Domestic Affairs

Moves were made in 1977 to lessen discriminatory practices, especially in such areas as sports and public entertainment, where integrated audiences and mixed participation were permitted by the authorities. The moves were welcomed, but the feeling was expressed, particularly in the South African press, that much more basic changes were needed. In general, the problems of the colored (mulatto), Asiatic (mainly Indian), and urban Black populations remained unresolved.

Suggestions were made by the ruling National Party that the country's constitution be revised and that the Westminster system of government be replaced by a form of government more in keeping with the contemporary exigencies of South African life. The proposals that were put forward, however, did not gain wide popularity.

The mounting international pressure directed against South Africa, the government's race policy, and the proposal for a new constitution, were the central issues in the general election (in which only whites participated) held at the end of November. The National Party, under the leadership of Balthazar John Vorster, was returned to Parliament with 134 seats, the largest majority in the country's history. The Progressive Federal Party, which gained 17 of the 30 seats of the combined opposition, became the official opposition party.

Other significant domestic events during the year were the formation of Inkatha, a Black political alliance under the leadership of Chief Gathsa Buthelezi, chief executive minister of the KwaZulu government; the emotional response to the trial of Afrikaans poet Breyten Breytenbach, who was acquitted of charges of planning to overthrow the government while serving a prison sentence imposed upon him a year earlier for other security offenses; the banning of some highly acclaimed Afrikaans literary works, most notably Magersfontein, O Magersfontein, a satire by Ettienne Le Roux; and the detention without trial of a number of persons including student leaders, Black spokesmen, and journalists.

During the cold and wet winter, a group of Blacks were evicted from a squatter camp at Modderdam in the Cape. The Cape Committee of the South African Jewish
Board of Deputies (SAJBD) and the Cape rabbinate joined the widespread protest against this action.

The economic situation remained troubled, and many large companies showed smaller profits. Bankruptcies caused widespread losses by the public, especially in the real estate area. It was noted, however, that despite South Africa's difficulties (for political and other reasons) in competing in overseas markets, the long range economic outlook was positive, because measures had been introduced to fight inflation and restore a more favorable balance of payments.

**Foreign Relations**

International criticism of South Africa mounted. At the same time, attention was increasingly drawn to the whole of southern Africa because of developments in Angola, Namibia, Rhodesia, and Mozambique, most especially the presence of Cuban troops in some of these countries. Some observers, including former United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, viewed developments in the African subcontinent as an extension of the East-West conflict.

There was widespread reaction abroad to the riots in the Black township of Soweto, and the subsequent rioting elsewhere. Outrage was expressed at the judicial finding that no one could be held responsible for the death of the young Black leader Steve Biko, while in detention. There was strong criticism of the detention without trial of a number of people, including Percy Qoboza, editor of the banned Black newspaper *The World*, and members of the so-called "Committee of Ten," a Soweto leadership group. Finally, protests were made against the banning of the editor of the *Eastern Province Herald*, Donald Woods, who subsequently fled the country.

International opprobrium isolated South Africa politically, economically, and culturally. Toward the end of 1977, the United Nations agreed to the imposition of a ban on the sale of arms to South Africa. Andrew Young, United States ambassador to the UN, and David Owen, British foreign secretary, emphasized demands by the international community for basic changes in the Republic, including a call for majority rule. The South African government, however, rejected these demands, and continued to put forward its own solution to the volatile race problem: the separate development in independent states of all Black ethnic groups in South Africa.

Namibia (South West Africa), previously administered by South Africa, was placed under the direct control of an administrator general, Justice Marthinus T. Steyn. Formulas were advanced for its independence by the end of 1978, including free elections in the territory. Disputes concerning the continued presence of South African troops in the area, and other matters, continued to prevent wide acceptance of plans advanced by the international community, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), and the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA). Both SWAPO and DTA claimed to represent the views of the Namibian majority.
Relations with Israel

The election of Menachem Begin as prime minister had no significant effect on relations between South Africa and Israel. Begin was reported to have said: "While we reject racism, we see no reason to shun a hand of friendship that has been reaching to us from a forest of hatred and violence."

The long-awaited visit of a minister of Israel to South Africa took place when Finance Minister Simha Ehrlich came to the Republic in February 1978. During the visit, details concerning trade, the opening of mutually beneficial investment opportunities, and other financial agreements were ratified by Ehrlich and South African Finance Minister Owen Horwood. It also became possible, for the first time, for South Africans to purchase Israel bonds. A double taxation agreement was entered into by the two countries.

Frequent cultural and scientific exchanges continued. Among these were the highly acclaimed visit to South Africa of the Bat Dor Ballet Company, and similar visits to Israel by South African performers; exchanges of art exhibitions; and the exchange of scientists involved in such areas as water conservation, industrial technology, and medicine.

Israel agreed to obey the UN arms embargo against South Africa. Commenting on this, Die Vaderland, a leading Afrikaans daily, stated: "Although Israel has to obey the UN sanctions embargo—something for which we cannot blame her—she will not allow herself to be prescribed to with regard to what her relationship to a friend should be."

In November, on the eve of the general elections, The Star, a Johannesburg newspaper, published the transcript of a conversation in which Minister of Justice J.T. Kruger was alleged to have said: "You cannot deny your own homeland. You cannot deny the fact that there are Jews outside Israel and Israel is still a homeland. They are sending money to Israel and then they run away from other places... The Minister later claimed that his remarks were quoted out of context. Reaction in Israel was sharp, since the remark was taken to imply that South African Jews send money to Israel and then leave at the first signs of difficulty in their own country. Davar, the Israeli daily, commented: "The statement of Minister Kruger cannot go unanswered. He has offended South African Jewry as well as the State of Israel... It is necessary to demand a full retraction from the government in Pretoria." South African Foreign Minister Roelof F. Botha sent a note of explanation to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, in which he completely disassociated the government from the "reported negative remarks" about the South African Jewish community.

Most South African newspapers, and particularly the Afrikaans press, showed understanding of Israel's problems, and devoted extensive space to reports of affairs in the Middle East. This was particularly so during the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem.
The ambassador of Israel, Itzhak Unna, enjoyed great popularity in South Africa, most especially because he learned to speak fluent Afrikaans. He put Israel's position on a number of issues before the public, and appeared on the national television service.

**Antisemitism**

Antisemitism was not prevalent in South Africa, and was particularly eschewed by the government and all official public bodies. However, small neo-Nazi and other extreme right-wing groups continued to propagate antisemitic views in cheap monthly broadsheets distributed at random or to subscribers. These groups were rabidly anti-Black and anti-Jewish. They earned the contempt of most people, and were roundly condemned as sowers of hatred by the general press, both English and Afrikaans. Newly established among these groups was a South African branch of the British National Front. There were reports as well of the existence of a branch of the Ku Klux Klan. Antisemitic material from abroad, including Arthur Butz's notorious *The Hoax of the 20th Century*, continued to be distributed on a small scale.

Other manifestations of anti-Zionism and antisemitism continued in three journals: *Die Afrikaner*, official organ of the ultra-right Herstigte Nasionale Party; *The SA Observer*, edited by S.E.D. Brown; and *Muslim News*, a paper which enjoyed a fair circulation among Moslems, mainly in the Cape Town area, and espoused the views of Arab propagandists.

During the election there were some attempts to drum up anti-Jewish sentiment in certain quarters. By and large, they were of little moment, except in the Cape, where two Jewish candidates were assaulted by unknown extremists.

For the first time, a Jew, Abe Hoppenstein, stood for election to Parliament as a National Party candidate. Attempts were made to introduce a Jewish element into the election. SAJBD issued a statement deploring these attempts, stressing that Jews participated in politics as individual citizens.

The credibility of pro-Nazi propaganda which sought to deny the Holocaust was greatly undermined by events surrounding the banning of Richard Harwood's *Did Six Million Really Die?* When attempts were made to appeal the banning, Arthur Suzman presented an affidavit to the Appeal Board completely refuting Harwood's calumnies. Suzman's evidence was widely reported, and served to discredit those who supported Harwood and other writers espousing similar views.

A book based on the whole matter and containing the substance of Suzman's affidavit was subsequently published by SAJBD. The first edition of this book, *Six Million Did Die—The Truth Shall Prevail*, by Arthur Suzman and Denis Diamond, was completely sold out. A second edition containing important additional material was prepared. The book enjoyed an especially favorable reception in West Germany,
JEWISH COMMUNITY

Communal Activities

The tensions in South Africa had their effects on the Jewish community, which numbered 118,000.

There was considerable speculation about increased emigration from South Africa. While no statistics singling out Jewish emigration were available, it could be assumed that Jewish emigration was at least proportional to the general trend, which showed a decided increase in the number of people leaving the country. Most such people were professionals. There has been a noticeable increase in South Africans taking up residence in Israel since 1976.

The emigration of members of the community, and a fairly difficult financial climate, had deleterious effects on communal funding. The United Communal Fund (UCF), which provided for the financial needs of local institutions, experienced increased difficulties in meeting its growing commitments, even though it showed every sign of increasing its overall income.

The two major fund-raising organizations were UCF and the Israel United Appeal (IUA). During 1977, IUA's men's campaign was launched by Haim Zadok, former Israel minister of justice, and Akiva Hoffman. UCF's women's campaign was launched by Chaim Potok, the American writer. The chairman of IUA was I.A. Maisels; Mendal Kaplan was chairman of UCF.

At its various public meetings, and in its two publications, *Jewish Affairs* (English) and *Buurman* (Afrikaans), the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) continued to stress the need for harmonious intergroup relations, help for the underprivileged, and the removal of all discrimination based on race, color, or creed. Contact with Black leaders in the political and cultural spheres was encouraged by SAJBD. The Board itself met with Chief Lennox Sebe of the Ciskei, Chief Cedric Pathudi of Baphuta Tswana, and Chief Gatsha Buthelezi of KwaZulu. Chief Sebe visited Israel and spoke very positively of his experiences there.

Representatives of SAJBD attended a number of conferences of Jewish organizations abroad, most notably meetings of the Material Claims Conference and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. A large delegation under the leadership of the Board's president, D.K. Mann, attended the meeting of the General Assembly of the World Jewish Congress in Washington in October. Mann delivered a paper on South African Jewry that was widely acclaimed.

With the extension of the period of compulsory military service from one to two years, SAJBD saw the need for a well-coordinated chaplaincy service. It broadened
the work it had undertaken for many years in this area by establishing a Joint National Jewish Chaplaincy Council under the chairmanship of Cecil Meltz. The chief chaplain was Rabbi L.D. Sandler; Hilton Kaplan was appointed administrative director. A regular magazine for servicemen, Daf LaChayal was produced by SAJBD. To meet the religious requirements of many Jewish servicemen, the army provided full kashrut facilities at a number of bases throughout the country. The Union of Jewish Women sent festival packages to men who were unable to spend holidays at home.

**Zionism**

The South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) was particularly active in the area of aliyah because of the growing interest in settlement in Israel. Through its well-organized network of Zionist associations and parties, especially the Women's Zionist Council, SAZF engaged in widespread educational programs, and conducted numerous tours to Israel. The work of various Zionist youth movements was supported. Close organizational contact was maintained with Israel through an active and well-organized committee and office of SAZF in Tel Aviv. The president of SAZF was Edel Horwitz; Julius Weinstein served as chairman.

**Religion**

As it became increasingly difficult to fill rabbinical posts in South Africa, particularly in small towns, a number of congregations began to employ Hebrew teachers in a rabbinical capacity. Four new Orthodox synagogues were established in the Linksfield, Victory Park, Randburg, and Edenvale areas around Johannesburg. These areas had gained in Jewish population as a result of shifts away from older areas such as Berea and Yeoville.

The Lubavitch movement showed signs of growth, and exerted influence among certain groups of university students and young people. No appointment was made to replace Rabbi Arthur S. Super as chief minister of the United Progressive Jewish Congregation, after his departure for Israel. The Progressive movement was represented on the South African Jewish Board of Deputies by Rabbi Walter Blumenthal and on the South African Zionist Federation by Rabbi Ben Isaacson. Rabbi Bernard M. Casper was chief rabbi of the Federation of Synagogues of South Africa (Orthodox); Rabbi Eugene J. Duschinsky was the Av Beth Din (Cape Town).

**Jewish Education**

The community was well served by ten day schools located in all the major cities. These schools were financed totally by the community, and were the major beneficiaries of the United Communal Fund. Their teaching syllabi were designed by the
South African Board of Jewish Education (SABJE), whose educational outlook was Zionist and Orthodox. Rabbi Isaac Goss served as director. The day schools served some 45 per cent of all Jewish children in Johannesburg, and about 65 per cent in the Cape area. In Durban and Port Elizabeth the proportion was estimated to be even higher. In addition to the day schools there were a number of afternoon schools. The Avida/Zlotnick Seminary, under the direction of Rabbi Moshe Kurts-tag, trained Hebrew teachers and rabbis.

**Jewish Culture**

Two significant books that appeared were *The Celibacy of Felix Greenspan* by Lionel Abrahams and *B’ikvei HaParshayot* by Rabbi Eugene J. Duschinsky.

A major amount of SAJBD's work was in the cultural sphere, with the result that SAJBD was recognized as one of the most important sponsors of cultural events in Johannesburg. In October, it organized the first Johannesburg Film Festival, at which many internationally acclaimed films made their South African debuts. Notable among these was *Hester Street*, which went on to enjoy considerable popular success on the commercial circuit. Proceeds from the festival were donated to the Urban Foundation, an organization dedicated to the improvement of the quality of life within urban Black areas.

At its museum, SAJBD held a number of exhibitions, most notably one entitled "Shtetl Life," centering around a collection of eight oil paintings by Raphael Mandelzweig. They were donated to the museum by the well-known local Judaica collectors Abel and Sarah Shaban. Other valuable acquisitions were two important bronzes by the South African sculptors Moses Kottler and Herman Wald. SAJBD was establishing a collection of contemporary works of art by South African Jewish artists.

**Personalia**

The University of the Witwatersrand awarded honorary doctorates to Emmanuel P. Bradlow, Israel A. Maisels, and Ellen Hellman. Leslie Frankel was appointed a director of the United Mizrachi Bank, Ltd. (Israel); Ted Mauerberger was elected mayor of Cape Town; Professor M.F. Kaplan was appointed to the advisory committee of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research; Harry Hurwitz was appointed adviser to the Israel prime minister. A number of Jews were appointed judges: Henry J. Preiss, David Friedman, Namie Philips, and Richard Goldstone.

People appointed to important communal offices included: Rachiel Rapaport, president, Women's Zionist Council; Aubrey Zabow, chairman, Cape Committee of SAJBD; David Drutman, administrative director, Federation of Synagogues of South Africa; Selwyn Franklin, rabbi, Durban United Hebrew Congregation; Steven Rein, national chairman, South African Jewish Ex-Service League; Franz
Auerbach, chairman, South African National Yad Vashem; Rose Norwich, president, and Anna Morris, executive director, Union of Jewish Women; Mike Belling, organizing secretary, Western Province Zionist Council; and Bernard Lazarus, president, Council of Natal Jewry.

Among prominent Jews who died during the year were: Dr. Harry Abt, distinguished figure in religious, cultural, and educational life, in April; Geoff Josman, general secretary, Eastern Cape Zionist Council, in April; Mrs. Len Davis, broadcaster and journalist, in May; Arnold Golembo, chairman, South African Revisionist Organization, and honorary officer of SAZF, in August; and Sam Cohen, philanthropist and pioneer of South West Africa, in October.

DENIS DIAMOND