovakia, by which Egypt bartered cotton for an estimated 200 MIG jet fighters, 100 tanks, 6 submarines, and artillery (September 27, 1955); and an agreement by which Communist China agreed to buy about £8,000,000 ($2,720,000) worth of Egyptian cotton (August 11, 1955). This was followed by a decision to open Egyptian trade offices in Communist China (September 14, 1955). On March 1, 1956, Egypt signed a contract to sell Communist China 5,000 tons of cottonseed oil. Egypt agreed with Russia on September 6, 1955, to exchange 60,000 tons of its current rice crop for 500,000 tons of Russian crude oil. On October 10, 1955 the Soviet Ambassador to Cairo, Daniel S. Solod, announced that his government was prepared to offer technical assistance to all Arab countries. In February 1956 Cairo began trade talks with Hungary and Bulgaria. A trade agreement with Bulgaria was signed on March 17, and the Hungarian government offered in April to supply machinery and build roads in connection with the Aswan Dam project. Representatives of Egypt and North Viet Nam met at the Leipzig Fair in East Germany during March and agreed to the exchange of up to $5,000,000 in Egyptian cotton for Vietnamese coal and cement. A Rumanian economic delegation visited Cairo on May 29, 1956, to negotiate the exchange of Egyptian cotton for oil.

In May 1956 an Egyptian health delegation arrived in East Berlin to tour hospitals and medical installations in East Germany. During the same month, Egypt admitted that some of her army officers were receiving training in Poland. Egypt recognized Communist China on May 16.

Whereas in 1954 only 12 per cent of Egypt's chief export, cotton, had been purchased by the Soviet bloc, by the end of 1955 the Soviet Union alone was absorbing over a third.

The economic shift was accompanied by a noticeable change in the tone of official Egyptian political pronouncements concerning the Soviet Union and the West. The government-controlled press and official radio stepped up the stream of attacks on Great Britain, France, and the United States, while frequently releasing glowing eulogies of the Soviet Union and Communist policies. This affected the negotiations which Egypt was conducting with the United States and Britain for help in financing the Aswan Dam. On July 20, 1956, the State Department withdrew its offer of economic aid for the Aswan Dam after Egypt had announced its acceptance of American terms. The gov-
ernment of Gamal Abdel Nasser reacted violently on July 26 by nationalizing the Suez Canal.

The rising prestige of Egypt as a nation and President Nasser as an individual among the neutral nations was underscored by the close relations which developed between Nasser and President Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India. Several times during 1955-56 the three leaders exchanged visits. When Tito visited Cairo early in 1956, he and Nasser jointly declared their intention to remain outside any major power bloc. At a conference held on the Yugoslav island of Brioni in July 1956, the three leaders issued a tripartite declaration urging immediate admission of Communist China to the UN and pledging “close cooperation” in international questions.

Nasser also took the lead in forming an Arab bloc to counteract the influence of the Baghdad Pact. From the beginning, Egypt had attacked the pact as a divisive element in the Arab world. Nasser also felt that it threatened Egypt’s leadership of the Arab states.

When on October 26, 1955, Iran joined the Baghdad Pact organization, the “northern tier” was complete from Pakistan through Turkey, and the Middle East was theoretically integrated into the global plan to contain the Soviet Union. In the West the Baghdad powers were linked to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) through Britain and Turkey; on the East, they were aligned with the SEATO through Britain and Pakistan. Attempts were made to give greater substance to the Baghdad organization by extending its jurisdiction to joint antisubversion efforts, and to economic and social cooperation. But there were many weaknesses in the organization. British pleas failed to overcome the reluctance of the United States to become a full-fledged member because of the danger of antagonizing Egypt. France looked with great misgiving upon the whole “northern tier” concept as a “paper tiger.” Later, Britain’s participation in the attack on Egypt undermined her effectiveness as a partner in the Baghdad organization, since Iraq refused to attend meetings together with the British.

Prior to the invasion of Egypt, Cairo’s opposition to the pact was perhaps the greatest deterrent to its success. On October 20, 1955, Egypt and Syria announced that they had signed a pact providing for mutual assistance in case either party were attacked by a third nation. An organization similar to the Baghdad Treaty structure was set up, with a supreme council, a war council, and a joint command. A joint defense fund was subscribed, 65 per cent from Egypt and 35 per cent from Syria. A week later Saudi Arabia became a member, and Yemen joined in April 1956. Military forces were placed under a joint command headed by Major General Abdel al-Hakim Amir, Egyptian chief of staff and minister of defense.

Shortly after Syria was drawn into the Egyptian orbit, ties between Damascus and the Soviet bloc were strengthened. A trade agreement between Syria and the Soviet Union was announced on November 17, 1955. Syria was to ship various agricultural products in return for machinery, automobiles, and assorted manufactured and chemical products. At the end of November, Syria and Communist China signed an agreement for the exchange of commercial representatives. A similar agreement was signed between Syria and
Rumania on January 14, 1956. There were reports in the autumn of 1956 of large shipments of Russian military equipment to Syria and an influx of military personnel from the Soviet Union.

In the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan the political struggle between the Baghdad powers and the Egyptian bloc intensified. Before either side applied any great pressure, Jordan announced that it would remain neutral between the Baghdad Pact and the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi Arabian Defense Pact (November 21, 1955). But on December 6, 1955, General Sir Gerald Templer, Chief of the British general staff, came to Amman to persuade the government to join the Baghdad Pact. The immediate consequence was upheaval in the Jordan government and mass demonstrations against the West. Egyptian and Saudi Arabian "economic assistance" played a role in the popular outbreaks against the Baghdad Pact. After several cabinet shake-ups and four changes of prime ministers within a month, Samir al-Rifa'i took office with a promise that "adherence to any new pacts is not the policy of my government."

On May 2, 1956, King Hussein dismissed Lt. General John Bagot Glubb and three other high-ranking British officers of the Arab Legion, one of the best disciplined and trained fighting forces in the Arab world. Less than a month later, command of the legion was given to Lt. Colonel Ali Abu Nuwar, an enemy of the former British commander and an admirer of Egypt's President Nasser. On May 31 Jordan and Syria announced an agreement for a permanent body for military consultation and joint effort in case of war. After the attack on Egypt, Jordan's rift with Great Britain became even deeper. The government announced that, in accordance with a vote of the newly elected anti-Western Jordanian parliament, it would end the alliance with Britain as soon as the assistance which it received from London was replaced by aid from Egypt and other Arab countries.

Military Developments

Border flareups between Israel and its Syrian, Jordanian, and Egyptian neighbors continued to threaten peace and security in the area. On two occasions during 1955–56, troubles caused by the Arab-Israel conflict were brought before the UN Security Council. On December 11, 1955, Israeli forces staged a raid on a Syrian army position in the Lake Tiberias area, in retaliation for Syrian firing at Israeli fishing boats, and killed at least 56 Syrians. Israel was censured in a resolution passed unanimously by the Security Council on January 19.

Despite the Security Council resolution, flare-ups continued, not only between Israel and Syria in the Lake Tiberias area, but with Egypt in the El Auja demilitarized zone, in the Gaza region, and along the Jordanian frontier. By the beginning of April 1956 the whole armistice regime governing border relations between Israel and her Arab neighbors seemed on the verge of collapse. Again the Security Council was called to consider the situation. On April 4, the council unanimously requested UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold to go to the Middle East to work out improved armistice relations between Israel and the Arab states. It asked him to make a one-month survey of compliance with the armistice agreements, and to arrange
any measures which might help to reduce tension along the frontiers. During Hammarskjold’s negotiations, conflict between Israel and Egypt broke out again. On April 5, a ten-hour artillery duel left fifty-five Arab civilians killed and ninety-two wounded in the Egyptian-held town of Gaza, while there were six wounded on the Israel side of the line. Suicide squads (fedayeen), mostly composed of Arab refugees trained by the Egyptian army, raided several Israel towns and villages and penetrated to within fifteen miles of Tel Aviv.

But by the end of April, Hammarskjold succeeded in easing the tensions, and persuaded both sides to call a halt to the mounting tide of attacks, retaliations, and counter-retaliations. The most significant accomplishment was the agreement by Egypt and Israel to permit greater freedom of movement for UN truce observers along the demarcation line, and for the creation of fixed observer posts along the Gaza strip. After visiting all the Arab states bordering Israel, the secretary general reported to the Security Council on May 10 that a “will to peace” existed in the Middle East, and urged encouragement of that feeling. He called for a waiting period while the results of his peace mission developed.

After a month, the Security Council convened to further consider the secretary general’s report. On June 5, 1956, the council again unanimously adopted a resolution requesting Hammarskjold to “continue his good offices with the parties, with a view to full implementation of the Council’s resolution of April 4, 1956 and full compliance with the Armistice Agreements, and to report to the Security Council as appropriate.”

Although the Secretary General’s mission was successful in postponing a complete breakdown of the armistice agreements for a few more months, almost no progress was made toward a solution of the Palestine question. The intense nationalism and deep misunderstandings on both sides of the Arab-Israel frontiers were not conducive to a resolution of the nearly nine-year-old crisis.

By the autumn of 1956 tensions mounted to a higher pitch than ever before. Israel engaged in a series of large-scale retaliatory raids against Jordan, and charged that fedayeen attacks from Egypt were being stepped up. Belligerent threats on both sides of the frontiers finally culminated in Israel’s invasion of the Sinai desert on October 30, 1956. Great Britain and France joined the battle a few days later when they invaded Egypt “to keep the Egyptian and Israeli forces apart.”

After British and French vetoes in the UN Security Council blocked American and Russian resolutions directing a cease-fire and withdrawal of Israel, a special session of the General Assembly was convened to deal with the situation. The world organization called on Great Britain, France, and Israel to withdraw their troops from Egypt and to restore the boundaries existing prior to the invasion. For several weeks the three invaders failed to heed the UN resolutions. Before withdrawing, Great Britain and France wanted guarantees of an international status for the Suez Canal. Israel insisted on an over-all peace settlement with Egypt which would insure free transit through the canal, unmolested entry into the Gulf of Aqaba, and freedom from attack by Arab forces based in Egypt. Finally, international pressure—including
a Soviet threat of armed intervention—and European oil shortages caused Great Britain and France to accede to the UN resolutions. Since Israel could not hold out alone, it agreed to withdraw.

To help restore stability in the area, a UN Emergency Force (UNEF) was established, under the command of Canadian General E. L. M. Burns, commander of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. The UNEF was composed of contingents from various small nations not directly involved in the Middle East conflict.

As a result of the attack on Egypt, Israel was thrown into isolation, and possibilities of an amicable relationship with her Arab neighbors approached the vanishing point. Because Israel was joined in its attack on Egypt by Great Britain and France, the Arab image of the new state as a "bridgehead of Western imperialism" was deepened, and possibilities of Israel's integration into its Middle East environment receded.

The attack undermined the prestige of Great Britain and France in the Middle East and throughout Asia and Africa. It also strained relations not only with the Asian members of the Commonwealth, but with Canada, which regarded the attack as a setback for the UN and world peace.

Relations between the United States and its two foremost allies were seriously jeopardized by their failure to consult Washington about their plans, or to give due regard to American opinion. American opposition to the invasion helped to recoup some of the prestige lost by the United States in Asia and the Middle East in recent years. Many Asian nations expressed gratitude for the diplomatic support they received from the United States in the crisis.

By far the greatest gainer was the Soviet Union, which now lent all-out support to the most extreme Arab demands for action against Israel, Great Britain, and France. The invasion lent invaluable support to Soviet propaganda against "Western imperialism." At the time of writing (November 1956), it was not clear to what extent the Soviet Union would actually enter the area physically. But it was certain that the Communists would reap great diplomatic and propaganda benefits from the invasion of Egypt.

EGYPT

The growth of nationalism in the Arab world and the outbreak of war in Egypt had a direct impact on the traditional status of minority groups, including the Jewish community. At the time of writing (November 1956) Egypt had the largest Jewish population of any Arab League state. Estimates ranged from 30,000 to over 50,000. The latter was the estimate of the Egyptian government. In normal times approximately two-thirds lived in Cairo. The next largest Jewish community, that of Alexandria, was dwindling because of deteriorating economic conditions. Prior to 1948 nearly a third of Egypt's Jewish population lived there. There were no reliable figures available on the number of Jews living in the large towns of the Nile Delta and the Suez Canal Zone, where prior to 1948 there had been small communities. But the number there was also believed to have dwindled.
Civic and Political Status

An estimated 90 per cent of the Jewish community was born in Egypt, but relatively few Egyptian Jews were officially recognized as Egyptian citizens. The government estimated that more than half the Jewish population were citizens, but other reliable sources maintained that not more than 12.5 per cent were officially recognized as Egyptians. Many Jews were Italian, French, British, or Greek subjects, although they and their families had lived in the country for several generations. Some of them had attempted to become Egyptian citizens, but without success. Still others, although born in Egypt, often of families which had lived there for several generations, were stateless. Estimates of both foreign and stateless Jews varied, but their numbers were believed to be about equal. This situation arose from the peculiarities of the nationality law. This prescribed three principal ways of establishing Egyptian citizenship: first, by qualifying as an Egyptian by origin, birth, or marriage; second, in the case of former Ottoman subjects, by opting for Egyptian nationality within a prescribed period; and third, in the case of foreigners, by naturalization. In the first case, there was normally no difficulty for those who had the qualifications. However, mere birth in Egypt did not qualify an individual to obtain citizenship. The law defined an Egyptian by birth as one who had been a subject of the Ottoman Empire, a member of the royal family, who had served in the armed forces, or who had an Egyptian parent. Few Jews fitted into any of these categories. Not having been Ottoman subjects, they were also unable to obtain citizenship by the second method. Naturalization was always difficult for certain minority groups, including Jews. There were numerous instances of individuals whose applications for naturalization had been pending for as long as fifteen or twenty years.

The Egyptian authorities gave preference in naturalization to individuals regarded as valuable and capable of being amalgamated into the "national type." In the past many foreign residents attached relatively little importance to Egyptian nationality, and in fact were much more at home in the foreign than in the Egyptian strata of the population. Because most Jews living in Egypt tended to identify themselves with European culture and consciousness rather than with that of Egypt, the Jewish community was among those regarded by many Egyptian officials as unassimilable.

Another related problem for Egypt's Jews was the desire of the authorities to take from foreign minorities the large measure of economic and administrative control they had previously exercised in the country. This trend began to develop with the rise of Egyptian national consciousness, and found legislative expression as early as twenty years ago. It acquired even greater momentum with Nasser's ascent to power. A principal aim of the new regime was to create a society which would "develop, form, consolidate and become a strong homogeneous and unified whole" (Egypt's Liberation, the Philosophy of the Revolution, by Nasser).

This aspiration created special difficulties for the country's Jewish minority, because many of its members were closely identified in the popular mind both with European culture and with Israel, Egypt's principal foe on the international scene. Another difficulty was created by the term "Israel,"
traditionally used to describe the Jewish community, but now also synonymous with the enemy.

Even prior to the attack by Israel there was evidence of the government's doubts about the political reliability of the Jewish community. Jews often faced delays in obtaining permits for foreign travel, although in the end these were generally granted. Jewish men called for army service were told that they remained liable for duty but were not needed at present. Jews had to obtain special permits to travel in certain security zones. A special department in the ministry of interior previously known as the Zionist department became known as the bureau of Jewish affairs, and was reportedly given the task of supervising Jewish businessmen, bankers, and stock exchange brokers.

Noncitizen members of minority groups, and many who were Egyptian citizens, were faced with difficulties by the drive to "Egyptianize" the national economy. Often in applying for government import permits or other documents necessary for transacting their business, they met ruinous delays to which their Muslim competitors were not subjected. To plug up leaks of currency, which members of minority groups were suspected of sending out of the country, a staff of twenty inspectors was established in Egypt and ten in Switzerland. Their activities were reported to be responsible for the expulsion in 1956 of the Jewish banker, Elie Politi, and the publisher Salomon Salama. The property and assets of both men were confiscated by the Egyptian government.

One example of Egyptianization was the transfer of the Delta Land Company, established in 1910 by the Jewish banker Joseph Mosseri Bey, to Egyptian hands in July 1956. The Jewish president, chairman, and managing director were forced to resign, and were replaced by three Muslims, to whom 500 shares each were transferred. The directors were forced to sell 50 per cent of the company's shares to the Egyptian government.

As a consequence of growing economic difficulties, many Jewish and other non-Muslim businessmen had formed partnerships with Muslims in the post-Palestine war era. The official registry of Egyptian businesses showed fewer Jewish names than in the era immediately preceding the nationalist upsurge. Often the purpose of these mergers was to obtain a Muslim name for an enterprise.

Another step toward national homogeneity was the abolition of all Muslim, Christian, and Jewish religious tribunals on January 1, 1956. This was largely motivated by the government's desire to close the Muslim religious courts as part of its fight against the Muslim Brotherhood. A government spokesman characterized the law, enacted on September 21, 1955, as an "effective means for achieving democracy," eliminating "all semblances of a special order which limits the authority of the State and its sovereignty" and "realizing the unity of the judiciary" for all Egyptians regardless of religious affiliation.

The new law did not secularize or unify family law, but gave the civil courts the task of applying the various religious laws which had been formerly applied by the religious tribunals. There was still no secular law of marriage and divorce, although the new legislation might be a step in that
direction. The Egyptian Jewish community's two rabbinical tribunals were among the fourteen non-Muslim tribunals abolished.

The September 21 law permitted Muslim qadis to sit on the bench of civil courts when cases of personal status were heard, but made no such provision for non-Muslims. There was no public Jewish statement on the law, but the heads of the Roman, Coptic, Greek, Maronite, Armenian, Syrian, and Chaldean Catholic rites openly protested against the decree. In December 1955, five priests and several Catholic laymen were arrested in Cairo for distributing copies of a joint protest statement issued by these Christian religious groups.

On January 17, 1956, the Egyptian government announced a new constitution. This was approved by a popular referendum on June 23, 1956. While in Article 3 it stated that “Islam is the religion of the State . . . ,” its preamble “assured freedom of thought and worship in an atmosphere where there are no dictates save those of conscience and reason.” Article 31 guaranteed the equality of all Egyptians “in respect of rights and obligations without discrimination on account of race, origin, language, religion, or creed.” Article 43 reiterated that: “Freedom of worship is unrestricted. The State guarantees freedom of religious practice in accordance with the established usage in Egypt, providing this does not conflict with public order or morality.”

The special status of Islam in the legislation abolishing religious courts and in the new constitution emphasized the religion's close identification with Egyptian nationalism. This special consideration served to fortify the popular conception of the “true Egyptian” which placed a premium on identification with Islam, despite the frequent statements of the present regime that Egyptians of all faiths and ethnic origins were held in equal esteem.

Egypt's Jewish community participated in various national events during 1955–56. In Cairo and in Alexandria about 3,000 Jews, led by Chief Rabbi Haim Nahoum and Salvatore Cicurel, president of the Cairo Jewish community, participated in the June 23 elections. When the Egyptian government organized a National Arms Week in October 1955 to raise funds for the purchase of equipment, the Jewish community fully participated. Of the E£ 600,000 ($204,000) raised, it contributed E£ 15,400 ($5,236). The chief rabbi stated: “This drive by Egyptians should not be regarded as astonishing. Egyptian Jews have duties toward Egypt, where they were born and live, as well as rights.” After the Israel incursion into the Sinai desert, the chief rabbi published a communiqué denouncing “Zionist aggression,” and emphasized that the patriotism of Egyptian Jews was beyond doubt. Radio Damascus reported on November 6, 1956, that wealthy Jews in Egypt were collecting E£ 50,000 ($17,000) for the Red Crescent.

Community Organization

The Jewish community was still divided into Rabbanite (Sephardic and Ashkenazic) and Karaite groups, each with its own community organization in Cairo. In Alexandria all groups were organized into a single community council. Rabbi Haim Nahoum was officially recognized as the leader of the whole Jewish community in Egypt. The Cairo and Alexandria communities
still maintained their own schools. The Jewish hospital and clinic in Cairo served about 2,000 Muslims, Christians, and Jews each month.

The exodus of large numbers of Jews from Egypt and the general decline in the country's economy adversely affected Jewish communal organizations. In 1953 the Cairo Jewish hospital had a deficit of $19,000, and the education commission a deficit of $21,600. At the end of 1955 it was reported that the Cairo Jewish hospital was running an annual deficit of around $30,000. Salvatore Cicurel announced in June 1956 that most Cairo Jewish communal institutions would have to close down because of the growing burden of support for the city's poverty-stricken sick and elderly Jews.

A major problem of Egyptian Jewry was that of finding a spiritual leader to succeed the eighty-three-year-old Rabbi Nahoum, who had played a major role in the life of the community. Until the Israel attack, it was hoped that the authorities would revise existing legislation so that a new chief rabbi could be obtained from France, the cultural home of most of the present Egyptian Jewish community.

The renewed eruption of war with Israel at the end of October 1956 led to the worsening of Jewish conditions in Egypt. Although at the time of writing (November 1956) there was no precise information available about the situation of Egyptian Jews, there was evidence that the Israel attack had precipitated either official or unofficial action against many members of the Jewish community. Strong feeling was aroused against all who might be suspected of any attachment to Britain, France, or Israel. The situation was particularly exacerbated by the British and French bombing of Port Said, which was reported in Cairo to have killed over 10,000 Egyptians. About 100,000 inhabitants fled from the town, and 60,000 were said to be refugees in and around the area of Cairo. Since many Jews in Egypt were citizens of either Great Britain or France, they suffered from action directed by the government at all British and French subjects.

Unconfirmed reports from Jewish refugees arriving in Europe from Egypt at the end of November 1956 stated that several hundred Jews had been interned, and that their property had been confiscated. Many others were said to have been expelled from the country. The Paris office of the American Jewish Committee released a list of individuals, about 90 per cent of whom were Jewish, control of whose property had been taken over by the Egyptian government. The list, reported to be a photocopy from the Cairo French-language daily, Journal de Commerce, contained 486 names, including René and Salvatore Cicurel, two of the foremost leaders of the Jewish community.

The Egyptian government retorted that as of December 4, 1956, only 288 Jews were being detained “for reasons of security,” and that efforts were being made through the International Red Cross to get them out of the country. Of these, 151 were said by the government to be stateless, and the rest Egyptian nationals. The Egyptian government maintained that there was no discrimination on a racial or religious basis, and that action was being taken only against those suspected of pro-Zionist or pro-Israel activities and sentiments. The government asserted that Jews who were not security risks were free “to live here and conduct their business unmolested as they always have been.”
However, the Egyptian government acknowledged that assets of rich Jews had been put under sequestration (government control) "to be sure that they do not try to smuggle their money out of the country." This order included several large department stores owned by leading Jewish families in Egypt. The profits were presumably going into the controlled accounts of the owners.

SYRIA

In Syria, the traditional center of Arab anti-Western sentiment, the growth of intense nationalism also had an impact on minorities. Again, there were no accurate figures concerning the number of Jews in Syria, but it was believed to be between 5,000 and 7,000—about half the number who had lived there just prior to the Palestine war. Since 1948, the largest number of Jewish emigrants were believed to have gone to neighboring Lebanon. The next largest group apparently had migrated to South American countries. A number went to France, Italy, and North Africa. Only about 200 were believed to have gone to Israel since 1948. Somewhat less than 50 per cent of the Jewish community lived in Damascus, and a slightly smaller number in Aleppo. About 1,000 Jews lived in other Syrian towns.

According to available information, Jewish integration into the Syrian community was difficult for many of the same reasons as in Egypt. Jewish identification with Western, and particularly French, culture and consciousness, in the face of growing Arab nationalist estrangement from the West, was one bar. Identification of the Jewish minority with Israel, the chief enemy, was a second. After the Palestine war, Jews were unwelcome as members of political parties. During 1955–56, none were employed in any public posts, nor did large private organizations hire Jews. Nevertheless, in Aleppo, where the Jewish community was traditionally well-to-do, some Jews continued to prosper. Some were professionals, including a number of relatively prosperous Jewish doctors, and some conducted businesses, chiefly import-export and foreign exchange.

In Damascus, the Jewish community was traditionally poor, and its situation remained about the same. A large proportion of the families required financial aid to supplement the earnings of employed members. This aid averaged about 1.5 Syrian pounds per week (about 45 cents). In all, the community spent about $500 per week on some 1,300 individuals.

Syrian Jews generally had difficulty in obtaining passports to leave the country. Laissez-passers for a one-week stay in Lebanon were abolished, but some Jews made the trip fairly regularly and had no particular difficulty in obtaining permission to do so. In the spring of 1956, Jordan and Syria agreed to authorize travel permits for cross-border travel without visas, except to Jews. Identity cards issued to Syrian residents stated the religion of the bearer.

Since 1948, some estates belonging to Jews living abroad had been requisitioned for the use of Palestine Arab refugees. On occasion, the close proximity of Arab refugees and the Syrian Jewish community created communal tension. Although actual incidents resulting from this tension were few, it
created a state of alarm in the Jewish community. In December 1955 Syria also launched a fund for arms to which Jews contributed. According to Radio Damascus, the leader of the Damascus Jewish community contributed 950 Syrian pounds ($285), and some other members gave 1,000 pounds ($300) each. By the end of December it was reported that the Jewish community had contributed a total of 8,730 Syrian pounds ($2,619).

The Palestine war left the Syrian Jews in a depressed and insecure state, and greatly reduced whatever possibilities of integration had existed prior to 1948. Despite individual exceptions, identification with the national cause tended to be equated with identification with Islam. In Syria, more than in any other Arab country with a Jewish minority, the Jewish community was stigmatized because of its identification with "international Zionism" and the Israel enemy.

**LEBANON AND IRAQ**

There were few changes in the lives of the 8,000 Jews of Lebanon and the 5,000 in Iraq. Late in 1955, the remnant of the once large Iraqi Jewish community (prior to the Palestine war, about 130,000) had some of its rights and property restored to it. Full passport privileges were restored to Jews in 1955. The government also proposed a draft law to allow smaller numbers of directors to manage affairs of Jewish incorporated societies. It was felt that the move would enable Jews in Iraq to take advantage of some of the property formerly held by the Jewish community.

During 1955, 155 Jews arrived in Israel from Iraq. The citizenship of 103 Iraqi Jews was withdrawn during the same period by the council of ministers when they failed to return to Iraq from business trips abroad within the period of time prescribed on their passports. There were reports from Iraq that a small number of Jews had turned Muslim to facilitate their social, political, and economic assimilation into Iraqi society.

In Lebanon, the only Arab country to increase its Jewish population since the Palestine war, conditions for Jews were normal. The Jewish population of Lebanon actually increased from 5,000 to about 8,000 as a consequence of an influx of Jewish refugees from Iraq and Syria since 1948. The French Alliance Israélite Universelle continued to operate its four schools, with over 1,000 Jewish students.

*Don Peretz*