

# JEWISH NEWS BRIEFS

**NEW YORK (WNS)** -- The Redwood City, California, synagogue which was destroyed by a \$1.5 million fire will be rebuilt.

**JERUSALEM (WNS)** -- Five persons were injured, one of them critically, when a bomb exploded at the Machane Yehuda market.

**TEL AVIV (WNS)** -- Education Minister Zevulun Hammer has announced that the study of the Holocaust will be compulsory in all high schools.

**NEW YORK (WNS)** -- Rabbi Joseph Sternstein, president of the American Zionist Federation, has announced a major campaign to promote Jerusalem Day on May 24 throughout the United States.

**NEW YORK (WNS)** -- There are an estimated 500 students learning Hebrew from 30 teachers in Moscow despite official harassment.

**PARIS (WNS)** -- The window of a store in Bordeaux owned by Leon Levy, president of the League Against Anti-Semitism (LICA) was shattered by machinegun fire.

**WASHINGTON (WNS)** -- President Carter told a press conference Feb. 27 that he rejects the charge that his brother, Billy, is anti-Semitic and will not condemn him.

**NEW YORK (WNS)** -- The new Iranian government will provide the Palestine Liberation Organization with "political and moral" support but not arms or troops.

**NEW YORK (WNS)** -- Disappointment over the cursory treatment given to relations with Jews at the recently completed Latin American Bishops Conference was voiced here Feb. 26 by Jacobo Kovadloff, director of the American Jewish Committee's Latin American department. Kovadloff was "disappointed" that there was no condemnation of anti-Semitism or the Nazi movement, both of which he said were growing in Latin America.

**JERUSALEM (WNS)** -- The Israeli government put into effect a sharp increase in the price of petroleum products boosting the cost-of-living index another two percent.

**WASHINGTON (WNS)** -- The State Department asserted that the United States is discussing "a larger military presence" in the Middle East but this does not mean new bases. "We are not considering a base structure or troops," State Department spokesman Hodding Carter said.

**BONN (WNS)** -- The Bundesverfassungsgericht, West German's highest court, has promised "to decide within this year" whether to bring three Nazi war criminals to trial.

**VIENNA (WNS)** -- The Ministry of Interior reported that 137,700 persons visited the museum of the former Nazi concentration camp at Mauthausen in 1978, 23 percent more than in 1977.

**VIENNA (WNS)** -- Education Minister Fred Sinowatz has asked Austrian teachers to deal with the horrors of the Nazis when the NBC-TV "Holocaust" series is shown on Austrian television in March.

**TEL AVIV (WNS)** -- Four Arabs from the village of Idna near Hebron have been arrested as suspects in the vandalizing of tombstones at the Kiryat Gat Cemetery.

**WASHINGTON (WNS)** -- An article in the privately published bi-monthly magazine "NATO's 15 Nations," claims that although "the Arab states and Israel are better armed than before the Yom Kippur War," the balance now "leans heavily in favor of the Arab states."

**WASHINGTON (WNS)** -- The protection of the oil flow from the Middle East is vital to United States interest, Defense Secretary Harold Brown declared.

**NEW YORK (WNS)** -- Israelis and their supporters in the United States should not become too complacent in the expectations of a Middle East peace, Israeli Chief Ashkenazic Rabbi Shlomo Goren warned.



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**TEL AVIV (WNS)** -- The Labor Alignment, the coalition of the Labor Party and Mapam, will end after 10 years if the Mapam convention in February approves the decision of its secretariat to dissolve the partnership.

**UNITED NATIONS (WUP)** -- For the first time in history, a nation plans to set up a University of Peace. That nation is Costa Rica, a genuine friend of Israel.

**TEL AVIV (WNS)** -- An atlas that includes 2091 names of Jewish scholars during the 600 years that ended with the expulsion of Jews from Spain has been published.

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### Purim

PURIM, merriest of Jewish holidays, occurs either in February or March.

The word Purim means "lots" and refers to the manner in which an ancient Persian bigot, Haman by name, decided on what day to carry out his plan to get rid of the Jewish people. The story is to be found in the Book of Esther in the Bible.

Haman's wrath was kindled by the refusal of Mordecai the Jew to bow down to him or his effigy. Sensing that the Jewish faith was hostile to his dictatorship Haman planned to eliminate the Jews.

How this plot was thwarted through an act of patriotism on the part of Mordecai and by the courageous intercession of Esther, Mordecai's cousin, who becomes Queen of Persia is the story line of the Biblical volume.

The joyousness of the holiday observance, which expresses itself through song and prayers of thanksgiving, derives from the relief felt each year over the triumph over tyranny. Gift giving and giving to the poor also mark the day.

In temples and synagogues, the Esther story is read from a special scroll called megillah, at the Megillah Service.

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