Disclosures in 1978 about the abuse of funds in the South African Department of Information led to the greatest political scandal in the country's history. The department was abolished and its secretary, Dr. Eschel Rhoodie, was retired prematurely. After a judicial investigation, recommendations were made that criminal charges be brought against Rhoodie and others. Two commissions, led by judges Anton Mostert and Rudolf Erasmus, revealed, among other things, that state funds had been used to finance *The Citizen*, a party political newspaper. The scandal led to the resignation of Dr. Connie Mulder, the cabinet minister responsible for the department who had run a close second to Pieter W. Botha in the election to succeed Balthazar John Vorster as prime minister. Vorster had been elected state president when Dr. Nicolaas Diederichs died in August.

Another major issue confronting the country was the resolution of the question concerning the independence of South West Africa. Lengthy negotiations with Britain, the United States, Canada, France, and West Germany led to a formula by which the former German territory, mandated to South Africa by the League of Nations, would gain its independence. Problems arose, however, in implementing the agreement. At year's end the territory remained under the leadership of Marthinus T. Steyn, administrator-general appointed by South Africa. An election was held in the territory, but this was recognized only by South Africa. A second election, approved by the United Nations, was scheduled for 1979.

The guerilla war on the border between South West Africa and Angola continued as the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), under the leadership of Sam Nujoma, sought to assume control over the area. In February the country was horrified by the assassination of Toiva Shiyagaya, minister of health and welfare of Ovambo, by a SWAPO member, while he was addressing a political meeting at Okahau. In March Chief Clemens Kapuuo, veteran Herero leader and president of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, was killed by an assassin outside his store in Katutura township near Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia. Dr. Robert Sobukwe, leader of the Pan Africanist Congress, who had long been detained in prison for his political activities, died in February 1978. At his funeral several Black
leaders, including Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, chief minister of KwaZulu, were forcibly expelled by the mourners.

In April diplomatic relations between South Africa and Transkei, the first independent Black homeland, were severed by the Transkei prime minister, Paramount Chief Kaizer Matanzima, as a result of his dissatisfaction at the incorporation of the territory of East Griqualand into the South African province of Natal.

In June the National party celebrated the 30th year of its accession to power.

The country's economic situation was not markedly improved by the measures adopted to contain inflation and restore a more favorable balance of payments. However, as the world's major producer of gold, South Africa benefited from its price rise to over $200 an ounce.

Relations with Israel

The various agreements entered into between Israel and South Africa during the February visit to South Africa of Israel Finance Minister Simcha Ehrlich were widely thought to herald a drive by Israel to increase trade with South Africa. It was also rumored that Israel sought to serve as a bridgehead for South Africa in the export of industrial goods to both the EEC and the United States. Ehrlich, however, denied this, stressing that an increase in raw materials imported from South Africa was intended exclusively for use in Israeli industry. Ehrlich stated that he expected R40-million worth of trade to result from his visit. Other matters discussed included Israeli fishing rights in South African waters, the improvement of air services between the two countries, and the establishment and expansion of joint industrial ventures.

During 1978 South Africa's exports to Israel increased by 50 per cent, from R29.3 million to R43.7 million. During the same period, South African exports to Israel increased from R13.39 million to R21.57 million. South African exports consisted mainly of steel, while Israel's exports were largely phosphates and other chemicals. A new dimension was added to Israel-South Africa trade relations by the signing in January 1979 of a contract whereby South Africa agreed to export substantial amounts of steam coal to Israel.

In March a dispute arose between El Al Israel Airlines and South African Airways during which El Al stated that unless agreement was reached about new services which it required between the two countries, it would withdraw its services altogether. There were no political connotations to the dispute. A compromise was subsequently reached, resulting in the start of the first South African Airways flights to Israel.

Public and official reaction to the celebration of Israel's 30th anniversary was widespread and congratulatory. Most newspapers featured articles on the occasion, and a number included special supplements devoted to Israel. When Golda Meir died in December 1978, many thousands of messages of sympathy were received by the Israel embassy and Jewish organizations.
In January 1979, Yitzhak Ofek, chairman of the Israel Olympic Committee, announced a decision to sever all links between his committee and South Africa, a decision which did not find favor with either the Israel Foreign Ministry or the Jews of South Africa. At a plenary session of the committee the decision was reversed.

In June 1978 the Israel ambassador, Itzhak Unna, refused an invitation to be guest of honor at the premiere of the play *Golda* in Pretoria’s Breytenbach Theater, because the theater was closed to Blacks. He later attended the play at a Johannesburg theater which was open to all races. Unna’s example was followed by many other envoys, and his attitude was enthusiastically endorsed by a very broad section of the public and the press, both English and Afrikaans. Appeals to the authorities to open the theater to all races were organized on a large scale, but to no avail. However, a campaign to boycott the theater did have a marked effect. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) unequivocally endorsed the ambassador’s stand in accordance with its resolve to do everything possible to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on race, creed, or color. It was highly significant that the overwhelming support which Unna received was forthcoming against a background of stern official reaction to what was described by certain government ministers as improper interference by a foreign diplomat.

**Antisemitism**

Attempts by various racist groups to organize themselves into movements were of some concern. Two groups in particular, the Afrikanerweerstandsbeweging (AWB—Afrikaner Resistance Movement) and the National Front (NF) gained much publicity. NF, made up mainly of disgruntled British immigrants, began distributing anti-Zionist and racist literature in an area of Johannesburg largely populated by Jews. SAJBD issued frequent warnings that this material was provocative to the Jewish community. In January 1979 NF held a public rally which was picketed by some 500 young Jews who prevented the meeting from starting. Shortly thereafter, NF disintegrated when its leaders fled the country one by one. The first to leave was NF founder Jack Noble, who averred that he was returning to Britain to contest a seat in the British general elections as an NF candidate. Some NF members who had been charged with fraud and theft fled the country while charges against them were pending.

*Die Afrikaner*, official organ of the ultra-right Herstigte Nationale party (HNP), continued to play on the theme of an international Jewish conspiracy and to propagate calumnies about the Holocaust, denying that it ever took place. It conducted a vituperative campaign against SAJBD for its stand against racial discrimination and intolerance, and accused it of having organized the demonstration against NF, and of preventing John Tyndall, chairman of the British NF, from visiting South Africa.

An organization calling itself “Boerenasie” launched an appeal for membership, announcing its intention to take power and expel all Jews from South Africa. Its
publications Sonop/Sunup and Facts/Feite were banned, and the state initiated legal proceedings against its leaders. S.E.D. Brown, in his publication the SA Observer, continued to promulgate virulently anti-Jewish views, with particular emphasis on the Holocaust and Israel. A number of editions were banned.

Holocaust, the television film, was not shown on the national television service of the S.A. Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), but was exhibited privately and received wide and generally favorable reviews. Embittered attacks on the film were made in the extremist press. SABC continued to deny Jewish clergymen the opportunity of conducting either the daily Bible reading or Epilogue on TV, notwithstanding requests in this regard, and numerous press articles about the matter. The head of SABC English religious broadcasts, Bill Chalmers, continued to hold his post despite many protests over his advocacy of the theory of an evil international conspiracy involving Jews and others. While accepting the fact that SABC ascribed to Christian national principles, misgivings were expressed in Jewish circles about the attitudes of SABC toward the South African Jewish community.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Communal Activities

The major event of the year was the 30th national congress of SAJBD, in May, which coincided with the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the organization. The keynote address at the congress was delivered by Philip Klutznick; also participating was Sidney Vincent, director of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, Ohio. The congress dealt with the major issues confronting the community, in particular with the problem of maintaining Jewish identity in a community having little trained manpower and suffering severe financial difficulties. Vincent had been invited to study the structure of the community and to recommend changes which would make for more effective use of human and material resources. Vincent's report, which was presented after the congress, was far-reaching in its suggestions, and led to a detailed memorandum on the subject by SAJBD executive director Denis Diamond. An ongoing commission was appointed to implement Vincent's suggestions and monitor progress.

Another area of concern that received a great deal of attention at the congress was the question of participation by the Jewish community in attempts to improve intergroup relations in South Africa. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and Professor Piet Cillie, a leading Afrikaner thinker, were invited to contribute major papers before the congress on the subject. A publication, Towards a Responsible Community, containing the major addresses delivered over a period of some 20 years by Arthur Suzman, Q.C., chairman of the Public Relations Committee of SAJBD, was issued to coincide with his retirement from that position. Suzman's valedictory address, in its unequivocal condemnation of racial prejudice and call for the defense of
freedom of thought and conscience, well reflected the attitude of the delegates, who overwhelmingly passed a resolution that was widely publicized locally and abroad, and which had far-reaching implications for SAJBD policies. It read:

Congress urges all Jewish organizations and all individual members of our community to associate themselves with, and actively support, by peaceful and legitimate means, the elimination of unjust discrimination based on race, creed or color. Congress commends the Executive Council for the steps taken to promote harmony and understanding between all sections of the community and urges the Executive to intensify its efforts to extend knowledge of the Jewish people, their history and culture amongst all fellow-citizens.

At a banquet to celebrate the Board's 75th anniversary attended by the late Dr. Nicolaas Diederichs, the state president, the matter of intergroup relations again received attention in an address by SAJBD president D.K. Mann. He called on individual Jews to lend exemplary support to efforts being undertaken to alleviate the tensions and problems of a racially divided society.

David K. Mann and Dr. Israel Abramowitz were re-elected as president and chairman of SAJBD, respectively. Denis Diamond, SAJBD executive director, announced his intention to retire from office prior to his emigration to Israel.

Dr. Arthur Hertzberg of the United States launched the United Communal Fund (UCF) campaign in February 1978. UCF, under the chairmanship of Mendel Kaplan, sought to meet the needs of South African Jewish institutions that were being adversely effected by increased emigration and a deteriorating financial climate.

Zionism

Aliyah was the central theme of the 35th South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) conference held in September, which was launched by Dr. Abraham Avi-Hai, chairman of Keren Hayesod. It was once again decided not to hold Zionist elections, but to retain the present key by which the various parties were allocated representation on the SAZF Executive Council. Itz Kalmanowitz and Julius Weinstein were elected chairman and president of SAZF, respectively. Leib Frank, for many years chief executive of the SAZF Israel office in Tel Aviv, retired at the end of 1978 and was succeeded by It Stein.

Considerable public interest was shown in remarks made at the conference by Ambassador Unna of Israel. He stated that the frequent claim that Israel and South Africa were in the same boat was not true. South Africa was under attack because its “internal political, economic and social structure contained built-in elements of discrimination against the non-white population groups,” whereas Israel was under attack simply because it existed. Despite Israel's deep objection to South African race policies, Unna added, it steadfastly refused to indulge in blanket condemnation of South Africa. Thus, there were positive and mutually beneficial relations between the two countries.
In March 1978 the Women’s biennial Zionist campaign was launched by Mk. Moshe Shamir and Judge Hadassa Ben Itto.

**Religion**

Rabbi Zalman Posner of the United States was the main speaker at the conference of the South African Federation of Synagogues (SAFOS). The conference heard Dr. Allie Dubb discuss the demographic survey of the South African Jewish community which he had conducted on behalf of SAJBD; the results were being published by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Ivan H. Sackheim was elected chairman of SAFOS.

**Education**

Dr. Eliezer Shmueli, director-general of the Israel Ministry of Education, was the main speaker at the 18th national conference of the South African Board of Jewish Education (SABJE). Isaac Joffee was elected chairman in succession to Ivan Greenstein. The conference focused its attention on the problem of maintaining the high standards of the ten Jewish day schools in the major cities in the face of higher costs and the likelihood of restricted income from UCF.

**Jewish Culture**

SAJBD arranged a function to launch *A Cloud and a Way*, a volume of Yiddish poetry by David Wolpe, 250 copies of which were purchased by the South African Jewish Trust (SAJT) for distribution to Jewish libraries throughout the world. The internationally renowned Yiddish poet David Fram was honored at a function organized by SAJBD, SAJT, and the South African Yiddish Cultural Federation (SAYCF) to celebrate his 75th birthday.

Significant books written by Jews included *The Early Cape Muslims*, by Dr. Frank Bradlow and Margaret Cairns; *Sarah Gertrude Millin, a South African Life*, by Martin Rubin; and *Oorwintering in die Vreemde*, a collection of Afrikaans poetry by Olga Kirsch, who has lived in Israel since 1948.

Lionel Abrahams was one of the winners of the prestigious Pringle Award for creative writing published in South Africa.

An exhibition of paintings on the theme of the Holocaust by Frank Startz was well received. The artist presented one of his works to SAJBD. Graphic works were commissioned by SAJBD and UCF from Aileen Lipkin, who held a prestigious exhibition at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Professor Lippy Lipshitz, sculptor and former head of the University of Cape Town Michaelis Art School, received the Association of Arts Medal prior to his *aliyah* to Israel, in recognition of his services to art in South Africa.
Collections of memorabilia were acquired from various persons for inclusion in the Harry and Friedel Abt Museum of SAJBD. One such collection was the papers of Sallie Kussel, reflecting a lifetime of service to South African Jewry, and most particularly to the Union of Jewish Women. A collection of valuable stamps and messages of remembrance from Israeli leaders to the parents of the late Alex Buchen, who fell in the Israel War of Independence, was presented to SAJBD by Alex's uncle, Leo Buchen.

Visitors from abroad who delivered lectures included: Dr. Beryl Frymer of the United States; Professor Michael Davies of Hebrew University; Dr. Eliezer Oren of Ben Gurion University; Rabbi Louis I. Rabinowitz, former Johannesburg Chief Rabbi, now of Jerusalem; Eliyahu Honig of Hebrew University; Chaim Bermant of London; and Max I. Dimont of the United States.

To much public acclaim, SAJBD organized the second Johannesburg Film Festival. Together with the French embassy, SAJBD sponsored a French Film Festival. Both festivals included a number of films of Jewish interest.

Much valuable ongoing cultural and educational work throughout the country was done by the Union of Jewish Women, the Women's Zionist Council, SAZF, SAYCF, and SAJBD.

**Personalia**

Justice C.S. Margo and Wolf Isaacs were appointed honorary colonels of the 24th and 2nd squadrons of the South African Air Force, respectively. David Friedman, S.C. was appointed a judge. Hans Adler was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of the Witwatersrand.

Helen Suzman, for many years the only representative in Parliament of the opposition Progressive party and champion of Black rights, was awarded the United Nations Award for Human Rights.

Dr. Leah Bronner was appointed associate professor of Hebrew studies, and Dr. Max B. Feldman, professor of psychological medicine, at the University of the Witwatersrand. Sandra Fredman was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship. Dr. Solly Morris, ex-city engineer of Cape Town, received a gold medal from the Institute of Municipal Engineers of Great Britain in recognition of his contribution to South Africa's advanced urban transport system. David Lazarus was elected mayor of East London for the 20th successive year. Ted Mauerberger and Louis Kreiner were re-elected mayor and deputy mayor of Cape Town, respectively. Neville Cohen was reappointed mayor of Port Elizabeth. Reeva Forman was elected as the first woman president of the Johannesburg chapter of Jaycees. Gerald Leissner was named Jaycees International "senator of the year" from among 26,000 candidates. Ellen Colley received the UJW "woman of the year" award.

People appointed to important Jewish offices included: L.D. Sandler, rabbi, Randburg Hebrew Congregation; Mervyn Danker, principal, Theodor Herzl School, Port Elizabeth; Harry Hurwitz, adviser on external information to the prime minister of
Israel; Inez Jacobson, chairman, Transvaal Jewish Welfare Council; Meish Zimmerman, deputy director, SABJE; Jack Rubenchick, governor, Haifa University; Dr. Herman Davidson, chairman, Natal Zionist Council; Harold Levy, S.C., chairman, SAJBD Cape Committee, upon the aliyah of Dr. Aubrey Zabow; and Josh Goldberg, community director, Council of Natal Jewry.

Among prominent Jews who died during the year were: Alf Blumberg, president, S.A. Maccabi, in February; Norman Lourie, founder, Balfour Park Sports Club and S.A. Habonim, in March; Leon Gluckman, actor-producer, in March; Jack Rubik, editor of Barkai, in April; Israel Pinshaw, secretary, SAJBD Cape Council, in May; Rae Greenblatt, secretary, Women’s Zionist Council, in May; Taiby Segal, prolific Yiddish writer, in May; Dave Epstein, member, Transvaal Provincial Council, in May; Esther Plen, community worker, in June; Esther Lipworth, devoted Zionist, in June; and Sophie Bellville Stern, who died a few months short of her 107th birthday, in August.

DENIS DIAMOND