JEWISH COMMUNITY

WORLD TRENDS brought inflationary pressures to South Africa during 1973, with repercussions in the Jewish as well as in the general community. International political pressure brought increased dialogue on black-white relations, in which both Jewish and Gentile citizens engaged. The Yom Kippur war evoked strong South African sympathies for Israel.

Population

Latest official figures (1970 census; see AJYB, 1972 [Vol. 73], p. 580) put the Jewish community at 117,990 out of a European (white) population of 3,750,716 and a total population (all races) of 21,447,250. Statistical analysis showed a higher percentage of Jews than non-Jews among the country’s aged and a declining Jewish birthrate (see AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], p. 511).

Civic and Political Status

Jews participated as equal citizens in all branches of South African life. In parliament, four Jews were members of the House of Assembly, and one Jew a member of the Senate. Eleven Jews were members of Provincial Councils. David Bloomberg (41) became Cape Town’s youngest mayor; Joe Levy was reelected mayor of Uitenhage for the eighth term, and Solly Rubin was reelected mayor of Port Elizabeth. Jews were also elected mayors of several other towns: Morris Egdes (Sandton), Boris Kaplan (Winburg), Edel Cohen
(Odendaalsrus), and A.S. Sher (Milnerton). There were a number of Jewish deputy mayors.

Seven Jews continued to serve as judges of the South African Supreme Court. Namie Philips, Q.C., and Gerald Friedman, S.C., were appointed acting judges. Martin Horwitz and Lionel Weinstock were appointed senior counsels.

Mrs. Helen Suzman, Progressive party member of parliament for Houghton, Johannesburg, received an honorary doctorate of civil law from Oxford University, England, in June, in recognition of her work for the advancement of nonwhites; in December she was nominated “Woman of the Year” by South Africa’s largest daily newspaper, The Star, Johannesburg. Professor Maurice Frank Kaplan, deputy principal of the University of Cape Town, was appointed a member of the prime minister’s advisory council. The Johannesburg city council saluted a former Jewish mayor, Jack Mincer, by naming a city square in his honor.

Long-standing debate on Jewish attitudes regarding South African race policies continued. At the interprovincial conference of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, in Johannesburg in June, Arthur Suzman, Q.C., chairman of its public relations committee, restated the Board’s policy of not entering the political arena, except in matters directly affecting Jews. At the same time he reiterated the Board’s policies recognizing the right and duty of individuals to express their personal views on racial issues and exhorting every Jew to contribute, in his personal attitudes and dealings, to the promotion of a just relationship between all races and groups in South Africa, in accordance with the teachings and precepts of Judaism.

Endorsing these policies, the conference adopted a proposal that the Board urge its affiliates to review the existing wage structure of their black employees, pay wages at least above the poverty line, and provide them with opportunities for advancement, as well as with pensions and medical aid. The Board itself was acting along these lines.

The conference participants expressed mixed views on attitudes of Jewish students (see under Youth). It was pointed out that any extremism among Jewish students involved only small groups. Their concern generally with moral issues in race relations was noted with appreciation.

Rabbi Dr. Arthur Super, chief minister of the United Progressive Jewish Congregation of Johannesburg (Reform), associated himself in March with protests against the state banning of leaders of the National Union of South African Students. Several rabbis, both Orthodox and Reform, criticized from the pulpit the system of migratory labor in South Africa.
Scripture Lessons in State Schools

In furtherance of Jewish communal concern over state educational directives on Scripture lessons (AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], p. 514), the Board of Deputies made representations to the Minister of National Education Johannes Petrus van der Spuy, pointing out that such lessons offended the religious convictions of Jewish pupils and explaining that, while the law gave parents the right to withdraw children from these lessons, the attitude of teachers often made them reluctant to invoke this right. The Board suggested (a) that schools automatically separate Jewish and non-Jewish children for purposes of religious instruction, and (b) that Old Testament lessons be given to Jewish children during the period Christian children received “Christo-centric” religious instruction. The Board offered the services of Jewish ministers and teachers for such lessons.

In October van der Spuy received a Board delegation which elaborated on the problems involved and the Board’s proposals. Two months later, the minister informed the Board through his private secretary that he was unable to accept the suggestion of automatic separation, as the onus rested on parents: schools could not take the responsibility of deciding which children were of the Jewish faith. Neither could he accept the proposal for separate religious lessons for Jewish children, since he would then have to make similar provision for all other denominations. He argued that the law gave full recourse to Jewish parents, in its provision that “the religious convictions of the parents and the pupils shall be respected in regard to religious instruction and religious ceremonies,” and that it is “incumbent on the education departments to act accordingly.” All that was required was a letter from parents to school principals, requesting that their children be withdrawn from religious instruction classes, as attendance would be contrary to their religious convictions. Schools had been instructed to grant such application; “any problems experienced in this connection should be reported to the education department concerned for investigation.”

The Board of Deputies then issued a public statement which, while expressing appreciation of the consideration given by the minister and disappointment that he could not accept the Board’s suggestions, urged Jewish parents to exercise their right of withdrawing their children from “Christo-centric” religious lessons.

A related problem, the Board’s delegation told the minister, was that Jews who were training as teachers or already teaching were required to take religious instruction courses and to give “Christo-centric” religious lessons upon the request of school principals. The minister stated that students could be exempted from taking such courses on
application to the head of their training institute, and that Jewish teachers who felt their beliefs did not permit them to give "Christo-centric" lessons could submit an objection to the director of education. The Board, in its statement, hoped for assurance that those claiming such exemption would not suffer prejudice in appointments to teaching posts.

**Antisemitism**

The election in 1972 of Harry Schwarz as Transvaal leader of the opposition United party (AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], pp. 514-15) continued to have repercussions. In February the party’s Platteland (rural) Council in the Transvaal disassociated itself from statements made by Jack Dormehl, a member of the Transvaal head committee of the party, that a Jew should not have been elected leader; that Schwarz was "trying to push Jews into high positions in the party at the expense of Gentile members." The Platteland Council regarded Mr. Dormehl’s conduct as "an insult to the United Party and its principles," and requested the Transvaal executive committee to take disciplinary action. The party executive council duly expelled Dormehl for his remarks.

Schwarz was involved in some heated exchanges during debates in the Transvaal Provincial Council early in 1973. When some Nationalist members made gibes reflecting on his Jewish ancestry, Schwarz retorted that his ancestors had been civilized at a time when theirs had been running around in skins. This provoked angry comments and press reactions, until the leader of the National party in the council, D.S. van der Merwe Brink, sharply rebuked members on both sides of the argument and asked that racial remarks be avoided in debate. The pro-government paper *Die Vaderland* editorially condemned the racial exchanges. English newspapers denounced the remarks as antisemitic.

In the small Orange Free State town of Odendaalsrus, a suburban Dutch Reformed Church congregation council, which met in May, adopted a resolution "regretting the election of a non-Christian" (Edel Cohen) as mayor of the town. Cohen, a well-known local businessman and member of the National party, was elected mayor by Nationalist councillors, all of them Christian. The church council’s action followed a sermon by the local minister, Dominee D.H. Botes, affirming it was the duty of Christian councillors to ensure that the mayor of the town was a Christian. The resolution was taken in committee, but dissenting church council members leaked it to the press, where it was severely criticized. Gert Hanekom, leader of the
National party in the Natal Provincial Council, issued a statement denouncing the church council action as "blatant anti-Semitism" in view of the great contribution of Jews to South Africa and saying that Edel Cohen deserved the gratitude of Christians. In his view, the church council did "a disservice to South Africa."

The Board of Deputies asked the Orange Free State Moderature of the church to repudiate the resolution, but was informed that the church as a whole did not pronounce on matters of a purely local character. The Board then wrote to the local church committee which replied that it had decided not to reopen the matter. The Board took the matter back to the Moderature from which it was awaiting a reply.

Communal Organization

The 70th anniversary of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in March was widely noted in the general and Jewish press. An audio-visual production, "Speak With One Voice," made for the occasion traced the growth of South African Jewry from its beginnings to the present community of some 118,000 persons, and the role of the Board of Deputies as the unifying force representing the community to the authorities, defending it against antisemitic attack and helping to meet its diverse needs.

At an anniversary celebration, in Johannesburg on April 8, Maurice Porter, the Board's president, said the Board "stands for the concept of Klal Yisrael, of an all-embracing Jewish community," as well as for the equal rights and duties of Jewish citizens: "We have considered ourselves an integral portion of the South African population, and have encouraged and welcomed the participation by Jews in all aspects of the country's life. We would like to think that the Jewish community has indeed made a not unworthy contribution to the progress of South Africa in all fields, and trust it will continue to do so."

In the course of the celebrations, the Board announced plans to erect in Johannesburg a new communal building which would serve as its headquarters, but would also be a national cultural center for South African Jewry.

The Board arranged for Jewish ministers to serve as part-time chaplains for the large number of Jewish youths doing their year of national service in South Africa's defense forces. It also engaged Rabbi Lawrence Sandler to act as coordinator of chaplaincy services; he was duly accredited by the defense authorities.

Meetings to commemorate the six million Jews destroyed in the Nazi
holocaust, held on Remembrance Day, April 29, were well attended in all main centers.

The Union of Jewish Women of South Africa, with its 10,000 members in 58 branches throughout the country, continued its wide-ranging social, educational, and welfare services.

ORT South Africa conducted a campaign through its various branches to enroll new members.

The Hebrew Order of David and B’nai B’rith continued their social and cultural activities. Mayor A.D. Bensusan of Johannesburg brought the city’s greetings to the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Hebrew Order of David Centre in Orchards, Johannesburg, in June. Herman Edelsberg, executive director of the International Council of B’nai B’rith, visited South Africa in July–August to discuss plans for establishing a district grand lodge in South Africa.

New branches of the South African National Yad Vashem Memorial Foundation were established during the year, following visits to various centers by its chairman, Rabbi J.J. Fogel.

Fund Raising

There were new levels of contributions to the Israeli United Appeal campaign which, by agreement between the South African Zionist Federation, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, and the South African Board of Jewish Education, was the main fund-raising appeal in 1973. Following leadership meetings addressed by Jewish Agency treasurer Arye Leon Dulzin, the campaign was launched in May at banquets in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria, Kimberley, Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth, East London, and Durban. Guest of honor at these functions was General Yitzhak Rabin. Other campaign meetings were addressed by Dr. Julia Libman, a recent Russian immigrant to Israel, and Commander Yehuda Igra of the Israel Navy.

After the outbreak of the Yom Kippur war, there were further increases in giving, even from many who had already made their pledges to the campaign. On a brief visit to South Africa in October, Ezra Shapiro, world chairman of Keren Ha-yesod-United Israel Appeal, expressed thanks to South African Jewry for its “super-effort.”

Earlier, in February and March, the Women’s United Communal Fund campaign took place to raise money for local Jewish organizations. It was launched by Mrs. Ruth Dayan of Israel and continued by Mrs. Miriam Mann of the United States. The sum raised
was larger than in previous women's campaigns for the same objective.

Progress was reported by the South African Jewish Trust, a financial instrument established by the Board of Deputies in 1972 (see AJYB, 1973 [Vol. 74], p. 517), for the purpose of attracting bequests and benefactions for Jewish religious, cultural, and philanthropic purposes.

Religion

Israel's Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren came to South Africa for the sixth national conference of the Federation of Synagogues of South Africa, held in Johannesburg August 16-19 and attended by delegates from all parts of the country. A capacity audience heard his keynote address, which dealt with religious issues affecting Israel and its people and supported the state's attitude towards peace with the Arab states.

Reelected to the presidency of the Federation, Professor Israel Bersohn declared in his presidential address that "the religious community has always been treated in a most courteous and helpful manner, whenever it had occasion to approach government departments." He and Chief Rabbi Bernard Moses Casper, the Federation's religious head, reviewed progress achieved by the Orthodox in 1973, notably by the Jewish Ministers' Training College; four of its graduates received their ordinations from Rabbi Goren in a ceremony at the conference. During a session on youth, concern was expressed over inroads by non-Jewish cults among Jewish students attending universities. There was also concern over increasing intermarriage.

Inflationary trends compelled several Hebrew congregations to increase membership dues during the year; some recorded deficits. Plans for new synagogues (Orthodox) were approved in the Johannesburg suburbs of Glenhazel, Linksfield, and Waverley. Witbank planned a new synagogue and hall. Johannesburg's Great Synagogue erected an adjoining hall. In Ceres, a rebuilt synagogue was consecrated; it replaced one damaged beyond repair in the 1969 earthquake.

Notable milestones were marked by several Hebrew Congregations: Kimberley (centenary); Paarl (80th anniversary); East London (75th anniversary); Stellenbosch, Parys, and Rustenburg (golden jubilees).

Reform congregations announced an increase in members, the largest under Chief Ministers Rabbi Dr. Arthur Super in Johannesburg and Rabbi Dr. David Sherman in Cape Town. Durban's enlarged
Temple David was reconsecrated during the year. The United Progressive Jewish Congregation of Johannesburg extended its school facilities; its sisterhood celebrated its 40th anniversary.

Education

There were 18 Jewish day schools in South Africa, with a total 1973 enrollment of about 6,500. Chief among them were the King David Jewish Day Schools run by the South African Board of Jewish Education in Johannesburg, and the Herzlia Jewish Day Schools run by the Cape Board of Jewish Education in Cape Town. Herzlia opened a new primary school in the Cape Town suburb of Constantia in April. The four months' Ulpan scheme, operated by the South African Board of Jewish Education in Israel, was attended by 127 day-school pupils.

Cape Town's Herzlia was one of the three recipients of Israel's Zalman Shazar prize for 1972. The school received a second contribution of R50,000 from the Joseph Stone Charitable Foundation, established by a Cape Town philanthropist, in December 1973.

Besides day-school students, roughly another 6,000 children received Jewish education at Orthodox and Reform part-time schools (mostly congregational). There was also a Yiddish Folkschool in Johannesburg.

Johannesburg's Yeshiva College introduced a Yeshiva Gedola class for advanced Torah studies.

Changes in the directorate of the South African Board of Jewish Education, announced in August, included the appointment of its director, Rabbi Isaac Goss, to the newly created post of general director and head of a council of educators; the appointment of Norman Sandler, for the past 19 years headmaster of King David High School (Linksfield) as director of secular studies of the Board, and the appointment of Elliot Marc Wolf, deputy principal, to succeed Sandler as principal.

Moshe Krone, head of the World Zionist Organization's Department for Torah Education and Culture in the Diaspora, visited South Africa in August for consultation with Jewish educators.

Haim Lamdan arrived from Israel in July to succeed Dr. Ami Zeevi as Director of the Cape Board of Jewish Education.

Youth

Student politics led to some sharp controversies during the year. In
March a small group of Jewish students at the University of Cape Town began publishing, under the auspices of the university's Students' Jewish Association, a monthly newspaper called Strike, which vehemently criticized the Jewish community and the rabbinate for remaining silent in the face of "racist capitalism" and attacked prominent individuals and Jewish industrialists. At a meeting of the Board of Deputies on May 20, Board chairman David Mann said the issues of Strike he had seen were "reprehensible," containing New Left propaganda against Israel and echoing extremist views on local affairs. The Board, he said, sought dialogue with students, but it must be dialogue and not diatribe.

The Board of Deputies and the Zionist Federation continued to support a joint program for Jewish students at South African universities, which was run by the South African Federation of Student Jewish and Zionist Associations. Under this program, the two sponsoring bodies brought Rabbi David Rosen from Israel in September to serve as adviser to Jewish students, mainly in Johannesburg. Similar appointments for other centers were under consideration.

The various Zionist youth movements again played the major role in organized Jewish youth work. Summer camps arranged by them attracted large numbers. Youth groups were also sent to Israel by both the Board of Deputies and the Zionist Federation to attend leadership seminars.

Social Services

Reviewing welfare work at the annual meeting of the Transvaal Jewish Welfare Council in Johannesburg in December, the council's chairman, Professor P.R. Levy, said that while it had made important progress, many gaps remained to be filled, particularly with regard to special housing for the aged outside institutions and sheltered employment.

Inflationary trends strained the budgets of welfare organizations during the year. The Johannesburg Hevra Kaddishah, the Witwatersrand Hebrew Benevolent Association (Gemillus Hesed), the Cape Jewish Board of Guardians, and other Jewish welfare agencies all recorded increased calls for loans and relief. Services provided for the handicapped, the orphaned and those in need of financial assistance and rehabilitation continued along routine lines.

The Jewish Women's Benevolent and Welfare Society in Johannesburg celebrated its 80th anniversary in June.
Cultural Activities

In March Colonel Mordechai Bar-On, head of the youth and hechalutz department of the World Zionist Organization, visited South Africa under the auspices of the Zionist Federation to conduct leadership seminars on Israel.

Under the joint auspices of the Board of Deputies, the Zionist Federation and the Friends of the Hebrew University, Professor Moshe Greenberg, chairman of the Bible department at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, came to South Africa in July to lecture on the Bible. He drew large audiences. He also addressed the Congress on Old Testament Studies, held by the University of South Africa in Pretoria as part of its centenary celebration.

Adult education programs conducted by the Board of Deputies, the Zionist Federation, the Union of Jewish Women, the Yiddish Cultural Federation, and various Hebrew congregations continued as in previous years.

In September Israel Consul General Aryeh Bustan opened a mobile exhibition of rare Jewish books, arranged by the Zionist Federation.

Books by South African Jewish writers published during the year included: A Decade With South African Jewry, a collection of addresses and essays by Chief Rabbi Bernard Moses Casper; Israel, the Epic of a People, a history by Abraham Addleson; Gleanings, essays on Judaism and Jewish education by Rabbi Isaac Goss; Around the Tents of the Torah, Bible commentary by Rabbi N.L. Marcus; Mists of Memory, an autobiography by Bernard Sachs; a posthumous selection of Essays and Lectures, by Professor Phillip Segal; Namaqualand in Flower, by Sima Eliovson (flora); The Awakening, a novel by Morris Tanner.

The South African Hebrew journal, Barkai, edited and published by Jacob Rubik, celebrated its 40th anniversary in January.

Zionism and Relations With Israel

News of the Egyptian and Syrian attacks on Israel on Yom Kippur came as most South African Jews were at afternoon prayers in the synagogues. Stunned worshippers hurried from the closing services to get newspapers and listen to radio reports. Emergency meetings of the main Jewish organizations were called. On October 8, a crowded mass meeting at Johannesburg's Zionist Center, chaired by Julius Weinstein, chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, and addressed by Israel Consul Bustan; Chief Rabbi Bernard Moses Casper; Maurice
Porter, president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, and Israel Maisels, Q.C., of the Jewish Agency's board of governors, unanimously adopted resolutions expressing horror at the Arab aggression on Jewry's most sacred day and pledging "whole-hearted moral and material support for Israel and its defence forces."

As in the 1967 six-day war, the South African government pursued a policy of neutrality, but the sympathy of leaders and people were clearly with Israel. Premier Balthazar John Vorster, referring to the conflict, at a meeting in Keetmanshoop, South West Africa, said Russia, not merely Syria and Egypt, was at war with Israel: it was Russian weapons, tanks, and planes that were being used against Israel. If the Israelis lost the war, Russia would be able to control the Gulf of Suez and the flow of oil to the West. The Soviets would also control the Indian Ocean, with all which that meant to South Africa.

Defense Minister Pieter Willem Botha, speaking in George, Cape Province, said that South Africans had strong sympathy for Israel in its struggle against forces supported by Communist militarism: "I want to convey to the South African Jewish community our deepest sympathy and assure them that we as a small nation feel their plight," he said. "What is happening to them today may happen to us tomorrow. We will find practical ways of showing our goodwill towards Israel." South Africa could not send arms or troops, he added, but it would help Israel with financial support and medicines.

South African newspapers, both English and Afrikaans, gave wide coverage to the war and showed keen understanding of the issues involved. The main newspapers sent their own correspondents to cover the battlefronts, and their reports were especially descriptive of Israel's response to aggression. Big Power pressure on Israel and the severance by Black African states of relations with Israel received close editorial attention.

Within the Jewish community there was what David Mann of the Board of Deputies called "rock-firm solidarity with Israel" when he summed up the community's reaction at a meeting on October 28. Thousands offered to go to Israel to serve in some capacity; but the Israeli authorities advised that this was not required. (Later, groups of young people were accepted for work in the kibbutzim.) Several South Africans who had settled in Israel lost their lives while fighting in the Israeli army.

The community made a maximum effort to give financial help, and totals surpassed the emergency figures achieved at the time of the six-day war. Many non-Jews joined in spontaneous giving. In view of national currency restrictions, the South African Treasury gave special permission for the immediate transfer to Israel of the sums raised.
Church leaders joined Jewish spokesmen at a mass meeting, in Johannesburg on November 8, to protest Arab refusal to give prisoner-of-war lists in defiance of the Geneva Convention, and resolutions urging international intervention were adopted. Special prayers for the release of the prisoners and mourning for Israel’s war dead were offered at synagogues throughout the country; the rabbinate proclaimed a half-day fast.

Earlier in the year, Israel’s 25th anniversary was celebrated between May and September by South African Jewry at a series of functions throughout the country, which drew large audiences.

The deaths of Louis Aryeh Pincus, in July, and of David Ben-Gurion, in December, were mourned by the community. Pincus had been a South African by birth and had held high office in the Zionist movement before settling in Israel, where he became treasurer, and later chairman, of the Jewish Agency. Memorial services for Ben-Gurion in Pretoria were attended by Deputy Minister of Bantu Affairs Punt Janson on behalf of the government, Transvaal Administrator Sybrand van Niekerk, and members of the diplomatic corps, and in Johannesburg by city councillors and members of the consular corps.

Aryeh Bustan arrived on May 30 to succeed Itzhak Unna as Israel’s consul-general in South Africa. Shlomo Hover continued to serve as Israeli consul and Ambassador Michael Michael as chargé d’affaires of Israel’s Legation.

Israeli visitors to South Africa included Avraham Harman, president of the Hebrew University, who attended the national conference of the Friends of the Hebrew University in September; Professor Moshe Many, chairman of Magen David Adom in Israel, who came for the 13th biennial conference of Magen David Adom in South Africa, held in September; Mrs. Aya Dinstein, chairman of World WIZO, and Mrs. Chasya Pincus who addressed the 20th biennial South African Women’s Zionist conference in April.

In June, a South Africa-Israel Chamber of Commerce was initiated in Tel Aviv, paralleling the Israel-South Africa Trade Association in South Africa. South African Minister of the Interior Dr. Cornelius Petrus Mulder paid a private visit to Israel in September.

A joint delegation from the South African Zionist Federation and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies called on Austrian Ambassador Ernst Hesselberger, in Pretoria on October 2, to record South African Jewry’s protest at the closing of the Schoenau transit camp.

Marcus Arkin, formerly professor of economics at Rhodes University, became director-general of the South African Zionist
Federation in July. The Federation marked its 75th anniversary in December; tributes were received from sister organizations throughout the world.

Muriel Meisels was elected president of the South Africa Women's Zionist Council in April, to succeed Jeanette Davidoff.

**Personalia**

Joseph Jowell, for 23 years mayor of Springbok, Cape Province, and a leader of its Jewish community, died in Springbok in January, at the age of 67. Harold Hanson, Q.C., eminent attorney and Zionist leader, died in Johannesburg in February, at the age of 68. Sydney Walt, Cape Town communal and congregational leader, died in Cape Town in May, at the age of 53. Israel Matthew (Taffy) Whippman, Johannesburg artist and gallery owner, died in Johannesburg in June, at the age of 71. Henry Bradlow, Bloemfontein communal and congregational leader, died in July while visiting Johannesburg, at the age of 84. Jos Roy, Cape Town industrialist and welfare leader, died in Cape Town in August, at the age of 62. Joseph Stone, Cape Town philanthropist, died in Cape Town in September, at the age of 77. Abe Grabman, Zionist and communal leader, died in Johannesburg in December, at the age of 53.

EDGAR BERNSTEIN