
Union of South Africa

THE POLITICAL TENSIONS of preceding years (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, vols. 51-55) continued to affect South African life during the period under review (July 1, 1953, through June 30, 1954). But after Premier Daniel Francois Malan's success in the general election of April 15, 1953 (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1954 [Vol. 55], p. 329), the governing Nationalist Party consolidated its position and the opposition parties lost ground. The economic contraction of the preceding two years gave way to an upward trend, reflected in an improved balance of payments, in budget concessions to taxpayers, and in the partial relaxation of import restrictions. The position of the Jewish community remained stable, with good relations prevailing between Jews and all other sections of the population.

Political Developments

Political tensions during the year under review focused mainly on legislation affecting non-Europeans (non-whites) and trade unions. Too extensive for review in the compass of this article, the various enactments aimed at the extension of the government's *apartheid* (segregation) policies (see surveys in the AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, vols. 51-55), in the fields of labor, education, and domicile, and drew many protests, particularly from church quarters.

The government made two further attempts to overcome constitutional barriers to its plan to transfer colored (mulatto) voters in the Cape Province from the common roll to a restricted communal register (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 396-99); both attempts failed to secure the requisite two-thirds majority at joint sittings of the two houses of parliament.

Under the Suppression of Communism Act (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1952 [Vol. 53], p. 388, and 1953 [Vol. 54], p. 398-99) Minister of Justice Charles Robberts Swart ordered several trade union officials to resign their positions and abstain from attending meetings. Draft legislation was announced in parliament on May 12, 1954, by Minister of Labor Ben Schoeman to subject trade unions to certain restraints and controls, and bar them from participating in politics.

The British Trade Union Congress (TUC) sent two delegates, James Crawford and Ernest Bell, to South Africa to study the situation. They made their investigation during the period November 11-December 18, 1953,

and in a 12,000-word report to the British TUC General Council (made public on March 25, 1954), declared that: "After examining the recent legislative enactments and the effect they have had and are likely to have upon the trade union movement, there is no doubt in our minds that today the South African trade unions are facing a direct and serious challenge to their existence as free, democratic and self-determining agencies." The report also criticized the internal divisions of South African trade unionism.

At a conference in Capetown on May 5-7, 1954, South African trade unionists established a Unity Committee to make representations to the minister of labor and to achieve united resistance to the proposed legislation. The government, however, pressed its bill, with only minor modifications, through a second reading in the House of Assembly on June 2, 1954, deferring the third reading to 1955. The trade unions were due to review the situation at a conference scheduled for October 9-10, 1954.

Elections to the provincial councils, which took place on August 18, 1954, showed increased support for the government. It captured forty-five seats in the Transvaal, against the United Party's twenty-three; thirty seats in the Cape, against the United Party's twenty-four; and all twenty-five seats in the Orange Free State. (Previously, the Nationalists had held thirty-six seats in the Transvaal, twenty-six in the Cape, and twenty-four in the Free State.)

Twelve Jews were among the candidates elected in the Transvaal—Alfred Einstein, Nathan Eppel, Boris Wilson, Reuben Sive, Samuel Emdin, Ephraim Leonard Fisher, Hyman Miller, Ephraim Benjamin Woolf, Alexander Leopold Kowarsky (in Johannesburg seats), and Morris Nestadt (Benoni), Mrs. Emily Myer (Boksburg), and Leonard Barnett Taurog (Springs). Five Jews were among the candidates elected in the Cape—Aaron Zalman Berman, Abraham Maurice Jackson, and Mrs. Sophie Lang in Capetown, Charles Barnett (Cape Flats), and David Lazarus (East London). All the elected Jews were United Party candidates: the Nationalist, Liberal, and Labor parties each had one Jewish candidate in the elections, but these were defeated.

Civic honors conferred on Jewish citizens during the year included the election of Gustav Haberfeld as mayor of Kimberley (October 1953), and Abraham Adleson as deputy mayor of East London (December 1953).

Jewish Population

On May 12, 1954, the Union Director of Census and Statistics gave the South African Jewish Board of Deputies the following tabulation, abstracted from the Union Census of 1951, covering the number of Jews in the principal urban areas of the Union. The figure for the total Jewish community was not yet available; unofficial estimates put it at 108,000-110,000 Jews, out of a European (white) population of 2,588,933 and a total population (all races) of 12,437,227 (1951 census). The 1946 census had showed a figure of 104,156.

TABLE 1

JEWISH POPULATION IN MAIN SOUTH AFRICAN URBAN CENTERS,
CENSUS OF 1951, 1946

Place	Males		Females		Total	
	1951	1946	1951	1946	1951	1946
Cape Town	10,148	9,827	10,298	9,762	20,446	19,589
East London	560	491	555	473	1,115	964
Kimberley	314	328	272	279	586	607
Port Elizabeth	1,431	1,310	1,435	1,220	2,866	2,530
Durban	2,335	2,158	2,147	1,974	4,482	4,132
Pietermaritzburg	169	195	144	135	313	330
Pretoria	1,680	1,833	1,548	1,594	3,228	3,427
Johannesburg	26,518	25,494	26,905	24,877	53,423	50,371
Germiston	719	697	727	653	1,446	1,350
Benoni	629	657	608	587	1,237	1,244
Boksburg	255	271	226	285	481	556
Krugersdorp	536	505	466	433	1,002	938
Nigel	151	161	142	126	293	287
Potchefstroom	243		177		420	
Randfontein	230	206	216	174	446	380
Roodepoort-Maraisburg	198	204	173	172	371	376
Springs	618	541	610	508	1,228	1,049
Vereeniging-Vanderbijlpark	387		317		704	
Brakpan	451	443	426	385	877	828
Bloemfontein	636	653	604	632	1,240	1,285
Paarl	258		249		507	
Uitenhage	107		89		196	
Kroonstad	157		126		283	

Civic and Political Status

The civic and political status of the Union's Jewish community remained unchanged, with Jews enjoying equal rights and opportunities with all other white citizens. A statement by Mr. and Mrs. Gardner Cowles, publishers of *Look* magazine in the United States, made in an American television interview during March 1954 (after a brief visit to South Africa) that: "The Afrikaners have won the last election and are now adopting racial policies with a good deal of anti-Semitism thrown in, exactly like Hitler's Germany," was condemned as false by the South African Jewish press (week ending March 26, 1954), and repudiated in parliament on April 8, 1954, by Morris Kentridge, veteran Jewish member of parliament. Earlier (August 11, 1953) the prime minister repudiated as a fabrication a report in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* that he had expressed himself in anti-Semitic terms to a Canadian visitor, Mrs. Kate Aitken, in an interview she claimed to have had with him.

A minor parliamentary incident caused some concern at the time. During April 1954 a sharp attack on Minister of Finance Nicolas C. Havenga by

Bernard Friedman (United Party) was met by M. D. C. de Wet Nel (Nationalist) with a warning that such speeches by a Jewish member of parliament could stir up anti-Semitic feeling. Morris Kentridge (United Party) asked the prime minister to repudiate this threat. G. H. Strydom (Nationalist) said that he and his colleagues had no quarrel with the Jewish community, but objected to some Jewish members of the opposition vilifying them as Nazis. Abraham Jonker (Independent United Party) said that while he agreed with some of Strydom's criticism, he deplored the racial reference. The members concerned were in parliament as representatives of their constituencies, not of a particular community. This point was also stressed by Edel Jacob Horwitz, chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, at a meeting of deputies in Johannesburg on May 16, 1954.

Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitic propaganda during the period under review was of comparatively small proportions and largely confined to the persons and organizations cited in preceding issues of the YEAR BOOK. Some of the material emanated from Einar Aberg of Sweden, and some came from Britain and America. Foreign material included a booklet printed in London, *Hidden Government* by Lieut.-Col. J. Creagh Scott, a repetition of the charges in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Representations regarding this anti-Semitic material were made to the government by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

During the year *Die Republikein*, which had formerly been the organ of the Ossewa Brandwag, and which from time to time had published pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic material, went out of existence. Its last issue appeared on January 27, 1954.

Communal Organization

Communal organization proceeded along the pattern of preceding years, marking time rather than registering any definitive advance.

The central role in servicing communities was played by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. The Board of Deputies was the central representative organization of South African Jewry. It had been formed in 1912 "to watch and take action with reference to all matters affecting the welfare of South African Jews as a community," had as its affiliates all of South Africa's Hebrew congregations, and most of the cultural, philanthropic, and fraternal societies, and was recognized by the government of the Union of South Africa.

Chairman Edel Jacob Horwitz led a delegation from the Board of Deputies to the Conference of Commonwealth Jewish Organizations, held in London at the end of June 1954. Max Greenstein represented South African Jewry at the session of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (CJMCA) and at the meeting of the Coordinating Board of Jewish Organizations, held in New York during March-April 1954. Simon Kuper,

chairman of the South African Zionist Federation and Abel Shaban, honorary president of the South African ORT-OSE and chairman of the World OSE executive, represented South African Jewry at the earlier session of the CJMCAG (February 1954).

FUND RAISING

The 1953-54 fund-raising period was mainly devoted to the United Communal Fund, which made budgetary allocations to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies; the South African Board of Jewish Education; the Cape Board of Jewish Education; the South African Council for Progressive Jewish Education; the South African ORT-OSE; the Union of Jewish Women of South Africa; the Federation of Synagogues of the Transvaal; the South African Jewish Ministers' Association; the Mizrachi Yeshiva Ketana; the Yiddish Cultural Federation; and special funds instituted by the Board of Deputies to assist small rural Jewish communities and provide pensions for Hebrew teachers. The campaign (still in progress at the time of writing, July 1954) was as yet considerably short of the target figure of £500,000 (\$1,400,000).

The 1952-53 Israeli United Appeal campaign for 1953 also showed lower totals than those achieved in the preceding year.

Social Services

Social welfare agencies registered substantial increases in expenditure without a proportionate rise in revenue, and the need for increased funds for their work was stressed at annual meetings of the South African Jewish Orphanage (Johannesburg), the Chevra Kadisha of Johannesburg (which handled the largest relief budget in the community), the Jewish Women's Benevolent and Welfare Society (Johannesburg), the Jewish Board of Guardians (Cape Town), the Witwatersrand Jewish Aged Home (Johannesburg), and Our Parents Home (Johannesburg), major South African Jewish social agencies.

The expenditure of the Johannesburg Chevra Kadisha during the fiscal year 1953-54 topped £100,000 (\$280,000), the largest figure in its history, mostly spent on relief and rehabilitation services. The Chevra Kadisha reported a deficit of £14,000 (\$39,200).

Building operations commenced in April 1954 on the new premises of the Witwatersrand Jewish Aged Home, scheduled for completion in three years at a cost of £500,000 (\$1,400,000).

Religious Life

Jewish religious life showed signs of greater cohesion and less disharmony than in the period 1950-53. Attempting to realize hitherto unsuccessful plans to establish a national union of Orthodox congregations, regional confer-

ences took place to promote the formation of provincial federations, with the ultimate aim of combining them into a country-wide organization. The Transvaal Federation of Synagogues, headed by Chief Rabbi Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, played a leading part in this regard, and strengthened itself considerably. At its annual general meeting on May 2, 1954, it listed a membership of 44 affiliated Hebrew Congregations, with over 10,000 members.

The Transvaal Federation organized a Kashruth Week in March 1954, launched with a personal visit by Chief Rabbi Isar Unterman of Tel Aviv. The campaign included an exhibition of kosher products at the Selborne Hall in Johannesburg, lectures by various rabbis, and a broad-based propaganda drive. In Cape Province the South African Jewish Ecclesiastical Association (Omer), headed by Chief Rabbi Israel Abrahams, held a Kashruth Month.

Five new synagogues were opened during 1953-54 in Johannesburg: Etz Chayim; Valley-Observatory; Parkview-Greenside (all Orthodox); Port Elizabeth (Reform); and Graaff-Reinet (Orthodox). New communal centers, which included halls and Talmud Torah classrooms and could also be used for religious purposes, were opened at Bloemfontein, Benoni, Summerstrand, and Odendaalsrus. New synagogues were planned in a number of centers.

The Jewish Reform movement, headed by Rabbi Moses Cyrus Weiler, reported increased membership at the annual conference of its South African Union for Progressive Judaism (Durban, November 1953). Plans were completed to add a third constituent, Temple Emanuel, to the United Jewish Reform Congregation in Johannesburg, during 1954. The Reform movement had 8,000 members, in congregations in Johannesburg, Capetown, Durban, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, Springs, and Germiston.

Jewish Education

The silver jubilee conference of the South African Board of Jewish Education, which met in Johannesburg May 29-31, 1954, was attended by some 200 delegates. It reviewed twenty-five years of endeavor in the Jewish educational field and endorsed the board's program for new institutions, including the establishment of the King David High School in Johannesburg (extending facilities already afforded by the King David Jewish Day School), and the establishment of a hostel for students of the Rabbi J. L. Zlotnik Seminary for the training of Hebrew teachers.

Reports disclosed that during 1953-54 the King David Jewish Day School, which had started in 1948 with 6 pupils, now had 600 pupils and a long waiting list; and that the Rabbi Zlotnik Seminary had produced 52 teachers since its inception ten years before. Eighty-eight Hebrew schools and 32 Hebrew nursery schools throughout the Union and Rhodesia were reported affiliated to the Board of Jewish Education.

The silver jubilee conference rejected pressure for stricter religious observance by teachers and pupils, and supported the board's "middle course" policy of "broadly national traditional" Jewish education.

A financial deficit continued to hamper the work of the board, as well as that of its Cape Province counterpart, the Cape Board of Jewish Education. The latter, in June 1954, projected the building of new premises for the Herzlia Hebrew Day School in Cape Town, to accommodate 500 pupils, and a hostel for 150 pupils. The Herzlia Day School, established in 1940, now had 400 pupils.

Sixteen students were graduated as Hebrew teachers from the Rabbi Zlotnik Seminary in Johannesburg in October 1953.

The Jewish Reform movement ran its own Hebrew schools in the seven South African cities where it had established congregations; these were supervised by its South African Council for Progressive Jewish Education.

YOUTH WORK

At the invitation of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Rabbi Louis Milgrom, Hillel Director of the University of Minnesota in the United States, conducted a fact-finding investigation into the position and needs of South African Jewish youth from June to August of 1953 (*see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1953* [Vol. 55], p. 335-36). Rabbi Milgrom's report, submitted in July 1954, pin-pointed the lack of trained personnel and scientifically devised programs in this field, the tendency towards over-concentration on Zionist youth effort, and the lack of attention to youth needs outside the Zionist field. It recommended the engagement of professionally trained Jewish youth counselors at the main South African universities; campus facilities for Jewish students; the engagement of one or more professional group workers to deal with youth needs throughout the entire Jewish community; and "as the top priority recommendation, an over-all committee for Jewish youth, with representatives from the Jewish Board of Education, synagogue leadership, sporting clubs, the Zionist Federation, and the Jewish Board of Deputies." At the time of writing (July 1954), the Milgrom Report was being considered by the major Jewish organizations concerned.

Rabbi Milgrom's visit to Cape Town in August 1953 was responsible for stimulating the establishment in that city of a university students' hostel, Hillel House, with a program based largely on his recommendations.

Zionist Activities and Relations with Israel

The visit to Israel of Prime Minister Malan and a party of Dutch Reformed Church clergymen in June 1953 (*see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1954* [Vol. 55], p. 327, 331) left echoes for several months in appreciative statements and press articles, and formed the basis for much intergroup goodwill work.

Israel sent an eight-man trade delegation to South Africa in April 1954 for the Rand Easter Show (the chief annual South African trade fair), at which Israel manufacturers exhibited for the first time. The delegation was welcomed on behalf of the Union government by Johannes N. Theron, Undersecretary for Commerce and Industries, at the official opening of the Israel exhibit on April 5, 1954.

Zionist work during the period under review was mainly concentrated on economic aid to Israel, consolidation of the South African housing and settlement project at Ashkelon, propaganda, and the encouragement of *aliyah* (emigration to Israel). The problem of stimulating *aliyah* from South Africa formed a dominant theme at the twenty-fourth biennial South African Zionist conference held in Johannesburg July 8-12, 1954, and attended by some 500 delegates from all over the Union and Rhodesia. It was reported that while some 1,000 South African Jews had settled in Israel since the establishment of the state, the number of South African emigrants showed a tendency to decline, the latest figures being 87 in 1952, 74 in 1953, and 35 for the first half of 1954. The conference decided on the constitution of a Professional and Technical Workers Aliya (PATWA) structure in South Africa, similar to that operating in Britain and the United States.

Simon M. Kuper, chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, visited Canada in February 1954 to enlist Canadian Zionist partnership with South African Zionists in the Ashkelon project. The proposal was still under consideration in Canada at the time of writing. The Ashkelon project was a scheme whereby South African Jewry, operating through the South African Jewish Appeal, had taken the main responsibility for the upbuilding of the town of Ashkelon in Israel. The South African Jewish Appeal had already established, in cooperation with South African companies in Israel, a housing project and various civic amenities.

In October 1953 the Israeli Herut leader, Menachem Beigin, arrived on a propaganda tour of South Africa under the auspices of the Revisionist Party. An attack on him in the *Zionist Record*, official organ of the South African Zionist Federation, in December 1953 led to a Revisionist protest withdrawal from the councils of the federation until June 1954.

In January 1954 the South African Zionist Federation announced a plan to build a Zionist center in Johannesburg to house the offices of the federation and include halls, committee rooms, and library.

Cultural Activities

Cultural activities during the period under review included an exhibition of Jewish religious art and ceremonial objects arranged by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. The interest which this exhibition evoked among non-Jews as well as Jews, when it took place in Johannesburg from February 15-21, 1954, led the Board of Deputies to send it on tour to other main South African centers. Ten thousand persons visited the exhibition in Johannesburg and 20,000 in other centers.

Cultural programs included continuation of the Peoples' College adult education scheme, and seminars and lectures arranged by various organizations. Exhibitions of the works of visiting painters Itzhak Frenkel (Israel) and Rafael Mandelzweig (Argentina), and a season of stage presentations by Maurice Schwartz and his Yiddish Art Theatre from New York attracted keen interest.

Books by South African Jews published during the year included: *Wonderful Words* by Ben Morrison (Hebrew semantics); *Morris Alexander* by Enid Alexander (biography); *Be-Magloth Ha-Chinuch* by A. H. Levin (autobiography); *A Sociological Survey of an African Labor Force* by Ellen Hellmann (sociology); *The Lying Days* by Nadine Gordimer (novel); *The Crooked Rain* by Gerald Gordon (novel); *Our Shadchan* by David Dainow (humor); *Gezang fun a Boben* by Rachel Levin-Brainin (Yiddish poems).

Personalia

Losses through death during the year included: Siegfried Raphaely, Rand pioneer and former president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (October 22, 1953); Alexander Ovedoff, former South African Jewish editor and prominent communal official (September 14, 1953); Dr. Jack Baynash, senior physician at the Johannesburg General Hospital and prominent communal worker (November 18, 1953); Louis Emanuel Joseph, past president of the Johannesburg United Jewish Reform Congregation.

EDGAR BERNSTEIN