



HISTORY OF ISRAEL

[Austerity and Other Growing Pains]

FEBRUARY 12 1953 ... USSR Breaks Diplomatic Ties with Israel

OCTOBER 12 1953 ... Woman and Two Children killed in Yehud Home

DECEMBER 6 1953 Moshe Dayan Becomes IDF Chief of Staff

JANUARY 26 1954 Moshe Sharrett Presents New Government

JUNE 22 1955 Kasztner Found Guilty

NOVEMBER 9 1952 ... Chaim Weizmann Dies

JUNE 11 1953 ... Couple Killed in Kfar Hess Home

AUGUST 1953 Unit 101 Activated

DECEMBER 7 1953 Ben Gurion moves to Sde Boker

SEPTEMBER 8 1954 Morroccan Aliyah Begins

decision was made to merge it into the Paratrooper division, under Sharon's command — with the goal of turning that entire division into an elite force. During this period, the Israeli army also clashed with the Syrians, primarily over the draining of the Hula Swamp, and the Egyptian army, over the creation of a Nahal settlement in a demilitarized zone.

While Israelis, especially those living closer to the borders, were mostly concerned about security, during the early 50's Israelis continued to struggle with shortages of food and other basic supplies. The German reparations agreement, which remained controversial, began to positively impact Israel's economy. Emotions relating to the Holocaust were not limited to the reparations. In 1954, a proceeding known as "The Kasztner Trial," focused on whether Rudolf Kasztner, who had worked to save Jews in Hungary, had in fact collaborated with the Nazis. A lower court concluded he did, which led to his assassination in 1957. The next year, Kasztner was exonerated by Israel's Supreme court.

The Soviet Union had supported the establishment of the State of Israel, and Golda Meir was warmly welcomed to Moscow as the first Ambassador. However, in the early 50's, as Israel's ties to the United States and West Germany strengthened, and blatant antisemitic acts took place in communist countries of Europe, those ties became strained. The Soviets broke diplomatic ties with Israel, after a bomb was thrown at the Soviet Embassy in Tel Aviv, which they reestablished six months later.

Despite having reached armistice agreements with all its neighbors, in the early 50's Israelis could hardly feel safe. Israel had long porous borders, especially with Jordan. As a result, raiders would constantly enter to steal from, and often murder Israelis. In 1951, 137 Israelis were killed or wounded, a number that grew to 147 in 1952, and 180 in 1953. In response, Israel ordered retaliatory raids on Jordanian towns.

1953 1st Israel Prize Awarded

1953 Bar Ilan University Founded

1953 1st Paper Factory Opens

1954 Tel Aviv-Northbound Train Station Established

1954 Bank of Israel Founded

Initially, the army did not seem up to the task, until it was decided to form an elite force called "Unit 101," under the command of the young Ariel Sharon. The operations it conducted persuaded the Jordanians to try to reign in the cross border raids. The unit was so successful that a

Israel also welcomed in its second Prime Minister Prime Minister. David Ben Gurion stunned the nation and resigned to become a pioneer himself, by moving to Sde Boker, deep the Negev. Ben Gurion believed the future of the country lay in the Negev. His voluntary retirement would last less than two years.