For the People of South Africa, 1990 was one of the most dramatic, exciting, and, at the same time, bewildering periods in recent history. It was a year in which radical government action hastened the dismantling of apartheid and further threatened the traditionally dominant and privileged position of whites. Jews shared the anxieties of other whites about the future and were also mindful of their own potential role as scapegoats during the painful adjustments to come. They were worried, too, about the apparent growth of black anti-Semitism and how this might affect them in the new South Africa.¹

National Affairs

On February 2, 1990, Pres. F.W. de Klerk stated in his opening speech to Parliament that the government had decided to lift the ban on all prohibited organizations, including the African National Congress (ANC), as well as to release, unconditionally, ANC leader Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. Furthermore, the three-year-old "state of emergency" would be relaxed in regard to media curbs, conditions imposed on released emergency detainees, and restrictions on some 33 organizations. He also announced the repeal of the Separate Amenities Act of 1953, which comprised the discriminatory laws generally referred to as "petty apartheid."

De Klerk's speech marked the beginning of a new phase in the process of political reform that had been initiated more than a decade earlier by his predecessor, P. W. Botha, in response to growing doubts within the National party about the continued viability of apartheid and to various political and economic developments during the late 1960s and 1970s. By 1986, when his attempts to introduce limited reform had failed to curb growing violence, Botha declared a general state of emergency.

While it appeared that progress toward ending apartheid had halted at the political level, this was not the case in other areas of life in South Africa. "Apartheid is crumbling all about us, and the new society is taking shape," wrote anti-apartheid activist John Kane-Berman. "Post-apartheid SA is not going to be legislated into existence by some future government under a new constitution. It is being forged

in theatres and hotels and restaurants, on trains, on beaches and sports fields, in universities and private schools, in shops and offices, in mines and factories. . . . In our silent revolution the Government has often been more of a spectator than an actor. Change has taken place despite, not because of, its wishes."

What happened in 1990, then, was that the government not only recognized and sanctioned the so-called silent revolution, but also resumed and accelerated legislative and structural reform. De Klerk clearly demonstrated that he and his government were irrevocably committed to the abolition of apartheid and to the establishment of a democratic South Africa with equal rights for all.

**Responses to Change**

The responses of whites to these events ranged from uncritical optimism about a nonracial, democratic, more egalitarian South Africa, to deep pessimism about the country's viability and the future of whites and, on the extreme Right, to uncompromising rejectionism. For those who accepted that black majority rule was inevitable, hopes for the future depended to an important degree on their assessment of what would happen to the economy. Thus, the immediate concern of lower- and middle-class wage- and salary-earners was the growing competition from blacks, Indians, and coloreds, both in getting jobs and in job advancement, as well as the increasing possibility of having to work under black supervisors and managers. Small white businesses that traded mainly with blacks also faced increased competition. At another level, large employers of labor, both public and private, were constantly under pressure from the powerful black trade unions, legalized only relatively recently. Some factories and commercial firms already had to close down because they could not meet union demands, while many others were involved in a dangerous game of brinkmanship. Looking beyond the present and immediate future, there was great trepidation in the white business community over the implications of ANC rhetoric about nationalization and the redistribution of resources. At the same time, there was hope that black leaders would acknowledge the importance of white capital and know-how in maintaining the economy.

Other, noneconomic, concerns of whites related to the effects of removing discriminatory legislation. Although this had already been happening gradually over the previous 10–15 years, during 1990 the Separate Amenities Act was repealed in its entirety. The Group Areas Act—which designated where members of each racial group could legally own and occupy property—was modified with regard to business premises and was not being enforced against blacks wanting to live in "white areas." Many whites found it difficult to share places of recreation, restaurants, hotels, and amenities such as public lavatories with people whom they still regarded

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as uncouth, uncivilized, and even "unclean." Many also feared that blacks moving into white neighborhoods would bring noise, litter, overcrowding and, in general, lower their tone—and property values. There was also serious concern about the quality of education as schools, colleges, and universities were opened up to all.

There was fear as well that the loosening of control over black political activity would lead to an increase in violence against whites. This fear was reinforced by the ANC's insistence that it was not ready to renounce what it termed "the armed struggle" until it was convinced that there was "real progress" toward majority rule. In the longer term, there was the equally frightening prospect of complete anarchy when expectations by ordinary blacks for a better life could not be fulfilled by a black government.

Black responses to the dismantling of apartheid were also not uniform. At the ideological level, there were groups, like the Pan Africanist Congress, that were reluctant to acknowledge de Klerk's sincerity or to negotiate any compromise with the whites; others would talk to the government, but only on the understanding that such issues as nationalization and majority rule based on one-man one-vote were nonnegotiable preconditions; and still others, like Mandela, who were prepared to lay everything on the negotiating table. There was also an internal struggle for power between the older (and, generally, more moderate) ANC leaders and the younger ones; the unabated violence and bloodshed in the conflict between the ANC and Zulu chief minister Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha movement; the ideological gulf between the ANC and the youthful militants of the 1976–1986 uprisings; the probability, at some future date, of a test of strength between leaders of the ANC and those of the powerful black trade unions; and the potential tensions, within the ANC, between the noncommunists and those advocating a socialist state. This lack of unity encouraged some whites, perhaps naively, to believe that there was no great danger of a black government taking over in the near future. For others, probably the majority, the confused situation among blacks simply added to the uncertainty.

**Jewish Responses**

On February 28, 1990, two-and-a-half weeks after his release from prison, a photograph of Nelson Mandela warmly embracing Yasir Arafat in Lusaka, Zambia, was published on the front pages of several South African dailies. The following day Mandela was quoted as saying, in response to a question, that if his meeting with Arafat and his statements equating the struggle of the Palestinians with that of the blacks were to alienate "South Africa's influential Jewish community," that was "too bad" (PIJI, Mar. 2, 1990). These reports, coming on the heels of recent

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right-wing anti-Semitic incidents, raised the ire of local Jews—and their anxiety.

To give expression to the community's outrage and, at the same time, to restore
calm, mass meetings were organized during March in Johannesburg and Cape
Town. These were addressed by leading representatives of the South African Jewish
Board of Deputies and the South African Zionist Federation, by Chief Rabbi Cyril
Harris, and by Democratic party parliamentarian (now ambassador to Washington)
Harry Schwarz. While reaffirming the community's support of Israel, the major
thrust of all the speakers was to allay anxiety, cool tempers, and place events in a
more realistic perspective. Schwarz assessed the overall situation as follows: The
Jewish fate is ultimately tied up with that of the white population as a whole and
there can "be no separate deal between blacks and Jews." Clearly it would be in the
interest of Jews for South Africa to have a liberal constitution underpinned by a bill
of rights. As Schwarz correctly explained: "Only a society which gives everyone
rights will give Jews rights." He also suggested, as did other speakers, that insofar
as Jews felt that they did have special interests, they should be vigilant while
maintaining a low profile.

Since almost all Jews were part of the English-speaking sector, and since a large
proportion belonged to the middle and upper classes, it was primarily with these
groups that they shared their hopes and fears. Thus, it is probable that the majority
supported the government's initiative, though not unlikely that at least some had
considerable sympathy with the right-wing rejectionists.

At an official level, the Board of Deputies, as the representative of local Jewish
interests, was eager to identify the Jewish community with current political develop-
ments. In a press statement following de Klerk's opening speech to Parliament, the
board expressed its confidence that the president's proposals would "create an
atmosphere for the establishment of genuine democracy for the benefit of the coun-
try and all its peoples" (PIJI, Feb. 16, 1990).

Attitudes Toward Jews

Over the past several years a number of extreme militant, right-wing groups had
come into being. Afrikaner in origin, but welcoming English-speakers who shared
their views, their main objective was to counter the unification of South African
society. These groups based their appeal on the concept of a white, Christian,
Afrikaner national state, in which not only would apartheid continue to be vigor-
ously enforced but the rights of non-Christians would be severely curtailed. The
most important and durable of these groups, the Afrikaner Weerstands beweging, or
Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB), had a quasi-military structure, sported
brown-shirt-style uniforms, and adopted a swastika-like symbol as its emblem. The
leader of the AWB, ex-policeman Eugene Terre'Blanche, was quite explicit about
the sinister role of the "five, six, seven hundred thousand (sic)" Jews in South Africa
who controlled the economy and who were playing a major role in breaking down
racial barriers ("They never marry with a non-Jew but they want me to mix with
the blacks and with other races"). He also accused them of having "no loyalty for
the country and for the Afrikaners . . . [but] are here to make money and to send
it to Israel."4 There seems little doubt that the strident anti-Jewish sentiments so
frequently expressed by the AWB encouraged a rash of anti-Semitic incidents over
the last two to three years—despite Terre'Blanche's vigorous denial that his move-
ment was in any way involved. These incidents included placing pigs' heads in
synagogues, private homes, and other places; desecration of a cemetery; burning the
Israeli flag and displaying Nazi flags; and anti-Jewish graffiti. Throughout 1990, a
variety of such incidents were widely reported in the general press and in the Board
of Deputies' news digest (PIJI). The latter included references to numerous state-
ments, letters, and articles—some (by both Jews and non-Jews) condemning the
incidents, and others criticizing the Jews.

Anti-Semitic actions were condemned not only by the Jewish community but also
by the state president and other members of the government, by Afrikaner academ-
ics, and by two right-wing political groups, the Herstigte (Reconstituted) National
party and the Conservative party. Dr. Andries Treurnicht, leader of the last-men-
tioned group, which was also the official parliamentary opposition, was quite un-
equivocal in his denial that either he or his party (at whose rally some people waved
Nazi flags) were anti-Semitic, had any Nazi sympathies or leanings, or that they had
ever sanctioned any anti-Jewish behavior by their members. Both the government
and police emphasized that these incidents were perpetrated by "insignificant minori-
ties," the "lunatic fringe," and that while they would do all they could to
apprehend those responsible, there was no cause for undue alarm.

Officially, the Jewish community took a similar position, warning against over-
reaction or the creation of vigilante groups. Anti-Semitism had always existed in
South Africa, it was felt, and was probably no more prevalent now than it ever had
been: it had simply been brought into the open by present conditions. Nevertheless,
the board kept a close watch on these activities and maintained contact with the
authorities in order to protect the community and its institutions. Knowledgeable
South Africans did not discount the possibility that Jews could become primary
scapegoats of the Right in the event of economic and political turmoil.

The question of black attitudes to Jews is more complex and requires distinguish-
ing between anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish perspectives. During the 1980s, opponents
of apartheid—black and white, South Africans and foreigners—saw Israel as a
staunch and active ally of the racist regime. Not only had the Israelis flaunted the
UN decision to impose trade sanctions on South Africa but, even worse, there
appeared to be strong evidence that they were supplying the South African army
with equipment, materials, and expertise. Even after September 1987, when the
Israeli government—under pressure from the United States—decided to impose
sanctions, the South African press continued to report actual or presumed military

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4 Summarized and quoted from an interview with Eugene Terre'Blanche in Tzippi Hoffman
cooperation between the two countries. The frequency and consistency with which reports, articles, editorials, and correspondence on this topic were published throughout the 1980s and even during 1990 undoubtedly contributed to Israel's negative image in the minds of blacks and liberal whites.

It appears, however, that for blacks, the more salient issue was Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the Palestinian struggle for freedom. Parallels between Israel's treatment of Arabs and South Africa's treatment of blacks had long been drawn by supporters and opponents of apartheid, friends and enemies of Israel. For blacks, whose most vociferous spokesman in recent years was Anglican archbishop and Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu, the intifada was seen as analogous to their own desperate fight against the oppressor. Nelson Mandela, too, identified with the Palestinians and frequently expressed his gratitude to, and friendship with, "brothers-in-arms" Yassir Arafat and Muammar Qaddafi.

In addition, local Muslims engaged in a massive ongoing campaign—through meetings, protests, posters, advertisements, and publications—to demonstrate Israel's inhumanity and the illegitimacy of her claim to statehood. The Islamic Propagation Center International in Durban, a well-funded organization, disseminated expensive anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic leaflets to thousands of householders. Antagonism between Muslim and Jewish students continued to be a feature of university campus life, particularly at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand. Physical confrontations took place periodically between the two groups.

Jews took the two black leaders far more seriously than they did either right-wing white or Muslim anti-Semites. Each attack on Israel elicited a vigorous counterattack, accusations of anti-Semitism, and a reaffirmation of the community's commitment to the Jewish state. Both Mandela and Tutu denied that their condemnation of Israel's policies meant that they were anti-Jewish. Mandela went further: If Zionism meant the Jewish aspiration for a national home, then he supported it just as he supported Israel's demands for secure borders and Palestinian claims for an independent state. He would like, he said, to visit Israel and even to offer his good offices in bringing about a peaceful settlement (PIJII, June 15, 1990). These assurances were offered by Mandela and Tutu on public platforms, in the media, and at meetings with representative Jewish community organizations. Officially, at any rate, some Jewish leaders maintained that, despite their position on the Palestinians, neither Mandela nor Tutu could be accused of being anti-Jewish (PIJII, Feb. 13, 1987; June 1 and 29, 1990). However, in the "Jewish street," the tendency was still to equate opposition to Israel's policies with anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.

An entirely different issue was whether blacks had negative attitudes toward Jews and, if so, whether these attitudes constituted anti-Semitism. Until about 18 years ago, the possible existence of such feelings occasioned no serious concern. In general terms, the relationship between Jews and blacks, like that with other English-speaking urban whites, was based primarily on their respective roles as master and servant, tempered, at best, by a degree of paternalism expressed in terms of more
compassionate and humane treatment. Jews were not much concerned what blacks thought of them, assuming that they were, like other whites, resented, but cherishing the belief that they treated "their" blacks better and were, therefore, less disliked than other whites. This belief was shared by many other whites who often accused Jews of "spoiling" their black employees. Many blacks also believed that Jews were more compassionate employers and that, politically, Jews had identified more than other whites with left-wing and liberal groups.

Serious interest in black attitudes to Jews grew out of recent events and increasing black power. In August 1990, the South African Zionist Federation commissioned a survey in which a sample of 1,031 "black elites" and 1,014 whites were asked to say what they felt about Jews. The main findings among blacks were: 17.5 percent said that the Jewish community "irritated" them because, in descending order of frequency, they were parasites, snobs, racists, anti-Christ, and unpatriotic; 16 percent approved of right-wing anti-Semitic actions, and one-third were uncertain whether or not they approved; and, finally, 30 percent considered the Jewish community to be "mostly a liability" to South Africa. Percentages of whites giving the same responses were: 5.7 percent, 0.7 percent, and 3.2 percent, respectively. Unfortunately, the crudeness of the research design—nothing, for example, was asked about black attitudes to other white groups or to whites in general—makes it impossible to draw any conclusion beyond the indication that some anti-Jewish, as distinct from anti-Israel, feeling does exist among blacks.

Whatever other factors might contribute to black attitudes to Jews, it seemed likely that the economic sphere would continue to be the most important determinant of future relations between the two groups. In the first place, for large numbers of black industrial and commercial workers, the boss—and therefore, the exploiter of his labor—was typically a Jew. (Although mining magnate Harry Oppenheimer had not considered himself a Jew since early adulthood, he and his family were still regarded as such by many blacks and whites alike. Anti-Semitic references to Jewish economic power invariably included the Oppenheimer financial and mining empire.) Furthermore, a significant proportion of small businesses catering primarily to a black clientele had been and were owned by Jews—many of whom were perceived to have become rich by taking advantage of blacks' lack of education and their subordinate position.

Whether blacks were anti-Semitic in the classic Western sense was at least debatable. While it could be assumed that there were black anti-Semites, there was evidence that for many blacks these attitudes were situation-related, and that negative attitudes toward Jews were balanced by similar attitudes toward other whites.

Anti-Israel feelings were more serious, however. If no solution were found that

completely satisfied the Palestinians, black attitudes could remain negative. On the other hand, once blacks achieved their own goals in South Africa, attitudes to and relations with Israel might—as in many other countries in Africa and elsewhere—be modified by self-interest. Nevertheless, the relationship of South African Jews to Israel was problematic for black leaders and could continue to be so in the future. As black columnist Jon Qwelana wrote in the Johannesburg Sunday Star (Apr. 1, 1990): "Personally, I think South Africans of Jewish extraction should expend the great quantities of vigor and energy they pour out in defense of Israel at every drop of a hat on greater concern about what happens right inside their own backyard. Charity begins at home, after all, unless 'home' means somewhere else for them, which I earnestly refuse to believe." A related issue for Jews concerned money raised for Israel: if, under a black government, restrictions on transfer of money abroad remained in force, would current special arrangements be continued?

The Jewish community was also concerned about the effect on Jewish institutions of an inevitably more even-handed, nonracial policy of allocating state funds. Thus, Jewish day schools could expect to receive considerably diminished grants-in-aid, as could Jewish welfare and other government-subsidized services. Furthermore, a black government might insist that all schools (and possibly other institutions) must be open to anyone who wished to attend them, irrespective of race or religion.

In summary: in the negotiations between the government and black nationalists, it seemed unlikely that the Jews would become an issue. Anti-Semitism as such was unlikely to become a problem. On the other hand, the limitations discussed would affect the community and the way it functioned. If imposed, however, these limitations would reflect general policy; they would not be specifically directed against Jews. The notable exception was the connection with Israel, and in this regard the South African Jewish community might find itself facing a serious dilemma.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

In 1970 the Jews of South Africa numbered 118,200, constituting 3.1 percent of the 3.7 million whites and 0.6 percent of the total population of 21.4 million. The

"For a detailed analysis, see Sergio DellaPergola and Allie A. Dubb, "South African Jewry: A Sociodemographic Profile," in AJYB 1988, vol. 88, pp. 59–140. The sources of statistical data that have not been specifically referenced are, ultimately, publications of the Central Statistical Service, Pretoria, together with additional, unpublished material made available by the CSS to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies from time to time. It should be noted that a countrywide sociodemographic survey by Allie A. Dubb, sponsored by the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town, is now under way. In addition, an official population census was conducted in March 1991. The results of both survey and census were expected to be available early in 1992."
widespread political unrest during the late 1970s led to a dramatic increase in emigration of whites, among them, Jews. While there are no statistics on Jews who left South Africa, it has been estimated that some 14,000 (or almost 12 percent of the 1970 total) had emigrated by the end of 1979. The 1980 census count of 117,963 Jews—down a mere 200 since 1970—was, therefore, unexpected. Detailed analysis of census results and other information led to the conclusion that the loss due to emigration had been offset by an estimated natural increase of 4,200 and an influx of some 9,600 immigrants and returning emigrants. Nevertheless, although the size of the community remained relatively stable, in 1980 it constituted only 2.6 percent of all whites, and 0.5 percent of the total population. By 1990, if a zero migration balance is assumed for the preceding ten years, the Jewish population might be expected to have declined to about 114,000—representing 2.3 percent and 0.4 percent, respectively, of the estimated white and total populations.

The decade 1970–1980 brought a small but significant Jewish immigration from Zimbabwe and other neighboring African states, the United Kingdom, and Western Europe. Although it was generally believed within the Jewish community that there had been a large influx of Israelis after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, in fact, during the whole period, the net Israeli immigration amounted to about 1,300. Only 2,261 Israeli-born and 1,927 Israeli citizens were enumerated in 1980—approximately the same numbers as in 1970. Although popular perceptions of 20,000–30,000 were grossly exaggerated, it is nevertheless probable that there were more Israelis, but that they had escaped enumeration for various reasons. Between 1980 and 1989, 4,030 former Israeli residents immigrated to South Africa and about 685 emigrated, while during the first half of 1990, an additional 539 immigrants arrived. Although it is still impossible to determine the total number of Israelis in the country, at least 7,500 could be accounted for by mid-1990.

Of the estimated 14,000 Jews who emigrated from South Africa during the 1970s, the largest proportion left in the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto uprising. Jews continued to speak of considerable emigration during the 1980s—particularly during the turbulent years of 1986–87—but there is not enough information to make any reasonable estimate. What is known is that only about 3,700 emigrated to Israel and that this number represents an unknown, but undoubtedly much smaller, proportion of the total emigration than it did in the 1970s. Clearly, continued Jewish emigration would depend on actual developments in South Africa and also on whether Jews felt they had a place in the new South Africa—both as whites and as Jews.

The long-term movement of Jews to large urban centers continued, particularly to the two major metropolitan areas of Johannesburg and Cape Town. Whereas in 1970 these two cities accounted for 75 percent of the South African Jewish popula-

tion, this had risen, in 1980, to 80 percent of the total. Conversely, the proportion of Jews in all the smaller cities dropped from 11.7 percent to 10.6 percent. These trends gained momentum during 1980–1989 and, by the end of the decade, several of the smaller city communities were having difficulty maintaining the amenities of Jewish life.

Communal Affairs

Although funds, skilled professional personnel, and committed lay leadership were becoming scarce—related to the emigration of young people and the aging of the community—South African Jewry continued to manifest a cohesive communal life. This was exemplified in its two major organizations, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) and the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF). Seymour Kopelowitz, who was appointed national director of the SAJBD in 1990, described the SAJBD’s role in a changing South Africa in broad terms: acting as a “think tank” for the community, developing and disseminating ideas, and planning for the future needs of the community within the context of the wider society. According to Kopelowitz, the SAJBD would embark on a program to identify the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the Jewish community over the next ten years.

The SAJBD made intensive efforts to establish dialogue with the wider community in general and black leaders in particular. These meetings took place at national and regional levels. Nelson Mandela, “Terror” Lekota, Ahmed Kathrada of the ANC, and Alec Irwin of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) were among those who held meetings with the SAJBD. The Transvaal Council of the SAJBD ran Club 44, a group focusing on current affairs that invited speakers such as Aggrey Klaaste, editor of the Sowetan, a daily newspaper catering mainly to blacks, and Prof. W. de Klerk, brother of the state president. A range of other cultural activities was coordinated by the SAJBD.

Increasingly, Holocaust memorial services were a feature of the Jewish communal calendar. These ceremonies included poetry readings, songs, and a keynote address, often delivered by a prominent visitor. In addition, Holocaust memorials were erected in major Jewish centers. Since the late 1980s, South African Jews had joined the worldwide pilgrimages to Auschwitz, and in 1988 South African Jews joined world Jewry in commemorating the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht. To mark the event, synagogues kept their lights burning throughout the night. For the occasion, a panel of Holocaust survivors in Johannesburg recounted their experiences to an audience of over 400. Adult education Holocaust study programs were conducted in Cape Town and Johannesburg. In 1990, Dr. Ze’ev Mankowitz of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem held the attention of 350 Jews and Gentiles over a period of six weekly sessions in a course organized by the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town. The penultimate lecture was clouded by ugly questions from a “denial” member of the audience. On
the whole, however, South Africa did not experience the sort of neo-Nazism currently rife in Europe.

The Jewish community was well served by a vigorous Jewish press consisting of the *Zionist Record*, an organ of the SAZF, the *South African Jewish Chronicle*, and the *Herald Times*. In addition, each region published a monthly newspaper containing mainly local news. The *Johannesburg Jewish Voice* began publication in 1990; although funded by the Jewish community, it gave voice to a wider range of political opinion than the other publications and was somewhat controversial.

**Fund Raising**

The South African Jewish community had a proud tradition of fund raising for Jewish and Israeli causes. The year under review was a remarkable one for the United Communal Fund (UCF) and the Israel United Appeal (IUA), which had merged in 1987. The single entity, known as the United Communal Fund (UCF), had the effect of unifying the community and ensuring that the two funds did not compete with each other for contributions. The beginning of 1990 saw the start of the highly successful Operation Exodus campaign for Russian Jewry. Shlomo Hillel, a former speaker of Israel's Knesset, was a guest speaker at a number of IUA gatherings. For the first time the organization enlisted the help of the rabbinate and the lay leaders of synagogues, with outstanding results. There appeared to be a newfound spirit of cooperation between the synagogue leadership, both lay and religious, and the fund-raisers.

The major beneficiary of the UCF was Israel; other recipients included the SAJBD, the Jewish day-school movement, the Union of Orthodox Synagogues, the Union of Progressive Judaism, and the Union of Jewish Women. Congregations and other bodies raised their own funds among their members and with fund-raising drives. Although current trends in Jewish demography could eventually force the community to consider rationalizing the range of essential services, at present institutions for the handicapped, aged, and orphaned operated in all major centers. The Union of Jewish Women ran a thriving adult-education program. Their latest project was the Home Instruction Program for Pre-School Youngsters (HIPPY), which was directed at underprivileged black children.

**Israel-Related Activity**

The *intifada* had little impact on South African Jewry, and the community continued to demonstrate unquestioning support for Israel.

The SAZF was the representative body coordinating Zionist activity, and the various Zionist groupings, organizations, and societies were affiliated with it. Its departments dealt with organization and information, fund raising, youth activities, women's work, and immigration to Israel. The latter dwindled substantially during 1990. Affiliated with the Zionist Federation were a number of Zionist youth move-
ments: Habonim, Bnei Akiva, Betar, and Maginim, which conducted cultural programs, organized youth activities, and ran highly successful summer camps. In addition, university youth had their representative organization, the South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS), which was affiliated with the Zionist Federation as well as the SAJBD.

Mendel Kaplan, a South African lawyer and business executive, continued in the post of chairman of the international Jewish Agency board of governors, to which he had been appointed in 1987. He had served previously as world chairman of the board of trustees of the United Israel Appeal.

Education

The South African Board of Jewish Education claimed to control the largest Jewish day-school system in the Diaspora (the King David Schools), though most of its 94 affiliates around the country were afternoon and nursery schools. The system maintained its cohesion and strength, even though apart from Johannesburg and Cape Town, the number of Jewish pupils in day schools had been decreasing over the past few years—a result of demographic shifts within the Jewish population. The system was less threatened by financial considerations than in the past, in part due to a government financial subsidy of 5.5 million rands per annum and increased receipts from the United Communal Fund. (Future scenarios, however, could well exclude a government subsidy.) Jewish day schools provided education from preschool to the completion of high school for approximately 8,000 pupils—more than 60 percent of all Jewish children in South Africa. They received a full education following a state syllabus and a Jewish studies program including Jewish religion, history, literature, and Hebrew language. Although all schools had an Orthodox orientation—often described as “national-traditional”—some provided a more intensive Orthodox religious education than others. The mainstream Jewish day schools accepted children of mixed marriages and Reform converts.

The South African Board of Jewish Education also involved itself with Jewish children who attended state schools, whose main access to Jewish education was through the Cheder program and by means of Religious Instruction Booklets sent into the schools. It also administered a network of Hebrew nursery schools according to the standards laid down by the Nursery School Association of South Africa. The Cape Council of the SAJBD had its own religious-instruction program for Jewish pupils who attended state schools in the Western Cape.

A more intensive Jewish education was provided for approximately 1,700 pupils by the Yeshivah College, the Torah Academy of the Lubavitch Foundation, the Beis Yakov Girls' High School, the Sha'arei Torah Primary School, and the Yeshivat Torat Emet, all in Johannesburg, as well as the Hebrew Academy in Cape Town. The Progressive movement also maintained a network of supplementary Hebrew and religious classes at temples affiliated with it. These schools were affiliated with the Union for Progressive Jewish Education.
At the tertiary level, Hebrew teachers were trained at the Rabbi Zlotnick Hebrew Teachers Training College in Johannesburg. University students were able to take Jewish studies through the Semitics Department of the University of South Africa, the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of Cape Town, the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at Natal University, and the Department of Hebrew at the University of the Witwatersrand. A Jewish Studies University Program (JSUP) combined traditional Jewish studies with university studies through the University of South Africa. Many of these programs reported increased enrollment. In September 1990, an international conference on “Judaism in the Context of World Civilizations” was held at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Religion

According to a study conducted in 1974, 80 percent of South African Jews were affiliated with a religious body, though there was evidence that this number had declined in the interim. About four-fifths belonged to Orthodox congregations and one-fifth to Progressive congregations. These were autonomous bodies, each controlling its own affairs, with religious authority vested in its spiritual leaders. Most of the congregations, however, were affiliated with representative organizations which endeavored to strengthen Jewish religious life. The Union of Orthodox Synagogues of South Africa was the umbrella body for Orthodox congregations throughout South Africa. It consisted of 95 synagogues and claimed a membership enrollment of approximately 18,500 families. Of the 95 synagogues, not more than a handful enjoyed the services of a full-time rabbi. A noteworthy feature of the South African Jewish scene was the inadequate financial compensation of rabbis; the overwhelming majority had to hold down more than one job in order to earn an adequate living.

The activity of the Jews for Jesus—which had attracted a few hundred Jews to its programs—and other evangelical movements was viewed as a serious problem. A special department was established by the Union of Orthodox Synagogues (UOS) to actively counter this process.

The UOS appointed and maintained the office of the chief rabbi, the Johannesburg Beth Din, and the Cape Beth Din. Since 1987 the office of chief rabbi had been held by Cyril Harris. He had been minister of the St. John’s Wood Synagogue in London and a fellow of Jews’ College, London, before coming to South Africa.

Recently there was tremendous growth in the ba’al teshuvah movement (returnees to Judaism), and 34 small shtieblach (synagogues) were established mainly in and around Johannesburg. The Lubavitch movement had also made inroads into the community, especially in Johannesburg, where it was established in 1972, and Cape Town, in 1976. Although a relatively small proportion of the community was

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*The countrywide sociodemographic study referred to in note 6, in progress at the time of writing, will provide updated figures.*
involved in Lubavitch activities, programs expanded substantially in the past few years. Adult education, youth clubs, and Shabbatons were particularly popular. Outlying communities were visited periodically by a Mobile Jewish Center—"Mitzvah Tank." This specially designed motor vehicle housed exhibits, a library, literature, mezuzahs, tefillin, and so forth. The "tank" periodically visited schools, youth seminars, and predominantly Jewish neighborhoods. In addition, a weekly national radio program, "The Jewish Sound," was initiated and produced by the Lubavitch Foundation.

For the Reform sector, the South African Union for Progressive Judaism (affiliated with the World Union of Progressive Judaism) was the coordinating body. Estimates of the movement's membership ranged from 2,500 to 6,500 families, with a total of 12 congregations in the major centers, though only a few were served by rabbis. Each temple operated a religious school, and there was a separate, independent primary school in Johannesburg under Progressive auspices.

**Personalia**

Seymour Kopelowitz was appointed national director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in 1990. Kopelowitz came to the board with a range of qualifications and awards: he had an MBA degree and was a former Jewish day-school principal and a Jerusalem Fellow.

Harry Schwarz was appointed South African ambassador to Washington in 1990. Mr. Schwarz immigrated to South Africa from Germany as a young boy and spent his entire political career fighting apartheid and social injustice.

Helen Suzman, an internationally renowned anti-apartheid liberal parliamentarian, retired from Parliament in 1990.

_Allie A. Dubb_

_Milton Shain_