

# 1956

## the world

### the way it was when the IAEA was born

50 years ago, on 23 October, the IAEA Statute was approved heralding the birth of the International Atomic Energy Agency. This marked the culmination of years of international diplomacy following US President Dwight Eisenhower's 1953 "Atoms for Peace" speech.

The year also saw Elvis Presley, the "King of Rock 'n Roll" ascend the charts, Queen Elizabeth II inaugurate the world's first commercial nuclear power plant in England, and Prince Rainier of Monaco wed Grace Kelley.

But against this background of royal pomp and circumstance, the world witnessed upheaval as the Suez Canal crisis broke out, Hungary revolted against a pro-Soviet government and civil rights unrest boiled in the US. Here is just a glimpse of the way the world was then...

## January

- ❖ Sudan becomes independent from Britain. Northern Muslim parties take over rule. Southerners demand autonomy and civil war begins.



- ❖ Elvis Presley, a truck driver, records "Heartbreak Hotel" for RCA, his first recording session. It sells over 300,000 copies in its first three weeks on the market.
- ❖ The Winter Olympic Games open in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy.
- ❖ A stick of dynamite explodes on the porch of Martin Luther King, American Civil Rights leader.

## February

- ❖ Nikita Khrushchev denounces Stalin at the 20th Communist Party Congress at Moscow as a "cult of personality."
- ❖ Female suffrage is granted in Egypt.

## March

- ❖ Morocco tears up the Treaty of Fez and declares independence from France.
- ❖ The US Supreme Court affirms the ban on segregation in public schools in Brown vs. Board of Education.
- ❖ Tunisia is granted independence from France.
- ❖ Pakistan becomes an Islamic Republic.
- ❖ Irene Joliot-Curie dies. French physical chemist who, along with her husband, Jean-Frederic Joliot, was awarded the 1935 Nobel Prize for Chemistry for their discovery of new radioactive isotopes prepared artificially. She was the daughter of Nobel Prize winners Pierre and Marie Curie.



## April

- ❖ American actress Grace Kelly marries Prince Rainier III of Monaco.
- ❖ Calder Hall, the world's first commercial nuclear power reactor in England, was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II.
- ❖ An Israeli-Egyptian cease fire, brokered by UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld, goes into effect.
- ❖ Last French troops leave Vietnam.
- ❖ Spain gives up its protectorate over parts of Morocco.
- ❖ Revived draft statute of the IAEA is submitted to the UN General Assembly.

## May

- ❖ Austria and Israel form diplomatic relations.
- ❖ The first known airborne US hydrogen bomb is tested over Bikini Atoll in the Pacific.
- ❖ Terrorism rages on Cyprus.

## June

- ❖ The 74-year British occupation of the Suez Canal ends.
- ❖ Golda Meir begins her term as Israel's foreign minister.
- ❖ Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller are married.



## July

- ❖ World's first nuclear power station (5 megawatts) begins operation at Obninsk in Russia.
- ❖ France raises the tobacco tax 20% to support war in Algeria.
- ❖ The Bell X-2 rocket plane sets a world aircraft speed record of 3,050 kph.
- ❖ Egypt's President Nasser nationalizes the Suez Canal.

## August

- ❖ India commissions its first nuclear power reactor, Apsara.

## September

- ❖ The USSR signs nuclear research agreements with North Korea which provide for a number of North Korean scientists to be taught nuclear physics in the USSR.
- ❖ At a conference on the IAEA Statute, Dr. Homi Bhabha of India declares, "We consider it to be the inalienable right of States to produce and hold fissionable material required for the peaceful power programs."



## October

- ❖ The IAEA Statute is approved by the Conference on the Statute of the IAEA held at United Nations Headquarters, New York; it enters into force on 29 July 1957. Its principal objective is "to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world".
- ❖ Hungary revolts against the pro-Soviet government and attempts to leave the Warsaw Pact. Soviet troops invade Hungary.
- ❖ Suez Crisis begins: Israel invades the Sinai Peninsula and pushes Egyptian forces back toward Suez Canal.

## November

- ❖ Soviet troops invade Hungary to crush the Hungarian Revolt against Soviet communist oppression.



- ❖ US Republican incumbent Dwight D. Eisenhower is re-elected by defeating Democratic challenger Adlai E. Stevenson in a rematch of their contest four years earlier.
- ❖ The 1956 Summer Olympics begin in Melbourne, Australia.

## December

- ❖ Fidel Castro returns from exile with his followers, among them Ernesto "Che" Guevara, and starts a guerrilla war.



- ❖ 1956 Academy Awards: *Best Picture*, "Around the World in Eighty Days"; *Best Actor*, Yul Brynner for "The King and I"; *Best Actress*, Ingrid Bergman for "Anastasia".
- ❖ Japan joins the UN.
- ❖ The world's first transistorized computer, the TX-0 is completed.