Review of the Year

UNITED STATES
OTHER COUNTRIES
Civic and Political

Intergroup Relations

A CENTRAL CONCERN of American Jews in 1982 was the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict on intergroup relations in the United States. Israel's incursion into Lebanon aroused criticism in the important sectors of American society, especially the media, which, for a good many years, had been largely supportive of the Jewish state. Whether justified or not, many Jews came to feel that this criticism constituted a veiled attack on American Jewry.

American Jews and the Middle East

An issue that emerged at the beginning of 1982, in the wake of the defeat sustained by Jews the year before over the sale of AWACS radar planes to Saudi Arabia, was the proposed sale to Jordan of sophisticated American weapons. A measure sponsored by senators John Heinz (R., Pa.) and Edward Kennedy (D., Mass.), which attracted 46 co-sponsors, opposed the sale, and instead looked toward bringing “Jordan into the Mideast peace negotiations.” In May, just prior to Israel's move into Lebanon, a public opinion poll conducted for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith by Garth Furst International/Penn and Schoen Associated found that 66 per cent of Americans opposed the arms sale, 21 per cent favored it, and 13 per cent were undecided.

In late June, following Israel's invasion of Lebanon, a CBS News poll found the public evenly divided as to whether the incursion was justified. However, only a quarter of the respondents felt that the United States should reduce military aid to Israel. The poll also indicated that twice as many Americans believed that the United States should give its “strongest support to Israel” as maintained that it should “pay more attention to the demands of the Arabs.”

In late September, following the Christian Phalangist massacre of hundreds of Palestinians in refugee camps in Beirut controlled by the Israelis, a Washington Post-ABC poll, as well as a Gallup poll for Newsweek, took note of a sharp rise in negative views of Israel. Fifty-one per cent of the respondents said that they were less sympathetic to Israel than they had been a year before. Israel was seen as either partially or very much responsible for the massacre by 81 per cent of the public;
50 per cent of Americans favored suspending aid to the Jewish state. The spillover of these feelings in relationship to American Jews was indicated by the fact that 41 per cent of the respondents agreed with the question: "Most Jewish people in America will support anything the country of Israel does even if it is against the best interests of the United States." Moreover, 51 per cent of the national sample and 77 per cent of American Jews believed that antisemitism was likely to increase as a result of the events in Lebanon.

At a June 22 meeting with 36 senators, Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who was visiting the United States, was subjected to hostile questioning. On July 21 the New York Times reported that "Israel's support in Congress has been significantly eroded"; Senator Paul Tsongas (D., Mass.) was quoted as saying that the "love affair with Israel . . . is gone." However, these shifts in attitude seemed to have little practical impact. Thus, in mid-July, only nine of the 435 members of the House of Representatives signed a resolution calling for Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, while 38 senators identified with a statement defending the incursion. At year's end, despite the furore over Lebanon, Congress added $510 million to the amount of military and economic aid to Israel that President Reagan had proposed. Congress also declared that any attempt to exclude Israel from the United Nations or its agencies would be met with a withdrawal of American financial support.

Other Middle East related matters were also in the news. In February the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, and Jewish Community Relations Council of New York denounced the reported decision of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art to refuse to sponsor an Israeli archeological exhibit because it included artifacts originating in the disputed West Bank. Also in New York, attorneys for the American Jewish Congress and Anti-Defamation League sought to block a $30,000 bequest to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on the ground that the PLO was a terrorist group. Late in the year, the American Jewish Congress announced a campaign to compel major United States corporations to reveal the extent of their efforts to influence U.S. foreign policy, particularly in the Middle East. The specific focus of attention was lobbying efforts during the 1981 debate over the sale of AWACS radar planes to Saudi Arabia.

In June former undersecretary of state George Ball, interviewed on ABC's "Nightline," charged that the "Jewish lobby" controlled American government policy in the Middle East in a manner that was contrary to American interests. Ball's charge precipitated an exchange of letters in the Washington Post between himself and Morris B. Abram, a former president of the American Jewish Committee. Abram asserted that Ball was accepting and spreading "age-old calumnies about Jews." Denying any antisemitic intent, Ball refused to retract his statement, asserting that the "effect [of Jewish community action] is to circumscribe the freedom of action of our government . . . ."

In June Interior Secretary James Watt stated in a letter to Israeli ambassador Moshe Arens that United States support for Israel would be jeopardized if "liberals of the Jewish community join with other liberals of this nation" in opposing the Reagan administration's accelerated energy development policies. The White House
quickly disavowed the statement, but it caused sharp anger in the Jewish community. In October Representative Paul McCloskey, Jr. (R., Calif.) was quoted as saying that Jews in the media slanted news about the Palestinians and stereotyped Arabs.

**American Arab Attacks on Israel**

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon brought an immediate response from Arab organizations in the United States, such as the National Association of Arab Americans. These groups, which had first emerged on the scene after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, were becoming an increasingly active and militant force on Middle East issues. The heightened activity of Arab propagandists could be seen in a well-financed campaign that placed a large number of pro-Arab advertisements in newspapers throughout the country; in personal appearances by wives of Arab diplomats; and in lectures by pro-PLO advocates, particularly on college campuses.

**Jews and the Media**

A pronounced feeling emerged in the Jewish community and elsewhere of anti-Israel bias in news coverage and editorial comment relating to the Lebanon war. Writing in the *New Republic* on August 2, Martin Peretz, who had visited Lebanon during the fighting, asserted that "much of what you have read in the newspapers and news magazines about the war in Lebanon—and even more of what you have seen and heard on television—is simply not true." In September the Anti-Defamation League released a study prepared by public opinion analyst David Garth, which dealt with the nightly newscasts of the three major television networks from June through August. Garth, like Peretz, alleged that there were distortions and biases in reporting about the number of civilian casualties inflicted by the Israelis. CBS and ABC rejected the Anti-Defamation League charge that their coverage had turned public opinion in the United States against Israel. They did concede, however, that for various technical reasons the reporting of casualty figures had been exaggerated. The Garth findings were echoed in a survey commissioned by the Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based, conservative, research organization. The Heritage Foundation noted that news coverage "tended to exaggerate the destruction wrought by the Israelis, while dwelling most briefly on that done by the PLO." The report singled out NBC and the Washington *Post* for their "inaccuracies and imbalance." The most serious charge, however, was made by Norman Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary*, in an article, "J'Accuse," which appeared in the magazine in September. He argued: "I charge here that the antisemitic attacks on Israel . . . are a cover for a loss of American nerve . . . for acquiescence in terrorism . . . and for the appeasement of totalitarianism."

The most thorough response to assertions of media bias was contained in an article by Roger Morris which appeared in the November-December issue of *Columbia Journalism Review*. He concluded: "In June, American journalism came to
a bloody new war in the Middle East, reported what it saw for the most part fairly and accurately and sometimes brilliantly, provided balanced comment, and provoked and absorbed controversy."

Catholic-Jewish Relations

In the fall Pope John Paul II granted a Vatican audience to Yasir Arafat, head of the PLO. A number of Jewish groups, including the Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Committee, and Union of American Hebrew Congregations, asserted that the Pope's meeting with Arafat would harm Catholic-Jewish relations. In a letter to Julius Berman, president of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, secretary of the Vatican's commission for religious relations with the Jews, explained that the Pope was prepared to "receive all men and women . . . to further the aims of peace. . . . [The meeting was] in no way a sign of approval of all the ideas and actions attributed to [Arafat]."

Antisemitism

In The Real Anti-Semitism, by Ruth Ann and Nathan Perlmutter, the latter the head of the Anti-Defamation League, it was noted that groups traditionally seen by Jews as allies and supporters, such as the liberal Protestant denominations, no longer shared common interests and goals with the Jewish community. On the other hand, fundamentalist Protestants and political conservatives, whom Jews had often opposed in the past, tended to side with the Jewish community on current issues.

In a symposium conducted in the January-February issue of Moment magazine, the executive heads of the Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, and National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council agreed that popular antisemitism, as reflected in such indices as a willingness to live next door to Jews or to vote for Jewish candidates, had abated. There was serious concern, however, about what Bertram Gold, executive vice president of the American Jewish Committee, called "situational antisemitism." This referred to a belief that Jews, as a group, stood opposed to the efforts of American corporations to do business with the Arab countries, or, more generally, that Jews supported Israel to the detriment of American interests and security.

In seeming confirmation of the abatement of traditional forms of antisemitism, the Anti-Defamation League reported at the end of the year that there had been a noticeable decline in antisemitic vandalism in the United States. The annual survey reported 829 incidents in 35 states and the District of Columbia in 1982 as against 974 in 31 states and the District of Columbia in 1981. It was also thought significant that not a single incident resulted from the activities of organized hate groups. (A contrary view was taken by the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, which, on the basis of a poll conducted among rabbis between fall 1981 and summer 1982, argued that antisemitic vandalism had actually increased.)
In March President Ronald Reagan made use of a speech before the National Conference of Christians and Jews to correct the impression he had left at the height of the AWACS fight the year before, that Jews manifested an improper dual loyalty toward Israel. "No group should be bullied into silence by racial or ethnic slurs, or fear of them," he stated.

One area that continued to concern some Jewish organizations, as well as other groups, was private club discrimination. In January the American Bar Association voted to support legislation banning discrimination by private business clubs on the basis of race, religion, sex, or national origin—an action hailed by the American Jewish Committee. In the summer, however, the legal group rescinded its action.

**Extremism**

Isolated episodes of violence and harassment associated with the Ku Klux Klan or Nazi-like groups occurred in various parts of the country. A Jewish student at the University of Maryland was wounded by a BB gun wielded by a student pretending to be a Nazi. In Manchester, Massachusetts, a group of eighth grade boys formed a club to harass Jews and blacks. Anti-Klan demonstrations in Boston and Washington erupted into violence. In Chattanooga a jury awarded $535,000 to five black women wounded by shotgun blasts fired by three former Klansmen in 1980.

**Nazi War Criminals**

Late in the year the justice department reported entering into an agreement with Hans Lipschis of Chicago, a former Auschwitz guard, that would result in his being deported by April 1983. In the case of Rumanian Orthodox archbishop Valerian Trifa, who had been ordered deported from the United States for Nazi crimes, Switzerland refused to accept him and approaches to other governments were begun.

In May John Loftus, a former justice department prosecutor, charged on "60 Minutes," a CBS news program, that hundreds of Nazi collaborators had been brought to the United States illegally after World War II to form an anti-Soviet spy army. Both the justice department and the government accounting office launched investigations of the matter.

**Economic Downturn**

The United States experienced a serious economic decline in 1982, and cutbacks in government funding for social welfare programs were seen in some quarters as exacerabating the suffering of the poor. Meeting in New York, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform) decried the Reagan administration's budget cuts, arguing that they increased "the gap between rich and poor" and caused "overall social unrest." In a speech to the board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in December, Alexander Schindler, head of the Reform group, urged
Jews to seek closer ties to the poor. Schindler argued that the Reagan administration labored "to multiply missiles rather than to mitigate human misery." In a similar vein, Rabbi Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, charged that the central organizing principle of the Reagan administration was "greed" rather than "economic necessity." For the most part, however, Jewish groups were not in the lead in challenging what some had come to call "Reaganomics."

Civil Rights

Civil rights activities by Jewish groups did not figure prominently in the news in 1982. However, Jewish groups did play a role in seeking an extension of the 1965 voting rights act.

One matter that drew considerable attention was the decision of President Reagan to reverse the previous denial of tax exempt status to private schools that practiced racial discrimination. At its plenary meeting early in the year, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, representing more than 100 Jewish groups, was sharply critical of the move. When President Reagan reversed himself and the issue moved to the supreme court, the American Jewish Committee joined with the American Civil Liberties Union, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, in a friend of the court brief arguing that the case was not moot. On the other hand, the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs (COLPA), an Orthodox legal aid group, welcomed the action of the president in raising the issue, because it had important implications for Hebrew Day schools which did not have minority students.

Quotas

The quota issue continued to worry Jewish organizations, although it came in for less intense discussion in 1982 than it had in the previous few years.

Early in the year the Harvard Law Review approved a plan that would take a student's race, but not sex, into account in filling some editorial positions. The plan reversed a policy considered the year before that would have reserved up to eight positions for women or minority group members who did not otherwise gain posts on the law review.

An episode that attracted some attention involved black students at the Harvard Law School who voted to boycott a course on racial and legal issues that was scheduled to be taught by both a black lawyer and Jack Greenberg, executive director of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. It was argued that Greenberg, because he was white, could not sufficiently empathize with the "third world community."

In June the supreme court was asked to review a lower court ruling in Boston which held that the current proportion of black teachers had to be maintained even
as teacher lay-offs were implemented. This resulted in a disproportionate number of white teachers losing their jobs, even though many of them had longer periods of service than the blacks. Late in the year the supreme court also took under consideration appeals by the police and firefighters unions in Boston, as well as the Massachusetts Civil Service Commission—joined in by the Reagan administration—arguing that municipal lay-offs should not necessarily be structured so as to preserve racial balance at the expense of seniority.

Church-State Relations

In January the supreme court refused to overturn a lower court ruling in a case involving a Lubbock, Texas school district. The lower court had maintained that voluntary gatherings of students in public schools for religious purposes were unconstitutional.

Pressure continued to mount during the year for some form of prayer in the public schools. Two bills were introduced in the Senate that would have removed the jurisdiction of the supreme court and lower federal courts in cases involving government sponsored and supervised school prayer. The American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, and Anti-Defamation League joined with a group of mainline Protestant denominations and civil liberties groups in opposing these measures.

In May, at a ceremony marking a "national day of prayer," President Reagan called on Congress to pass a constitutional amendment permitting voluntary prayer in the public schools and other public institutions. The Synagogue Council of America, representing Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform religious bodies, criticized the president, arguing that even voluntary prayer would offend the sensibilities of some students. Public opinion polls, however, showed considerable support for prayer in the schools. In June the Southern Baptists became the first major denomination to support the voluntary prayer amendment.

In September the push for school prayer received further impetus, when the administration announced that it would not oppose legislation sponsored by Senator Jesse Helms (R., N.C.) stripping the supreme court of jurisdiction over school prayer cases. At about the same time, President Reagan repeated his call for officially sanctioned prayer in the public schools.

At year's end the school prayer issue was also being debated at the state level. In December the New Jersey legislature overrode a veto of a bill calling for a minute of silence at the start of each school day. Among the groups supporting the veto were the Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Congress, and Association of School Administrators.

On April 15 President Reagan told the National Catholic Education Association convention that he would send to Congress a tuition tax credit proposal aiding parents who sent their children to private and parochial schools—a measure opposed by most Jewish groups. However, Agudath Israel, an Orthodox group, praised the president's stand. During the inconclusive debate over the tax credit
issue, new federal rules went into effect that made it possible for private and parochial school pupils to receive increased aid under a block grant program for gifted children.

Advocates of scientific creationism suffered setbacks during the year when U.S. district court judges in Arkansas and Louisiana struck down laws requiring that the biblical account of creation be taught in schools together with the theory of evolution. However, the New York Times reported that in many school districts creationism was still being routinely taught. In New York City three high school biology textbooks were rejected for use by Board of Education because they were thought to give insufficient attention to the Darwinian theory of evolution.

Cults

During the summer, the major religious organizations in metropolitan New York joined together in a program directed against "destructive cults." The Unification Church, headed by Sun Myung Moon, was a special target. Earlier, Moon had been sentenced to 18 months in prison and fined $25,000 for income tax evasion. On the other hand, New York State's highest court ruled unanimously that religion was the "primary purpose" of the Unification Church and that it was therefore eligible for tax exempt status.

The New Right

Activities of the New Right continued to receive widespread attention. At the summer meeting of the American Library Association, there were reports about efforts by Moral Majority and other groups to remove or ban books from community libraries. Earlier, the Coalition for Better Television had threatened once again to boycott one or more companies that advertised on prime-time television. However, Moral Majority, which belonged to the Coalition, demurred. It argued that the networks had made a serious effort to provide more suitable programming, and that quiet lobbying rather than threats was the best course of action.

A major thrust backed by the New Right was Senator Jesse Helms' bill banning all federal funding for abortions, and declaring that the supreme court had erred in 1973 when it legalized most abortions. In September the Senate narrowly set aside the measure, as it did an anti-abortion constitutional amendment sponsored by Senator Orrin Hatch (R., Utah).

As the 97th Congress drew to a close, it was evident that the "old center," guided by pragmatism, rather than the New Right, was in control of the situation. In addition to rejecting anti-abortion bills, the Senate had blocked the Helms school prayer bill, the family protection act, and efforts to halt school busing. Right-wing conservatives felt that the administration and the Republican leadership were not sufficiently supportive of their concerns. In the fall elections "social issues" played little or no role according to most observers, who recalled that two years earlier half
a dozen liberal Democrats had been defeated, presumably through New Right efforts. Indeed, eight of the nine senators targeted for defeat by the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) were reelected, as were 15 House members opposed by NCPAC. However, an article by Morton Kondracke in The New Republic (Dec. 20), and a book, Post Conservative America, by political analyst Kevin Phillips argued that the New Right was far from dead.

A number of books were published during the year attacking the Christian Right, among them Holy Terror: The Fundamentalist War on America’s Freedoms in Religion, Politics, and Our Private Lives by Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman; The New Religious Right in America by Samuel Hill and Dennis Owen; The Religious Right and Christian Faith by Gabriel Fackre; and God’s Bullies: Power Politics and Religious Tyranny by Perry Deane Young. Young’s volume placed much of the blame for the Christian Right’s intolerance on Roman Catholics in the movement.

Support for Israel by fundamentalist Christians continued to be manifested. In September, following the Beirut massacre, Jerry Falwell, leader of Moral Majority, called on Christians to rally around the Jewish state. During a November trip to the United States that was cut short by the death of his wife, Prime Minister Begin had been scheduled to meet with fundamentalist leaders in Dallas. The planned meeting was criticized by Howard Squadron, president of the American Jewish Congress, who argued that Israel, in courting Christian fundamentalists, risked alienating those members of the Jewish community who were opposed to the New Right’s political agenda.

**Jews and Politics**

Despite the feeling of many Jews that their position in the United States had been damaged by events in the Middle East, five more Jews were elected to the 98th Congress, raising the total number to 38. Representative Paul Findley (R., Ill.), considered the leading supporter of the PLO in Congress, was defeated in a reelection bid. Representative Paul McCloskey (R., Ca.), another sharp critic of Israel, gave up his seat to run a losing senatorial race.

In a period widely seen as conservative, Jews continued to remain the most liberal of white groups. According to a New York Times-CBS News exit poll, 70 per cent of Jews in the 1982 election voted Democratic. In the gubernatorial race in California between Democrat Tom Bradley, a black, and George Deukmejian, Jews voted overwhelmingly for Bradley (75 to 23 per cent). Two out of every three Jewish voters in the New York State gubernatorial race cast their ballots for Democrat Mario Cuomo, a liberal, who ran against Lewis Lehrman, a conservative Jewish Republican.