Despite the further consolidation of South Africa's six-year-old democracy and growing international respect for the country's macroeconomic and monetary policies, foreign investment declined, the rand—the unit of South African currency—depreciated to over 7.50 to the dollar, and unemployment remained at about 30 percent. Even some encouraging economic reforms, including deregulation, the relaxation of trade barriers, and privatization, failed to boost confidence in the face of the strong dollar and high oil prices, which pushed inflation up toward the end of the year to about 8 percent. On the positive side, South Africa did record a growth rate of nearly 3 percent.

In the local government elections held across the country in November, the African National Congress (ANC) won comfortably, although it ran 5 percent behind the electoral support it had in the 1999 general election, apparently due to ANC supporters staying home on election day. The opposition Democratic Alliance (DA), created through a merger in July of the Democratic Party (DP), the New National Party (NNP), and the Federal Alliance (FA), gained 23 percent of the vote, with a comfortable majority in the new Cape Town “unicity,” or metropolitan council, an amalgamation of six municipalities. Support for the DA came largely from the white population, with substantial backing, as well, from “mixed-race” Coloreds and Indians.

Issues of race and the legacy of apartheid remained. This came to the fore in August during a conference in Johannesburg on “Racism in South Africa,” organized by the South African Human Rights Commission. Crime continued to be a major source of concern, although the Community Crime Coalition in Johannesburg, a group of community organizations brought together by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBOD), reported substantial success. From August to November a series of bomb blasts occurred in Cape Town. Speculation was rife that PAGAD (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs) was responsible, and a number of its members were arrested and charged.

The government was criticized over its handling of the crisis in Zimbabwe, instances where the rule of law was ignored, inefficiency in the delivery of essential services, and President Mbeki’s insistence that there was no link between HIV and AIDS. South Africa had 10 percent of the world’s HIV carriers, and Dr.
Ruben Sher, director of HIVCARE International and head of the HIV/AIDS Clinic at the Johannesburg Hospital, said that South Africa was destined for a biological Holocaust unless it declared war on the AIDS virus. After criticism both at home and abroad, Mbeki announced his withdrawal from the AIDS debate.

Former president Nelson Mandela reacted lukewarmly to requests to intervene with the Iranian government to save 13 Jews arrested on spy charges. He pledged to use his influence to avert death sentences, but felt that interference in Iranian affairs would be counterproductive. In May the New York-based American Jewish Committee canceled, on short notice, an award ceremony honoring Mandela, in apparent reaction to his comments on the Iranian spy charges.

In his Rosh Hashanah message to South African Jews, President Mbeki expressed his belief that the nation’s Jews had every reason to feel positive about the coming year. And he was “optimistic about the future of South Africa—a country which embraces the rich heritage of all its peoples.”

Israel-Related Activity

In January Motti Talmor was appointed the new aliyah director of the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF).

Stephen Danziger, the chief executive officer of the South African/Israel Chamber of Commerce, reported that the chamber had extended its infrastructure and teamed up with the Department of Trade and Industry to foster increased trade with Israel and the surrounding territories—primarily the Palestinian Authority, but also Jordan and Egypt. Trade between South Africa and Israel had been steadily increasing. According to Joseph Abraham, Israel’s first secretary for economic affairs in Johannesburg, in 1998 exports from Israel to South Africa were 245 percent higher than 1985’s $64 million, while South African exports to Israel had increased from $175 million in 1985 to $274 million in 1998 (Business Day, January 17).

A select group of black South African professionals attended a monthlong leadership seminar under the auspices of the He’atid program at the International Institute in Kfar Saba, Israel. Most were from private companies, with some coming from government and nonprofit organizations. The program was initiated by the Mizrachi Organization of South Africa and Krok Vision, set up by two wealthy Jewish industrialists, the brothers Abe and Solly Krok. He’atid centers in a number of South African cities helped train black leaders.

South African born Yona-Ann Goldberg, past chairman of the women’s campaign of the United Jewish Appeal of America, was the guest speaker at the 98th annual meeting of the B’noth Zion Association in Johannesburg. Her address focused on the international role of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).

Addressing the 87th Women’s International Zionist Organization (WIZO) annual meeting in April, Malcolm Ferguson, chief director of the Department of
Foreign Affairs' Middle Eastern section, reported that South Africa enjoyed warm relations with Israel. Ferguson, a former South African ambassador to Israel, praised Prime Minister Ehud Barak for his peace efforts.

But positive sentiment weakened in the wake of the failed Camp David talks in July between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. Shortly after the breakdown, Yasir Arafat visited South Africa to request former president Mandela to mediate the Middle East crisis. Mandela turned down the request but indicated that he was willing to play a role as part of a larger team. He called on the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt to work together to achieve peace in the region. Palestinian ambassador Salman El Herfi stressed the Palestinian Authority's support for a negotiating team with Mandela in a primary position. Speaking in his personal capacity, Abe Abrahamson, honorary president of the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF), said that other countries should not get involved in the peace process because they had their own vested interests. In his view, Mandela was not an acceptable mediator.

President Thabo Mbeki indicated that South Africa would maintain its policy of supporting negotiations, and urged both parties to intensify their peace efforts. However, he added that those who had previously advised the Palestinian Authority to delay a declaration of statehood now had an obligation to recognize Palestinian independence. "Everybody who advised postponement, creating all manner of pressures and risks, now has the moral and political obligation to respond like the Palestinian Authority has responded" (Sowetan, August 4).

Israel's ambassador to South Africa, Uri Oren, issued a statement noting that Arafat's intention unilaterally to declare an independent state negated the basic principles of the peace process, which insisted on mutual agreement between the parties. The SAJBOD urged President Mbeki "to maintain his usual fair and even-handed approach to Middle East peace." The Jewish community was somewhat relieved when Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Aziz Pahad said the government would not take any new steps to resolve the Israel-Palestine crisis.

In early October, shortly after the outbreak of violence in Jerusalem, a number of South African Jewish leaders called for a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians at a special service at the Oxford Synagogue in Johannesburg. The service, led by Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, was held under the auspices of the SAJBOD and the SAZF.

The violence generated substantial anti-Israel feeling in South Africa, where the Muslim population numbered 850,000. The ANC, the ruling party, organized a Palestinian solidarity demonstration in Cape Town, where about 80 protesters carried placards proclaiming "Free Palestine," "Stop the Killings," and "Sharon, you have blood on your hands." Events nearly turned ugly when a kaffiyeh-clad demonstrator shouting "Stop the Zionist killers, stop the Jews" tried to join the protest. He was ordered to leave, while another demonstrator circled the area in a vehicle, shouting "Death to Israel."

Discussing the demonstration, ANC Western Cape spokesperson Cameron
Dugmore said it was meant to send a clear message that the ANC was "shocked and horrified at the ongoing violence in the Middle East and in particular at the killing of a large number of Palestinians and other people. We believe that, as South Africans who also struggled to achieve self-determination, we should give support to the peace process and to the Palestinian people, in particular, in terms of their right to self-determination." Dugmore added that this was only fair, since the Arabs recognized Israel's right to exist. "We have a large number of Jewish people within the ANC and within South Africa who have made a huge contribution to the liberation struggle," he added, "so it's nothing against the Israeli people. We are critical of the Israeli government and particular people in the opposition" (SA Jewish Report, November 20).

Michael Bagraim, chairman of the Cape Council of the SAJBOD, criticized the ANC's one-sided approach, arguing that the Palestinians had played a major role in fomenting the violence. Bagraim called for calm and expressed regret at the loss of life on both sides. Marlene Bethlehem, national president of the SAJBOD, added her voice, criticizing the "cheap political game" played by the ANC, which clearly wanted to curry favor with Muslim voters in the upcoming local elections. Tony Leon, the leader of the DA opposition party, similarly castigated the ANC's behavior as opportunistic.

In addition to the Cape Town protest, approximately 1,000 Muslims, including many women and children, marched on the U.S. and Israeli embassies in Pretoria. This self-styled "Free Palestine Campaign" demanded that the South African government sever ties with Israel and that the United States end its support for the Jewish state. Protestors carried placards calling for an end to Israeli "apartheid," and urged "Stop the Holocaust and genocide of the people of Palestine" (Citizen, October 14). Three people were arrested when the march turned violent after a protester chanted, "One bullet, one Israeli settler," while trying to break a police barrier outside the United States embassy.

Demonstrations also took place at the University of the Witwatersrand, and, in Cape Town, Muslim students marched on the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town. A McDonald's store, which apparently symbolized American influence, was attacked in Cape Town (Business Day, October 16). Further solidarity protests were held outside the Israel Trade Center and the El Al Airline office in Johannesburg.

Mounting tension was exacerbated by a bomb blast outside the Kenilworth offices of the DA opposition party in Cape Town. Initial speculation related the bomb to the fact that Tony Leon, the leader of the DA, was Jewish. Leon criticized the "grossly irresponsible behavior of the ANC recently in whipping up emotions among extremist elements, such as Qibla [a radical Muslim group founded in 1980 and inspired by the Iranian revolution] and PAGAD [People Against Gangsterism and Drugs] who were nothing more than missionaries of hatred and revenge" (SA Jewish Report, November 20).

At the SAJBOD's request, a meeting of the SAJBOD and the Department of
Foreign Affairs took place, where it was agreed to maintain daily contact. "We were given a wonderfully warm reception and left with a feeling of reassurance," explained Russell Gaddin, national chairman of the SAJBOD. Gaddin was confident that the government wanted to remain evenhanded in its Middle East policy. A joint statement after the meeting urged that the conflict be resolved by negotiations, and appealed "to both the Muslim and Jewish communities in South Africa not to let the Middle East conflict lead to disturbances of the public peace in South Africa" (SA Jewish Report, October 27). The sentiment was similar to an earlier public statement issued by the South African chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace. Shortly after the meeting between the SAJBOD and the government, Jewish leaders held public meetings in Cape Town and Pretoria expressing solidarity with Israel.

Despite the encouraging meeting between the government and the SAJBOD, the ANC organized a special parliamentary debate on the Middle East during which Israel was identified as the villain. The chief whip, Tony Yengeni, introduced the debate, arguing that the ANC had always "supported the right of the Palestinian people to reside in the land they call home as they supported our struggle against apartheid. Israeli settlement policies and the failure to deal with the Palestinian refugees had provoked this reaction," according to Yengeni. He condemned what he described as the Israelis' use of excessive force as well as their "refusal to abide by UN resolutions." Despite this, Yengeni warned that the conflict would not be allowed to play out on South African soil.

In his response to Yengeni, DA leader Tony Leon asked why the ANC-led South African government had sold Israel arms worth 42 million rand (about $5.5 million) in 1997 if "Israel was the sole human rights violator in the Middle East." Leon accused Yengeni of inflaming passions. Another Jewish member, the ANC's Ben Turok, entered the debate, making comparisons between the Israelis and the old apartheid government in how they dealt with stone throwers. Speaking for the government, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Aziz Pahad called for a just and lasting solution to the conflict.

Prior to the local elections, a poster appeared in Cape Town declaring: "A vote for the DA is a vote for Israel." In response to complaints from the DA, the ANC denied any knowledge of who printed or put up the poster. However, an anonymous caller who claimed to own a printing company said he was approached by the ANC to print the poster, and had refused. DA spokesperson Ryan Coetzee claimed that his party had information that ANC officials were waging an anti-Semitic campaign in some Cape Town mosques, directed against Tony Leon, the DA leader, who was not only a Jew but had an Israeli fiancée.

South African Jewish leaders expressed dismay at President Mbeki's harsh condemnation of Israel at the ninth session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference summit in Doha, Qatar. Speaking in his capacity as chairman of the "nonaligned movement," Mbeki told the meeting that the "Palestinian people have a right to return to their homeland and to have their own independent state
with Jerusalem as its capital." Commenting on the speech, Chief Rabbi Harris said the president had merely attempted to gain the support of the Arab countries. Nonetheless, he considered the speech unacceptable from the standpoint of the Jewish community, "especially given the generosity of Prime Minister Barak’s offer to the Palestinians." SAJBOD national chairman Russell Gaddin believed Mbeki was simply expressing long-held ANC views. "It is nevertheless sad for us," he added, "as loyal South Africans and Jews loyal to our brothers and sisters in Israel, that we should continue to see our government ignoring the historical truths of Israel’s position in the Middle East and its ongoing failure to acknowledge the refusal of the Arab nations to guarantee Israel’s security." In an editorial, the SA Jewish Report (October 17) expressed the hope "that our President takes the trouble to further acquaint himself with the Middle East situation, its history, the fact that the Palestinian refugee problem was not one of Israel’s creation—rather largely that of the Arab states themselves—and that he endeavor to learn about the concept 'jihad' and what it means to Muslims to die in a holy war; or to sacrifice their children's lives for it."

As the crisis intensified the South African government called on Israel to withdraw its forces as a means of restoring stability. "We urge the United Nations to deploy its peacekeeping forces to stop the carnage in the Middle East and restore peace," said Dumisani Rasheleng, spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs (Sowetan, November 23).

Anti-Semitism

There were a number of troubling incidents during 2000, including offensive comments on radio talk shows, anti-Semitic letters to the press, incidents of vandalism of Jewish property, the desecration of Jewish graves, the sale, at an Islamic conference in Pretoria, of books denying the Holocaust, and accusations of Jewish conspiratorial power. Often, anti-Zionist rhetoric blurred with traditional anti-Semitic motifs, especially with the upsurge of violence in Israel and the territories.

In January the SAJBOD invited Dani Olesker of the Jerusalem Center for Communication and Advocacy Training to come to South Africa and discuss strategies for coping with anti-Semitic propaganda. In February representatives of the SAJBOD met with the South African Human Rights Commission to discuss strategies to combat racism in the media and to explore ways in which the Jewish community could help build a human-rights culture in South Africa. In June several PAGAD members suspected of bombing the Wynberg Synagogue in Cape Town in December 1998 went on trial. The proceedings were expected to be lengthy. Jews in Johannesburg reported a number of incidents of verbal abuse and threats by Muslims in August, after the breakdown of the Camp David peace negotiations.

The SAJBOD maintained a vigilant posture and took action against anti-Semitism when it was able. For example, it wrote to a bookstore selling the Pro-
tocols of the Elders of Zion, pointing out that the book was banned and requesting—unsuccessfully—the names of those who had purchased it. The SAJBOD also intervened when students from King David schools confronted anti-Semitism on the sports field from pupils of opposing schools. It also challenged comments made by Barney Pityana, chair of the South African Human Rights Commission, who tastelessly minimized the significance of the Holocaust in a discussion on reparations, slavery, colonialism, and the Holocaust.

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

The London trial in which David Irving sued Deborah Lipstadt for libel for calling him a Holocaust denier received substantial media attention. The *SA Jewish Report* (April 28) applauded the defeat of Irving in an editorial, "After the Irving Verdict": "The defeat of David Irving in court is gratifying, but we should not let ourselves believe that the battle against those who would deny the Holocaust has been won.'

Irene Steinfeld, coordinator of educational programs at Yad Vashem in Israel, was guest speaker at the Yom Hashoah ceremony in Johannesburg in May.

In June the ANC successfully proposed a motion in parliament to adopt the Stockholm Declaration, in which, at an international gathering in Stockholm in January 2000, 46 countries committed themselves to Holocaust education and remembrance. The debate in parliament was led by a Jewish ANC member, Andrew Feinstein. This was the first time the Holocaust had been a subject of debate in the South African parliament. In his emotional address, Feinstein told a subdued parliament that at "a time when racism and xenophobia are rearing their heads close to home and in faraway lands, let us ensure that the Holocaust will always hold universal meaning which transcends race, religion, and nationality."

Speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* (June 2), Feinstein explained that he had been shocked at the paucity of knowledge among his parliamentary colleagues about the Holocaust. "With the help of the Holocaust Centre, we’ve designed a format for getting information to members." Indeed, the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, which opened in August 1999 (see AJYB 2000, p. 425), made a huge impression on South African society with its programs for school children and other interested parties, including civil servants. In its first year of operation, 10,000 visitors passed through its doors, including 2,500 tourists from other parts of South Africa and from 30 countries. The Holocaust Centre’s first anniversary lecture was delivered by Professor Hubert Locke, dean and professor emeritus of the Graduate School for Public Affairs at the University of Washington. In August the Holocaust Centre hosted an exhibition of children's drawings from Theresienstadt, courtesy of the Czech embassy and the Jewish Museum in Prague.

An editorial in the *SA Jewish Report* (June 23) supported the decision of a commission set up by the British Jewish community not to seek the outlawing of Holocaust denial.
In November the Johannesburg High Court opened proceedings on a case originating in 1998. At that time, the SAJBOD registered a complaint with the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) following the broadcast of an anti-Semitic interview on Radio 786 with Dr. Yaqub Zaki. The interview was riddled with notions of Jewish conspiracies, and Dr. Zaki disputed the idea that Jews were murdered or gassed during the Holocaust. He claimed that “about a million Jews had died, like other people in the camps, of typhus and other infectious diseases” (Cape Jewish Chronicle, February 2001). In response to the SAJBOD’s complaint, Radio 786 gave notice that it intended to apply for an order from the Johannesburg High Court setting aside the IBA code of conduct for community radio stations. The code stated that material broadcast should not be “offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of any section of the population . . . or likely to prejudice relations between sections of the population.” The radio station claimed that this went against the freedom of speech guaranteed by the nation’s constitution. As the year ended, the court had not yet handed down its judgement.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

At the conference of the Gauteng Council of the SAJBOD in Johannesburg in August, David Saks, senior researcher of the SAJBOD, estimated that there were 80,000 Jews in South Africa. Johannesburg had 57,000; Cape Town 19,000; Durban 3,000; Pretoria 1,500; and the remainder were spread across the country. Saks noted that deaths exceeded births, with 500–550 births and 600–650 deaths per annum. There were no exact figures for emigration, but, according to Saks, enrollment at Jewish day schools was declining 2–3 percent a year, which meant that some 1,800 Jews emigrated each year. Assessing these trends, Saks contended that “South African Jewry is not in a state of collapse. Many feel positive and are staying to make a contribution. Even if trends continue in such a way, in 20 years there will still be about 40,000 Jews left.” Acknowledging physical dangers in South Africa, Saks highlighted the absence of spiritual danger: the intermarriage rate was only 7 percent (SA Jewish Report, August 18).

Business Day (February 23) carried an article by Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris asking Jews to stay in South Africa. Acknowledging that all transitional situations are difficult, he nevertheless called on Jews to foster a spirit of optimism.

Despite urbanization and emigration, there were indications, according to Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, spiritual leader of the country communities department of the SAJBOD, that Jews were returning to live in small towns. Examples cited by the rabbi were Hermanus, George, and even very small towns like Ficksburg, Clarens, Nelspruit, Knysna, and Plettenberg Bay.
Communal Affairs

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, chief rabbi of the British Commonwealth, visited South Africa in January and publicly referred to South African Jewry as a “model community.” It was, however, a community facing serious challenges: anti-Semitism emanating from extremist elements among the Muslim population (noted above), financial problems, and crime. All were highlighted by Yehuda Kay, the incoming national director of the SAJBOD, in an interview in the *SA Jewish Report* (February 4). He noted that anti-Semitism was being dealt with and that the SAJBOD had formed a Community Crime Coalition.

As the youngest person ever to take up the position of SAJBOD national director, the 24-year-old Kay hoped that his youthfulness would enable him to bring fresh ideas to the job, without “huge emotional baggage.” “The Board must continue to build better relationships with government in terms of both civic and non-governmental matters. We will continue to make these overtures and be an integral part of the South African community,” said Kay. He believed the SAJBOD was highly regarded by the government. He said: “We have positioned ourselves very nicely and are known as the organization it talks to. It is important that when government talks to the community on political matters, it knows it is talking to one body.”

As the year began, the *SA Jewish Report* reported that “an organized Israeli crime syndicate, involved in ‘deals’ worth hundreds of thousands of rands, is active in the Johannesburg suburbs of Norwood and Sandringham.” Superintendent Anton van Jaarsveld, commander of the Norwood police station, said it was difficult to determine the exact number of those involved. “We suspect the group consists of between 20 and 30 people. All of those we know of are Israelis. It is important to note that this is a syndicate and not an Israeli mafia. Although those involved work as debt collectors, they are doing much more. They are intimidating people across the spectrum. They are not targeting Jewish people per se and have even targeted Israelis. Several people have been shot at. All the people they harass are themselves busy with illegal stuff and can’t pay these guys. Therefore they do not want to lay charges” (*SA Jewish Report*, January 1).

Commenting on the allegations, Ze’ev Luria, political counselor to the Israeli embassy, said he was aware of and concerned about violence being perpetrated “by some Israelis” in South Africa. The matter also attracted the attention of the Afrikaans daily, *Beeld*. Its headline, “Mafia terrorseer SA Jode” (Mafia terrorizes South African Jews), upset the SAJBOD, which complained of misrepresentation and fabrication in the article. Two months later, Superintendent Chris Wilkin, spokesperson for the South African Police Services, claimed that the so-called “Israeli mafia” was not a major threat to the Jewish community or to other South African citizens.

The need for financial rationalization was taken up in Johannesburg by the creation of the Johannesburg United Jewish Organizations structure, known as Bey-
achad ("Together" in Hebrew). In February Errol Goodman, national director of the Israel United Appeal-United Communal Fund (IUA-UCF), and incoming CEO of Beyachad, warned of bankruptcy if major Jewish organizations failed to come together. "Many of our beneficiary organizations no longer have government subsidies, particularly the schools and homes for the aged." In addition, Goodman explained that the emigration of many potential donors had put a financial strain on communal organizations. Therefore, he concluded, "restructuring and rationalization" were necessary (SA Jewish Report, February 11).

Financial hardship among the elderly led the Union of Jewish Women (UJW) to provide kosher meals for more than 120 Jews in Johannesburg. Our Parents' Home, a residence for senior citizens founded in the 1930s for German-Jewish refugees in Johannesburg, was in danger of closing due to the withdrawal of state subsidies.

In line with the new imperatives, Jewish Communal Services (JCS), after 52 years of autonomy, merged with the Johannesburg Jewish Helping Hand and Burial Society (Hevrah Kadisha). According to the director of JCS, Brenda Solarsh, the merger was not the product of a shrinking community; rather, it was driven by opportunities for access to resources and expertise. JCS would continue to offer a full range of services.

In June, under the guidance of Beyachad, the SAJBOD, the SAZF (South African Zionist Federation), and the UCF (United Communal Fund) signed an administrative cooperation agreement. Marlene Bethlehem, national president of the SAJBOD, described the event as "one of the most important days in the history of the community." Errol Goodman explained that the agreement was precipitated by a financial "crisis" driven by emigration. All three organizations would be housed under one roof in Raedene, Johannesburg. Under the new setup, each organization would maintain its autonomy while Beyachad (the organization responsible for the agreement) would control the administration, library facilities, and marketing and accounting departments of the three. A number of satellite organizations would also be housed in the new premises, which would include a library, archives, a small synagogue, a museum and exhibition area, boardrooms, and youth facilities.

An editorial in the SA Jewish Report (June 30) applauded the agreement, which, the paper believed, provided an opportunity for democratic governance. "On a more subtle level, the agreement marks the beginning of a new, more democratic communal structure, a stronger, more broadly based leadership and hopefully, the end of the 'edifice complex' to which Jewish organizations were prone. This 'complex'—largely a phenomenon of the '60s, '70s and '80s—caused splits and divisiveness, a 'let's form our own organization in our own set up' attitude in efforts to retain perceived power bases and hang onto obsolete leadership positions."

Minister of Trade and Industry Alec Erwin was keynote speaker at the Gauteng 2000 conference of the SAJBOD held in Johannesburg in August. Erwin was
upbeat about the economy, arguing that South Africa was “turning around the economic ship.” The country, he maintained, was no longer plagued with “an inefficient, uncompetitive economy.”

Max Strous, executive director of Our Parents’ Home, told the Gauteng 2000 conference that longevity and changing demographics were causing a huge strain on communal services for the aged. “At no time in history has our community been so taxed. The demographic changes have caused people living in Hillbrow, Berea, and Yeoville to leave their homes. The wealthier aged, living in more affluent areas, suffer from loneliness and ill health and many have children who have emigrated. Ours is an aging community and therefore the demand for homes for the aged is growing. Our financial position is in dire straits and our deficit is growing, especially since government grants have disappeared.”

In the wake of the Gauteng conference, the SA Jewish Report (August 18) called for courageous leadership. The weekly referred to the speech of Russell Gaddin, who said that the community now faced the most serious issues in his 30 years of communal work. A profound despondency had overtaken the community, said Gaddin, due to emigration, crime, economic hardship, and a diminishing donor base for essential welfare and educational institutions. “Many Jews had withdrawn inwards,” said Gaddin, “and a resounding ‘silence’ pervaded the community.” Notwithstanding these somber observations, the editorial reminded readers that “despite the diminishing numbers,” the South African Jewish community “still remains a vibrant one with an abundant resource of competent, energetic and dedicated people. It is in times like these that courageous leadership, willing to take radical new initiatives, is crucial if the process of corrective adaptations to the new situation in South Africa is to genuinely take hold.” The SA Jewish Report was confident that the community was seriously addressing its problems.

This did not appear to be the view of Gail Goldberg, outgoing national president of the Union of Jewish Women (UJW). Speaking at the opening of the UJWs 26th national triennial conference in Johannesburg in August, she railed against what she saw as Jewish apathy. “People seem to be deliberately avoiding commitment to their Jewish communal organizations and to their obligations to the general community.... A laager [circle-the-wagons] mentality prevails,” she said. Nearly all the Jewish communal organizations, Goldberg contended, were experiencing difficulties and a lack of “people power.” Goldberg highlighted AIDS and tuberculosis, a weak currency, violence, and emigration as the problems not being addressed.

At the same conference, Chief Rabbi Harris warned of communal “hemorrhaging in the middle,” by which he meant the 25-45-year-old generation, portending problems in the long term. But he believed there was much to be positive about, including a low rate of intermarriage, a high percentage of Jewish children studying at Jewish day schools, and extensive Jewish involvement in the wider society. Nonetheless, he said that crime remained a major problem.
In her Rosh Hashanah editorial, Suzanne Belling, editor of the *SA Jewish Report*, lamented that even the rationalization of communal resources effected by the merger of Jewish organizations had not “translated into true togetherness. It does not mean unity or a united community for which we should strive in word, intent, deed and thought. For, while South African Jewry has an international reputation for vibrancy, commitment, observance, *Yiddishkeit* and identification with Israel, these praiseworthy attributes cannot compensate for the fragmentation, splinter groups, fringe organizations, personal agendas, ‘edifice complexes,’ internal squabbling in the community as a whole and within specific structures.... What we need for the year 5761 is to resolve to do likewise in our own community and to aim for recognition of our own diversity of views and beliefs, yet be a people united through the lofty wisdom of our own sacred teachings” (September 22).

The Great Park Synagogue, Johannesburg, established a new community center on the site of its new building in November. The director, Max Katz, explained that the center would have a coffee shop, a cinema, an Internet café, and a restaurant. “We’re going to try to create a center where people can do activities outside normal activities,” said Katz.

**Community Relations**

In February, Tikkun, a Jewish program to help the underprivileged, announced that former president Nelson Mandela had agreed to become the organization’s patron-in-chief. Also, Tikkun was now incorporated and registered in the United States, enabling American donors to obtain federal tax exemptions for their gifts. Tikkun involved itself in a massive effort to alleviate the plight of hundreds of flood victims in Alexandra Township, Johannesburg. Also, in combination with the Oxford Synagogue Skills and Adult Center (OSSAC), Tikkun ran an adult literacy program for women so that they would not be totally dependent on men. On an ongoing basis, Tikkun ran a crèche for 70 children in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, to enable mothers to seek work. In addition, it set up a rural project at Orange Farm, outside Johannesburg, where women baked, planted, and made preserves as a way of earning a living.

At the Gauteng conference of the SAJBOD, Craig Hummel, chairman of the youth sector of Tikkun, appealed for greater Jewish involvement in the wider society. “We can only ensure our future if we involve ourselves with the economic, social and educational development of the majority of the people of this land,” he declared (*SA Jewish Report*, August 18).

In September a new series of efforts were initiated, and existing programs expanded, to help the unfortunate both locally and internationally. Herby Rosenberg, Tikkun’s CEO, accompanied Nelson Mandela to Sydney, Australia, on a fund-raising drive. But, as Tikkun stalwart Ann Harris pointed out, the organization did not “simply collect money.” Tikkun announced the launching of a Web site for Tikkun and for the Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund. Jewish awareness of economic deprivation in the country was raised through partnerships with or-
ganizations in Cape Town. An example was the Intra-Communal Development Program, a community-development outreach project initiated by the Cape Council of the SAJBOD and the United Herzlia Schools in association with Tikkun. The program included two after-school programs in underprivileged "black" areas. A number of Jewish primary schools had relations with disadvantaged schools, including a joint program to teach reading initiated by Rhona Dubow.

The Cape Council of the SAJBOD promoted initiatives to bring the Muslim and Jewish communities together, with the encouragement and participation of two ANC parliamentarians, Andrew Feinstein and Salie Manie. The plan was for joint social activities for the elderly and sports for the young. It was expected that these efforts would complement the work of the long-standing Cape Town Interfaith Initiative.

In March South African Jewish communal organizations joined L’Atet, an Israeli humanitarian voluntary organization, to coordinate a relief-and-rescue project for flood victims in neighboring Mozambique. Yehuda Kay, national director of the SAJBOD, said it was important for the Jewish community to get involved. "From a Jewish perspective, we are always involved in Africa and South Africa" (SA Jewish Report, March 24). Mervyn Smith, chairman of the African Jewish Congress (AJC), pledged support for the victims when he met with Joaquim Chissano, the Mozambican president, in the wake of the devastating flood. This meeting preceded the AJC conference held in Maputo, Mozambique.

In February Temple Emanuel, as part of its outreach program, established a recreation center for people who were HIV positive, under the aegis of the United Sisterhood. In September Jewish day schools embarked on an outreach program by collecting educational toys for preschool children.

Religion

The year 2000 saw the emergence of significant tensions between those embracing an inclusive view of Judaism and the Jewish community, and those seeking clearer borders, especially between Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Reform, according to Simon Jocum, president of the South African Union of Progressive Judaism, numbered 7,000 people, or 14 percent of affiliated Jews in South Africa. There were eight Reform temples and five rabbis, as well as several others preparing to be rabbis. Notwithstanding its relatively small numbers, Reform's voice and those of others critical of the Orthodox and lay establishment were given substantial coverage in the pages of the SA Jewish Report, much to the chagrin of the communal leadership.

The tensions were evident early in the year when David Saks, senior researcher for the SAJBOD, referred to the resilience of Orthodox Judaism, despite predictions of its demise in the face of modernity. Saks noted an increase in anti-Orthodox propaganda, which, he believed, had to be seriously engaged. It was widely assumed that what he had in mind in the reference to critics of Orthodoxy was the editorial team of the SA Jewish Report. In April, after the paper had re-
ported on the (Reform) Central Conference of American Rabbis’ approval of same-sex marriages, Geoff Sifrin, editor of the “Opinion and Features” section of the Report, wrote of pressure being exerted on the newspaper by a senior Jewish figure not even to hint at support for the move or even to take a “neutral” stand. Sifrin used the opportunity to express the need for healthy debate and open engagement on all issues concerning Jews.

One month later the newspaper took a swipe at lay leaders, advocating a more important role in policy formation for Jewish communal professionals. “Often,” it editorialized, “top portfolios are given to voluntary people because of their wealth or prominence in the business world. They present the face of their organizations to the public, while the professionals, trained in the field, are relegated to the back room.” Even congregational rabbis, the editorial contended, “are, on occasion, subjected to the whims of their committees and are brought to book if they overstep the ‘acceptable’ in their sermons or public statements” (SA Jewish Report, May 19).

This call came in the immediate wake of a religious controversy in Cape Town. Rabbi David Hoffman of the Cape Town Progressive Jewish Congregation gave the guest lecture at the Holocaust Day ceremony. It was rumored that Orthodox rabbis had boycotted the event, a charge denied by the SAJBOD and the United Orthodox Synagogues (UOS). It appeared to be true, however, that the Orthodox rabbis had been told not to sit on the platform for the occasion. The issue evoked such anger that the Cape Council of the SAJBOD issued the following statement:

Considerable concern has been expressed by members of the Cape Town Jewish community following the non-attendance by certain members of the Jewish community at this year’s Yom Hashoah Vehagevura [Holocaust Day] commemoration in Cape Town because the main speaker was a Reform rabbi.

As we come out of the Omer period, a time of reflection, we are reminded once again that we Jews are one people, irrevocably linked by destiny and history to each other. We have celebrated the accomplishments of the Jewish people and mourned with her when tragedies occurred.

All the more reason why we are deeply concerned about the events surrounding Yom Hashoah, which have left many in the Cape Town Jewish community feeling deeply alienated, hurt and angered.

While the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (Cape Council) respects the religious beliefs of those concerned, we call on religious streams to deal with disagreements in a constructive communal manner so as not to harm and divide the Jewish community.

We furthermore call upon all responsible leaders to speak in the spirit of ahavat Yisrael, love of all Jews, that despite the issues on which we differ, we remain united (SA Jewish Report, June 8).

Further evidence of dissatisfaction with the UOS emerged in August when a motion for the Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation to break away from the UOS was made at the synagogue’s annual general meeting. According to the man who proposed the motion, Dr. Clive Rabinowitz, the relationship between...
the congregation and the UOS had deteriorated because the UOS and its Bet Din (religious court) had “moved considerably to the right and became more hard-line.” Problems had been manifest in 1999 when the congregation’s rabbi, E. J. Steinhorn, had been declared persona non grata (see AJYB 2000, p. 424). Although that matter had been resolved, many congregants sympathized with the proposal to break away. The majority, however, opposed the move in the belief that negotiation rather than withdrawal was the best strategy. Commenting on the outcome, Jack Friedman, Cape chair of the UOS, said he was pleased that the congregation was staying in the fold. For his part, Rabbi Steinhorn said that the large turnout for the synagogue meeting was a positive indication that people were concerned about the interpretation of Judaism (SA Jewish Report, September 1).

There was another storm brewing, this time around one of the Report’s columnists, Steven Friedman. The first public indication of the problem emerged in the Mail & Guardian, a national weekly, which reported (September 15-21) that, under pressure from Chief Rabbi Harris, the board of the Report had unanimously voted to stop running Friedman’s column, since “Friedman’s liberal views on Judaism and Zionist politics have raised the hackles of the paper’s readership since the column’s inception.”

Friedman, director of the highly regarded Centre for Policy Studies in Johannesburg, had indeed used his column to criticize the conformity of the Jewish establishment and its inability to accept what he termed the “deviant” Jew. In his view this was because “most do not conform to the community and its leadership’s stereotype of the ‘good Jew’—a person who leads a middle class suburban lifestyle, a shul member (if not goer) and, preferably a business person. . . Jews not conforming to that stereotype,” maintained Friedman, “face a thick wall of prejudice which prevents them contributing even if they wanted to. . . ” He believed that the result was the loss of talented potential leaders and a “leadership which might be good at making things happen, but is very bad at working out what should happen if the community is to fulfill its potential” (SA Jewish Report, May 19).

Friedman’s harsh attacks on the lay establishment and the Orthodox way of life generated a predictable response, especially after he criticized what he termed “mumbo-jumbo” customs performed by Orthodox Jews in South Africa, which, he claimed, were devoid of halakhic basis (SA Jewish Report, June 2). “Arrogant and ill informed” was how Chief Rabbi Harris referred to Friedman, and the rabbi called for a more “positive” view to be expressed in a Jewish newspaper (SA Jewish Report, June 16). His colleague, Rabbi Norman Bernhard of Johannesburg, was even harsher, claiming that if “there were a Pulitzer Prize for impudence, arrogance and ignorance,” Friedman would win it (SA Jewish Report, June 23).

Undeterred, Friedman further challenged the establishment by calling for the inclusion in the community of the Lemba, a black group claiming Jewish ancestry. The question of the status of the Lemba had surfaced periodically, but the rabbinate had always maintained that the Lemba were not Jewish according to
Halakhah (see AJYB 2000, p. 424). In Friedman's opinion, this was not a sufficient reason for their exclusion (SA Jewish Report, June 30).

It was shortly after the Lemba broadside that the story of Friedman's dismissal broke in the Mail & Guardian. A flood of angry letters to both the Mail & Guardian and the SA Jewish Report condemned the actions of the board as a form of censorship, and Friedman himself berated "fundamentalists," who, he said, "are not the only 'real Jews.'" Friedman urged the community not to allow "a small minority to decide for the rest of us who and what is really Jewish" (SA Jewish Report, October 6). In response, Chief Rabbi Harris denied that the SA Jewish Report had "stifled all dissenting voices." Friedman, he argued, had been intemperate and had not contributed to sound debate. "It is ludicrous to suggest," argued the rabbi, "in the name of press independence, that the Jewish community newspaper should allow a regular columnist to trample in an offensive manner on the deeply held beliefs and cherished practices of the majority of its readers." In the end, Friedman's establishment detractors won the battle and his column was terminated.

Another problem for the UOS was the proliferation of shtieblach (small Orthodox prayer groups) in Johannesburg. Many of these mushrooming houses of prayer did not support the UOS financially, a matter raised by Chief Rabbi Harris at the Gauteng 2000 conference of the SAJBOD. While he acknowledged that the growth of shtieblach demonstrated that the younger generation was religiously vibrant and concerned with Jewish study and observance, and expressed pleasure at some examples of cooperation with mainstream congregations, Rabbi Harris regretted the insistence of the shtieblach on maintaining their independence and not affiliating with larger synagogues.

Responding to Rabbi Harris, Shawn Zagnoev said the shtieblach would continue to thrive and that the large synagogues would have to accept the new reality. Zagnoev pointed out that shtieblach were increasingly in demand because of the ba'al teshuvah (return to tradition) movement. He said there were about 20 shtieblach in Johannesburg, most of which did not exist 15 years before, with an estimated 1,300 families. Zagnoev warned of the danger of a wedge being driven between the synagogues and the shtieblach. "We cannot allow for two different streams of Orthodox Judaism to emerge which are hostile to one another. The reason why the South African Jewish community has remained homogeneous is because all streams of Orthodoxy have been accepting of each other. Any attempt to marginalize the shtieblach will have, in my opinion, unfortunate and unnecessary repercussions" (SA Jewish Report, August 18).

Notwithstanding these challenges to its hegemony from the left and the right, the UOS continued to maintain a successful Bet Din, including a kashrut department, and Chief Rabbi Harris continued to enjoy a fine reputation, within and outside the Jewish community. Indeed, in September he was invited to deliver the 16th annual Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture in Durban, jointly hosted by the South African chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, and the Council for KwaZulu-Natal Jewry. Rabbi Harris used the occasion to make
a passionate plea for the return of morality in South Africa and for the "haves" to assist the "have-nots."

Demographic shifts had predictable effects on synagogues and other religious institutions. In May the Berea Synagogue in Johannesburg held its valedictory service, after long-standing financial problems coupled with demographic changes took their toll, and in August the Potchefstroom synagogue was closed. Another synagogue, Adath Yeshurun in Percelia, Johannesburg, had to shut down after neighbors (most of them Jewish) objected to having a large synagogue complex, with its attendant traffic and security problems, in their midst. The synagogue had moved there from Yeoville in 1998. In Pretoria, meanwhile, it was announced that the Adath Israel Synagogue would be relocated from its Crawford College premises to Groenkloof, Pretoria. In March the foundation stone of the new Park Road Synagogue was laid in Johannesburg; the synagogue was modeled on the old Great Synagogue in Wolmarans Street in the Johannesburg inner city. In April Johannesburg’s newest mikveh (ritual bath), the Chaya Esther Mikveh, in Fairmount, was officially opened. It was named in memory of Adele Taback, who died in a car accident in 1998. In May a plaque marking the site of the first South African synagogue was unveiled in Cape Town by Rabbi Simon Harris of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation. The Pretoria Progressive Congregation, Beth Menorah, celebrated its jubilee in 2000.

Rabbi Norman Bernhard retired from the Oxford Synagogue Center in Johannesburg after 35 years of service. The synagogue had experienced substantial dissension and waning membership. According to a report in the SA Jewish Report (January 14), its problems had been solved and a new strategic management plan was in place.

In June Russell Gaddin, national chairman of the SAJBOD, expressed concern at Christian proselytizing in South Africa, particularly on the campus of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. In October the anticult organization Jews for Judaism held a seminar on how to deal with various aspects of Christian missionizing in South Africa, focusing on the "Jews for Jesus" phenomenon, which tried to persuade Jews that they could remain Jewish while accepting Jesus as their messiah.

Education

In March the minister of education, Professor Kadar Asmal, addressed the biennial conference of the Association of Principals of Jewish Schools of South Africa, meeting in Cape Town. Asmal appealed to the Jewish community to contribute to the development of the country, particularly in the field of education. "The Jewish dynamic has been a dynamic of enormous intellectual discourse and the triumph of ideas. And you who have faced adversity will more than anybody else, be able to communicate with those who have been despised" (SA Jewish Report, March 17).

A gloomy picture of the plight of Jewish day schools was presented at the Gaut-
eng 2000 conference of the SAJBOD in Johannesburg in August. Frank Samuels, principal of Yeshivah College, Johannesburg, told the conference that the day schools faced a huge challenge from private schools, which attracted a high number of Jewish pupils. The withdrawal of state subsidies for independent schools also created financial problems for Jewish schools. According to Samuels, the King David schools in Johannesburg had received 6.7 million rand (approximately $1 million) in 1995, 3.4 million rand in 1999, and nothing in 2000. Even though tuition fees had not been raised to offset the loss, many parents were still unable to afford to send their children to King David. Another factor adding to the difficulties of the day schools, said Samuels, was the emigration of Jews who had previously contributed money to the community. Plans to raise funds for Jewish education were set in motion against the somber backdrop of a cut in subsidies from the United Communal Fund (UCF).

A new Tzeirei Tzion synagogue was opened on the Yeshivah College campus in Glenhazel, Johannesburg. Jack Kersh, executive director of the Yeshivah complex, referred to the synagogue as “a demonstration of our belief in the country’s future.”

Culture

The Israeli film Kadosh was the premier feature at the Israeli film festival in Johannesburg in February. The Orthodox community was offended at the way it portrayed the treatment of women in Jerusalem’s Haredi community of Meah She’arim. Chief Rabbi Harris protested to Israel’s consul general, noting that the film had caused a great deal of confusion and harm. Israeli ambassador Uri Oren acknowledged that the embassy had received many complaints.

The South African Jewish Arts and Culture Trust (SAJACT) reported that, since its inception in 1993, it had made a substantial contribution to Jewish culture, especially in the fields of music, art, and theater. SAJACT provided a platform for Jewish artists, offered scholarships and grants, and nurtured and promoted new talent.

A Marc Chagall exhibition opened in Johannesburg in October.

In December the new South African Jewish Museum was officially opened in Cape Town by former president Mandela. The museum was the brainchild of Mendel Kaplan, international Jewish leader and industrialist, and was supported by the Kaplan Kushlick Foundation. Vivienne Anstey was named director.

Publications

Some noteworthy new publications of Jewish interest were To Reach for the Moon: The South African Rabbinate of Rabbi Dr. L. I. Rabinowitz by Rabbi Dr. Gerald Mazabow; Riteve: A Jewish Shtetl in Lithuania edited by Dina Porat and Roni Stauber and based on A Yizkor Book to Riteve: A Jewish Shtetl in Lithua-

Personalia

Professor Valerie Mizrachi, University of the Witwatersrand, awarded the UNESCO Woman in Science (Africa) Award for her work on HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis; Dr Sheila Aronstam named “Bloemfonteiner of the Year” for her involvement in crime prevention, service to the blind, and Jewish communal work; Julius Feinstein, cofounder and senior partner of Grant Thornton, Kessel Feinstein, honored by the Johannesburg Jewish Helping Hand and Burial Society (Hevrah Kadisha) for 65 years of honorary service; Leon Wilder, distinguished Cape Town communal leader, received Keren Hayesod's “Yakir” award; Geoffrey Neiman granted a special award, the Cruz de Oficial de la Orden de Isabel la Catolica, from King Juan Carlos of Spain, for Spanish dancing; Gershon Hurwitz appointed national chairman of the South African Union of Jewish Students; Ray Wolder, elected president of the Union of Jewish Women of South Africa; Sylvia Berzack awarded honorary life presidency of the WZO; Maria Parness and Anette Price each awarded honorary life vice presidency of the WZO; Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris and Ann Harris received the Commonwealth Jewish Council Year 2000, given by the British Commonwealth Jewish Council, for service to South African Jewry.

Among prominent South African Jews who died in 2000 were Frank Bradlow, communal leader and art historian; Professor Sam Kleinot, public health specialist; Jean Kluk, Durban Jewish leader; Cecil Margo, jurist, Jewish communal leader, and one-time advisor on aviation to David Ben-Gurion; Aaron Mendelow, advocate and Jewish communal leader; Rachiel Rapoport, Women’s Zionist leader; Morris Rutstein, Jewish leader and founding member of Histadruth Ivrit in South Africa; Gaby Shapiro, antiapartheid activist; and Leon Traub, businessman and founder of Metro Cash and Carry.

Milton Shain