During 1991, the process of dismantling apartheid and the movement toward democracy continued. Among other developments, the classification of the population into racial categories was abolished; racial restrictions relating to land use and ownership were scrapped; and, as a first step in the unification of the educational system, many white schools were opened to children of other races. At the same time, amendments to the Internal Security Act ending detention without trial and restoring the *habeas corpus* constituted an important step toward the return to the rule of law. Finally, a start was made in releasing political prisoners and facilitating the return of exiles and refugees.

Meanwhile, the government declared its commitment to negotiation as the means of bringing about a just and fair "new South Africa." Apart from the radical Right and Left, this approach was universally endorsed, and, indeed, bilateral and multilateral talks were held between leaders of a number of political groups throughout the year. These contacts were not always easy and were characterized by considerable mutual suspicion; however, recognition that a negotiated settlement was the only feasible approach was given expression in the signing of the National Peace Accord in September. Further progress was registered when, two months later, the multi-party Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) was formed.

The undoubted progress toward democratization was increasingly acknowledged by the international community. During the course of the year several foreign governments lifted economic sanctions, wholly or partially, and long-suspended diplomatic relations were restored. Organizations that had either not been allowed to operate in South Africa or that had not wished to do so sent fact-finding missions or established offices in the country. International sports bodies ended their boycott and, after 32 years, South Africa received an invitation to participate in the upcoming Olympics.

The most disquieting feature of 1991 was the steep rise in the incidence of violence. Political violence, which was primarily black on black, reflected the animosity between the African National Congress and the largely Zulu Inkatha Freedom party. Criminal violence also increased significantly. While whites were frequently the victims, blacks were not immune. In Johannesburg, which was most
severely affected, more and more people routinely began to carry arms for self-protection, while the overall quality of life declined significantly.

The government was apparently unable to control either the political or the criminal violence. On the one hand, it was expected to act decisively but, on the other, the image of the police and army as the brutal upholders of apartheid precluded vigorous and effective countermeasures. Ultimately, in an effort to resolve the dilemma, the government announced the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry into the Prevention of Public Violence and Intimidation, whose brief was to investigate the causes of violence and to recommend measures to contain it. The Commission was headed by Richard Goldstone, a Jew, a high court judge who, in the words of the National Peace Accord, was chosen because he enjoyed "the confidence of a broad spectrum of the South African community."

Although progress on the political front during 1991 did lead to the lifting of sanctions and the reestablishment of political and economic relations with the rest of the world, the hoped-for economic revival did not materialize. On the contrary, according to the South African Reserve Bank in its *Annual Economic Report 1992*, "Structural weaknesses in the economy, a severe drought in the summer rainfall areas, internal social and labor unrest, problems encountered in the political negotiations process, and relatively weak economic growth in most of the major industrialized countries, prolonged the downward movement in economic activity in South Africa. . . ." Thus, during 1991 the gross national product declined, retrenchments increased, and employment opportunities decreased, inflation rose to over 15 percent (27 percent for food), and there was less disposable income.

The instability, uncertainty, and economic recession did not appear to have accelerated emigration, which continued the gradual downward trend of the two previous years. Immigration, on the other hand, was 18 percent lower than in the previous year. Nevertheless, there was a net surplus of over 8,000 immigrants in 1991 as compared with 9,800 in 1990.

**Relations with Israel**

Unlike previous years, when Israel's alleged military assistance to South Africa ensured that country a fairly high media profile, Israel received relatively little coverage in 1991. The exception, understandably, was during the Gulf War. Reports on the war contained frequent references to Israel, and these, for the most part, were sympathetic and supportive. The press also published both Jewish and Muslim reactions to events in the Middle East, including reports on Jewish solidarity meetings and on Muslim rallies at which the United States and Israel were condemned and their national flags burned. The African National Congress (ANC) also participated in some of these demonstrations, praising the PLO and criticizing the Jewish state. Nevertheless, despite the charged emotional climate, Jews for Social Justice had what they described as a highly successful meeting with a group of Muslims, a channel which, they believed, might be useful in the future.
In June State President F.W. de Klerk addressed the national congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. The event was unprecedented in South Africa except, perhaps, for some of the appearances of the late prime minister Jan Smuts. In his well-researched speech, de Klerk traced the history of Jewish settlement in South Africa and recounted the many contributions that Jews had made in the economic, social, and cultural spheres, stressing the country’s debt to the community. He emphasized that Jews were absolutely equal partners in the new South Africa, and that any attempt to drive a wedge between them and the rest of the population would not be tolerated. De Klerk also referred to Israel and criticized that country’s imposition of sanctions against South Africa. He recognized, however, that Israel had been subjected to considerable pressure by the United States and expressed his satisfaction that good relations had now been restored. He also showed considerable insight into the Jewish attachment to Israel, asserting that this in no way called into question Jewish loyalty to South Africa.

Toward the end of the year, President de Klerk paid an official visit to Israel, where he was received with great warmth and where he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Bar-Ilan University. At a tree-planting ceremony in his honor, an unexpectedly large crowd of former South Africans heard him express, once again, his appreciation for the Jewish contribution to the development of South Africa and his understanding and respect for the deep roots that bind all Jews to Israel.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

It is probably reasonable to assume that individual Jews reacted to the general situation in South Africa in much the same way as other whites. While some Jews were certainly aware that increased frustration, insecurity, and economic hardship may have brought about a further rise in right-wing anti-Semitism, this did not evoke the level of anxiety that was evident in 1990. Similarly, African National Congress support for the PLO and hostility toward Israel drew far less public protest than in the previous year. This relatively calm response was actively fostered and encouraged by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and other major Jewish organizations. At the same time, these bodies monitored left-wing activities, were in contact with various members of the government, and maintained communication with leaders of the various African political groupings. Their assessments of the attitudes and activities of these groups were reported to the community on appropriate occasions.

Community leaders—notably, members of the national executive of the Board of Deputies and Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris—increasingly urged Jews, both as individuals and as a community, to become more involved with other communities and to demonstrate their resolve to participate in the new South Africa. At the national congress of the Board of Deputies, the newly elected president, Gerald Leissner, stated: “In the past, the Jewish community has tended to worry about itself and
issues such as welfare, education and relations with Israel. While that won’t change, we hope that we can now get involved in broader issues as well.” (Quoted from The Star, Johannesburg, June 6, 1991.)

Demography

The official population census of 1991 did not provide a reliable count of Jews in South Africa since, unlike previous censuses, the question on religion was defined as optional. Thus, whereas in 1980, some 160,000 whites refused to answer the question or responded “no religion,” in 1991 the number had increased to 1,048,000—that is, one-fifth of all whites. As is the case with most other religious groups, the figure of 65,406 persons classified as Jews is a considerable underrepresentation. A minimum estimate of the actual size of the community, approximately 82,000, was obtained by augmenting the census findings with an assessment of the probable number of Jews who did not specify their religion. Data from a variety of sources suggest an alternative estimate.

The Jewish population at the 1980 census was 118,000. The ensuing decade saw a negative rate of natural increase (deaths exceeding births), leading to a decline of some 6,000, and a negative immigration balance (emigration exceeding immigration) of 7,000. This gives a total of 105,000 Jews in 1991.

Although the discrepancy between this and the lower estimate may be due, at least partly, to mistaken assumptions, quality of sources, and sampling or other errors, there is another factor that must be taken into account. Israelis living in South Africa are a wild card in any estimate of the Jewish population. Neither the 1980 nor the 1991 census reflected more than a small and insignificant influx from Israel. The probable reason is that most Israelis described themselves to enumerators as visitors or temporary residents and were therefore not counted. On the other hand, in the 1990/91 Sociodemographic Survey of the South African Jewish Population, Israelis were sampled along with local Jews—if they lived in “Jewish” suburbs in Johannesburg, or appeared on the community registers of the other survey centers. It is suggested, then, that the Jewish population is not defined in the census in the same way as in the survey and many other sources, and that this accounts for some of the difference between the two estimates suggested above. What is highly probable, however, is that the indigenous Jewish population decreased by between 20,000

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1 All references to the 1991 census are based on the final, adjusted results published in a series of reports by the Central Statistical Services, Pretoria. The uncorrected raw count for the Jewish population had been just over 59,000.
2 It was assumed that the proportion of probable Jews among whites who did not specify their religion was similar to that of Jews among whites who did.
3 These include the 1990/91 Sociodemographic Survey of the South African Jewish Population (conducted by Allie Dubb at the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town, and scheduled for early publication), communal records, South Africa’s Central Statistical Services, Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics, and immigration records maintained by the Tel Aviv office of the South African Zionist Federation (TELFED).
and 36,000 between 1980 and 1991, but that this was partially offset by returning émigrés, some immigration from other parts of Africa and from Western Europe, and a large but unknown number of Israelis.

The full effects of international migration over the last 20 years have still to be researched. Some demographic consequences are, however, already apparent as, for example, in the age structure. According to the official censuses of 1970, 1980, and 1991, the median age increased from 31.9 to 33.9 to 38.9. This reflects the fact that emigrants were primarily young to middle-aged couples and their children, and young adults. Thus the median age, in 1980, of South Africans who emigrated between 1970 and 1980, was 24.7, while those who emigrated between 1980 and 1991 had a median age of 29.7 in 1991. The 1991 survey suggests that in-migration offset, to some extent, the effects of emigration and that the median age of the community—including Israelis and others who may not have been enumerated in the census—is 34.7.

Looking more closely at the age distribution, we find that the youngest age groups have declined in relative size, and that the oldest have increased. Thus, in 1970, 33 percent of Jews were under 20 years old; by 1980 this had dropped to 29 percent, and by 1991 to 23 percent (or 27 percent according to the 1991 survey). By contrast, the proportion of those aged 65 or over increased from 12 percent to 17 percent to 20 percent in the three censuses. The implications of these figures are important in planning both present and future educational facilities, as well as meeting the needs of seniors in the community.

In addition to international migration, movement from small towns and rural areas to the cities continued during the 1980s, while the movement from the smaller cities to Johannesburg, Cape Town, and, to a lesser extent, Durban gained momentum. As regards immigrants and returning émigrés, it appears that they, too, preferred to settle in the two larger cities.

These changes had serious consequences: whereas Jewish life continued to flourish in Johannesburg and Cape Town, the smaller cities were experiencing difficulties. Thus, in Pretoria, Durban, and Port Elizabeth there were not enough Jewish children to maintain viable nursery and day schools—a situation which, in Durban and Port Elizabeth, had already resulted in a large proportion of non-Jewish pupils. In addition, these communities, together with those still extant in the smaller towns, were finding it increasingly difficult to provide for such amenities as ritual slaughter and circumcision or to employ rabbis and cantors. Some had sold or planned to sell synagogues, country clubs, and other property. In all, the future of these communities seemed bleak.

Community leadership responded to demographic change and its consequences by seeking overall, national-level solutions and by coordinating many aspects of Jewish life in the country as a whole. Thus, although local communities retained their autonomy at some levels, their dwindling numbers, shortage of funds, and inability to provide themselves with many of the essential amenities increased their dependence on the national organizations and their leaders.
Communal Affairs

In view of the changing circumstances prevailing in South Africa, the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBOD) established a Joint Communal Co-ordinating Committee to ensure communal unity, loyalty, and discipline. The new committee comprised the respective national presidents, chairpersons, and executive directors of the SAZF and SAJBOD. In addition, Mendel Kaplan, chairman of both the World Jewish Congress and the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency, and Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris were coopted onto the committee.

Intensive efforts to establish dialogue with the wider community in general and within the Jewish community continued under the auspices of the SAJBOD. As part of the SAJBOD's "outreach program," contact was made with the nation's largest labor federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). One of the ideas mooted at the meeting was the development of a code of conduct for Jewish business people that could serve as a national model for business ethics. Representatives of the SAJBOD met with Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha Freedom party, in Ulundi, Natal Province. A meeting was also held with Sheila Suttner, a social worker currently residing in Perth, Australia, whose son Raymond headed the Department of National Political Education of the ANC. The Cape Council of the SAJBOD met with political science professor Vincent Mapai, to share insights into South African society. The South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) met with the ANC Youth League and Jews for Justice, an activist Jewish liberal organization, and hosted Albie Sachs, a prominent ANC executive member. Minister of Finance Barend du Plessis was guest speaker at the inaugural dinner of the Jerusalem Club, a project of the Young Adult Division of the Israel United Appeal–United Communal Fund (IUA–UCF). The club, which was formed to involve young Johannesburg Jewish professionals and business executives in Jewish affairs, met four times a year to hear guest speakers on topical issues. Both the Israeli embassy and SAJBOD sent representatives to the opening of the ANC's national conference in Durban.

A number of prominent Jewish visitors met with the SAJBOD this year, among them Rabbi Ben Isaacson of the Harare Hebrew Congregation, Zimbabwe, and Lester Scheininger, national president of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Helen Marr, president of the International Council of Jewish Women, visited South Africa as guest of the Union of Jewish Women and addressed the group's 23rd national triennial conference. The union was involved in a variety of educational activities, including the introduction of adult education, the Home Instruction Program for Pre-School Youngsters (HIPPY), and the MATAL science program designed for deprived black children at the preprimary level.

South African Jewry accepted responsibility for an agreement with the government of Lithuania to strengthen tourist relations between the two countries and to maintain Jewish cemeteries in Lithuania. The agreement was signed by Mendel
Kaplan and Prime Minister Gediminias Vagnorius of Lithuania.

It was decided to erect a permanent South African Jewish National Memorial, commemorating fallen comrades in both world wars, in Heroes Acre in the Jewish section of the West Park Cemetery, Johannesburg.

An exhibition about Franz Kafka—the man, his work, and his native city of Prague—toured major centers. The exhibition was prepared by the Nachum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv.

The Johannesburg Jewish Voice celebrated its first anniversary. Although funded by the Jewish community, the monthly served as a forum for a wide range of political opinion.

Israel-Related Activity

Four days into the Gulf War, in the second half of January, over 1,800 Jews in Cape Town gathered in solidarity and prayer, while in Johannesburg five synagogues held solidarity prayer meetings in support of Israel. An all-night solidarity vigil was held in Johannesburg under the auspices of the SAUJS. During the war, a "solidarity tour" of 70 delegates visited Israel, meeting with citizens of the country, government officials, and other dignitaries in order to boost morale and demonstrate to the people of Israel that world Jewry was behind them.

A delegation of leading South African Jews joined Jewish leaders from other countries in Jerusalem for the ninth plenary session of the World Jewish Congress in May.

Members of Parliament Tony Leon and Lester Fuchs attended the Second International Conference of Jewish Members of Parliament in Jerusalem in June. Harry Schwarz, the South African ambassador to Washington, was one of the guest speakers. The same month, a group of South African journalists visited Israel as guests of the Israel Ministry of Tourism. A seminar promoting Israeli medical products was held in Johannesburg under the joint auspices of the Israel Trade Center and the South African-Israeli Chamber of Commerce.

A number of Israeli public figures visited South Africa this year: Yosef Burg, former Knesset member and cabinet minister; Member of the Knesset Eliyahu Ben Elissar; Avishai Braverman, president of Ben-Gurion University, and, as a guest of the South African Foreign Ministry, Yossi Olmert, director of the Israel Government Press Office.

In the buildup to the Gulf War and following its outbreak, Jews and non-Jews rallied to the cause of Israel through the Israel United Appeal—United Communal Fund (IUA-UCF) solidarity campaign. Unsolicited assistance, in the form of both cash and volunteers, poured in for the first time in years. A sum of three million rands (approximately $1 million) was raised within less than two weeks of the start of the war. The coincidence of the war and the arrival of thousands of Russian Jews in Israel added an unprecedented number of new contributors to the ranks of longtime supporters. Community leaders saw the campaign as demonstrating South
African Jewry’s unfailing commitment to Judaism and Zionism.

The 1991 Operation Exodus campaign for Russian Jews was launched by Natan Sharansky in February under the auspices of the IUA-UCF. Sharansky addressed meetings in Johannesburg and Cape Town. In Cape Town he met with Jewish members of Parliament and the Presidents’ Council.

**Community Relations**

The Jewish community found itself in the middle of a bitter conflict between the authorities and a black educational organization when it was offered an empty former state-owned school building in Johannesburg. However, as soon as it became clear that the government move had frustrated takeover of the premises for sorely needed accommodation for black pupils, the Board of Jewish Education indignantly turned down the offer.

Difficulty in finding jobs and housing in Israel led a large number of Russian immigrants to apply for visas to South Africa. Among these were some 250 families who were victims of a scam perpetrated by two “employment agencies” that promised them jobs and other benefits—at a price. On arrival in South Africa, the Russians found themselves completely abandoned and destitute. Hearing of their plight, the Board of Deputies took responsibility for housing and feeding them, while successfully interceding with the government to stay deportation and to give them an opportunity to find work.

**Education**

The gradual desegregation of South African education had implications for Jewish day schools. With state schools now demanding ever increasing tuition fees and the Jewish day schools considered to be academically superior, more of the relatively few Jewish pupils in state schools were considering the day-school option. In Johannesburg, 61 percent of all Jewish children were enrolled in day schools; of these, 70 percent attended the King David Schools. In Cape Town approximately 75 percent of Jewish pupils attended the United Herzlia Schools. In addition, the Lubavitch Hebrew Academy opened a middle school.

The first multiracial Progressive Jewish day school opened in Johannesburg this year. The Yael Primary School was the latest addition to the Yael Education Project, which operated two nursery and play schools as well as an after-school center. The schools are named after the late Yael Assabi, an Israeli lawyer and the wife of Rabbi Ady Assabi, senior rabbi of the Imanu Shalom Congregation.

The Jewish Students University Program (JSUP) opened a Graduate Law School on its newly renovated Johannesburg campus. JSUP was founded by Rabbi M. Kurstag in 1976 to provide Jewish university students who are unable to attend a full-time university with an environment and facilities similar to those found on residential campuses. The latter include classrooms and lecture halls, a kosher
canteen, University of South Africa (UNISA) tutors, selected athletic and cultural activities, and a Jewish curriculum. JSUP combines a UNISA degree of choice with Jewish studies, which are organized on an informal basis and cover subjects such as Bible, Jewish philosophy, history, laws and customs, modern Hebrew, and Talmud. All discussions are in English and no prior knowledge of Hebrew is required.

Religion

The Oxford Synagogue Center, Johannesburg, celebrated Rabbi Norman Bernhard's 25th anniversary as spiritual leader. A new Chabad center was established in Lyndhurst, Johannesburg. Ties were severed between the Imanu Shalom Congregation, led by Rabbi Ady Assabi, and the South African Union of Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ). The former indicated that it wanted to distance itself from both the Left and Right and to pursue an independent and unaffiliated path.

Publications

Two new studies dealing with South African Jewry were published this year: Founders and Followers: Johannesburg Jewry 1887-1915, edited by Mendel Kaplan and Marian Robertson; and Sammy Marks: "The Uncrowned King of the Transvaal" by Richard Mendelsohn. Mendelsohn's biography of Marks, a turn-of-the-century Jewish industrialist and politician, won the University of Cape Town Book Award.

Personalia

Nadine Gordimer, the daughter of Jewish immigrants, was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, becoming South Africa's first Nobel laureate for literature. Through her many works of fiction, she criticized the indignities of racism and exposed the chasms of South Africa's divided society to an international readership.

Mendel Kaplan was elected chairman of the World Jewish Congress and reelected chairman of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency.

Mervyn Smith was elected national chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. An attorney, Smith was vice-president-elect of the Association of Law Societies of the Republic of South Africa and an executive member of the board of the Cape Performing Arts Board.

Richard Goldstone was appointed head of a Commission of Inquiry into the Prevention of Public Violence and Intimidation. Goldstone, an active member of the Jewish community, had, since his appointment as a judge in 1980, delivered several landmark judgments in the field of human rights. In 1990 he chaired the commission of inquiry into the Sebokeng shootings, in which 18 people were killed.

Prof. Phillip Tobias of the University of the Witwatersrand Medical School was awarded the LSB Leakey Prize for Multidisciplinary Research in Ape and Human Behavior.
Herby Rosenberg retired as director-general of the South African Zionist Federation. An attorney by training, he accepted the post of executive chairman of the South African Associates of Ben-Gurion University, Israel. He was also named a director of the Lubner Foundation, which assists a wide range of community affairs projects.

Hadassah Sachs retired as editor of Jewish Affairs, issued by the SAJBOD.

Rudy Frankel, prominent Jewish industrialist, founder of the giant conglomerate Tiger Oats, died this year.