

# South Africa

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## *Domestic Affairs*

**I**N MARCH 1980 huge tax benefits totalling R1.5 billion were announced by Owen Horwood, minister of finance. This reflected the government's intention of channeling the benefits of the soaring price of gold to the private sector. However, to the disappointment of pensioners and the under-privileged, the price of basic commodities rose.

The 1980 census showed that the population had increased by five million (27 per cent) since 1970. There were now 23,771,970 people in the country: 15,970,019 blacks; 4,453,273 whites; 2,554,039 coloreds (mulattos); and 794,639 Asians. The white growth rate, at 1.7 per cent per annum, was the lowest, while the black growth rate, at 2.5 per cent, was the highest. For coloreds and Asians the respective figures were 2.2 and 2.4 per cent.

Prime Minister Pieter Botha's 12 point national policy plan was the subject of debate for most of the year. His proposals called for the acceptance of a multinational society in which the rights of all groups would be recognized in accordance with the principles of "vertical differentiation" and the acceptance of self-determination in as many areas as possible. Thus, schools would remain separated and the various races would still live apart, but all other "unnecessary discriminatory measures" would be scrapped. There would be a sharing of power between whites, Indians, and coloreds through consultation and joint responsibility in matters of common interest. Stressing the economic interdependence of southern African nations, Botha called upon them to form a "constellation," with "mutual respect for each other's points of view." While the prime minister's plan provoked criticism on many points, both from the left and more fiercely from the extreme right, a wide spectrum of whites accepted it as the enunciation of a bold new initiative intended to come to terms with the country's major problems.

Toward the end of the year, Minister of Cooperation and Development Piet Koornhof announced that wide-ranging legislation would be enacted to "remove unnecessary irritating measures and hurtful discrimination." Among the steps contemplated were a relaxation of the laws regulating the influx of blacks into various urban areas, the granting of more control over their own affairs to urban blacks in the townships adjacent to the major cities, and the introduction of compulsory education for black children in certain areas.

Soon after Botha announced his national policy plan, the first interim report of the Schlegel-Daube commission on the constitution was presented to Parliament. Its recommendations, which were adopted in the latter half of the year, included abolition of the Senate; an increase in the membership of the House of Assembly; and the creation of the State President's Council, consisting of 60 members representing the white, colored, Indian, and Asian communities. A plan for a Council of Black South African Citizens was dropped after it met with opposition from black leaders. A major cabinet reshuffle took place at the time that the new constitution came into effect; General Magnus Malan, former chief of the defense forces, became minister of defense, and Gerrit Viljoen, previously administrator-general of Namibia-South West Africa, became minister of education.

Eleven terrorists, using AK-47 rifles and Soviet-made rocket launchers, attacked the Booyens police station in Johannesburg's southern suburbs, but caused no injuries. Saboteurs attacked the Sasol I and Natref refineries at Sasolburg, causing an estimated R6 million worth of damage; a similar attack on the Sasol II plant was averted. The home of Professor Jan Lombaard of Pretoria University was bombed. Lombaard had proposed solutions to the race problem, particularly regarding the province of Natal and Zululand, which much differed from separate development. Two youths were killed when colored children, who were conducting an extended school boycott, clashed with police at Elsies River in the Cape.

The protracted scandal and subsequent court case involving Eschel Rhoodie, former secretary of the department of information, drew to a close when Rhoodie's appeal to the supreme court was upheld and his six-year sentence was set aside. A new scandal involving a R28 million secret Swiss bank account allegedly held by the former state president, the late N. Diederichs, caused a stir.

### *Foreign Relations*

Much significance was attached to the call by Samora Machel, president of Mozambique, that South African entrepreneurs return to his country with investments, and his expressed intention of reverting certain enterprises to private ownership in an attempt to reverse the serious economic difficulties which his nation faced. This, together with statements by Robert Mugabe, prime minister of Zimbabwe, about the limited application of Marxist economic policies in his country, was seen as reflecting a growing awareness on the part of South Africa's immediate neighbors of the need for inter-state economic links and the failure of Marxist systems in the region. While somewhat similar sentiments were expressed by the Angolan government, this did not result in any de-escalation of tension along the Namibia-Angola border. Military activity in the region was intense and included a major raid by South African troops into central Angola, during which the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) headquarters was destroyed. A United Nations special delegation on Namibia visited the area in October but was unable to resolve the issue of the territory's independence.

In line with his stated objective of forging positive ties with countries in the area, Prime Minister Botha met with the leaders of the independent homelands of Venda, Bophuthatswana, and Transkei, and the kingdom of Lesotho. Botha also visited Taiwan, thus reciprocating the visit of Premier Sun Yung-Suan to South Africa.

### *Relations with Israel*

While South Africa and Israel were developing strong economic ties and were eager participants in cultural and scientific exchanges, they emphatically denied that they were cooperating in the development of nuclear weapons. Rumors to the effect that South Africa and Israel had jointly tested a nuclear device were rife in the international press and were given added publicity by a British television program purporting to "prove" such joint endeavors.

Economic links between South Africa and Israel were given an added boost when Simcha Ehrlich, Israel's finance minister, visited South Africa, and his South African counterpart, Owen Horwood, visited Israel. South Africa agreed in principle to an Israeli request for \$200 million in easy credit to buy such items as meat, tobacco, asbestos, hides, food, and paper over a three-year period. South Africa also agreed to sell Israel coal on easy credit beginning in 1983. Other matters agreed upon included the sale of Israel government bonds up to a limit of R20 million, and the renewal of most of the 1978 economic agreements, which were due to expire in June 1982, for an additional three years. Israel was seeking to expand her fishing rights off the South African coast and to establish a South African-supported research and development fund for agriculture, science, and medicine.

Among the many cultural and scientific visits and exchanges which took place during the year were the following: a group of South African wine growers toured Israel; a fact-finding mission of South African school principals examined open-air education and emergency preparedness programs in Israel; six prominent South African medical specialists, including Christiaan Barnard, met with colleagues in Israel; the Witwatersrand Youth Choir and the Windhoek Youth Choir toured Israel; Ethel Sachar, mayor of Cape Town, represented South Africa at the Floris 80 flower show in Haifa; Lucas Mangope, president of Bophuthatswana, lectured at Bar Ilan University; Barry Mendelow, a South African hematologist, conducted research at the Weizmann Institute; some 150 leaders of the Israel diamond industry attended the meetings of the World Federation of Diamond Bourses and the World Federation of Diamond Manufacturers' Associations in South Africa; 15 Israeli scientists participated in the first international conference on operations research held in South Africa; Israeli conductor Dan Vogel led the orchestra of the Orange Free State Performing Arts Council; and Professor Raanan Weitz of Bar Ilan University served as Norman Hanson visiting fellow of the National Building Research Institute.

### *Antisemitism*

The level and general pattern of antisemitic activity was much the same as in recent years. Antisemitic articles appeared in *Die Afrikaner*, official organ of the Herstigte Nasionale party (HNP). The *South African Observer*, edited by S.E.D. Brown, continued to publish articles denying that the Holocaust had taken place, and attacking Israel and Zionism. The *Muslim News*, reflecting the views of extremist Muslim elements mainly in the Cape Town area, also maintained its strong anti-Zionist and anti-Israel line. Ultra-right-wing militancy led to the arrest of a number of persons belonging to the Wit Kommando terrorist organization, and the detention of Alan Fotheringham, former leader of the defunct South African National Front. Sporadic daubings of antisemitic slogans and Nazi symbols on various Jewish and public buildings were widely condemned by the press and the authorities.

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) expressed outrage at a report that a group of students at the University of Pretoria had staged a party in honor of Hitler, replete with Nazi regalia and symbols. A full and unequivocal apology was forthcoming from the university authorities and the students, the latter claiming that they had acted in insensitive ignorance while intending nothing more than a lighthearted diversion. The incident was universally attacked by the media as a gross display of callous behavior, and the Jewish reaction was widely supported.

Remarks about Jews made to an American journalist by Danie Craven, leading sports figure and president of the South African Rugby Board, stirred anger in the Jewish community. Craven denied that the remarks reflected an antisemitic intent on his part.

Arthur Suzman's *The Holocaust—The Falsehoods and the Facts* was published by SAJBD. It was based on Suzman's previous book *Six Million Did Die*, written in conjunction with Denis Diamond.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

### *Communal Activities*

The relatively high rate of emigration among white South Africans, which had seriously affected the Jewish community, seemed to have abated. Indeed, it appeared that a not inconsiderable number of people who had emigrated during the previous few years were returning to South Africa. A large number of Israelis continued to arrive in the country; the size of the expatriate Israeli community was variously estimated at between 15 and 25 thousand. A number of Rhodesian Jews arrived in South Africa both before and immediately after Zimbabwe independence was declared.

SAJBD held its 31st congress in May. Morris J. Amitay, executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and Moshe Davis, of the Hebrew University, were the main speakers.

SAJBD once again passed a resolution dealing with race relations. The dramatic phrasing of the resolution caused widespread comment throughout the country and gave rise to editorials in all major English and Afrikaans newspapers. While SAJBD spokesmen characterized it as not all that different from many other resolutions passed in recent years, it was widely seen as indicating a major shift in SAJBD policy. Former SAJBD president David K. Mann stated that "the change in language reflects the increasing urgency of the situation." President Arthur Suzman, defending SAJBD against charges that it was meddling in politics, noted that the future of the Jewish community ultimately depended on "the maintenance of harmonious race relations in a multi-racial society. To confine our attention exclusively to specific Jewish problems is to lose sight of the far wider issues in which, whether we like it or not, we are immediately and intimately involved." The full text of the resolution was as follows:

While welcoming recent reforms, congress believes that unless more meaningful and more significant changes in our social, economic, and political structure are initiated, the ever-mounting external and internal pressures may well erupt in violence and bloodshed. Congress accordingly urges all concerned, in particular all members of our own community, to co-operate in securing the immediate amelioration and ultimate removal of all unjust discrimination based on race, creed, or color. Only in this way can we hope to stem the widening gulf and dangerous polarization between our different population groups and establish that common bond of trust and loyalty essential for a peaceful, united, and just society.

A clear indication of SAJBD's concern about matters of social moment in South Africa was the appearance on the congress platform of Lucy Mvubelo, eminent black trade union leader, and Professor Hennie Coetzee, leading Afrikaner intellectual.

Close links were maintained with Jewish communities abroad through SAJBD's participation in the work of such organizations as the World Jewish Congress, the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, and the Material Claims Conference.

A major achievement by SAJBD was the agreement which it elicited from the representatives of the two major religious groupings, the Orthodox and the Reform, to consult on issues which might disrupt communal harmony.

The United Communal Fund (UCF) campaign was launched by Leonard Fein of the United States in February.

### *Zionism*

At the end of August the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) held its 36th biennial conference, which was attended by dignitaries from South Africa and abroad, the latter including Meron Medzini, director of development and training of the Keren Hayesod, Professor Gidon Shimoni of the Hebrew University, and Joseph Harmelin, Israel's ambassador to South Africa. A number of resolutions were passed at the conference expressing the solidarity of South African Jewry with Israel. As usual, the *aliyah* issue formed a central part of the proceedings, with calls

being made upon the Zionist leadership to set an example in this area. Other matters discussed at the conference included the ideological foundations of Zionism, fund-raising activities, manpower training, and cultural and educational endeavors.

Immediately after the conference, Meron Medzini assisted the Israel United Appeal (IUA) in its pre-campaign activities. Other IUA emissaries included David de Rothschild of France and Tibor Jonas and Leo Marcus of Israel. The women's Zionist campaign of IUA was launched by Israeli author Yael Sion-Dayan. Her visit was followed by that of Michal Modai.

A large contingent of South African Women's Zionist Council members, under the leadership of President Rachiel Rappoport, attended the WIZO conference in Israel in November.

Habonim, the Zionist youth movement, marked its 50th anniversary in March with celebrations at which the guest of honor was General Chaim Bar Lev of Israel. Stephen Pincus, chairman of the 5,000-member movement, appeared on South African television. The event was also marked in Israel, where the *Jerusalem Post* published a special supplement, and at celebrations held at Kibbutz Tzorah where a large number of Habonim members had settled upon making *aliyah*.

### *Jewish Education*

Continuing to flourish despite increased financial burdens, the wide network of Jewish day schools remained the central concern of the community in all its local fund-raising endeavors. Two new schools were opened during the year, the Lubavitch Chabad School and the Leila Bronner Girls High School, both in Johannesburg. Emanuel Rackman, president of Bar Ilan University, and Leila Bronner, a professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, were guests of honor at the opening ceremony of the high school for girls.

Rabbi Isaac Goss retired as director of the South African Board of Jewish Education (SABJE) and was succeeded by Shlomo Mayer. Mayer delivered the keynote address at the annual conference of the Association of Headmasters of Jewish Day Schools, which included a tribute to Rabbi Goss for his years of service in establishing and guiding the day school movement in South Africa. SABJE was awarded the Shazar Prize for outstanding Jewish education under Rabbi Goss' leadership.

The Herzlia School in Cape Town celebrated its 40th anniversary.

The Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Center of Jewish Studies and Research of the University of Cape Town was officially opened by former Israeli president Ephraim Katzir in August. The opening also included a colloquium in which the participants were Professor George L. Mosse, first incumbent of the Chair of Jewish Studies at the university, and Professor Gabriel Cohen of Tel Aviv University.

## *Jewish Culture*

Ongoing programs of cultural interest were organized by SAJBD, SAZF, the Women's Zionist Council, the Union of Jewish Women, the Hebrew Order of David, B'nai B'rith, the South African Union of Jewish Students, and various societies of friends of Israeli universities.

Visitors from abroad included General Aharon Yariv (Friends of Tel Aviv University); General Mordechai Gur (Ben Gurion University); Yaacov Tavin, head of the Jewish Agency's department of education and culture in the Diaspora (SABJE); Daniel Thursz, executive vice president of B'nai B'rith International; Rabbi Alexander Schindler (South Africa Foundation); Professor Itche Goldberg (South Africa Yiddish Cultural Federation and SAJBD); Malcolm Hoenlein (South Africa Foundation); Chaim Herzog (ORT centenary celebrations); Rabbi Solomon Gaon (opening the first Sephardi synagogue in Cape Town); and Ilan Rogoff (Johannesburg Music Society).

A highly acclaimed book was *Jews and Zionists: The South African Experience* by Gidon Shimoni. Other books of note by Jewish South Africans included *Beyond Dachau* by Levi Shalit; *Another Year in Africa* by Rose Zwi; and *The Philo-Semitic Aspect* by Solomon Rappaport. Nadine Gordimer won two prestigious literary awards, the CNA Literary Award for her novel *Burger's Daughter* and the Neil Gunn International Fellowship of the Scottish Arts Council. The Annisfield-Wolf race relations award was given to *The Bushmen*, edited by Phillip V. Tobias.

Three major international conferences on Semitic, Judaic, and Biblical studies were held in Johannesburg at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The Harry and Friedel Abt Museum of SAJBD continued to mount programs of cultural and artistic interest, including an exhibition of the works of Johannesburg Jewish artists which received much favorable comment. The United Hebrew Congregation of Johannesburg and SAJBD mounted an exhibit portraying aspects of South African Jewish life. There was also an exhibit devoted to the Great Synagogue in Cape Town, which celebrated its 75-year anniversary. A Jewish art and music festival, organized by the Council of Natal Jewry, took place as part of the Durban Arts 80 celebration.

## *Personalia*

New SAJBD officers included Arthur Suzman, president; Israel Abramowitz, chairman; and Aleck Goldberg, executive director. Rabbi Aharon Pfeuffer was appointed head of Yeshiva College. Charmain Lewitton became head of the King David Junior School in Linksfield. Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz was made chief rabbi emeritus of the South African Federation of Synagogues.

Jews who were appointed to important positions in the country included Leslie Glasser—professor of physical chemistry at the University of the Witwatersrand; D.H. Jacobson—vice president of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research;

Raymond Abratt—head of the department of radiotherapy, provincial hospital, Port Elizabeth; Professor Charles Isaacson—chair of pathology at Baragwanath Hospital; Herman Davidson—president of Rotary; Leo Levine—director, South African Gold Exchange; Etienne Mureinik—British Council Scholarship to read law at Oxford University; Jack Penn—member of the President's Council; and Professor Solly Benatar—head of the department of medicine, University of Cape Town.

Among prominent Jews who died during the year were Dr. Walter Cohen, founder of the braille system in South Africa, who was himself blind, in February; Dora Hurwitz, honorary vice president of South Africa Magen David Adom, in February; Harry X. Rajak, prominent in the affairs of SAJBD, in April; Sarah Feldberg, active in Jewish cultural affairs, in April; Louis Hurwitz, president of South Africa Magen David Adom, in June; Dr. Jules Addelson, life member of the South Africa Medical Council, in June; Stanley Raphael, well-known radio announcer, in June; Joseph Daleski, life president of SAZF, in June; Stan Friedman, mayor of Krugersdorp and leader of the Jewish community there, in July; Abraham Dubowitz, author, in July; Joan Nafte, artist, in August; Harry Serebro, former national chairman of UCF and active in affairs of SAJBD, in August; Archie Tannenbaum, honorary officer of SAJBD, prominent Zionist, and leader of the Krugersdorp community, in August; Louis Herman, pioneer Jewish historian, in August; Leon Segal, founder, Selwyn Segal Hostel, in August; Nathan Woolf, prominent leader of Bloemfontein and Orange Free State Jewries in September; Maish Galoon, young leader of Cape Town Jewry, in September; Dorothy Lazarus, former mayor of East London, in October; and Audrey Goldberg, former chairman of Durban Women's Zionist League, in November.

DENIS DIAMOND