With a general election due in the spring of 1958, political conflict between the government and opposition grew sharper during the period under review (July 1, 1956, through June 30, 1957). There was increased tension in race relations between Europeans (whites) and non-Europeans (Negroes, Asians, mulattoes). Anglican and Catholic churches went on record against government apartheid (segregation) policies. Jews, divided with other sections of the European population on the issues involved, steered clear of the conflict as a community, though they participated in the various parties as individual citizens.

Internally, the Jewish community, stirred by Israel's Sinai campaign of October-November 1956 (see p. 376), responded in increased measure to the Israeli United Appeal; domestically, it devoted intensified effort to the stabilization of communal finances.

Political Developments

The general background of current South African politics has been broadly traced in preceding volumes of the American Jewish Year Book. It should be reiterated that the clash between government and opposition on apartheid did not concern the general principle of segregation (to which all the political parties except the small Liberal Party and the banned Communist Party subscribed). It was the forms which such segregation should take and the extent to which it should be enforced by law that were under dispute. Most Jews shared the general European attitude.

In October 1956 South Africa withdrew from active participation in the United Nations (though remaining a dues-paying member) in protest against continued attacks on its racial policies, which it held to be within its sole domestic jurisdiction. Parliament decided in May 1957 to drop the Union Jack as one of the country's two official flags and make the South African flag the only official flag. J. G. N. Strauss resigned as leader of the United Party and the parliamentary opposition, and was succeeded by Sir De Villiers Graaff in November 1956. In August 1957 that party adopted a platform pledging repeal of some of the measures enacted by the present government, while at the same time guaranteeing the continuation of European political control. On the Nationalist (government) side, Prime Minister Johannes Gerhardus Strijdom told the United Press on April 1, 1957, that the coming election would not be used to decide whether South Africa should become a republic, "but once again it will indicate whether we are advancing towards it." Another factor with a bearing on the general
election was the breakaway of Theo Wassenaar, Nationalist leader in the Transvaal Provincial Council, to form a new party with a modified Nationalist platform.

**Apartheid**

The main political battle of the year revolved around the Native Laws Amendment Bill, containing the so-called "church clause" giving the minister of native affairs the discretionary power, subject to certain limitations, to forbid natives (Negroes)—who generally worshipped in their own churches—from attending worship at a European (white) church in a European residential area, if Europeans in the area took exception to it. The bill drew protests from Anglican, Catholic, and Methodist churches, as a violation of fundamental Christian principles. A deputation from the Dutch Reformed churches, which generally supported the government, urged the minister to withdraw or modify the clause. The deputation affirmed that the Afrikaans churches, no less than other churches, could accept no limitation on their right to disseminate their gospel "how, when, and to whom" they chose. The minister, Hendrik Fransch Verwoerd, agreed to redraft the clause: he had to redraft it twice before a version was produced which the Afrikaans churches did not oppose. The essential difference between the original and the revised clause was that the original clause would have placed the obligation on the church in the European area, if so directed by the minister, to exclude natives from common worship with Europeans in that church; the revised clause which was finally adopted shifted the obligation to the native worshipers, if so directed by the minister, to refrain from participation in common worship with Europeans at European churches.

The fact that they did not oppose the final version did not mean that the Afrikaans churches were satisfied with it. Synod discussions revealed misgivings among some leading members. Pretoria Theology Professor Ben Marais, and Stellenbosch Theology Professor B. B. Keet questioned their church council's attitude in condoning the revised clause. A. S. Geyser, professor of Christian ethics at Pretoria University, wrote, in a letter to *Die Vaderland* (July 24, 1957):

Nobody must conclude, from the silence of the Afrikaans Churches on this clause, that they can give defensible support of the legislation on Biblical grounds. . . . The Bible says nothing in favor of or against apartheid as a social matter and therefore as an arrangement which falls within the competence of the State . . . [but] the Bible permits no separation on the grounds of race and descent in the community of the believers—i.e., in the Church. The Church as a community must consider very seriously before it will permit a re-building of a separation which was destroyed by the Master.

The English churches opposed the revised as well as the original church clause, and when the bill was passed through the House of Assembly after a bitter parliamentary fight by a vote of 79 to 48 on May 1, 1957, and approved by the Senate on May 15, Anglican and Catholic bishops issued pastoral letters calling on their churches to disregard the new law and keep
their churches open to people of all races and colors, even if a ban on native worshipers should be imposed under the act.

**Jewish Attitude**

During the parliamentary debate on the bill, some government supporters in the Assembly and in the Senate took exception to criticism of the church clause by some of the Jewish members of the opposition, claiming that Jews were a historic example of a nation and a faith which practised apartheid, and that Jews would not admit natives to common worship with them in their synagogue. This was categorically denied by Chief Rabbi Louis I. Rabinowitz of Johannesburg, in an article in the *Zionist Record* (May 10, 1957) in which he affirmed that the synagogue was unreservedly open for worship to anyone professing the Jewish faith, regardless of race, color, or descent. However, since there were no Jews among the native races of South Africa, this was an attitude of principle only: in practice the problem was not one that touched the synagogue, and Jews for the most part maintained silence upon it.

Other apartheid measures which evoked widespread protest included the separate universities bill, providing for closure of “European” universities to non-European students and the setting up of “non-European” universities exclusively for them; and the nursing amendment bill, introducing racial separation between Europeans and non-Europeans in the nursing profession. The separate universities bill was withdrawn owing to certain legal snags, but it was expected that it would be presented in a new form in 1958, although the leading Cape Nationalist paper *Die Burger* questioned the wisdom of introducing it at all.

Symptomatic of the race relations tensions were the native bus boycott in Johannesburg in January–April 1957, and the non-European one-day anti-apartheid strike on June 26, 1957.

**Treason Trial**

Police raids in various centers on December 5, 1956, led to the appearance at a special court in Johannesburg on December 19, 1956, of 156 persons for preliminary examination on charges of treason. Of the defendants, twenty-three were European and the rest non-Europeans. The trial was still proceeding at the time of writing (September 1957). Since the protracted nature of the trial involved the accused persons in serious economic hardship, a public fund was established under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Johannesburg, to assist the families and meet the costs of the defense of the accused.

**The Case of Rabbi Ungar**

In January 1957, Minister of the Interior Theophilus E. Dönges directed Rabbi André Ungar to leave the country. (Coincidentally, he was due to leave South Africa for a new post in England when he received the government order.) Rabbi Ungar, who had come to South Africa two years before to minister to the Port Elizabeth Progressive Jewish (Reform) Congregation, had almost from his arrival attacked the government as “Nazi,” and cabinet
ministers as "puffed up little men," from the pulpit and the public platform, and in the press, and had rejected appeals from his congregation to leave politics alone.

When Rabbi Ungar charged that the government, through its ban on him, was trying to intimidate Jews, the Eastern Province Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies declared that Rabbi Ungar spoke entirely as an individual, and that the Jewish community did not regard the withdrawal of his residence permit as an attempt by the government to intimidate Jewish citizens of South Africa who might be critical of government policy.

**Jewish Population**

No new figures were available since the 1951 census put the Jewish community at 108,496 persons out of a European (white) population of 2,588,933, and a total population (all races) of 12,437,277. In November 1956 a further analysis of the 1951 census returns by the Union director of census and statistics, showed a further decline in the number of Jews using Yiddish as their home language in South Africa. In 1951, 9,972 Jews had been speaking Yiddish at home, as compared with 14,044 in 1946, and 17,684 in 1936.

**Civic and Political Status**

Full civic equality of the Jews of South Africa continued as in the past. Relations between Jews and non-Jews were marked by general goodwill. There was little anti-Semitic agitation, and much show of mutual respect. Jews continued to play an integral part in South African public life, and several attained high public office. Max Goodman was elected mayor of Johannesburg; Mendel Paul, mayor of Queenstown; M. Singer, mayor of Potchefstroom; I. Greenblatt, mayor of Simonstown; Louis Dubb, mayor of Port Elizabeth. Alfred Markman was elected deputy mayor of Port Elizabeth.

**Communal Organization**

There was a trend towards closer coordination and consolidation in the field of communal organization during 1956–57. This was largely brought about through consultation between the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and the South African Zionist Federation on the problem of raising the funds necessary for the maintenance of South African Jewry's central representative educational and cultural organizations (see AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1957 [Vol. 58], p. 363-64).

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, the South African Board of Jewish Education and parallel educational bodies, the Federation of Synagogues of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, the Union of Jewish Women, the South African Yiddish Cultural Federation, the Histadrut Ivrit, the South African ORT-OSE, and the committees for the assistance of small rural communities and for the provision of pensions for Hebrew teachers—all had banded together, some nine years previous, to raise funds on a
“community chest” basis through the establishment of the United Communal Fund (UCF). But the UCF had set itself higher goals to meet expanded programs in the educational field, and these were proving difficult of achievement.

Other fund-raising efforts detrimentally affected the 1955–56 UCF campaign, which was extended into the first half of 1957 in an attempt to make up the gap. Despite the extension, the campaign fell thousands of pounds short of its target, and allocations to participant organizations had to be reduced by 30 per cent. In negotiations during the second quarter of 1957, the UCF was only narrowly rescued from breakdown when a formula was found for a new effort, assisted by substantial loans from the Board of Deputies and the Zionist Federation. Named the 1957 UCF Stabilization Campaign, the new drive, with a target of £500,000 ($1,400,000), was being launched in September 1957. Rabbi Kopul Rosen of England accepted an invitation to visit South Africa to inaugurate this campaign.

**Jewish Education**

Despite its major financial headache, the South African Board of Jewish Education registered consistent progress. Its Jewish day schools in Johannesburg had 934 pupils; thirty-one Hebrew nursery schools under the direction of the board provided for 1,764 pupils. Eighty-four teachers had graduated from the board’s Judah Leib Zlotnik Seminary since its establishment in 1944.

The Cape Board of Jewish Education opened its new Herzlia Day School premises in Cape Town, housing under one roof a primary, preparatory, and high school serving 550 children. An additional 400 children attended Hebrew Nursery Schools in the Peninsula.

The Progressive (Reform) movement’s education also registered expansion during 1956-57, with new nursery school units established at Temple Shalom and Temple Emanuel in Johannesburg, and enrollment at other Reform schools increasing. There were approximately 1,000 students in its Johannesburg schools, and about half that number in the rest of South Africa.

**Religious Life**

Religious activities showed progress, but were still hampered by the shortage of rabbis.

In February 1957 Rabbi Moses Weiler, leader of the Progressive Jewish (Reform) movement in South Africa, announced his intention to retire at the end of 1957 and go to Israel. Rabbi Weiler had started the Reform movement in South Africa nearly twenty-five years before with only a handful of adherents, and built it up to 10,000 members belonging to thirteen congregations in nine centers.

New synagogues were opened during 1956–57 at Northcliff, Johannesburg (Orthodox), Bethal, Transvaal (Orthodox), and Pretoria (Reform). New communal halls and school buildings were opened in Camps Bay, Cape Town (both Orthodox and Reform); Durban (Reform), and Germiston (Orthodox). Plans for the building of new synagogues, halls, or school premises were announced by the Oxford Congregation, Johannesburg (Orthodox); Emma-
Zionist and Pro-Israel Activity

South African Jewry followed with close concern the development of Israel's Sinai campaign. Rallies throughout the community in January 1957 adopted resolutions of solidarity with Israel. A joint statement issued by the Zionist Federation and the Board of Deputies in December 1956 protested against the persecution of Jews in Egypt, and appealed "to all statesmen who have a voice in the counsels of the nations to insist upon the cessation of these persecutions and upon adequate reparation to the victims."

Friendly relations continued between the Union government and Israel. Visa fees were abolished in October 1956 by agreement between South Africa and Israel. Finance Minister Tom Naude paid a brief visit to Israel in August 1957.

South African sympathy was largely with Israel in the Sinai campaign. The Nationalist press expressed admiration for Israel's achievement, and asserted that Soviet aid to Egypt was a development which the Union could not but view with misgivings. The opposition press also displayed a generally sympathetic attitude to Israel in the Sinai campaign.

In March 1957, the South African Zionist Federation moved into an imposing new home, Zionist Centre, in Johannesburg, containing, in addition to offices, lecture rooms and halls for communal functions. Two South Africans, Inez Gordon and Anna Franks, were elected to the World Executive of the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO).

The community was stirred by the visit to South Africa in February 1957 of Colonel Abraham Yoffe, one of the heroes of the Sinai campaign. At the time of writing, Israel Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan was due to visit the Union. A visit of five Israeli mannequins who displayed Israel fashions was arranged by the Jewish National Fund in South Africa, and proved a major attraction. Israel again participated in the Rand Easter Show, South Africa's biggest trade fair, in April 1957.

Revisionist Dispute with Zionist Federation

Zionist work during 1956-57 was clouded by a dispute between the Zionist Federation and the Revisionist Party, over the Revisionists' right to a separate fund-raising campaign. The South African Zionist Conference had adopted a resolution in August 1956 banning separate party campaigns in the Union; campaigning for Israel was to proceed solely through the Israeli United Appeal (IUA), and Zionist parties were to receive allocations from IUA receipts. The Revisionists, however, refused to accept the resolution, holding that their movement was discriminated against financially by the
Jewish Agency for Palestine. Israel Dunsky, chairman of the Zionist Federation, had made an effort to get the matter adjusted in Jerusalem. Dunsky and Harold Hanson for the Federation, and Joseph Dalessi for the Revisionists, devoted part of their visit to Israel for the Actions Committee session in July 1957 to seeking agreement with the Jewish Agency on a global allocation for the Revisionist Herut-Hatzohar. But the negotiations proved fruitless, and the Revisionists reaffirmed their intention of proceeding with the separate campaign. The Zionist Federation, in accordance with earlier decisions and the 1956 conference resolution, expelled the Revisionists from the federation on July 31, 1957. The federation and the Board of Deputies called on the community to support only over-all campaigns—the IUA and the UCF. The Revisionists replied with counterstatements claiming the right, under the constitution of the World Zionist Organization, to conduct a separate campaign. In September 1957 Herut leader Menahem Beigin and Herut Knesset member Haim Landau were due to arrive in South Africa to launch the Revisionist campaign.

Social Services

South African Jewry followed with anxiety the bloody events in Hungary, and participated in efforts to assist Jews among the Hungarian refugees. Cape Town Jewry gave substantial aid to Hungarian Jewish refugees who touched the Cape on their way to Australia. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies during the first half of 1957 made representations to the government to include Jews among the Hungarian refugees admitted to South Africa, and also to admit Egyptian relatives of Jews living in South Africa. The government received these representations sympathetically, but as of September 1957 few Hungarian Jews, and still fewer Egyptian Jews, had been among the refugees admitted to the Union. A number of cases were being followed up.

After ten years of activity the Witwatersrand Jewish Welfare Council had twelve affiliated organizations, each performing important functions in the social welfare field.

In August 1956 the South African Jewish Orphanage celebrated its golden jubilee, having provided 2,000 children with a Jewish home and education in its fifty years of existence.

The Witwatersrand Jewish Aged Home reported that its new premises in Sandringham were nearing completion; when finished, this building would provide for 550 residents.

Rehabilitation of breadwinners handicapped by economic hardships or serious illness was carried out by the Jewish Women’s Benevolent and Welfare Society, which also did valuable work to assist the handicapped through its Frieda Sichel Occupational Therapy Center, and helped in some cases with educational grants.

Institutions which assisted necessitous members of the community with loans or grants reported that during 1956-57 calls had been heavier, and larger disbursements had to be made. During 1956-57 the Johannesburg Chevra Kadisha disbursed nearly £62,400 ($174,720) in such loans and grants;
the Joseph Miller Benevolent Association, £94,000 ($263,200); the Witwatersrand Gmilus Chasodim, £64,000 ($179,200).

Valuable work in the social welfare field was also included in the activities of the South African Union of Jewish Women, the South African ORT-OSE, and the Welfare Department of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. The social welfare work of the Union of Jewish Women was very diversified. It included assistance, both financial and personal, to the Jewish Aged Home, the Jewish Orphanage, and the Society for the Welfare of the Jewish Deaf; sick visiting; participation with non-Jewish women’s organizations in raising funds for poor relief, care of the crippled, Red Cross, cancer research, and welfare work for non-Europeans; provision of comforts for patients in hospitals; and financial aid for social welfare institutions in Israel. ORT-OSE concentrated mainly on vocational guidance, giving grants to needy students to complete their training, and helping qualified persons to find employment. The Welfare Department of the Board of Deputies rendered a wide range of services, which included assistance in finding employment, assistance to handicapped persons, tracing of missing relatives, assistance with applications to government departments in respect to naturalization and related matters, and even personal guidance on domestic problems. The Board of Deputies also processed reparations claims for victims of Nazism now living in South Africa.

The vocational activities of the Union of South African ORT-OSE, while not very large, had a varied character. A placement service provided employment, mainly for persons between the ages of thirty and forty-five. About 100 persons were placed during 1956–57, the men in mechanical and technical trades, the women in hairdressing, nursing, millinery, and garment work. A vocational guidance service carried out a rather extensive program of aptitude testing. These services were particularly useful among adolescents, forming the basis for decisions on preparation for a profession or other occupation. Tests were given to some sixty youngsters, chiefly those about to leave school. Educational films and lectures on career guidance were given in the various Jewish schools. Manual training classes, with an enrollment of about 210 pupils, were regularly conducted in the three Jewish schools of Johannesburg. Applications were accepted for scholarships to trade schools and occasionally to universities, and grants for tools were made to apprentices. An agricultural training center (hachsharah), known as the Esrael Lazarus Farm, located at Oogies in the Transvaal, housed between fifteen and twenty youths. Most of its graduates went to Israel.

Youth Services

Plans for Jewish youth work received a setback when ideological differences blocked an invitation to American Hillel Director Rabbi Saul Kraft to undertake a mission among Jewish university students in South Africa. The invitation was to be extended by the Board of Deputies, as part of its project in the Jewish youth field. But Chief Rabbi Louis I. Rabinowitz objected to the fact that Rabbi Kraft was Conservative rather than Orthodox. The chief rabbi was supported by the South African Jewish Ministers’ Association. To avoid involving the proposed mission in a controversy that
would militate against its success, the Board of Deputies reluctantly agreed to drop the invitation. The decision caused considerable criticism in the community, the Union of Jewish Women in particular taking exception to the Orthodox attitude.

The various Zionist youth groups and congregational youth sections were active. Jewish youth camps were held during school vacations.

Cultural Activities

The Peoples' College program was stimulated by the visit to South Africa in October-December 1956 of the Anglo-Jewish writer Joseph Leftwich, who delivered a series of lectures under Peoples' Collge auspices in Johannesburg, and under the auspices of the Board of Deputies (which co-sponsored Peoples' College with the Zionist Federation) in other centers.

Johannesburg's seventieth Birthday Festival, celebrated from September to November 1956, also had the effect of providing much cultural stimulation, through the visit of world famous artists, including Yehudi Menuhin and Jascha Horenstein. The Board of Deputies organized an instructive exhibition of the part Jews had played in the upbuilding of Johannesburg.

A visiting exhibition of Israel art, sponsored by the Israel government, attracted wide interest throughout South Africa during the spring and summer of 1957.

The visit of London Jewish actor David Kossoff, presenting *The World of Sholom Aleichem* on the local stage, proved of significant cultural interest during January and March 1957, as did the staging by South Africans of *The Diary of Anne Frank* in the spring of 1957.


Personalia

Prominent South African Jews who died during 1956-57 included: former South African Zionist leader Lazar Braudo, who died in Israel (reported September 14, 1956); Rev. Abraham Levy, veteran Port Elizabeth spiritual leader (reported May 17, 1957); Solomon L. Sive, Rand Jewish pioneer and communal worker (reported July 17, 1956); Lieut.-Col. Israel Levinson, doyen of South African Jewish chaplains (reported December 21, 1956); Henry Bernstein (reported August 31, 1956); Morris Zwi, Johannesburg Jewish communal worker (reported August 3, 1956); and Simon Roy, prominent Cape Town industrialist (reported April 10, 1957).