South Africa

National Affairs

The year 2002 saw the continuing transformation of South Africa and the consolidation of power by the African National Congress (ANC), led by President Thabo Mbeki. Substantial attention was given to regional foreign policy. Domestically, the ANC-led government maintained its conservative Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy despite the strains this produced with its partners in the coalition—the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

Notwithstanding the global economic slowdown and regional instability, the GDP grew by 3 percent. Investment rose by 6 percent and manufacturing production—boosted by the 37-percent depreciation of the rand in 2001—was up by 5.4 percent, as compared to 2.8 percent in 2001. But such advances were undermined by a rise in inflation to 10 percent and a continuing unemployment rate of about 40 percent.

Policies aimed at black empowerment, including a mining charter ensuring that mining operations would come under black control, impacted positively on black elites and a burgeoning black bourgeoisie. Nonetheless, Statistics South Africa reported that the average income (corrected for inflation) for African blacks decreased from R 32,000 per annum to R 26,000 between 1995 (one year after the first democratic elections) and 2000. During the same period the average income for whites increased from R 137,000 to R 158,000. Furthermore, greater access to electricity, clean water, and sewerage was offset by the loss of over a million jobs.

HIV/AIDS remained a major problem, with an estimated 4.5 million South Africans living with the disease. About 18.4 percent of South African blacks aged 15–49 were HIV positive. An indication of the devastating social impact was that 3.3 percent of households were headed by children aged 12–18. Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), a non-governmental agency established in 1998, sharply criticized the government’s AIDS policy, harnessed substantial public support, and convinced
the Constitutional Court to rule that public hospitals must issue anti-retrovirals—a step the authorities had opposed.

Notwithstanding ambitious efforts by the government to improve the efficiency of its justice system, the level of crime remained high, largely due to the poor quality of policing and lack of confidence in the courts, which were viewed as tainted by corruption.

Careful planning and international strategizing prevented the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg in August, from turning into an exercise in Israel-bashing. Jewish groups, including the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBOD), were involved in the strategy talks, and two months prior to the conference the SAJBOD hosted a media tour of various sustainable development projects under Jewish auspices. There were pro-Palestinian protests and some anti-Israeli chanting at the summit, but the event did not come close to turning into the kind of fiasco that occurred the year before at the UN World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban (see “Demobilization in Durban,” AJYB 2002, pp. 85–111).

South Africa’s northern neighbor, Zimbabwe, led by Robert Mugabe, was a source of concern and a major problem for President Mbeki. His response to the contested presidential election, erosion of civil rights, and land grabs there was a policy of “constructive engagement” and secret diplomacy that, as the year ended, had not produced results. Instability in Burundi and the Great Lakes area of central Africa also threatened the stability of the region, and South Africa involved itself in peace initiatives, encouraged by the cessation of hostilities in Angola.

South Africa took the lead in replacing the 39-year-old Organization for African Unity (OAU) with the new African Union (AU), which sought to enhance the African continent’s influence in relation to the “North”—the industrialized world. Officially founded in Durban in July, the AU was based on the ideology of Mbeki’s African Renaissance and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). Nations belonging to the AU were required to commit themselves to democratic principles and respect for human rights.

The SA Jewish Report (May 12) devoted an editorial to the implications of the new AU for Israel. Recalling that Israel had played a constructive role in many African countries before the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the paper suggested that the AU’s overriding commitment to “the principles of democracy, good governance, and economic development” should lead it to appreciate Israel, “a vibrant, highly developed democratic country in a region where this is a scarce commodity.” And it asked, “Is it too
much to hope that the AU will break the old pattern of OAU hostility to Israel?"

In October, nine bomb blasts shook Soweto and Bronkhorstspruit in Gauteng Province, resulting in one death. Police suspected that the far right was responsible. "We know who they are," said Police Commissioner Jackie Selebe. A number of suspects were subsequently arrested.

In November, the New National Party (NNP) broke away from the Democratic Alliance (DA) in a bitter divorce and aligned itself instead with the ruling ANC-led government.

The ANC held its 51st conference at Stellenbosch outside Cape Town in December. There was a strong emphasis on black economic empowerment, alleviation of poverty, a comprehensive social-security program, improving public health and education, speeding up land reform, and improving the quality of the judiciary. Before the conference, ANC leaders warned that the "ultra-left" that criticized the government's economic policy would have its wings clipped.

Israel-Related Activity

The South African government remained involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In January, the government hosted a conference outside Cape Town for Israeli and Palestinian diplomats that focused on how the South African experience of conflict resolution might be useful for Middle East peacemakers. The eight-man Israeli delegation was headed by Yossi Beilin and included Avraham Burg, speaker of the Knesset. Sa'eb Erakat and Ziad Abu Ziad led the Palestinian team. The South African contingent included four ANC ministers—Jeff Radebe, Valli Moosa, Dullah Omar, and Ronnie Kasrils—as well as former National Party stalwarts Pik Botha, Roelf Meyer, and Leon Wessels. President Mbeki was present throughout. Top religious leaders, including Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris and Nudungane Njongonkulu, the Anglican archbishop, also participated. A joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of the conference stated that the conflict could not be resolved through violence; effective channels of communication had to be maintained under all circumstances; each side had to take into consideration the fears of the other; reaching a solution meant that there could be to "winner" or "loser"; and the process could not be held hostage to extremists.

Reactions to the conference varied. Yossi Beilin, in a newspaper interview, said that the South African transition experience held valuable lessons for the Middle East. Israel's ambassador to South Africa, Tova
Herzl, noted that “Israel welcomes anything that might bring the parties together—but we can’t disconnect it from anything that happens on the ground.” The SAJBOD welcomed the initiative, and the *SA Jewish Report* (Jan. 18) criticized cynics, asking, “isn’t it better to allow ourselves to hope that the spirit of that meeting should be carried back to the Middle East and influence others? No stone should be left unturned in the search for peace.”

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Aziz Pahad reaffirmed South Africa’s relations with Israel at the 45th conference of the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) in March. Pahad told the meeting that South Africa’s policy was predicated on the fundamental principle of unequivocal and unchanging support for the right of Israel to exist within defined borders, in full peace and security with its neighbors. Pahad also acknowledged that the nongovernmental segment of the World Conference Against Racism in 2001 at Durban had been “hijacked and used by some with an anti-Israel agenda to turn it into an anti-Semitic event” (*SA Jewish Report*, Mar. 15).

In April, however, as Israeli troops entered West Bank cities in the wake of a spate of bloody Palestinian suicide bombings (see above, pp. 199–201), the ANC and its coalition partners (the SACP and COSATU), along with the South African Civics Organization, adopted a joint resolution condemning Israeli actions. It accused Israel of aggression against the people of Palestine and of violating UN Human Rights treaties and the Geneva Convention’s protocols on the treatment of civilians and prisoners of war. These groups also marched on the embassies of Israel and the United States. Meanwhile, the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting Committee on Palestine, convened in Durban, voted to send a delegation to meet with Yasir Arafat in an “expression of solidarity with the president and the people of Palestine.” Led by South African foreign minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, a delegation of NAM ministers visited Arafat in June and then released a statement expressing “its support for all international efforts aimed at achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting solution.”

There were about 600,000 Muslims in South Africa, 1.5 percent of the total population, and many turned out to participate in pro-Palestinian rallies. Even the historically moderate Muslim Judicial Council, the official voice of the South African Muslim community, recognized Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah as “legitimate fighters for the liberation of Palestine” (*Sunday Argus*, Mar. 17). In fact Hanan Ashwari, the Palestinian spokeswoman, informed the SAJBOD that she had traveled the en-
tire Arab world and had never seen such virulent support for Hamas as she had in the Western Cape, which was where the majority of South African Muslims resided.

A senior delegation from the SAJBOD met with President Mbeki in May to discuss the Middle East conflict. The president assured the group that the South African government was committed to playing a constructive role in the quest for a peaceful, negotiated settlement, and Mbeki believed that lessons could be drawn from the South African experience. The SAJBOD, in turn, conveyed the insecurity that Jews felt, particularly when they heard or read about the extreme rhetoric directed against Israel and Jews at pro-Palestinian rallies.

In September, the ANC chairman of the Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee, Dr. Pallo Jordan, told the Cape Council of the SAJBOD that there was “absolute consensus” in Parliament on Israel’s right to exist. The sentiment was repeated by Kgalema Motlanthe, the ANC secretary general, in a keynote address at the SAJBOD’s Gauteng Council: Israelis, he stated, had the clear right to live in their own state. He also praised the disproportionate role played by Jews in the struggle against apartheid.

Critics of Israel staged a major protest against Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres when he addressed the Jewish community at the University of the Witwatersrand in September. Water cannon had to be used to break up the demonstration. The SAJBOD, which organized the talk, was blamed for not adequately informing the university of the nature of the event so that proper security could be provided. The SAJBOD, while condemning the hooliganism of the demonstrators, acknowledged that it should have maintained better communications with the university.

Despite strenuous objections from the SAJBOD, E-TV, an independent television network, broadcast a documentary highly critical of Israel, “Palestine is Still the Issue,” by British filmmaker John Pilger. The South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) deemed the actions of E-TV “provocative and inciteful.” The station did allow for a debate after the documentary between Ronnie Kasrils, South Africa’s minister of water affairs and forestry and an opponent of Israeli policies, and Hagai Segal, a British commentator on Middle Eastern affairs.

Anti-Semitism

There were substantial manifestations of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial during 2002. These came in the form of harassment of individu-
als, abusive letters and e-mails to Jewish organizations, and journalistic excesses—slanted newspaper coverage, abusive cartoons, and offensive comments on radio talk shows.

Some examples: There was a violent confrontation between Jews and non-Jews at an interfaculty soccer match at the University of the Witwatersrand. At Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg, a sukkah was vandalized. Swastikas were daubed on Jewish premises in Johannesburg, and the Cape Town Jewish Center received an anonymous bomb threat. Holocaust denial pamphlets were distributed to households in the northern suburbs of Bloemfontein. The Doors Nightclub in Johannesburg held a “soldiers party” characterized by Nazi paraphernalia, including a doorman with an SS uniform, swastika decorations, and someone shouting, “Heil Hitler.” Sometimes the anti-Jewish vitriol was tied to the Middle East conflict, although the rhetoric and motifs were plainly anti-Semitic and not just directed against Israeli policies.

Addressing the Union of Jewish Women on the question of anti-Semitism in the “new South Africa,” Marlene Bethlehem, national president of the SAJBOD, noted that hostility had taken a new turn since the birth of democracy in 1994. Whereas before that it had been generally restricted to the white far right, it was now manifest in the Muslim community. Bethlehem believed that the danger posed by Pagad (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs, a mainly Muslim vigilante movement) was far from over. But she cautioned against painting the whole Muslim community with the same brush. “Most are not radicals, and just want to live as peace-loving citizens,” she said.

The SAJBOD repeatedly denounced anti-Jewish incitement over the course of the year, including rhetoric and behavior at anti-Israel rallies and marches.

Holocaust-Related Matters

In April, the Constitutional Court handed down judgment in a long-running legal battle between the SAJBOD and the Islamic Unity Convention (IUC). The case originated in 1998, when the SAJBOD complained to the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) about Radio 786, a Muslim community radio station in the Western Cape, for allegedly broadcasting statements that were anti-Semitic because they denied the Holocaust (see AJYB 2002, pp. 511–12). The IUC, in turn, sought to have the relevant section of the code of conduct for broadcasting services declared unconstitutional because its prohibition on
broadcasting hate speech infringed on the freedom of expression. While the court found that the sweeping language of the broadcasting code did indeed infringe on the constitutional guarantee on free speech—a ruling that had been anticipated—the court nevertheless upheld the prohibition on the advocacy of hate speech based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion. The SAJBOD expressed satisfaction with the result. Russell Gaddin, chairman of the SAJBOD, noted that “as South Africans we are protected by freedom of speech and protected from hate speech. This is a landmark victory for all South Africans and we will be pursuing the matter against Radio 786 on the grounds set out in the ruling” (SA Jewish Report, Apr. 19).

But in November, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission (BCC) dismissed the SAJBOD’s complaint. The acting chairman of the BCC, advocate Roland Sutherland, wrote that “the trivializing of the extent of suffering” of Jews during the Second World War was “doubtless perceived by many who accept the accuracy of Holocaust evidence as churlish and insulting. Nevertheless, in my view, it is not the stuff of which reasonable people take offence to the degree it warrants the proscription of the expression of such views.” Sutherland ruled that there was no hate speech since there was “no attack in the broadcast on the Jewish religion or Jews as such . . . no exhortation to hatred of any particular religious group or group of individuals.” The decision shocked the SAJBOD. “We will pursue every avenue open to us to take this matter further,” said Russell Gaddin. “We believe we have a case they have to answer.”

Mervyn Smith, chairman of the SAJBOD subcommittee that dealt with the matter, said it was “extremely difficult to accept the dismissive tone throughout the decision” and noted that even the mainstream press had facetiously asked whether Sutherland had gotten his education at the University of Damascus. Referring to Sutherland’s use of the phrase “many who accept the accuracy of Holocaust evidence,” Smith suggested that Sutherland himself had trivialized the Holocaust and that his ruling was offensive. “What is he saying,” asked Smith, “that there are many people who do not accept the evidence of the Holocaust?” This, in Smith’s view, was “grist to the mill of Holocaust revisionists; it makes them respectable” (SA Jewish Report, Dec. 23).

The BCC did uphold a complaint against another Muslim community radio station, the Johannesburg-based Radio Islam, for two offensive broadcasts in August. The station explicitly attacked Jews and called for their death, and its anti-Israel rhetoric was ruled to be hate speech—Israel, representing world Jewry, was accused of controlling the world and
being responsible for the September 11 attacks on the U.S. In making his judgment, Prof. Kobus van Rooyen said that to threaten people with murder amounted to "a severe and serious invasion of their rights of personality." Van Rooyen maintained that it was "no excuse to hide behind an Islamic text, quoted out of context, on air," and that the same would hold for the recitation of violent passages from the Bible quoted out of context for the purpose of inciting violence. As for the anti-Israel rhetoric, Van Rooyen claimed it was "strident, emotive, unforgiving and blatantly accusatorial. One cannot escape the hate that flows forth from the comment and tone thereof." And he added that no opposing views were broadcast, as required by the law on airing controversial statements. The BCC warned Radio Islam that it would be fined if it broadcast similarly in the future.

The Cape Town Holocaust Centre (CTHC) maintained its prominent role in human-rights education. Marlene Silbert, its education director, reported an "ever-growing number of adult groups who are participating in the Centre's programs—university faculties, the military, law enforcement agencies, religious groups of all faiths and backgrounds, and a broad range of groups from civil society." There was also a special program on sensitivity training for the South African Police Services.

The CTHC held two exhibitions during 2002. In February, Esther Surdat displayed "Framing History: Family History and Memory," the story of her family, which came from the shtetl of Kusshan (Kursenai). In December, "Visas for Life" opened. This exhibition celebrated the bravery of diplomats and others who helped Jews escape the clutches of Nazism. "Visas for Life" was seen in some 100 venues around the world.

In August, Professor Christopher Browning, a renowned Holocaust historian and visiting professor at the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town, delivered the third anniversary lecture at the CTHC. He discussed the trials of Holocaust deniers David Irving and Ernst Zundel, at both of which he had appeared as an expert witness.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

South African Jews and Israel

Memories were still fresh of the anti-Israel tone of the World Conference Against Racism held in Durban the previous fall and of the harsh

In January, the Jewish Agency declared that South African Jewry—together with those of Argentina and France—was an “endangered” Jewish community. Targeted for aliyah, South African Jews would be entitled to a special subsidized package of benefits if they relocated to Israel. Commenting on the matter, Russell Gaddin, national chairman of the SAJBOD, said that South African Jews had no reason to feel singled out as particularly in danger, though he acknowledged concern over Muslim anti-Semitism in the Western Cape and what he termed the anti-Israel bias of South Africa’s Middle East policy. The SAJBOD’s attitude, he said, “had always been that Jews should either go home or stay home. We are completely committed to the ideal of aliyah, and those who choose to make their homes in Israel do so with our blessing. At the same time we recognize that we are citizens of South Africa and that it is our duty to put as much as we can into the society that has nurtured us and enabled us to live in peace and prosperity as proud South Africans and proud Jews” (SA Jewish Report, Jan. 25).

Speaking at the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) conference in Johannesburg, Salai Meridor, chairman of the Jewish Agency executive and the World Zionist Organization, disagreed. Meridor contended that Jews could only ensure their Jewishness through aliyah. He praised South African Jews who went to live in Israel and condemned those emigrating to other diaspora countries. At the same conference, Kenny Katz, outgoing chairman of the SAZF, spoke of the challenges facing South African Zionism. In his view the government was biased with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and he lamented what the Jewish community had had to witness in Durban at the World Conference Against Racism. Nonetheless, he viewed the future with optimism. The SAZF conference prompted the SA Jewish Report (Mar. 15) to editorialize about the worldwide Zionist movement, which, it charged, was in a state of confusion, insisting, on the one hand, that all Jews belonged in Israel, but acting, on the other, as if “Zionism today boils down to ‘support’ for Israel, financial and moral, but does not translate into the practical reality of actually going to live there.”

Israel Independence Day celebrations in April drew large audiences, and in May, a group of South African volunteers (including non-Jews) went to Israel to alleviate the country’s manpower shortage created by military call-ups. An editorial in the SA Jewish Report (May 10) called
on South Africans to “come out and show the South African public and government that support for Israel is widespread and cuts across the entire spectrum of viewpoints including Jews who were active in the apartheid struggle.” There were well-attended Israel solidarity meetings in Johannesburg and Cape Town, and a SAZF delegation to the World Zionist Organization in Israel handed a 12,000-signature solidarity petition to President Moshe Katzav.

In August, the SAJBOD met with Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, in what both parties described as a cordial exchange. The meeting arose out of the archbishop’s public statements on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: he compared Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians to South Africa’s treatment of blacks under apartheid, and later described disinvestment from Israel as a “necessary move” in opposing her policies. Commenting after the meeting, Russell Gaddin said the discussions concerned “how we could possibly influence peace in the Middle East, bring an end to violence and perhaps introduce the South African peace model to that area of the world.”

The SAJBOD’s strategy of quiet diplomacy with Tutu was not to the taste of all South African Jews. In an open letter published in the *SA Jewish Report* (Aug. 9), editor Geoff Sifrin accused the prelate of condemning Israeli actions while turning a blind eye to Palestinian atrocities against Israelis. Tutu responded by describing Sifrin’s letter as “a thinly veiled sarcastic observation that the South African Jewish community has not heard me castigate the Palestinian bombers enough. Tutu maintained that a careful reading of his remarks on the subject would reveal that “I was quite categorical in my condemnation, first, of what I described as the Arab stupidity in having refused to recognize Israel and committing the Arab nations to her destruction, and secondly, the awfulness of suicide bombers, and thirdly the poisoning of children’s minds if it was true that Palestinian children were being taught to hate Jews.” Tutu continued, “I am deeply concerned for the Jews and the Palestinians. I want to see them live harmoniously together . . . Peace is possible based on justice and equity; based on respect for the territorial integrity of Israel as a sovereign state existing side by side with an equally independent and sovereign Palestinian State.”

There was widespread outrage among South African Jews in December, when young children dressed up as suicide bombers participated in a march in Cape Town marking Al Quds Day, and an Israeli flag was set on fire to the shout of “Death to Israel, death to Sharon.” Russell Gaddin considered the occasion a “disgraceful display of hate speech, incite-
ment, and anti-Semitism.” A spokesman for Qibla, the radical Muslim group that organized the march, said the use of children was “completely justified” in order to draw attention to “the murder happening in Palestine.” On the other hand, Imam Gassan Solomon, a member of the Muslim Judicial Council, said it was “irresponsible to expose children to a march of this kind” (SA Jewish Report, Dec. 12).

The “Not in My Name” group, made up of Jews who opposed Israeli policies, held a Peace Hanukkah ceremony at the District 6 Museum. (District 6 was an inner-city area from which the apartheid government had forcefully removed the “colored” [mixed-race] community.) Speakers made repeated comparisons between the apartheid government and Israel’s actions in the Territories.

The South African Union of Jewish Students organized a memorial service for the seven students killed in a bomb blast on the campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The campus chaplain, Rabbi Jonathan Shippel, delivered an interdenominational message to an audience of Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

The Israeli Trade Center underwent a major refurbishing. The center’s first secretary for economic affairs, Elad Stav, spoke of refocusing Israel’s commercial interests in Africa, and particularly South Africa. Over the last several years Israel’s exports to South Africa had shrunk while its imports from the country had skyrocketed, a situation he thought the center might help reverse. In another effort to stimulate trade with Israel, the South Africa-Israel Chamber of Commerce appointed the first black ever to its executive, Bonang Mohale. Mohale was director of marketing at Sanlam and had a long association with the Jewish community.

A new Israel Center was launched in June to coordinate all Israel-related issues in the community. Michael Mensky, the director, explained that it would seek to promote a greater awareness of Israel in South Africa, focusing on such matters as Israeli technological advances and lifestyle trends in the Jewish state.

Communal Affairs

The South African Jewish community continued to make progress in consolidating and rationalizing its operations. The latest step in this direction was the establishment by the SAJBOD and the SAZF of “Tachlis from Beyachad,” an e-mail newsletter about Jewish world affairs, with primary focus on Israel and South Africa.

Chabad House in Johannesburg inaugurated a drug-awareness cam-
The campaign aimed at the entire Jewish community. The purpose, explained Rabbi David Masinter, the Chabad House director, was to educate the community "to the dangers and pitfalls of drug abuse."

A number of women were appointed to important communal positions. The Cape Council of the SAJBOD appointed Vivienne Anstey as vice chairman; the SAZF named Islo Brito as its new director; and Suzanne Belling became director of the Cape Council of the SAJBOD.

A new Jewish community center opened in the fast-growing coastal town of Plettenberg Bay. Over 220 Jews lived in the area, and the number regularly swelled during the holiday seasons.

Kosher Mobile Meals were more in demand than ever before in the program’s 30-year history. While in 1972 it provided meals for 14 recipients, in 2002 the number had grown to 130. Margaret Cohen, co-convener of the organization, said that she and her colleagues were "there to assist any Jewish person who needs our help."

Indicative of the financial climate was a report by Stan Rothbart, the outgoing president, at the 42nd annual general meeting of the Society for the Jewish Handicapped. "Gone are the days of largesse when people could just supply shortfalls," he told the gathering, and went on to name new targets for fund-raising, including South African Jews who had emigrated elsewhere.

In November, controversy surrounded elections to the committee of the Gauteng Council of the SAJBOD, as accusations of illicit lobbying were raised at its biennial conference in Johannesburg. An editorial titled "Strengthening Internal Jewish Democracy" in the SA Jewish Report (Nov. 11) noted the absence of clear "procedures for voting, resolution of disputes, membership criteria and so on." The newspaper went on, "Of course, many people will protest the SAJBOD does have a constitution, and this is true. But the acrimonious fog which characterized the last election, in which 'deals' eventually had to be made between powerful individuals to rescue the outcome, shows that this constitution is not what it needs to be. Strict adherence to the principles of proper 'corporate governance' has never been a strong point of Jewish organizations. But we live in a new era now, where people demand to know how decisions are being made, and who is making them."

Community Relations

At the launch of his new book, Profile of a Community: South African Jewry, retired Jewish communal worker Aleck Goldberg urged Jews to
reach out to South African blacks. “Too few of us still take pride and joy in living in South Africa,” he said. “As a community we should feel more secure, not less secure with the demise of apartheid. We should celebrate it with all South Africans.”

There were a number of significant outreach initiatives during 2002. Tikkun, the Jewish organization committed to help the underprivileged of South Africa, announced a new program of scholarships for disadvantaged young people studying technology-related fields at the Peninsula Technikon, Rhodes University, and the University of Potchefstroom. In addition, a new Tikkun/Alexander Forbes Care for the Aged project would concentrate on providing support for the elderly in Alexandra, a black Johannesburg township. Tikkun had a number of other ongoing projects, including help for the inhabitants of the poverty-stricken Orange Farm in Gauteng, with emphasis on eradicating unhygienic conditions and dealing with crime. Tikkun also facilitated a workshop, “Culture Among Cultures,” at the South African Jewish Museum in Cape Town, for 25 high-school students from black townships and an equal number of white Jewish students.

Following a meeting with TAC (Treatment Action Campaign), the advocacy organization for HIV/AIDS victims, the SAJBOD joined in the fight to promote a national treatment plan for HIV-positive mothers. National Chairman Russell Gaddin undertook to have the SAJBOD investigate avenues for practical assistance, and requested TAC to submit proposals to help the SAJBOD determine strategy. In August, the SAJBOD met with the ANC Youth League (ANCYL). The two organizations agreed to “cement relationships” and agreed that it was important to deepen democracy, unity, and economic development in the country. Toward that end Jewish youth organizations would work together with the ANCYL to achieve common objectives.

Religion

The Union of Orthodox Synagogues of South Africa (UOS) celebrated its 70th birthday. Lady Amelie Jakobovits, widow of the late Lord Immanuel Jakobovits, former chief rabbi of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, was guest speaker at a banquet celebrating the occasion. The UOS appointed Darren Sevitz executive director and Tobi Einhorn director of education and convener of the conversion program.

Ongoing tensions between the Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation of Cape Town and the UOS Bet Din, or religious court (see AJYB
2001, pp. 470–71) continued in 2002. The focus of the dispute was whether the actions of Rabbi E. J. Steinhorn in carrying out the religious functions of the synagogue—primarily decisions about conversions, burial rights, and who might hold office—were within the bounds of Orthodoxy. Some South African Jews saw the matter as a broader struggle between modern Orthodoxy and a resurgent fundamentalism. In August, the congregation called a special meeting to consider a proposal to withdraw from the UOS and establish its own religious court. The congregation’s president began the meeting by noting that relations between the synagogue and the Bet Din had “steadily deteriorated” over the years, and that “acrimony” had reached “an untenable level.” During the discussion, Rabbi Steinhorn assured those present that he had no intention of transforming the congregation into a Conservative synagogue, as some of his critics had suggested. A letter from Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris was read, warning that the Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation would not be recognized as Orthodox if it left the UOS. After considerable debate the motion to secede was withdrawn.

In other developments in the Orthodox community, Johannesburg’s Tzeirei Tzion and Mizrachi Young Adults merged into the new Mizrachi Yeshivah Shul in July. A gala dinner was held in Johannesburg to celebrate the contribution of the Adass Yeshurun congregation and its leader, Rabbi Yossi Salzer, to Orthodox Judaism in South Africa. Strictly observant German Jewish immigrants founded the Adass in 1936.

In the Liberal sector of the community, the South African Union of Temple Sisterhoods (SAUTS) celebrated its Golden Jubilee during its biennial conference in Johannesburg in July, and Rabbi Michael Standfield was inducted as minister of Durban’s Temple David.

**Education**

The Johannesburg College of Adult Jewish Education (CAJE) brought together four of the city’s congregations—Sydenham, Highlands North, Pine Street, and Range Grove—into a unified adult-education project.

Yeshivah College in Johannesburg celebrated its jubilee in August. Tributes were paid to the principal, Rabbi Avraham Tanzer, the driving force of the institution.

The designers of the South African national school curriculum announced plans to require ninth-graders to study the history of the Holocaust and its moral and ethical dimensions. Gail Weldon, senior curriculum planner for history of the Western Cape Education Department
and a member of the National Working Group for the Social Sciences, explained that intimate involvement with the Cape Town Holocaust Centre had convinced her "that the study of the Holocaust has a special impact and relevance in South Africa. Teachers and pupils who have participated in the education programs at the Holocaust Centre have come out with not only a deeper understanding of the Holocaust itself, but also of issues of prejudices and racism, which up till then they have not confronted."

Culture

In a new marketing venture, the SA Jewish Report would be made available free of charge at over 300 outlets nationwide beginning in 2003. Jewish Affairs, the journal published by the SAJBOD, celebrated its 60th anniversary. David Saks, the editor since 2001, noted that it "is the primary vehicle for Jewish thought in South Africa. Its philosophy is to be the forum in which the Jewish community and the entire South African population can communicate" (SA Jewish Report, Feb. 15).

The Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town established a new department dedicated to the study of Jewish migration and genealogy, the first of its kind. Its planned mapping of South African Jewry would be linked up to the South African Jewish Museum so that visitors to the museum might trace their family histories. The initiative for this project came from industrialist and Jewish communal leader Mendel Kaplan.

In July, the South African Jewish Arts and Culture Trust (SAJACT) entered into a partnership with the SAJBOD. Under the arrangement, SAJACT was incorporated within the board's administrative structure and provided with logistical support. The goal of SAJACT was to provide a platform for Jewish artists of all kinds by nurturing and promoting new talent and providing funding.

Some noteworthy publications of Jewish interest were To Forgive But Not Forget by Maya Abramowitch; Joffe Marks—A Family Memoir by Georgina Jaffe; The White Life of Felix Greenspan by Lionel Abrahams; Yad Avraham by Dov Tanzer; Imaging the Unimaginable: Holocaust Memory in Art and Architecture by Neville Dubow; No Single Loyalty: A South African Teacher's Life by Franz Auerbach; Memories, Realities and Dreams: Aspects of the South African Jewish Experience, edited by Milton Shain and Richard Mendelsohn; and Profile of a Community: South African Jewry by Aleck Goldberg.
**Personalia**

Helen Lieberman, known as South Africa’s Mother Theresa, was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Notre Dame in the U.S. Ivan Ferrer, honorary treasurer of the SAZF and chairman of Likud, South Africa, was elected to the board of the Jewish Agency representing the World Likud. Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris received the Jerusalem Prize for Communal Leadership. Simon Jocum was elected to the executive of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) and to its board of governors. Barney Singer was given the Colleagues of Viri-list Award by the World Zionist Congress.

Among prominent South African Jews who died during 2002 were Rabbi Dr. David Sherman, rabbi emeritus of Temple Israel, Cape Town; Lazer Sidelsky, the attorney who gave Nelson Mandela his first job as an articulated clerk; Alicia Lazar, devoted communal worker; Blumie Louis, first honorary life president of the Federation of Synagogues Women’s Guilds; Rusty Bernstein, activist and coauthor of South Africa’s Freedom Charter; Percy Yutar, state prosecutor in the Rivonia Trial that led to Nelson Mandela’s incarceration; Arnie Benjamin, columnist and journalist; and Hans Kramer, patron of classical music. Archie Shandling, communal leader, died at the end of 2001.

*Milton Shain*