Throughout 1993, in the face of numerous obstacles and setbacks, South Africa marched inexorably toward the establishment of a democratic, multiracial society. This was due largely to the determination of the two major negotiating partners — F.W. de Klerk's governing National party and Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC). A multiparty negotiating forum met for the first time in March and soon became the scene of bitter argument and confrontation. By the time it held its final plenary session in November, four parties — two black homeland administrations — Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom party and the right-wing Afrikaner Conservative party — had permanently withdrawn from the talks. The remaining participants agreed that the first nonracial, democratic general election would be held in April 1994 and that, until then, a multiparty Transitional Executive Council would be established to advise and assist the government. Furthermore, a transitional constitution was signed. The difficult first phase had come to an end; the even more challenging and crucial second phase was about to begin — the creation of the new South Africa.

In February the ANC announced that its military wing, Unkhonto we Sizwe, would be disbanded before the general election. However, neither this announcement nor increasing accord on the political front resulted in any decline in the level of violence. In Cape Town, the year began with a brutal attack on a mostly white Sunday church congregation and ended with a similar killing in a crowded pub. In April the country was shocked by the assassination of Chris Hani — a prominent figure in the ANC and Unkhonto and general secretary of the Communist party — by white right-wingers.

Even with the lifting of economic sanctions by most countries, there was little significant increase in foreign investment; local businesses also appeared reluctant to initiate new projects. Market factors as well as the increasing cost of labor had led to widespread retrenchment of workers throughout the economy. For the black population, in particular, massive unemployment remained a heavy burden. At the same time, affirmative action had decreased job opportunities for whites at almost all but the highest executive levels. The situation was further exacerbated by strikes — often without the support of trade unions — which cost millions of rand in lost
production. Labor and other problems, especially in secondary industry and in the retail sector, were of particular relevance to the Jewish community.

Despite these problems, for many South Africans the future seemed more promising than at any time during the past two decades. While emigration was still fairly high, one did not have the same sense of a mass exodus as during the '70s and '80s. In the Jewish community, for example, emigration in the early '90s did not seem to have had the same disruptive effects on communal life as it had previously. It is likely that a larger proportion of recent emigrants were younger people, and that this change was related to difficulties in entering the labor market. There was a widespread and at least partly justified perception among white high-school graduates that affirmative action had seriously reduced their chances of being accepted into universities and, more seriously, into professional schools.

Israel and the Middle East

The replacement at the end of 1992 of the Likud-appointed ambassador Zvi Gov-Ari by Dr. Alon Liel marked a change in Israel's assessment of the processes taking place in South Africa. Ambassador Liel made it clear that the most important aspect of his mission was to establish links with the ANC, which he saw as the dominant force in the black community. Israel had much to offer: its expertise in a wide range of fields and its technological innovations had already commended it to many other African states. He also believed that it was important for local Jews to become involved in the new South Africa. Still, the long-standing relationship between the ANC and the PLO remained a serious obstacle to a meaningful relationship with Israel. The real change of attitude followed the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accord at the White House in September. Immediately following the ceremony, Nelson Mandela sent congratulatory telegrams to Yitzhak Rabin and Yasir Arafat expressing the hope that "this is the beginning of a process that will eventually lead to a permanent settlement between two historically linked peoples, bringing peace and stability to the entire region." A few weeks later, Mandela and Shimon Peres met briefly in New York and congratulated each other on the progress toward peace in their respective countries.

The new relationship was reflected in the composition of two South African delegations to Israel. The first, organized at the end of 1992 by the South African Union of Jewish Students, included eight members of the ANC Youth League. On their return from the 12-day visit, during which they met with political leaders across the spectrum, they recommended to their national executive committee that lines of communication with the Israeli government should remain open, but that it was not appropriate for senior ANC leaders to visit that country officially at that time. The delegation had been impressed by Israel's achievements but remained critical of its policy toward and treatment of the Palestinians. Their harsh comments led Mervyn Smith, national chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBOD), and the Hon. Abe Abrahamson, chairman of the South African
Zionist Federation (SAZF), to issue a joint statement charging the ANC delegates with failing to recognize the complexities of the Middle East situation.

The second delegation, comprising 20 members of the ANC and several other black political organizations, accepted an invitation to visit Israel at the end of the year to observe Israeli municipal elections as part of an intensive voter-education seminar.

**Anti-Semitism**

At the end of the eighties and the beginning of the present decade, Jews became alarmed at the increase in anti-Semitic and anti-Israel statements and incidents from both the right and the left. The Jewish Board of Deputies not only monitored and investigated these manifestations, but also took appropriate action. By 1991-92, however, the board had apparently come to the conclusion that these activities did not pose any serious threat to the community. They informed members of the community — at mass meetings, smaller gatherings, and through statements in the media — that right-wing anti-Semitism involved a relatively small group of extremists and that, while their activities were being watched, there was no need for alarm or for drastic reaction. Indeed, by 1993 it appeared that the Jews were a minor item on the agendas of these groups.

With regard to the attitude of the ANC — which was almost certainly going to govern South Africa after the elections — the board acknowledged Mandela's oft-repeated declaration that the idea of anti-Semitism was as abhorrent to the ANC as any form of racism, and that the rights of Jews to organize, to freely practice their religion, and to further their cultural interests were inviolable. As to Israel, Mandela and other ANC leaders pointed out that they supported both Israeli and Palestinian nationalism, the right of each to self-determination in their own state, and their right to secure borders. The ANC, it was frequently emphasized, was not anti-Israel, but it was against Israel's continued occupation of Arab territory and "oppression of the Palestinians." In general, South African Jews seemed to accept these assurances and did not feel seriously threatened by anti-Semitism. In any case, at the level of the individual, few South African Jews ever directly experienced anti-Semitism, either in the past or in the present climate of uncertainty.

Muslim antipathy was evident from time to time, though it is difficult to distinguish between anti-Semitic and anti-Israel sentiments. Apart from articles in the Muslim press, this hostility was felt at the universities by Jewish students and their organizations on various occasions. In the public arena, one particular incident aroused considerable negative reaction. A demonstration by about 150 people outside the Israeli embassy in Cape Town on el-Quds Day was marked by anti-Israel banners and chanting, and two smoke bombs were thrown at the locked doors. At the gathering, Dawood Khan — a member of the ANC Cape regional executive — was heard shouting, "Hitler should have killed all the Jews." Condemnation by Jewish leaders was swift, as was the reaction of the ANC. The chairman of the ANC
executive, the Rev. Dr. Allan Boesak, was quoted as saying: "We are absolutely outraged by Mr. Khan's remarks and we condemn them as blatantly racist and offensive to all civilized people." Khan was ordered to apologize — which he did — and was temporarily suspended from the executive.

In July the organizers of a film festival on the theme "Limits of Liberty" persuaded the custodians of the Nazi anti-Semitic film Jew Suess to allow it to be screened in South Africa. The film was withdrawn, however, when the Board of Deputies threatened legal action. This led to considerable controversy in the media about censorship and freedom of choice — a particularly sensitive issue in a post-authoritarian, post-apartheid South Africa.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

*Demography*

In the census year 1991 the number of Jews in South Africa was estimated at between 92,000 and 106,000. Although there was no evidence in the early '90s of the high rate of emigration that characterized certain periods during the '70s and '80s, there does seem to have been a steady outflow, particularly of younger Jews, from the country. A conservative estimate based on the scanty information available suggests a total of some 4,000 emigrants between 1991 and 1993, plus an unknown number of returning Israelis — a grand total of some 6,000 persons. However, what we know of the '70s and '80s makes it likely that there was also an influx of returning émigrés and of other Jews (especially Israelis), resulting in a probable net loss of 3,000 Jews. If this is the case, then the midyear Jewish population in 1993 was probably somewhere between 89,000 and 103,000. This represented approximately 0.4 percent of the total South African population and 1.8 percent of whites.

*Communal Affairs*

Jewish responses to events in South Africa were, in general, similar to those of other white South Africans. If there was a higher rate of emigration or greater pessimism about the state of the economy among Jews, this was probably due to their overrepresentation in the higher occupational and economic levels.

On February 24, the daily Citizen quoted a statement made in the Knesset by the director of the South African Zionist Federation's Tel Aviv office, Sidney Shapiro, in which he claimed that the majority of South Africa's Jews wanted to leave the country because of a feeling of insecurity and because of impending black rule. The

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federation's head office in Johannesburg immediately refuted the report, saying that Shapiro had been misquoted; the national director of the Board of Deputies maintained that current emigration was little more than a trickle. A few days later the nationally distributed *Sunday Times* ran an article on Jewish emigration based on the results of Allie Dubb's sociodemographic study, and in June the papers quoted a Jewish Agency spokesman on the expected Jewish exodus. Regardless of the facts, it is clear that both Jews and non-Jews believed that there was significant Jewish emigration and, probably, that it was higher than among other sections of the population.

Community leaders continued to meet with opinion makers across the political spectrum. Numerous political leaders were hosted by the SAJBOD. In February a prominent group of Jewish businessmen held private talks with the ANC on the economic situation in South Africa and the role of the private sector in the future of the country. The meeting was convened by the SAJBOD at the request of the ANC, led by its president, Nelson Mandela. The Jewish delegation was led by SAJBOD national chairman Mervyn Smith. At the meeting it was agreed that "structures should be put in place that will enable the two groups to continue their discussions on an ongoing basis and to propose practical steps for future implementation." According to the SAJBOD's national director, Seymour Kopelowitz, the meeting did not focus on Jewish issues. Tokyo Sexaule, ANC chairman for the PWV (Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging) region, addressed a Jerusalem Club dinner in Johannesburg in October.

On various occasions throughout the year, Mandela and other African leaders paid tribute to the Jewish contribution to the economic development of South Africa and urged Jewish entrepreneurs not to leave the country but to use their capital and know-how to aid in its reconstruction. The most comprehensive and reassuring statement to date on the ANC's attitude to the Jews was spelled out by Mandela in his keynote address at the opening of the 37th National Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in July. His message to the community was that South Africa needed all its people to help build a common future. The Jewish community, he said, should be optimistic about that future and "not beat a hasty retreat." The congress reelected Mervyn Smith as national chairman. Smith indicated that the South African Jewish community was fully committed to "equality, freedom, and mutual respect in local society" and pledged that it would do everything it could to assist in the advancement of these ideals.

President F.W. de Klerk was guest of honor at the Maccabi South Africa sports dinner in January, held to honor the 1992 sportsmen/women of the year. In his address he praised Maccabi for helping to heal rifts in society. In February, Mr. Justice Richard Goldstone, chairman of the Goldstone Commission investigating public violence and intimidation, was honored by the Jewish community at a gala banquet in Cape Town for his contribution to the peace process in South Africa. He was similarly honored by the Oxford Synagogue Center, Johannesburg, in a testimonial dinner.

The Union of Jewish Women of South Africa was chosen to host the 16th triennial
International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW) convention in Johannesburg in May. Veteran opposition parliamentarian Helen Suzman gave the keynote address, in which she surveyed political events from the breakdown of apartheid to the period of transition. Also addressing the conference was Dr. Frene Ginwala, head of the ANC research department and deputy head of the Commission on the Emancipation of Women. Justice Richard Goldstone delivered the closing address. This was the first international Jewish conference held in South Africa, subsequent to the repeal of apartheid laws.


American Jewish organizations continued to show a strong interest in South African affairs. Diana Aviv, associate executive vice-chairwoman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC), and Albert Vorspan of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations came from the United States to represent NJCRAC at an international solidarity conference of the ANC in Johannes burg in March. Dr. Shimon Samuels, Paris-based director for Europe and Latin America of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, addressed a special meeting in Johannesburg of the South African chapter of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists in May. The same month, Rabbi David Rosen, director of Interfaith Relations in the Anti-Defamation League’s Israel Office and ADL liaison to the Vatican, addressed the SAJBOD. In August, during a national tour of the United States, Nelson Mandela met with senior leaders of the American Jewish Committee, in New York, and spoke of his high regard for South African Jews.

Israel-Related Activity

Ariel “Arik” Sharon launched the annual Israel United Appeal-United Communal Fund (IUA-UCF) campaign in March in Johannesburg. Sharon said the Jewish people was going through one of the most dramatic and exciting periods in its history. The invited audience saw a moving video of the rescue of endangered Jews from Sarajevo in the former Yugoslavia.

The SAZF held its 42nd conference in Johannesburg, July 29- August 1. Chairman Abe Abrahamson called for bridges of understanding to be built between the Zionist movement and other communities in the new South Africa, so as to insure the continuation of the strong links that bind Jews to the State of Israel. He called on the Jewish community to learn to cope with the new situation in South Africa with dignity and strength.
Religion

Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau of Israel opened the biennial conference of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues of South Africa (UOS), held in Johannesburg April 29-May 2. The UOS has served as the umbrella body for organizations and synagogues promoting traditional Judaism in South Africa since 1933.

At a banquet held in Johannesburg to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the UOS, tribute was paid to Rabbi Irma Aloy, who had served the South African Jewish community for 56 years. In his honor the UOS established the Rabbi Aloy Foundation, which lists among its aims the training of Jewish religious and judicial functionaries, in-service training for rabbis, the promotion of Orthodox Judaism, and the provision of scholarships for those studying to become rabbis.

State president F.W. de Klerk was guest of honor at a gala banquet hosted by the UOS in September to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Cape Beth Din. In his address, the president pledged that the new South Africa would continue to provide freedom of religion and protection for minority groups.

Bnai Akiva inaugurated a synagogue at its headquarters (bayit) in Johannesburg. The synagogue would serve as a center for daily minyanim as well as a Beit Midrash, a study center, for the movement.

The South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ) celebrated the 60th anniversary of the introduction of Reform Judaism to South Africa at its 37th biennial assembly, held in Port Elizabeth in June. The founder of the Reform movement in South Africa, Rabbi Moses Cyrus Weiler, was present. There are ten Progressive congregations in South Africa, the largest in Cape Town and Johannesburg, with 1,200 and 2,000 members respectively, and 400 members in the Durban congregation.

During 1993 the SAUPJ struggled to retrieve Temple Shalom and Temple Emanuel in Johannesburg from the control of Rabbi Adi Assabi, who had declared himself and his two congregations to be independent and Conservative. The matter came to court in June, where the case of those seeking to regain Temples Shalom and Emanuel for the SAUPJ was dismissed. Subsequently the matter was settled out of court, and Rabbi Assabi relinquished control of Temple Emanuel, which returned to the SAUPJ in September. Temple Shalom remained with Rabbi Assabi, operating as an independent congregation unaffiliated with any movement. The struggle, which had begun in 1992, severely weakened Reform Judaism in the Johannesburg area and reduced the number of members from 1,600 families affiliated with four Reform temples to 1,000 families affiliated with three.

Education

Distinguished educators, communal and civic leaders, and academics attended the official opening of the Mt. Scopus school in Johannesburg, a Jewish-sponsored college offering a secular education in a Jewish environment. The academic program
consists of the University of South Africa correspondence curriculum, supplemented by a program in Jewish studies.

The Jewish Teen Committee (JTC), under the auspices of the SAZF, continued to operate for all Jewish children in government and private schools. JTC brings Judaism to school children through regular meetings, educational seminars, and a variety of social events.

Hillel School, a Jewish day school in Benoni, closed at the end of 1993. Its students were to be accommodated at the King David Primary School in Johannesburg.

The Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand was scaled down as part of a wider retrenchment program carried out by the university.

Culture

In May a community television service, Shalom TV, was inaugurated. Shalom TV is broadcast on Sunday mornings via M-Net, a cable station. Programs have a South African flavor with a mix of both Israeli and world Jewish elements. "Entertainment, education and topicality will be the watchwords of the new series," said Prof. Harold Rudolf, Johannesburg city councillor and Jewish communal leader, who spearheaded the project.

Publications

Joseph Sherman, senior lecturer in the Department of English at the University of the Witwatersrand, was appointed executive director of Jewish Affairs, a cultural journal published by the Jewish Board of Deputies.

Two noteworthy new books were Armed and Dangerous — My Undercover Struggle Against Apartheid by Ronnie Kasrils and In No Uncertain Terms, an autobiography by Helen Suzman.

Personalia

Issy Pinshaw was appointed National Party-nominated Member of Parliament for the Transvaal. Pinshaw, a businessman, was actively involved in the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and was one-time president of the Association of Chambers of Commerce of South Africa. He began his political career in local Johannesburg politics in 1984. Councillor Les Dishy was elected mayor of Johannesburg.

Ivan Levy was appointed deputy president of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists. He is cochairman of the South Africa chapter of the association.

Louis Shill was appointed minister of housing and public works of South Africa,
the first Jew to be named to the cabinet in almost 50 years. (The only other Jew to be appointed to the cabinet was Dr. Henry Gluckman, who served as minister of health and housing under General Jan Smuts, from 1945 to 1948.)

The Jewish Business Achievers of the Year Award went to "Sun King" Sol Kerzner, creator of Sun City, the Lost City, and other top casinos and resorts throughout South Africa.

Mendel Kaplan, chairman of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency, was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

Helen Suzman, veteran liberal parliamentarian, was awarded the Nahum Goldmann Award of the World Jewish Congress.

Simon Jackson, executive director of the Jewish Helping Hand and Burial Society (Chevra Kadisha) for nearly 45 years, passed away at the age of 74.