

South Africa

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Population

A NEW POPULATION census was taken on May 6, 1970 but results were not available at the time of writing. The previous official census (1960) put the Jewish community at 114,762 out of a European (white) population of 3,088,492 and a total population (all races) of 16,002,797. Unofficial estimates placed the 1970 figure at approximately 120,000.

Civic and Political Status

The general elections in April and the provincial council elections in October were fought on national policies concerning *apartheid* and economics, and involved no "Jewish issue" as such. However, the attitude of the extreme right-wing Herstigte Nasionale party—established in 1969 as a breakaway from the governing National party (AJYB, 1970 [Vol. 71], p. 531) to the traditionally equal civic and political rights of Jewish citizens caused concern among Jews. The new party made subscription to Calvinist Christian principles conditional for membership, thus implicitly excluding, in the words of an article in its official organ, *Die Afrikaner*, "Catholics, freethinkers, atheists and Jews."

Following the article in *Die Afrikaner* and reports that some of the party's candidates had made disparaging remarks about the Jewish community, the *South African Jewish Times* wrote to the party's leader Albert Hertzog, asking for clarification. In a telephone interview with the paper's editor, Hertzog denied that his party was anti-Jewish, though he confirmed that subscription to Calvinist principles was required for membership. When the editor pointed out that acceptance of the "triune God," specifically mentioned in *Die Afrikaner* article, was against Jewish religious belief, Hertzog replied: "Then you could not subscribe to our principles." Regarding reports of anti-Jewish comments by some candidates, he said: "We do not approve of any member disparaging any section or religion."

In view of the position taken by the Herstigte party, the *South African Jewish Times* sought interviews with Prime Minister Balthazar John Vorster, the opposition United party leader Sir de Villiers Graaff, and Progressive party leader Jan Steytler on their parties' attitudes toward the Jewish community. In personal interviews granted to the editor, each made it clear that their parties were open to all citizens, regardless of religion, and that there were Jews among their members and in their councils. Said Premier Vorster:

The National Party has no particular "attitude" to any community. We regard them all as South Africans, enjoying equal citizenship rights and absolute religious freedom. We have never interfered and never will interfere with their citizen rights and religious freedom. The National Party is open to any white person, regardless of his religion or community, who is prepared to subscribe to its program and principles. As a member, he is entitled to all the privileges that membership confers. He can serve on any of our councils and can stand as a candidate for elections. There are National Party members of the Jewish faith on some of our councils and there are some who have stood as party candidates in elections.

Sir de Villiers Graaff expressed his party's stand as follows:

The United Party stands for the unity of all sections of the European (white) population in one nation. We accept a man not on his origins, language or religion, but by his dedication to South Africa. That was the policy we adhered to when we were in power. The rights of all sections were protected by the United Party Government, and not whittled away by ministerial decree. We further believe in religious freedom for all groups, and have always fought for the freedom and dignity of the individual, regardless of race, colour or creed. We have had many distinguished members of the Jewish community who have given service to South Africa through the United Party, in the Provincial Councils, in Parliament, in the Senate and even in the Cabinet.

Jan Steytler spoke in the same vein:

The Progressive Party welcomes the membership of every South African citizen, irrespective of race or creed. We have never taken cognisance of the racial origins or religion of any of our members. Currently, we happen to be a uniracial party, as compelled by law; but any member of our party can hold any office in the party, stand for election to parliament and, when we come to power, hold any office in the government. We have many persons of the Jewish faith among our members and several among our candidates in the election. Mrs. Helen Suzman has represented us so ably in Parliament this past session that she has won respect on all sides of the House.

The Herstigte party was virtually eliminated, at the polls. In the general election, all 78 of its candidates were heavily defeated, 75 of them losing their deposits. The governing National party was returned with six fewer seats (117 against 123 at the dissolution of parliament), while the United party won 47 seats (against 38 at the dissolution of parliament), and the Progressive party retained the seat it held in the previous parliament, its other 18 candidates being defeated.

Four Jews were among the successful candidates: Ephraim Leonard Fisher, Solomon ("Sonny") Emdin, and Hymie Miller (all United party), and Mrs. Helen Suzman (Progressive party). At the dissolution of parliament, five Jews were members.

The general election date coincided with the second day of Passover, and although Jewish representations to have it changed had not been successful (AJYB, 1970 [Vol. 71], p. 530), the Prime Minister had assured Jewish leaders that note would be taken in future of the dates of Jewish festivals, if he were advised of them. Thus, the government fixed the date of the provincial council elections for October 28, after Sukkot.

In the provincial council elections, all 22 Herstigte party candidates were heavily defeated. Returns of other parties (previous position in brackets) were: Transvaal—National party 54 (50), United party 19 (18); Orange Free State—National party 25, United party 0 (same); Cape—National party 36 (32), United party 18 (22); Natal—National party 3 (8), United party 19 (13).

Eleven Jews were among the candidates returned to the provincial councils. Transvaal: I. Kramer, H. Schwarz, D. H. Epstein, A. B. Widman, S. Moss, A. Jaffe; Cape: S. L. Gross, C. Brett, D. Lazarus, T. Aronson; Natal: J. Jacobs. All the elected Jewish candidates stood for the United party.

In the subsequent election (by electoral college) for the Senate, one Jew, Abraham Getz, was elected, replacing Ephraim Benjamin Woolf in the previous Senate (both United party).

Several Jews were elected during the year to high civic office. Sam Moss became Johannesburg's eleventh Jewish mayor and Raoul Goldman Durban's second Jewish mayor. David Lazarus was again elected mayor of East London, Alec Potash mayor of Benoni, and Alf Widman deputy mayor of Johannesburg.

Antisemitism

Antisemitic agitation in 1970 was marginal, coming mainly from crackpots and small fringe groups, some of them linked with antisemites and anti-Jewish groups in other countries. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies brought to the notice of the authorities anti-Jewish pamphlets, mostly American, British and Swedish in origin, which were circulated by local antisemites. Some of them disguised their antisemitic attacks as professedly "not anti-Jewish, but anti-Zionist."

A November report in a Johannesburg newspaper that some delegates at the Transvaal Congress of the National party had attacked "big companies and Jews" for unfair competition against the small farmer, and that Minister of Agriculture Dirk Uys and his deputy, Hendrik Schoeman, had reacted "sympathetically," was refuted by the minister. Uys said that "the Govern-

ment had, on numerous occasions, expressed its repudiation of anti-Semitism, and to that policy both he and his deputy minister firmly adhered.”

Communal Organization

Delegates from Jewish communities throughout the country participated in the 26th national congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, held in Johannesburg May 28—June 1. Chairman Irving Kane of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee came from the United States to deliver keynote addresses on world Jewry's position and Israel's key role, and on new techniques on Jewish communal work. In his presidential address, Maurice Porter stressed South African Jewry's deep commitment to Zionism and Israel; its appreciation of the South African government's helpful attitudes regarding transmission to Israel of funds raised by Zionists; the pride Jews took in their South African citizenship and in work for the common good. He stressed the Board's efforts to enrich Jewish communal life through its work among youth and students, its leadership training, and cultural programs.

Arthur Suzman, Q.C., chairman of the Board's public relations committee, referred to the moral issues involved in South Africa's racial problems. He said that, since the Board of Deputies did not enter the political arena, save on matters of direct concern to the Jewish community, it could not become the forum for framing a communal attitude to such problems. However, he urged that as citizens, Jews should show concern and do what they could to promote social justice.

The congress elected the Board's chairman, Maurice Porter, as its new president to succeed Teddy Schneider; the incoming executive council elected David K. Mann as the Board's new chairman.

The part played by women in South African Jewish communal life was mirrored at the 15th national conference of the Union of Jewish Women of South Africa, held in Johannesburg May 17–21. The conference was attended by delegates from the Union's 58 branches, representing 10,000 members throughout the country. Reports reflected a range of activities covering social, cultural, and representational services; adult education; youth and student work, service to the aged, fundraising, and fostering intergroup understanding. Mrs. Jeanette Cohen was elected the Union's new national president, to succeed Mrs. Sadie Kirsch. Miss Marian Nell was installed as the new national organizer.

In October Professor Roberto Bachi, professor of statistics and demography at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, briefly visited South Africa to advise the Board of Deputies on a demographic research project. Katriel Katz, chairman of the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, came to South Africa in August for the dedication of the memorial shrine at the Etz Hayyim synagogue in Johannesburg, erected by the South African Yad Vashem organization. The solemn ceremony was attended by the administrator of

the Transvaal Sybrand van Niekerk, civic and military dignitaries, and clergymen of various faiths.

Fund Raising

The campaign for the United Communal Fund, which covers the deficits of South African Jewry's national organizations, proceeded through 1970 under the aegis of the Board of Deputies, raising just over R 1 million (about \$1,400,000).

The South African Board of Jewish Education continued to labor under serious financial difficulties, more especially as a result of national increases in teachers' salaries which raised the Board's bill an estimated R 250,000 (\$350,000). In June it launched a special campaign for additional funds, led by Brigadier General Shlomo Gazit, head of Israel's military government in the occupied territories, who conveyed to communal workers the importance Israel attached to Jewish education in the Diaspora.

Campaigns for various other Jewish institutions went on apace. Plans were laid for an Israeli United Appeal emergency campaign to begin early in 1971.

The Board of Deputies initiated the South African Jewish Trust providing a repository for benefactions and bequests for Jewish communal purposes, which was granted substantial tax concessions by the government.

Religion

At the 5th national conference of the Federation of Synagogues of South Africa, held in Johannesburg March 12-15, chairman Israel Bersohn welcomed a delegation from the Cape, which had previously operated its own synagogue council independent of the Federation. He expressed the hope that this would be the beginning of country-wide unity. He paid tribute to the government for the fair treatment which it, like all previous governments, had accorded the Federation. "The religious community has always been treated in a most courteous and helpful manner," he said.

Dealing with the problem of mounting costs, shortage of personnel, and rivalry between congregations for the services of rabbis and cantors, Dr. Bersohn proposed the reorganization of the Federation as a Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations along the lines of the United Synagogue in Britain, with powers to fix uniform salary scales and generally advance Orthodox Judaism on a nationally organized basis.

Keynote addresses by the Federation's Chief Rabbi Bernard Casper and former Chief Rabbi Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, now a resident of Jerusalem, focused on problems arising for Jewry from a permissive society, as well as on the work of the Federation's Beth Din and its Ministers' Training College. The College, said Rabbi Rabinowitz, was currently preparing more students for the ministry than Jews' College in England.

The conference unanimously reelected Dr. Bersohn president. Rabbi Abraham Hyman Lapin of Johannesburg was installed as chief minister and senior rabbi of the Gardens synagogue and Rabbi Jacob Newman, also of Johannesburg, as rabbi of the Sea Point Hebrew Congregation, both of Cape Town.

During the year, the Reform sector expanded temples and services in the main cities. Rabbi D. Arthur Saul Super, chief minister of Johannesburg's United Progressive Jewish Congregation, and Rabbi David Sherman, senior rabbi of the Cape Town Reform Congregation, continued to focus on service to the Jewish community as a whole, rather than to the Reform sector only.

Johannesburg's Temple Shalom celebrated its silver jubilee; Rabbi Moses Cyrus Weiler, founder-minister of Reform Judaism in South Africa, now living in Jerusalem, attended as guest of honor.

Education

No new developments occurred in Jewish education since the last report at the 15th national conference of the South African Board of Jewish Education in November 1969 (AJYB, 1970 [Vol. 71], p. 533). There were 14 Jewish day schools with 6,000 students; 47 afternoon Hebrew schools (Talmud Torahs) with 2,300 pupils; 43 Hebrew nursery schools with 2,097 children. Talmud Torahs and nursery schools in the Cape had an enrollment of another 1,000 pupils; Reform Hebrew schools throughout the country, 1,000–2,000; Yeshiva College in Johannesburg some 700, and the Yiddish Folkschool had 300 pupils.

The Rabbi J. L. Zlotnik Hebrew Teachers Seminary conducted by the South African Board of Jewish Education continued training Hebrew teachers; 200 graduated since its establishment in 1944. Teachers were also recruited from Israel for limited periods of service.

Chairman Louis Sachs of the South African Board of Jewish Education visited Canada in October at the invitation of the United Talmud Torahs of Montreal to consult with and advise Jewish day schools there. On his return, he said that leaders of the Montreal organization were particularly interested in the South African board's Ulpan scheme, which annually was sending some 150 day-school pupils on a three-month study tour of Israel, in cooperation with Israeli educational authorities. There was a possibility of cooperation with Canadians in this and other fields.

Youth

The Zionist youth movements having some 7,000 members, mostly teenagers, continued their activities. The Federation of Student Jewish and Zionist Associations continued its work with university youth. Youth clubs were set up by the youth department of the South African Jewish Board

of Deputies for youths in the late teens and early twenties, who were neither students nor affiliated with the youth movements. In 1970, its director, Joseph Amiel, took a group of 31 to Israel for a leadership training course.

Social Services

Social welfare services continued through the established Jewish welfare councils, benevolent associations, and institutions for the aged, the orphaned, and the handicapped. Rising costs compelled welfare organizations to increase grants for the indigent and loans for rehabilitation.

Cultural Activities

Among the community's cultural work were adult education programs conducted by the Zionist Federation, the Union of Jewish Women, the Yiddish Cultural Federation, and many Hebrew congregations. The Board of Deputies brought Professor Shemaryahu Talmon of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, on a lecture tour extending over March–April, which drew large audiences. An exposition on “Aspects of Jewish Life in South Africa,” arranged by the Cape Council of the Board of Deputies and the Union of Jewish Women, opened in February at the South African Cultural History Museum in Cape Town. Containing many historical records and including a lecture program, it steadily drew visitors. Sir Richard Luyt, principal and vice chancellor of the University of Cape Town, officiated at the opening.

The Board of Deputies began publication in September of *Buurmann* (Neighbor—usually in the sense of good neighbor), a quarterly magazine written in Afrikaans and designed to foster Jewish-Christian understanding. It was widely welcomed in the Afrikaans community.

Books by South African Jewish writers published during the year included *Halachic Sources*, by Rabbi Jacob Newman; *The Jewish Bride's Guide to Life*, by Rabbi Louis Isaac Rabinowitz; *Fourteen Stories from Sholem Aleichem*, translated into English by Alec Bell; *Jesus Alias Christ*, by Simon S. Levin (theological study); *Art and Artists of South Africa*, by Esme Ber- man (a definitive study); *Abiding Values*, speeches and addresses by the Hon. Dr. Henry Gluckman (former minister of health); *The Ultimate Transplant*, by Pete Reichman (short stories).

Zionism and Relations with Israel

The interviews of the *South African Jewish Times* editor with the prime minister and opposition leaders included a question on how they viewed relations between South Africa and Israel.

Prime Minister Vorster recalled that South Africa had a long history of

friendship for Israel and was one of the first countries to recognize it as an independent state:

It was a National Party government under Dr. D. F. Malan which accorded Israel *de jure* recognition and Dr. Malan became the first prime minister of another state to visit Israel. National Party governments have made it possible for the South African Jewish community to give humanitarian aid to Israel, through special currency concessions. While it is South Africa's policy not to interfere in the affairs of other states, we view Israel's position and problems with understanding and sympathy. Like us, they have to deal with terrorist infiltration across the border; and like us, they have enemies bent on their destruction.

United Party leader Sir de Villiers Graaff said he believed there were many respects in which South Africa as a small nation could look for inspiration to Israel, also a small nation. The United Party had urged South Africa to have diplomatic representation in Israel, reciprocal with Israel's in South Africa. On a visit to Israel in 1969, Graaff said, he met leading personalities and was impressed with "the dynamism of the country and particularly the caliber of its youth." He recognized Israel and South Africa had many common problems, as for example, "that both countries have to protect themselves against terrorist operations emanating from bases in nearby territories—a more sophisticated type in Israel's case. Of course, there are differences of policy, but in spite of them I feel there are many avenues (trade and cultural relations among them) which South Africa and Israel can explore to mutual advantage."

Progressive Party leader Jan Steytler recalled the following statement he made before the six-day war:

The Israelis are fighting the same battle as we are fighting in South Africa—for their territorial integrity and their independence as a nation. I have the greatest respect for them and for all that Israel has achieved. They have set a standard of civilised living in the Middle East which I do not think any nation could better. Their outlook is marked by tolerance and respect for all sections and religions. We support South Africa's traditional friendship for Israel and favour the fullest reciprocal relations between the two countries through diplomatic representatives, cultural exchanges and mutual trade.

Israel Consul General Itzhak Unna told an Israel Independence Day rally in Johannesburg, in May, he had noted with pleasure that the dialogue between Israel and South Africa had broadened in the past year and that greater understanding now existed between the two countries over their respective problems. "There is naturally a fundamental difference between South Africa and Israel, but I believe it is necessary, despite this difference, to build bridges between our two countries so that we can thereby more clearly define our terrain of common interest and better grasp what our differences concern."

Both Unna and Ambassador Michael Michael, chargé d'affaires of the

Israel legation in South Africa, worked to promote better understanding between the two countries.

The 31st South African Zionist Conference, held in Johannesburg in March, was the largest communal conference of the year. It also celebrated the golden jubilee of the Keren Ha-yesod, whose world chairman, Israel Goldstein, came from Jerusalem to deliver the keynote address praising South African Jewry's response to Keren Ha-yesod appeals as "the highest per capita contributor." Brigadier Dan Laner, of the Israeli army, reviewed Israel's military and security position for the conference.

Israel Maisels, Q.C., retired from office as chairman of the Zionist Federation and was unanimously elected by the conference to the newly created position of general chairman. In his presidential address, he emphasized that there was no "Zionist/non-Zionist issue" in South African Jewry, as there was community-wide identification with Israel. In non-Jewish circles too, he said, there was understanding and friendship for Israel, especially by the South African government which has shown a "fair and reasonable attitude . . . in our requests to it and more particularly in relation to the transfer of funds collected for humanitarian purposes in Israel." Hyman S. Lieb Gott was elected the Federation's new chairman and Joseph Daleski was reelected president.

Leib Frank, general secretary of the Israel office of the South Africa Zionist Federation, reported to the conference on its aid to South African settlers in Israel, some 650 in 1969 and an anticipated total of nearly 1,000 in 1970.

Tribute also was paid to the special role played by women in South African Zionism. The 82 women's Zionist societies in all parts of the country, with approximately 17,000 members, represented an increase of 22 per cent since the 1967 six-day war.

In November, the Women's Zionist Council of South Africa, for the first time held their biennial conference in Jerusalem, which was attended by 250 delegates from South Africa. The program included a post-conference tour of Israel.

Early in 1970, the first Israel government tourist office on the African continent was opened in Johannesburg, with Ivor Manor as its director.

In November Professor Nathan Buras, head of the department of water resources engineering at the Haifa Technion, came from Israel as one of the international experts invited by the South African government to participate in its national Water Year conference, and presented a paper on work that could be adapted to South African needs.

Other Israeli visitors included Colonel Stella Levy and Mrs. Tamar Eshel, who came to launch the women's biennial Zionist campaign; Avraham Schenker, head of the Jewish Agency's department of information and organisation, who came to launch the Zionist membership drive; Carl Alpert, executive vice-chairman of the board of governors of the Haifa Technion; Itzhak Korn, secretary-general of the World Labor Zionist movement;

Professor Harold Fisch, Rector of Bar Ilan University, and Jacob Oleiski, world ORT leader and former director of ORT's schools in Israel, who came in connection with the South African program of ORT's 90th anniversary celebration.

Personalia

Mrs. Shifra Kaganton, welfare worker, died in Johannesburg in February. Mrs. Bessie Jaffee, welfare worker, died in Johannesburg in May. Herman Wald, leading sculptor, died in Johannesburg in July, at the age of 64. Jack Lazarus, president of the Johannesburg Hevra Kaddisha, died in Johannesburg in July, at the age of 66. Harry Carter, communal worker, died in Durban in August, at the age of 86. Isaac Levinson, Zionist leader, one-time secretary to Vladimir Jabotinsky, died in Johannesburg in September, at the age of 75. Izak Donen, chairman South African Technion Society, died in Johannesburg in September, at the age of 64. Philip Segal, professor of English at Witwatersrand University, died in Johannesburg in December, at the age of 55.

EDGAR BERNSTEIN