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**SOUTH AFRICAN JEWRY AND THE HOLOCAUST:  
RESPONDING TO ANTISEMITISM AT HOME AND ABROAD**

**KIM L. STOLOFF**

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
Requirements for Ordination**

**Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion  
Graduate Rabbinic Program  
New York, New York**

**March, 2001  
Advisor: Dr. Carole B. Balin**

In Memory of My Brother, Dean

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Our religion enjoins us to prepare ourselves for the worst amidst the best. So, as I look at my life today—in the face of tragedy, loss, and illness—in the face of all these unpredictable circumstances—I am grateful to have fulfilled my dream of attending Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

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we faced Dean's death. Together, we managed to start life renewed. Together, we gave each other encouragement and hope for a better time to come. It was the support, wisdom and caring given to me by my family that enabled me to reach my goals.

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rejoice for achievements yet unfulfilled, and I will continue to praise God—because each ending has always brought me to a new beginning.

**South African Jewry and the Holocaust:  
Responding to Antisemitism at Home and Abroad.**

Kim L. Stoloff

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

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## INTRODUCTION

The dollhouse was large enough for the two of us. It was decorated with lace curtains, tons of pillows and a table with four chairs. We did not spend a lot of time together, but our tea parties were the best. We always came together shyly, but the day would end with much chatter and laughter. After we sipped our tea and watered the tulips that decorated my windowsills, I would wave good-bye to Emily as she closed the door of my dollhouse, and walked through my parents' backyard. Emily and I were friends.

It never occurred to me to ask where she went after she left my home. I imagined that she went home to a house, just like mine, with maids and butlers and cooks—as was customary in white South African households. It never dawned on me that since her mother, Betty, was my nanny, caring for me day and night, Emily had to live with her grandparents. It was only much later that I became aware of the contrast between my lifestyle as a South African Jew in the late 1970s and the lives lived in the decrepit shack that the government had designated for Emily and her family, in a black township known as Kwa Thema. I was too young to fully understand the inequities of the social and political systems around me. I was too young able to observe, first hand and writ, the profound injustices and powerful examples of the heroic struggles which characterize this century.

I was born in the small town of Springs, near Johannesburg, where roughly half of my classmates at school were Jewish. My life outside school revolved around Temple Beth Emeth, founded by my grandfather, the first Reform Congregation in this small but strong Jewish community. As Jews, it became increasingly difficult for my family to justify a lifestyle supported by Apartheid. Despite being sheltered from overt antisemitism, disagreement with the policies of the Nationalist Government eventually led my family to break away from

our home and immigrate to the United States. It is only recently that change has come to my country of birth.

Now that I have been living in the United States, I realize that it is as easy for us, not just Jewish South Africans, to put on blinders. Not to question why park benches, bathrooms, restaurants, water fountains or even the entrance to the zoo were painted "Whites Only." The South Africa I lived in was that of Apartheid. Although the Jewish community fought for reform, and Jews were traditionally among the leaders in anti-Apartheid efforts, the Jewish community of South Africa has been criticized for not taking a more active role in responding to Apartheid, both recently and historically.

The 1930s in South Africa were days of racism and new legislatively enacted discriminatory measures against blacks. The silence of the officially elected South African [Jewish] community on these issues at the time was deafening ... No doubt a major reason was their abiding preoccupation with fears for their own position.<sup>1</sup>

Numerous books have been written on Apartheid, but very few on South African Jewry. I question how such strong criticism can be leveled against South African Jews without examining the antisemitism of South Africa's past. While the South Africa I lived in was not fraught with antisemitism, the feeling of vulnerability remained. Looking to our texts, Moses recounted the triumphs and tragedies of Israel's past in the book of Deuteronomy and we do well to follow him with a periodic review of our own behavior as well as societal behavior. Moses leads us to our highest goals—peace, prosperity and security, first spiritual then material.

I realize that I have a true challenge in examining my own heritage, because of the decisions made in the past. The words of the past, the words used today and the words of the

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Schwartz. *Jewish Affairs*. ed. Joseph Sherman Houghton, vol. 52, no. 1, (Johannesburg: South Africa.), 28.

future can wound—can incite people to terrible acts. In *The Way of All Flesh*, Samuel Butler describes a proper Victorian tourist who travels in the French Alps, stopping to admire each scene that his guidebook tells him he should, while he ignores all the splendid vistas that the book did not mention.<sup>2</sup> I see one mission of our Reform Judaism as heightening our awareness of some of these vistas that escaped underlining in our childhood texts and the lessons we reviewed at home or in college. Having experienced the “unthinkable,” we Jews understand what this means.

This thesis examines the actions and behavior of Jews in South Africa during the period from the 1930s up to, and including, World War II. Jews in South Africa were faced with a dilemma: since Jewish immigration into South Africa began at the turn of the century, Jews had been subject to intense antisemitism by Afrikaans and to a lesser extent by English-speaking communities. Rhetoric from Nazi Germany polluted the Afrikaner community. Their reaction included writing pamphlets and articles in newspapers, delivering parliamentary speeches, enacting immigration laws, and even sponsoring rallies and boycotts directed against Jews. At the same time, South African Jews were aware of the growing desperation of European Jewry, and the refugee problem. South African Jews contributed to the war effort though they were fearful of the repercussions at home. This led to contradictory actions by the Jewish population, which I will analyze in the context of their allegiance to their fellow Jews on the one hand and their precarious situation in South Africa on the other. I will attempt to evaluate whether their actions were hypocritical or whether their first allegiance was to their own survival in an increasingly precarious milieu. It is an easy leap to point out that any system which could criminalize race could also do so by

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Butler, *The Way of All Flesh*, (London: Oxford H. Milford University Press, 1944).

religion, and so it becomes quite remarkable that the Jewish Community was able to do all that it did in the face of Afrikaner opposition.

**CHAPTER 1**  
**A PRE-WORLD WAR II HISTORY OF**  
**JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA**

For many Americans, it is difficult to grasp recent South African history. The genesis of Apartheid as a legal and political reality is as foreign as the apparent silence of the South African Jewish community during World War II. It can be suggested, however, that our own vantage point has skewed our perspective. The reality is that the South African Jewish community did respond to world events, joining together in unprecedented fashion within the limits of its ability.

In this introductory chapter I will focus on the nature of Afrikaner nationalism and its influence on Jews. Until we understand the unique mindset of the Afrikaner, South African history will remain incomprehensible. The key to the actions of the South African Jewish community, indeed to all of South African twentieth-century history, lies within the contrived nationalistic culture of this group. Afrikaners dominated both the official and unofficial leadership of the country, and South African Jews were subjected to a variety of forms of discrimination that tempered their responses both at home and abroad. Jews' daily lives were affected by the unique and tumultuous politics of the land, thus throughout this study we will return again and again to the impact of the changing political framework during the war years.

**The Development of the Afrikaner Movement**

White descendants of the European Dutch first arrived in southern Africa in 1652. As employees of the Dutch East India Company, they settled near the Cape of Good Hope to establish a refreshment station for ships, en route to the Far East. Those Dutch who remained permanently in the Cape were later joined by a minority of Protestant French Huguenots.

The blending of these groups resulted in the development of a new culture that called themselves "Afrikaners." The merging of these two groups, the influence of African tribal languages, and the isolation from the Netherlands corrupted and changed the Dutch language into a distinctive dialect known as Afrikaans (the Afrikaans language; officially recognized in South Africa along with English in 1925). Possessing a language and culture that is unique to southern Africa, the Afrikaner has no other home, and has, over time developed xenophobia toward not only black Africans but those of English descent.<sup>3</sup>

The conflict between Afrikaners and Great Britain has dominated South African history. British involvement began during the Revolutionary Wars against France from 1789-1802.<sup>4</sup> As an imperial power, Britain temporarily occupied the Cape in South Africa from 1795-1803 in order to protect the sea passage to India. Britain occupied the area once again in 1806, following the outbreak of war between France and her European neighbors. The seeds of Afrikaner nationalism were sown from conflicts with British rule, including changes in education, the imposition of the English language, abolition of slavery, freedom of the press and the introduction of the British legal system.

Britain's attempt to undermine both Afrikaner nationalism and the previous 150 years of Dutch cultural influence (not only in this white settlement, but also in cities besides Cape Town) fueled a conflict between the British and the Boers (Afrikaner farmers). Fearing absorption by British rule, each of the Boer regions responded with varied degrees of

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<sup>3</sup> As a Jewish South African, I had very little contact with the Afrikaner community. Beside the segregation of Apartheid, schooling was segregated between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans.

<sup>4</sup>N. E. Davis, *History of Southern Africa*, (Essex, England: Longman Group Ltd., 1978), 31.

hostility. Boers confronted the reality that their "culture" was inferior to that of the British.

In the words of the South Africa historian William Henry Vatcher, Jr.:

It was only after the advent of the British, with their all-too-evident cultural and technological superiority, that the Afrikaners perceived their institutions and way of life as dangerously threatening, and began to develop consciousness of belonging to a group and to rally in defense of *ons eie* (our own).<sup>5</sup>

Thus in response to colonialism, the Afrikaner created a group memory that became foremost in their consciousness. At the same time, they further developed their language, which resembled that of the early Dutch settlers, and capitalized on their common experience and ethnic origin. In effect, Afrikaners effectively created their own ethnicity. Since they had no historic "fatherland," South Africa became home to their Afrikaner nationalism. In reality, of course, the black Africans, Indians, Dutch and British had occupied this territory long before the advent of the Afrikaner.

According to the British High Commissioner of the Cape, Alfred Milner (late 1890s), Afrikaner nationalism began to threaten British colonization efforts with political independence. Rejecting colonial rule and following a rigid Calvinist dogma regarding themselves as God's 'chosen people,' the Boers began their so-called "Great Trek" in 1836. They made an exodus from Cape Town into other South African settlements, establishing communities beyond British control and based upon Afrikaner principles that were anti-democratic and anti-liberal. These principles, as we shall see, later came to resemble those of

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<sup>5</sup> William Henry Vatcher Jr., *White Laager: The Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), x.

Nazism.<sup>6</sup> Using superior weapons, the Afrikaners overcame the native black population by the end of the century.

### **Origins of the South African Jewish Community**

The Dutch had been in Cape Town for 154 years when the British admitted Jewish settlers in 1806. The Dutch East India Company had prohibited Jewish settlement, but the agenda of the British was very different. In response to German and Portuguese claims on southern Africa, Britain sought to annex areas settled by Afrikaners. When diamonds were discovered in the town of Kimberley, already populated by Afrikaners, this provided an opportunity for Britain to achieve its goal. Widespread publicity about the discovery stimulated immigration into the area by European Jews. At the same time, roads and railroads opened up the interior to the discovery of gold in the Transvaal region.

This news about potential riches sparked a wave of immigration from England to South Africa—initially into the Cape Town region and subsequently into the minefields. A large number of these immigrants were Jewish, and within a short period another branch of the Diaspora was firmly rooted in South Africa. After the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, many Russian Jews immigrated to the Witwatersrand (near Johannesburg) with the hope of finding success in the gold industry. In contrast to rights received in the Cape, they were denied civic and political rights in this area.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>N. E. Davis, *History of Southern Africa*, (Essex, England: Longman Group Ltd., 1978), 53-55.

<sup>7</sup> Milton Shain, "South Africa," *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, ed. David S. Wyman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 671.



### Seeds of Conflict: Afrikaner vs. Uitlander

The influx of Europeans brought the Afrikaner population into direct contact with various different races. Predictably, the resident Afrikaner population confronted the newcomers with hostility of both a physical and political nature, and a series of bloody battles broke out in the occupied regions. The mounting tensions between the governing British, the Jewish European immigrants, and the Afrikaner population culminated in warfare, and the first Anglo-Boer war broke out by 1880.

Following the initial Boer victories, British Imperialism continued to be in direct conflict with Afrikaner nationalism, now more militant in nature. The new immigrants (many of whom were Jews) known as *Uitlanders* (outlanders), opened up the South African mining industry. The Afrikaners associated Jews with the British imperialists, although they made up only a small portion of the white population. Jews contributed to the colony in both the mohair and merino fleece trade.<sup>8</sup> They quickly became financially successful while the Boers remained subsistent in agriculture. The Jews' rapid assimilation into the local business culture contrasted sharply with the path taken by the Afrikaners. "Because the Boers had little art, less architecture, and no literature they depended on their farms, their Bibles, and their blood to set them off sharply against native and outlander."<sup>9</sup> "The reluctance of Boer leaders to amend the constitution and grant rights to the newcomers, despite substantial pressure from English immigrants, was motivated by fear that Boer power would be eroded

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> William Henry Vatcher Jr., *White Laager: The Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 41.

and ultimately subsumed by new demographic realities."<sup>10</sup> This fear of *Uitlander* pressure culminated in the second Anglo-Boer War.

This time the results were very different. At the end of the war in approximately 1900, having succumbed to overwhelming military force, the Afrikaner settlers felt a sense of deep frustration. Their hard-fought independence had been lost. They were part of a British colony extending from the Cape deep into the interior. Their sacrifices of manpower and resources had been in vain. Beyond simple defeat lay a sense of despair—in fact, their "homeland" had been stolen from them. This provoked a sense of xenophobia that endures to this day (despite the recent changes in government.) As expressed by Vatcher:

They had been chastised on their own home soil and they could see nowhere to go ... The war triggered a fiery Afrikaner nationalism bent on avenging the humiliations of defeat—a nationalism that took some sixty years to reach the triumph of an Afrikaner-dominated South African Republic.<sup>11</sup>

Parallels to the political climate of post WW I Germany cannot be ignored. In the aftermath of a devastating military defeat, the Boers blamed a scapegoat for their problems: namely, the Jew. This "rich Jew antisemitism" which persisted and intensified with the outbreak of the second Anglo-Boer War in South Africa continued into the next century.<sup>12</sup> Although Afrikaners knew of poor Jews who worked as miners or peddlers, they associated wealthier Jews with the British upper classes and regarded them as oppressors or invaders. As

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<sup>10</sup> Milton Shain, "South Africa," in *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, ed. David S. Wyman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, YEAR), 671.

<sup>11</sup> William Henry Vatcher Jr., *White Laager: The Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 28.

<sup>12</sup> Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991), 105.

Milton Shain explains: "This association was reinforced by the conspicuous presence of Jews on the goldfields and by their disproportionate representation among the mining magnates."<sup>13</sup>

Tensions between the increasing number of immigrants and the Boers were heightened by the growth in urban populations of Afrikaners, who had to compete with the *Uitlanders* directly. The prosperity and upward mobility of Jewish refugees, led to this economic competition and provoked further antisemitic sentiment among Afrikaners, who also viewed the penetration of Jews into universities and professions with alarm

### **Afrikaner Influence in Parliament and Political Parties**

Despite these Afrikaner sentiments, Jews received full political and economic rights in the new Union as part of the British Empire. In fact, five Jews were elected to the first Parliament. This was not appreciated by much of the population, and in the words of one historian: "While many observers admired Jewish enterprise, loyalty, and sobriety, others cast aspersions on the Jews for alleged dishonest and knavery."<sup>14</sup>

The Union of South Africa was established in 1910 and "was at first carried forward on a wave of sentiment for English-Afrikaans unity."<sup>15</sup> The British Government ratified the Union of South Africa Act, which made the following provisions:

- The Union Parliament had supreme authority over the provinces of the Cape, Natal, Orange Free State and the Transvaal.
- The executive officer was the Governor-General

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<sup>13</sup> Milton Shain, *Antisemitism*, (London: Bowerdean Publishing Company Ltd., 1988), 67.

<sup>14</sup> Milton Shain, "South Africa," in *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, ed. David S. Wyman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, YEAR), 671.

<sup>15</sup> Edwin S. Munger, *Afrikaner and African Nationalism: South African Parallels and Parameters*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 4.

- The Union Parliament consisted of a House of Assembly and the Senate
- Parliament's capital was in Cape Town, the Executive capital was Pretoria, and the Judiciary capital at Bloemfontein.
- The two official languages were English and Dutch.
- Afrikaners were given more voting areas in rural communities than their numbers would justify, giving them an advantage over non-Afrikaners.<sup>16</sup>

In reviewing these provisions, it is clear that the Union was built upon a series of compromises between the British and the Afrikaners. In keeping with the spirit of cooperation, the British chose an Afrikaner, General Louis Botha, to head the government as the first Prime Minister. Botha favored a partnership with English-speaking South Africans, but was soon opposed by the newly founded National Party. This party was established by General Barry Munnik Hertzog, Botha's former Minister of Justice, in 1914. The National Party declared itself the "vehicle of Afrikaner nationalism," a claim ultimately carried to victory with the regaining of republican independence in 1961.<sup>17</sup> Upon Botha's death, General Jan Smuts of the South Africa Party succeeded him. He served from 1919-1924, but his ministry ended when Hertzog allied himself with the Labour Party and won the support of poor white workers.

After his first ministry collapsed, Hertzog led the Nationalist Party to victory again in 1933 by proposing a united Afrikanerdom made up of both English-speaking and Afrikaans-

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<sup>16</sup> N. E. Davis, *History of Southern Africa*, (Essex, England: Longman Group Ltd., 1978), 31.

<sup>17</sup> Edwin S. Munger, *Afrikaner and African Nationalism: South African Parallels and Parameters*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 5.

speaking South Africans. Economic concerns and controversy over the gold standard eventually led to a fusion government under Hertzog's leadership, with Smuts of the South Africa Party positioned as Deputy Prime Minister. By December 1934 this fusion government—consisting of the Nationalist Party and the South Africa Party—merged into the United South African National Party. Hertzog and Smuts, both Afrikaners, had very different ideologies. "Hertzog always looked over his shoulder to see if the Afrikaners were following him; Smuts looked to see if the English-speaking South Africans were following him." <sup>18</sup>

Rejecting an offer to join the cabinet, Hertzog's one-time Interior Minister, Daniel Francois Malan, later to be Prime Minister of South Africa (1948), and his more extremist Afrikaner followers established a Purified National Party in 1934. "From the early days of Afrikaner nationalism to the present, one tendency has been repeatedly in evidence—an extremist right wing periodically splits, or hives, from the conservative main body, and eventually has its own way."<sup>19</sup> National Socialism in Germany found a sympathetic following among many Afrikaners, and Malan sought to build his party upon Nazi philosophy by emphasizing the need for an independent Afrikaner nation with its own national flag, language, and anthem. Herzog's tenure and coalition were jeopardized by the outbreak of World War II. Wishing to remain neutral, he chose not to support Britain against Germany. Simultaneously, Smuts perceived the danger from Hitler's Germany and opposed Herzog in Parliament. Victorious in defeating Herzog's neutrality motion, he took the helm of both the Party and the Parliament. War was declared against Germany, and Herzog

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<sup>18</sup> William Henry Vatcher Jr., *White Laager: The Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965), 54.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

defected to the right wing National Party. On an anti-war ticket, Herzog maintained a short alliance with Malan in the re-named Herenigde Party (Reunited National or People's Party) until he was forced out of the group for maintaining that South African nationalism consisted of both English and Afrikaans native South Africans.

### **Latent Forms of Antisemitism**

While several problems arise from the use of the term antisemitism, we need to distinguish between a political or even polemical quarrel and the desire to wipe out Jewish civilization. Certainly we cannot claim that every manifestation of anti-Jewish thinking is antisemitism. However in the case of South Africa, the appellation of "antisemitism" is appropriate. Unlike Hitler, Afrikaners, did not in general seek to wipe out the Jews. In analyzing the progression of anti-Jewish sentiment in South Africa, however, it becomes evident that there was a progression away from mere religious differences toward a more homicidal hatred.

In today's day and age, we do not often encounter publicly antisemitic political parties. Prior to WW II, however, several large political and cultural organizations in South Africa were able to be openly antisemitic and hostile toward racial and ethnic Jewish attributes without facing negative restraints or repercussions. Afrikaner nationalistic groups were boldly and publicly antisemitic. Afrikaners influenced both the populace and the government, and expressed their antagonism toward Jews in racial terms. They regarded Jews as a separate and dangerous race

In many ways, the hostile environment in Nazi Germany fed the local climate, for organized political antisemitism in South Africa followed a similar course to that in

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Germany. As we have seen, after WW I, Afrikaners shared with Germans a sense of shame in defeat, a sense of persecution by outsiders, and so adopted extreme forms of racism, including the revival of the mid-fifteenth century notion of purity of blood. Like the Nazis, South African antisemites labeled Jews as communists, revolutionaries, liberals, and finally, as conspirators in global plots against Christianity.

Antisemitism in this period manifested itself against the inherent "perverse" characteristics of Jews rather than against the Jewish religion. The Jews of South Africa, like their European brethren, were seen as lewd, greedy, money-grubbing moneylenders, untrustworthy, and guilty of insolence and boldness. For example, mimicking the Nazi paper, *Der Stuermer*, Afrikaans newspapers published cartoons of the caricature, "Hoggenheimer," representing the fat Jewish capitalist.<sup>20</sup> As well, antisemites culled from popular religious teachings that branded Jews as devils, ritual murderers, poisoners of the well, and desecrators of the host.

These racist ideas found ready acceptance among many Afrikaners. National Party members formed a series of right-wing organizations, including the Greyshirts, led by Louis T. Weichardt; the Ossewa Brandag (Ox-Wagon Sentinel), led by Hans J. F. van Rensburg; and the New Order, led by Oswald Pirow. These groups based their perceptions of Jews on the same irrational animosity generated by Hitler. While they claimed to be cultural, and thus non-political groups, their polarizing influence on South African politics was enormous. Their names will recur in this thesis because of their incessant chain of clearly antisemitic actions throughout the WW II period.

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<sup>20</sup> Gideon Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience 1910-1960*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980), 67.

### **The South African Jewish Board of Deputies**

It became abundantly clear to South African Jews that something had to be done to combat the stereotypes and actions against them. Organizing together to present a single voice, they formed a representative body, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. Lord Milner approved the establishment of the Board in 1903 in the Transvaal and Natal areas to protect the special interests of the Jewish community. Government and Opposition agendas had both featured prominently among organized Jewish authorities, and Lord Milner claimed that there had been difficulty in receiving advice from one representative Jewish body, without getting diametrically opposite opinions.

By 1912, the South African Board was recognized as an independent body, unaffiliated with any other body outside of the Union. It served "as the accredited mouthpiece of the Jewish community of South Africa."<sup>21</sup> Membership was made up of an Executive Council and delegates from various Jewish organizations, mostly affiliated with the Board. In its own words, the Board's function was:

To represent the Jewish citizens of the Union and to act as their spokesman, and to be available for consultation by Civic and Government Authorities on questions especially affecting the Jewish population of South Africa. To safeguard their rights as citizens against discrimination, whether religious, legal, social or economic.<sup>22</sup>

By 1933, the Board of Deputies recognized that antisemitic propaganda was rapidly accelerating and was damaging the relationship between the Jewish and non-Jewish communities in South Africa. It thus took on the responsibility to expose false claims and

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<sup>21</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *What it Is and What it Does*. March 17, 1939.

<sup>22</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *What it Is and What it Does*. March 17, 1939.



accusations being made against the Jewish community. Their policies contained the following points:

- The Board will request no additional privileges for Jews that their non-Jewish citizens do not possess.
- The Board will facilitate the naturalization process for foreign-born Jews who have qualified for South African citizenship.
- The Board is a non-political organization that owes allegiance to no political faction.
- The Board has no interest in fostering or promoting Jewish immigration into the Union. The Board's main concern is to prevent discrimination against Jewish immigrants.
- The policy of the Board of Deputies is to cooperate and foster mutual understanding between Jewish and non-Jewish South Africans.<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, the Board would play an instrumental role in attempting to combat antisemitism within South Africa. Its approach to the problem would alter over time, as we shall see, as the political climate for Jews in South Africa continued to deteriorate.

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<sup>23</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *What it Is and What it Does*. March 17, 1939.

## CHAPTER 2

### 1930s: THE RISING TIDE OF POTENT ANTISEMITISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

In this chapter, I will analyze the political atmosphere in South Africa vis-à-vis the Jewish community of the 1930s. The growing identification of South Africa's National Party with German Nazism made South Africa ripe for antisemitism as well as Apartheid. The pro-Nazi, antisemitic sentiments provoked by even modest numbers of incoming German immigrants incited the Board of Deputies and members of the Jewish community to react in contradictory ways. Finally, I will examine the proposals put forth to restrict Jewish immigration.

#### Afrikaner Sentiment and the Rising Antisemitic Tide

Hitler's ascent to power affected communities far beyond Germany's borders. By the mid 1930s, the antisemitic tide was steadily rising in South Africa. Indeed, Afrikaner sentiment closely paralleled that of Germany. Afrikaners met the increase in the number of German refugees with hostility. In response Jacob Rubik, the editor of the Hebrew periodical, *Barkai*, "The Morning Star," wrote several editorials criticizing this mentality. Upon his arrival in 1930 from Lithuania, Rubik immediately became active in the South African Zionist Federation and the South African Board of Jewish Education. He asserted that antisemitic sentiment began "the day the Nazi movement in Germany grew roots in the heart of the German people."<sup>24</sup>

Given the volatile atmosphere, and amidst allegations of Jewish control of the press, Rubik's ability to express such an unpopular view may be explained by the fact that this Hebrew periodical was meant only for a Jewish audience. It is probable that *Barkai*, the only

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<sup>24</sup> Jacob Rubik, ed., "Antisemitism in Africa," *Barkai*, (August-September 1936): 10.

South African periodical published in Hebrew, did not reach a wide audience. Most South African Jewish publications were printed in Yiddish. While liturgical Hebrew was understood, the majority of Jews did not speak Hebrew. In fact, primary sources analyzed from the files of the Board of Deputies make no mention of Mr. Rubik or his periodical. Rubik is most likely a reliable source understanding the Jewish situation in South Africa because Afrikaners, unable to understand Hebrew, could not impose restrictions upon him.

The Greyshirt Trial of 1934 is a case in point. Rubik used the pages of *Barkai* to describe and analyze the tactics used by Weichardt's Greyshirt Movement against the Jewish community. The case was litigated in Grahamstown in July 1934. Leaders of the Greyshirt Movement claimed to possess incontrovertible proof of a "world Jewish conspiracy" to destroy the Christian religion and civilization. The basis of the Greyshirt claim lay in a document allegedly stolen from the Port Elizabeth synagogue and signed by their rabbi, Reverend A. Levy. The account of this fictitious plot was written along lines similar to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

In response to this Greyshirt claim, the Board of Deputies brought an action for libel, on behalf of Reverend Levy. The suit was filed against three of the perpetrators: Johannes von Strauss von Moltke, leader of the South African Gentile Socialists; Harry Victor Inch, leader of the Eastern Cape Greyshirts; and David Hermanus Oliver of the South African Socialist Movement. The court indicted the culprits and damages were brought against them. Yet, Rubik wrote, the situation of the Jews was still desperate. As is so often the case in this type of action, the damage done by the spreading of false allegations was not mitigated by the successful outcome of the libel trial. Many who continued to believe in this lie and in

other lies perpetrated by the Greyshirts.<sup>25</sup> Rubik analyzed the outcome of the trial, remaining concerned:

The Judge found them guilty and Reverend Levy from Port Elizabeth innocent. Despite this verdict and despite all the announcements about it in the newspaper, many people still believed in all these lies ... they were not ashamed to even say afterwards that the Jews were responsible for all the troubles in the world.<sup>26</sup>

After the trial Rubik continued to alert his readership to growing antisemitism in South Africa. He expressed concern over the antisemitic rhetoric in the South African Press, and warned that what was happening in Germany could occur in South Africa. The South African antisemitic movement was no longer passive, he argued, although he conceded that there was dissension among the antisemitic parties: "The antisemitic movement is not one party block, rather it is divided into many organizations, but the public role of each is to direct active propaganda against Jews."<sup>27</sup>

Rubik was bothered by South African Jewry's apparent indifference to the growing popular antisemitism. Perhaps the Jewish community did not take the threats of these movements seriously, he wrote, since there was currently no cohesion among the Afrikaner leadership. In his words, "the situation in which the Jews of South Africa live, [within] a country warmed under the hidden sunlight ... who could believe that in such a country the antisemitic movement could grow roots?" He urged South Africans Jews to learn from the Jews of Germany. Although he claimed that one could not predict the same results as in Germany, the South African Jewish community should not deceive themselves. He further

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

warned the Jewish community of the danger of the right wing of the movements. Weichardt had started an Afrikaans newspaper called *Die Waarheid*, "The Truth," that he used to poison community opinion against the Jews. Even after the verdict in the Greyshirt Trial, *Die Waarheid* had the audacity not only to write that Jews raped Christian daughters, but to revive the notorious blood-libel myth that Jews used Christian blood in their preparations for Passover.<sup>28</sup>

According to Rubik, an objective of the antisemites was to strip Jews of their citizenship and rights in South Africa. Jews were blamed for the humiliation suffered by Afrikaners in the Boer War. They were even accused of contributing to the defeat of Germany in the First World War. (Many Afrikaners were anti-British, hence sympathized with Germany). Afrikaners were being advised that the only remedy for their suffering was to "throw out the Jews." In preparing for war against the Jews, H.S. Terblanche claimed that the day was coming when "the Jews will leave this state and the country will remain clean."<sup>29</sup> Under his leadership, the People's Movement developed an anthem swearing that Jews will be forced to leave South Africa. The song instructed members to metaphorically stand under the movement's flag to protect their freedom from the Jews. Terblanche urged Afrikaners to physically strike against the Jews, who steal and rape Christian daughters. His circulars reached all the corners of South Africa, instigating stone throwing, window breaking, and boycotts against Jewish businesses and Jewish doctors.

This growing antisemitism fostered a spate of legislation designed to curtail further Jewish immigration into South Africa. One attempt to limit foreigners in general, and Jews

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

specifically, was initiated and submitted to Parliament by Eric Louw. Smuts' opposition to this legislation actually provoked Nationalist attacks upon him as a supporter of Jewish capitalists. Clearly Rubik's predictions were accurate. The Immigration Quota Act of 1930 served to unnerve a Jewish community that had once considered itself well integrated into South African life. While immigration restrictions against Indians had been in effect for years and were an integral part of the political agenda, immigration policy was now directed at limiting Jewish immigrants from European countries. Popular support of the immigration bill in the Afrikaans press, along with Malan's openly antisemitic sentiments, led to widespread public discussion of the so-called 'Jewish Question' for the first time. As historians argue:

Among those Afrikaners wishing to curtail the influx and rights of Jews in the 1930's and 1940's were intellectuals who formulated the apartheid system as a way of safeguarding Afrikaner identity, racial purity and domination. Many of them had studied in Germany where they were influenced by fascist ideas, including an exclusivist or 'pure' form of nationalism.<sup>30</sup>

Fueled by public protests, the Government imposed additional restrictions on immigration laws in 1936. In addition to a valid passport and a guarantor from a South African citizen, immigrants were now required to pay a deposit of one hundred pounds sterling. In an attempt to avoid these more prohibitive laws that were to go into effect on November 1 of that year, many Jews hastily made passage to South Africa. More than five times as many Jewish immigrants arrived to South Africa than the previous year.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Teresa Jeffcote, Myra Osrin, Millie Pimstone, *Cape Town Holocaust Centre*, (Cape Town, South Africa: Cape Town Holocaust Centre, 1999), 6.

<sup>31</sup> Jacob Rubik, ed., "Antisemitism in Africa," *Barkai*, (August-September 1936): 11.

### **The *Stuttgart* Incident Fuels Public Antisemitism**

Mass public protests against Jews and Jewish immigrants peaked in October 1936 with the arrival in South Africa of the ship *Stuttgart* carrying 538 German immigrants. The arrival of the steamer and the publication of the fact that passengers had been assisted with their fares played directly into the hands of the agitators.<sup>32</sup> Posters appeared in the streets of the mainly Afrikaner populated town of Bloemfontein, in the Orange Free State, bearing the inscription, *Meer Jode Stroom Die Unie Binne*, (More Jews Storm into the Union).<sup>33</sup> As reported by the *Cape Times*:

At least 100 men and women of all ages, including many Greyshirts, marched down to the docks ... after hearing a rumor that the liner, *Stuttgart*, carrying 538 German Jewish immigrants, had entered the harbor seven hours before she was expected.<sup>34</sup>

The *Stuttgart's* docking was met with loud protest that concluded with the singing of the South African National anthem, *Die Stem* and three "heils" for South Africa. At the same time, a resolution passed urging Hertzog's Government to implement legislation against any future Jewish immigration into the Union. While protests were taking place on the dock, a mass meeting was held at the University of Stellenbosch.<sup>35</sup> Led by faculty—with speeches and diatribes against the Jews and a call to boycott Jewish firms and business—the protest was supported by academicians and led by a future South African Prime Minister (1958), Dr.

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<sup>32</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Letter to Hilfsverein der Juden*, November 2, 1936.

<sup>33</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Report* (23), 1.

<sup>34</sup> *Cape Times* (South Africa), October 27, 1936.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

Henrik F. Verwoerd, who threatened to protest against Parliament.<sup>36</sup> Herzog's United Party was already made up of a tenuous coalition. Verwoerd's threats would only exacerbate the internal instability and competition from the pro-Nazi rhetoric of Malan's Purified National Party. Antisemitism became more and more acceptable to government leaders, resulting even in the more liberal United Party proposing new immigration restrictions against Jews. This led to the Aliens Act of 1937, an immigration law that does not mention the word 'Jew' explicitly, but proposed that immigrants were to be allowed entry by a Selection Board which would base its decision on the likelihood of assimilation and the positive character of the applicant.

In December, Weichardt maintained that Malan could not be trusted to deal with Jews and that only the Greyshirt movement would go "the whole way" on anti-Jewish issues. The *Industrial Markets* publication suggested that the Jews were themselves responsible for antisemitism stemming from the boycott of German goods. The *Natal Mercury* reported that a transmitting station in Europe was being built to spread Jewish culture. *Die Volksblad* maintained that Bolshevik agitators were poisoning the mind of Afrikaner workers, and the *Southern Cross* reprinted Hertzog's speech glorifying Mussolini and Hitler.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Board Calls for Self-Imposed Immigration Restrictions**

The arrival of the *Stuttgart* shook the Board of Deputies. They had received information from the Council for German Jewry in London regarding the arrival of the chartered ship, filled with German Jewish refugees, and knew that the ship was anticipated to

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<sup>36</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Report*, October 1936.

<sup>37</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Report* (23), 3.



arrive in Cape Town prior to implementation of the new government regulations. The Board of Deputies was conflicted. On the one hand, they were deeply concerned with the fate of European Jewry; on the other, they feared exacerbating the hostile atmosphere in their homeland. Finally, after much deliberation, they decided to discourage the arrival of the ship. In a letter dated July 17, 1936 from the President of the Board of Deputies to Mr. Max Warburg and the Council for German Jewry in London, the Board expressed fear that all future immigration to South Africa would be stopped. Despite their communication, the Board of Deputies prepared to meet the steamer amidst the public antisemitic fervor.

One week after the arrival of the *Stuttgart*, on November 2, 1936, the Board of Deputies sent a confidential and urgent letter to Der Hilfsverein der Juden (Jewish Aid Society) in Berlin. The letter reiterated the growing agitation against Jews in the South African press. It also expressed concern that Malan's Opposition Government was claiming that South African Jewry was conspiring to bring refugees into the country and were supporting London's Three Million Pounds Fund, a fund to assist immigrants. The Board of Deputies based their concerns on Malan's Parliamentary speech in which he insisted that the Fund was established specifically to bring German refugees into South Africa. As the letter states:

South Africa is not mentioned as one of the countries to which they want to send the Jews from Germany, but I nevertheless believe that South Africa is one of the countries that has been chosen to send them to. If that is so, I would like to have the undertaking of our Jewish friends in South Africa that they will use all their influence to prevent the money being used to send Jews to South Africa.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Letter to Hilfsverein der Juden*, November 2, 1936.

Indeed, the Board of Deputies witnessed firsthand how rapidly the South African press employed sensational headlines. The press claimed that German-Jewish immigration was an organized movement, which led to a revival of arguments about the Three Million Pound Fund and a Jewish conspiracy to aid immigration. Against this background, the Board of Deputies urged the Hilfsverein to dramatically reduce immigration to South Africa or risk the danger that it be cut off altogether:

The present tide must be reduced to a trickle and best of all be dried up completely for many months ahead. This is essential for the future possibilities of any German Jewish immigration to this country ... we are prompted by our sincere wish to be of service to German Jewry. Such a falling off is, in our view, the only hope of preventing the doors of South Africa from being completely closed to the Jews of Germany.<sup>39</sup>

Even prior to the arrival of the *Stuttgart*, the Board of Deputies realized the imminent danger of restrictive legislation. Their fear was confirmed in a meeting on October 23, 1936 between a deputy from the Board and Prime Minister Herzog. The Prime Minister intimated that some form of restrictive legislation would have to be introduced to the Parliament at the beginning of 1937. After serious deliberation, the Board of Deputies dispatched a cable in Bentley's telegraphic code on November 13 to the Hilfsverein reiterating the seriousness of the hostility toward Jews in South Africa. Again, the Board of Deputies pointed out the large increase of German immigrants and the unprecedented hostility that had erupted with the arrival of the *Stuttgart*. The telegram appealed to the German Jewish community to "use every possible means to try to prevent further immigration" and insisted that the responsibility be placed in their hands.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Cable to Hilfsverein der Juden*, November 13, 1936.

Fearing that new legislation would racially stereotype Jews, the Board of Deputies again appealed to the Council for German Jewry to use their best endeavors not just to limit, but to stop Jewish refugees from entering South Africa. The Board of Deputies, dissatisfied that no radical reduction in immigration had occurred, sent a letter to the Reichsvertretung der Juden (Governmental Agency for Jewish Affairs) on November 30, 1936. "Tremendous pressure" they claimed, "is being brought to bear on the Government, not only by the Opposition (who have been the initiators of the agitation), but also by supporters in its own ranks."<sup>41</sup> They explained that hostility had culminated in antisemitic sentiments about a hypothetical Jewish syndicate overseas, assisting refugees fleeing to South Africa.

Yet again, the Board realized that their appeals were going unheeded. After giving anxious thought to the subject, they informed the Hilfsverein der Juden on December 15, 1936 that they had a responsibility to the Jewish community of South Africa. This responsibility compelled them to make a public statement to Reuters on the true facts of their immigration position:

Though there exist Jewish organizations overseas for the purpose of assisting refugees and for advising them upon matters of immigration there is no organization which aims at the settlement of such refugees in South Africa, or which assists to relieve the obligations imposed upon intending immigrants by the immigration Laws of South Africa.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, in a draft to Professor Japie Basson at the University in Stellenbosch, the Acting Chair of the Board of Deputies' Cape Committee emphatically stated that the Board of Deputies' manifesto does not and has not supported directly or indirectly organizations

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<sup>41</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Letter to Reichsvertretung der Juden*, November 30, 1936.

<sup>42</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Letter to Hilfsverein der Juden*, November 2, 1936.

whose object is to foster immigration into South Africa. Under the heading, *The Board of Deputies' Manifesto*, the lead article in the December 12, 1936 *South African Jewish Chronicle* claimed that, "the most effective means of keeping in check the grosser forms of antisemitism is enlightenment of public opinion as to the real facts concerning the Jewish people."<sup>43</sup> The *South African Jewish Times* acknowledged the importance of stating that South African Jewry had not been proactive in bringing immigrants into the country. Generally the Jewish community looked favorably upon the Board of Deputies' statement. However, an editorial in the *Times* maintained that their statement came too late. It could not combat the antisemitic rhetoric that South African Jews were part of a worldwide conspiracy promoting Jewish immigration into the country.

The tide of antisemitism was clearly rising, and the Board was caught in the middle of a terrible choice. It was clear that the future was bleak in Germany. But, at the same time, the Board clearly feared that their own community was at risk. During this period, while appeasement reigned on the larger world stage, perhaps we can understand the Board's fear and hope that some other solution would prevail that would not directly threaten their own safety.

### **The Politics Behind the Parliamentary Bills on Jewish Immigration**

In the highly charged antisemitic atmosphere of 1930s South Africa, several influential political leaders sought to restrict Jewish immigration into South Africa. Eric Louw, South Africa's chief representative in Europe, influenced Herzog's government by inflating the true figures of Jewish immigration into South Africa. He wrote that, "if it goes

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<sup>43</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Report* (23), 3.

on at this rate the Union will become the destination of all German Jews."<sup>44</sup> Obviously influenced by Nazi propaganda, he claimed that Jewish economic power endangered the welfare of the Afrikaner nation. Louw was not alone in Parliament. He was effectively a lieutenant of Malan and his Opposition Government, which attempted not only to halt Jewish immigration, but to introduce a Bill that advocated measures against Jews already living in the country. In a Parliamentary speech, Malan asserted that "South Africa has a Jewish problem, and we cannot deal with it effectively, unless we name it specifically, and face it squarely."<sup>45</sup>

Malan's private bill was meant to legitimize racial discrimination. The Minister of the Interior was accorded authority to reject applicants for immigration based on their social and cultural background. Foreigners who entered the Union after May 1, 1930 were required to satisfy the Minister that they were assimilative before they could be naturalized. An enormous discrepancy existed between the interpretation of Malan's bill in the English and Afrikaans press.<sup>46</sup> In short, the English newspapers with their British imperial sympathies, were less antisemitic than the Afrikaner press. The liberal English paper, the *Rand Daily Mail*, ran an article suggesting that, "Dr. Malan has realized that antisemitism is a profitable slogan in the *platteland* (rural areas).<sup>47</sup> The author warned that Malan was playing a dangerous game that those who joined him would regret.<sup>48</sup> The *Star* ran an article, *Who is*

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<sup>44</sup> Gideon Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience (1910-1967)*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980), 119.

<sup>45</sup> D. F. Malan, M.P., "Speech to Parliament," *House of Assembly*, January 12, 1937.

<sup>46</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Report* (23), 1.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

*Assimilable*, stating that Malan's proposed legislation was an "awkward effort" and that closing certain professions should be considered as fantastic.<sup>49</sup> In contrast, the Afrikaans press put forth the Nazi message that Jews were the enemy. Two Afrikaans newspapers, *Die Burger* and *Die Volksblad* suggested that the current immigration restrictions were a fiasco allowing for a Jewish conspiracy to bypass regulations, thus necessitating this new Bill.<sup>50</sup>

The ground swell of anti-Jewish feeling in South Africa, including threats against the existing Jewish community, prompted the ruling United Party to introduce the Aliens Act of 1937.<sup>51</sup> Just one day before Malan's speech to the Parliament on his own bill, he was preempted by the introduction of a bill by Richard Stuttaford, Minister of the Interior. Without mentioning Jews by name, immigrants were to be permitted entry by a Selection Board of Deputies that would evaluate candidates on the basis of good character and their "likelihood of assimilation" into the European population. To many Afrikaners, this bill was not specific enough. Like Verwoerd, they complained that this bill did not specifically mention Jews by name. Therefore, the opposition used their influence in the press to tackle the Jewish Question from a nationalistic point of view. Their aim was to have the bill specifically restrict Jewish immigration.<sup>52</sup>

Even the few stalwart supporters of Jews who were found in Parliament temporarily protected their political careers by siding with the opposition. For instance, future Prime

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> *Die Burger* (South Africa), "The New Regulations A Complete Fiasco," December 12, 1936.

<sup>51</sup> Cape Town, Holocaust Museum South Africa.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Minister Jan Smuts and Parliamentarian Jan Hofmeyr, who had opposed the 1930 Quota Act and denounced the antisemitic movements, now sided with Herzog. The worst fears of the Board of Deputies were being realized. South African Jewry became obsessed with their vulnerable domestic position as Rubik's words began to ring true: "This is our situation and this is our destiny all over the world, and even in this state, which was so free until now ... even in the country of South Africa."<sup>53</sup> They feared that the European Jewish Councils, which dealt with controlled emigration, did not understand the seriousness of the South African Jewish situation.

It is interesting to note the scale of misapprehension concerning Jewish immigration into South Africa. According to Louw and others, Jewish immigrants were inundating South Africa, and sanctions to block this flood were needed. Liberal elements in the government seemingly accepted this message without challenge. With the implementation of the Aliens Act, it did not take long for the admission of Jews to South Africa to quickly decrease. Immigration dropped from 2,549 German Jewish immigrants in 1936 to 481 in 1937 and 236 in 1938.<sup>54</sup> In light of the millions of European Jews, who were threatened, these are negligible numbers—and what had been a trickle dried up completely.

### **Eric Louw's Blatant Antisemitism in Parliament**

It is important to specifically examine the actions of Eric Louw and his Nationalist Opposition Party, for he provided the antisemites with their voice in Parliament. For a period of eight years, from 1936 to 1944, he harped upon the "Jewish Problem" whenever possible.

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<sup>53</sup> Jacob Rubik, ed., "Antisemitism in Africa," *Barkai*, (August-September 1936): 11.

<sup>54</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Statistics of Jewish Population and Immigration*. 1926-1942.

This was perhaps most blatant when, on February 24, 1939 in a speech entitled, "The Jewish Problem in South Africa", he introduced his Aliens (Amendment) and Immigration Bill in the House of Assembly. Upon the introduction of Louw's Bill, pro-German leaders of local cultural organizations, including von Moltke and Weichardt, now joined ranks with the Nationalist party. The main purpose of the Bill was to alert South Africans to the "Jewish Problem," by amending the Aliens Act of 1937. The Bill featured a statement that "Jews are a race unsuitable for immigration into South Africa."<sup>55</sup> The Board of Deputies acknowledged the parallels between this bill and Nazi acts in Germany.

In an article entitled "*Mr. Louw's Little Bill*," the *Star* newspaper, along with English South Africans, dismissed the seriousness of the bill. This posture of denial against Nazi influence in the government, so frequently seen in the late 1930s, was misguided. After all the Afrikaner press immediately endorsed and gave validity to the bill. *Die Burger* maintained the importance of Louw's amendment, which would exclude British citizens from immigration into the Union. As stated in the newspaper: "Merely because a man was born elsewhere in the world under a British flag, he is not according to the Aliens Act an 'alien' in our country, but is a privileged person ... that our opposition was well founded, appears from the fruits of the Act. The Aliens Act must be amended."<sup>56</sup>

While Smuts conceded to the passage of the Aliens Act of 1937, he grew deeply perturbed with the growing Nazi fervor in the country. At the same time, Louw and his supporters accused Smuts and Hofmeyr of being conspirators. Delivering his speech at the opening of the Provincial Congress of the United Party on January 16, 1939, (prior to Louw's

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<sup>55</sup> Eric H. Louw, "Aliens (Amendment) and Immigration Bill." *House of Assembly*, February 24, 1939.

<sup>56</sup> *Die Burger*, "A Criticism of the Aliens Act," January 10, 1939.



Parliamentary speech), Smuts warned that Nazi tendencies were threatening South Africa. Concerned with the cooperation between the National Party and the Greyshirts, he suggested that the National party was becoming more and more of a Nazi party:

Such things as freedom, self-government and Parliamentary representation would become points of controversy. Mr. Eric Louw's proposed Bill against the Jews showed this ... We should be careful in all matters which concern sentiment ... It is difficult to appreciate the other man's point of view, but the Bible gives us one golden rule, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'<sup>57</sup>

Smuts' assessment was correct. Louw's speech in Parliament was replete with hatred against the Jews. However, he maintained that he was actuated neither by Fascism or racism. Louw was convinced that Jews had inspired negative overseas reports about Nazi Germany. Overt and hidden Jewish campaigns, he claimed, sought to influence news agencies and the press in the international political arena. By selectively citing Jewish writings and teachings of the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud, Louw tried to incite the Parliament with antisemitic stereotypes of Jews and asserted that Jews purposely distinguished themselves from other nations. In analyzing Louw's speech, the Board concluded that Louw relished each indictment against the Jews. His technique, typical of the modern antisemite, feigned moderation and objectivity while indicting a whole people.<sup>58</sup> According to the Board, Louw "gave the disarming assurance that he had deliberately avoided Fascist or Nazi sources for his information but instead had gone to Jewish sources and would let the Jew speak for himself."<sup>59</sup> Jews themselves, he maintained, claim that they are unassimilable, with a distinct

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<sup>57</sup> *South African Press Association*, "Smuts Warns S.A. of Nazi Tendencies." January 17, 1939.

<sup>58</sup> *South African Jewish Board Deputies*. "(letter) The Technique of Antisemitism." 1939. 2.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

race and customs—remaining separate in blood and separate in nation. The Jewish race, he insisted, is loyal only to Israel and is bound by a global solidarity in finance and commerce. While Jews were communists, he claimed that it was also true that Jews in South Africa had a monopoly in the liquor, meat, hotel, tobacco and shirt trades. Masking his hatred in veils of patriotism, he positioned himself as a selfless individual motivated solely by the good of his nation.<sup>60</sup>

Louw further continued with an attack on Jewish leadership. He asserted that the Board of Deputies had served only to organize South African Jewry to encourage Jewish immigration into the country. Acknowledging that a manifesto written by the Board had actually advised against further Jewish immigration, Louw maintained that this was simply a tactical matter, a ploy, and that secrecy was the Board's hidden agenda. Louw went on to defend his position as non-extremist, considering himself open and honest in comparison to his colleagues who hid their views while blackballing Jews from organizations and clubs. He argued that his overt position allowed Jews to know exactly where they stood. It is easy to draw parallels between his self-effacing "patriotic" style and that of the German Nazis during the same pre-war period as they built a power base.

Louw's Bill included the following points:

- the amendment of the definition of an "alien;"
- the definition of assimilability in terms of racial, cultural and sociological criteria;
- the presumption that Jews cannot be assimilable;

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<sup>60</sup> Eric H. Louw, "Aliens (Amendment) and Immigration Bill," *House of Assembly*, February 24, 1939.

- the exclusion of an applicant who is of Jewish parentage as determined by a blood test, whether or not the parent claims to be Jewish;
- the requirement by aliens to produce their permits upon demand to a Magistrate;
- the application for new permits by Jewish aliens who entered the Union between January 1930 and February 1937;
- the restriction of name changes by aliens and the requirement that name and trade signs bear the full names of all individuals comprising a firm;
- empowerment of the Governor General to restrict certain businesses to aliens;
- denial that Yiddish is a European language.<sup>61</sup>

The Board of Deputies responded to Louw's Bill in a memorandum: "This is a new venture—an attempt to exclude any but those of the chosen blood—a ridiculous and clumsy attempt at definition designed to bolster up racial legislation on the exact lines of the Nuremberg Laws."<sup>62</sup> The Board warned that the bill was framed according to German racial laws. They specifically pointed out that Hitler's propaganda was also initially directed against Jews as communist and then towards socialists, liberals and all political opponents.<sup>63</sup> They continued:

These provisions open up, of course, unlimited possibilities for discrimination against aliens; and when read in conjunction with other discriminatory provisions in the bill against Jews it is obvious that they

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, "Memorandum on Eric Louw's Bill," 1939.

<sup>63</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, "Some Features of Mr. Louw's Bill," 1939. 2.

could be applied in a most prejudicial and discriminatory fashion against Jewish aliens ... Nazi parallels in this sort of discrimination, of course, abound.<sup>64</sup>

At Louw, the Board of Deputies leveled the following charges: "[He] is to be complimented on his incorrigibility in pursuit of the antisemitic line. The apotheosis of this line was revealed to a horror-struck world last November by the incredible excesses against the Jews all over Germany."<sup>65</sup>

Jews of South Africa responded in two ways to the rampant antisemitism worldwide. On the one hand, likely aware that the scale of Jewish immigration was being grossly exaggerated, they chose not to contest this point openly. On the other hand, they moved to curtail the threat posed by antisemitism at home by legal means and by mobilizing South African Jews to respond to antisemitism at home and abroad. Their efforts helped to defeat Louw's extremist bill, but there is no doubt that he achieved a negative effect by polarizing the Afrikaner population. For Jews in Europe, South Africa was no longer a viable refuge, and it is impossible to assess how many lives this cost in the aggregate.

Indeed by 1938, various movements no longer hid their antisemitism. The South African Jewish community indeed was isolated and threatened; of all *Uitlanders*, Jews became easy and visible targets.

### The Community Awakens

Although the Board fought immigration of European Jews for fear of reprisals, the South African Jewish community did nevertheless mobilize to assist their European brethren,

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<sup>64</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, B (3) iii. *Restrictions on Aliens Regarding Trades, Professions, Employment*. 1939. 3.

<sup>65</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Politics Behind Mr. Louw's Racial Bill*.

even prior to the passage of the Aliens Act. According to Rubik, an investigative article on the developing Nazi movement in South Africa acted as "an explosion" to Jewish leaders. On several fronts, Jews fought antisemitic hatred. To take two instances, they rallied against the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in Germany and they participated with Christian leaders in a City Hall meeting on November 18, 1938 to protest Nazi atrocities against Jews and Christians. Dr. Judah Leib Landau, Chief Rabbi of South Africa, appealed "to rulers of large empty countries to grant places of refuge to those helpless and innocent people who [had] been driven from their homes."<sup>66</sup> While there was no specific mention made of the South African restrictions on German Jewish immigration, it was announced that the "executive of the Society of Jews and Christians would send a deputation to the Minister in Pretoria to try to facilitate the entry into the Union of relatives of Jews recently arrived in the country."<sup>67</sup>

It became apparent during the November meeting that while many non-Jewish leaders were distressed by news of German atrocities, they feared jeopardizing their political careers by overtly expressing pro-Jewish sentiments. The mayor of Johannesburg, J.J Page, claimed that the meeting was convened "with heavy hearts, not to condemn a nation, but the powers in control in Germany." Like many of his non-Jewish compatriots, he was reluctant to criticize the German people for the cruelty in their country. Even the Afrikaner liberal politician, Jan Hofmeyr, appalled by antisemitism, expressed in a letter his detestation of the barbarism in Germany (and in the same note, his friendliest feelings for the German people.)

Two days later, on November 20, the Board of Deputies organized a mass meeting of Jewish citizens in Johannesburg to express horror over the treatment of Jews in Germany.

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<sup>66</sup> *Star*, Johannesburg, Transvaal. "Rand Protest Against Nazi Pogrom." November 18, 1938.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

They unanimously passed a Resolution that expressed sympathy for German Jews and a pledge for financial support:

While it does not seek to condone the action of the youth in Paris who was driven to frenzy by the sufferings of his kith and kin, it cannot find words to describe its sense of horror at the subsequent acts of terrorism, sacrilege, vandalism and persecution, which have been carried out allegedly as reprisals against the whole of German Jewry and which are a reversion to savagery paralleled only by some of the darkest episodes of history.<sup>68</sup>

While South African Jews raised their voices in response to German atrocities, antisemitic movements continued to find support in South Africa. Campaigns of hatred increased throughout 1938. Posters and paintings circulated that copied nearly word for word those found in the German newspaper *Der Stuermer*.<sup>69</sup> Circulars were sent to thousands of land workers to "rescue their daughters from Jews."<sup>70</sup> Moreover, there was an entire program of antisemitic lectures in and around Johannesburg, led by Johanness von Strauss von Moltke, the leader of the Greyshirt Movement in the Eastern Cape. Despite his 1934 indictment in the Greyshirt trial, he announced the publication of a book, *The Jews of South Africa*, which stereotyped Jews as part of a worldwide conspiracy to destroy Christendom. Rubik accurately informed the readers of *Barkai* that this book was based upon minutes stolen from the Board of Deputies.<sup>71</sup> The Board of Deputies, monitoring antisemitic literature, "resolved to have the publication of the book interdicted in the

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<sup>68</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, "Letter to The Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for Germany in Pretoria." November 21, 1938.

<sup>69</sup> Jacob Rubik, ed., "Antisemitism in South Africa," *Barkai*, 1938.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

Supreme Court. The interdict was granted in February 1938—once again a legal defeat for the antisemites.”<sup>72</sup> The exposure of this forgery seemed to have little effect on the spread of antisemitism, though the Board of Deputies now acknowledged the pervasive influence of Nazi propaganda in South Africa. Rubik concluded that if this bacteria is given the option to develop, Africa would be greatly endangered as a free land.<sup>73</sup> His words were ominous. Months later, the ‘Jewish Question’ would be discussed in Parliament.

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<sup>72</sup> Gideon Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience (1910-1967)*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980), 148.

<sup>73</sup> Jacob Rubik, ed., “Antisemitism in South Africa,” *Barkai*, 1938.

## CHAPTER 3

### 1939-1941: ANTISEMITIC POLITICS LIMITING

#### JEWISH RESPONSE TO THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

In an effort to enhance my understanding of the situation of South African Jews during 1939-1941, I met with Dr. Louis Babrow, Captain of the South African Medical Corps (1939-1945) and Smuts' former personal physician.<sup>74</sup> A South African-born Jew, he is an imposing man, commanding attention. Over a cup of tea and cake, a South African afternoon tradition, Babrow explained how both left and right wing Jews stayed out of politics during the early war years. They felt that it was in their own best interest not to antagonize the pro-German government of the day. "We were a minority," says Babrow, "if we Jews had a problem, who did we see?"<sup>75</sup> There was tremendous antisemitism in South Africa. Jews at the universities in Cape Town and Stellenbosch came under duress from the pro-Nazi Greyshirts who wore swastikas to show their allegiance to Hitler. Even Jewish families in the country districts, he said, eventually left for larger cities due to the organized boycotts by Afrikaners of their businesses.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> The meeting took place at his home in Cape Town, South Africa in December 1999.

<sup>75</sup> Louis Babrow, interview by Kim Stoloff, December 1999.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

Not just a military man, Babrow was a sports icon in the South African Jewish Community. He is one of the Springbok's "minyan" (a group of ten Jews who played on the South African Rugby team). He vividly recalled how he was booed off the playing field in 1939 because he was a Jew.

According to Babrow, Jewish faith in Smuts was not unwarranted. He said, "Smuts was pro-Jewish. I went overseas with him on two occasions. One of his grand kids is my godchild."

Following the war, Babrow was personally asked by Smuts to report on Hitler's Bunker and the devastation in central Berlin as one of five South African officers selected to survey the damage. He described the forty-two-room bunker as being under fourteen feet of



Babrow's recollections coincide precisely with the historical record. South African Jewry tempered its public response based on who was in power. General Hertzog, head of the fusion government, advocated a neutral stance for South Africa on the outbreak of war in Europe. As an Afrikaner nationalist, his neutrality indicated a stand against Britain. This neutral stand, it is important to note, did not necessarily mean that he was a Nazi sympathizer as much as an Afrikaner unsympathetic to Britain and a leader unwilling to let South Africa be drawn into a war unless its interests were directly threatened. Inevitably, there was a split in the cabinet that left Herzog narrowly defeated (eighty votes to sixty-seven.) In his place, the philo-Semite, Smuts, became Prime Minister of South Africa. He urged his countrymen to support Britain and France by joining the Allied war effort. With Smuts newly installed as Prime Minister, South African Jewry felt both obliged and empowered to respond with a unified voice to the atrocities being committed against European Jews. Given their highly precarious situation at home, this was a risky strategy, indeed.

General Secretary of the Jewish Board of Deputies, Gustav Saron, delivered his General Review cautioning broad political and economic issues were inseparably bound up with the Jewish community. He particularly noted the significance of the split in the ranks of the various Afrikaner parties with Hertzog's resignation from Parliament on December 12,

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concrete—including a map room, surgery unit, kitchen and dining area. Hitler's bedroom was described as having a small lounge area with an additional bedroom for Eva Braun. Babrow saw the precise place where Hitler sat when he shot himself and Eva Braun swallowed potassium cyanide. "The stain of the carpet from blood and wine could still be seen. This took place at 3:30 p.m. on April 30, 1945." Hitler and Eva Braun were then cremated in a trench filled with eighty liters of petrol. Babrow also met with the marriage officer, Herr W. Wagner, who explained about the wedding between Eva Braun and Hitler. He told Babrow, "when she signed the marriage certificate she made a mistake and started signing "Eva Br" and then scratched it out and wrote Eva Hitler." Joseph Goebells served as a witness.

1939.<sup>77</sup> Though Smuts' succession was viewed as a victory for the Jewish community, the future extent of the victory was, of course, unknown.

Politically, the Board was hopeful that with Hertzog's defeat there would be some internal self-evaluation among the Afrikaner parties. Saron reported that the theoreticians of the New Order "are no longer certain of a German victory (upon which their plans for South Africa were founded.)"<sup>78</sup> Despite this, he maintained that ill-informed Nazi propaganda had become accepted by many segments of the population. He sought to educate Afrikaners against assertions that Jews were responsible for the political and economic difficulties of Afrikanerdom. As he stated:

The Jewish point of view must be put vigorously, factually and without apologetics. Our generation has seen propaganda assume undreamt of dimensions and influence. Have the Jewish community, and those democratic forces, which are organizing the counter-propaganda fully realized the menace of the antisemitic propaganda, and have they taken adequate measures to cope with it? I personally doubt it.<sup>79</sup>

Saron's concerns about Hertzog were justified. After the defeat of his fusion Government in 1939, Hertzog rejoined the Nationalist Opposition, which was renamed the Herenigde Party. Herzog was elected leader, with Malan as his deputy. Eventually, in 1941, a split occurred in the Herenigde party between Herzog and Malan, which was precipitated by Herzog's demand that English-speakers be guaranteed equal rights. The outcome of this cleavage was the formation of the Afrikaner Party. Professor Andries C. Cilliers of Stellenbosch University, one time spiritual leader of the Herenigde Party, maintained that the

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<sup>77</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. January 26, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4, 4. 258.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 259.

Herenigde party now existed in name only. He urged a return to "Hertzogism" which he described as a policy of cooperation among all (white) South Africans.

Cilliers was perceived as a voice of moderation calling as he did for a rejection of the isolationism and intolerance of the extremist Nationalists and the recognition instead of the full "equality, equal worth and identity of interests of all Europeans in the Union."<sup>80</sup> According to Saron, he condemned the system that divided the European population into separate compartments—English, Afrikaner, and Jewish.<sup>81</sup> Cilliers championed this ideology in a pamphlet entitled "The Struggle for National Unity." In his writings, "he deplored the various boycott activities against Jews and said nothing could be gained by these movements to drive Briton and Jew from the *platteland*."<sup>82</sup> By July of the same year, the Board regarded this stand as a move toward moderation, since boycotts against Jewish businesses had been tempered.<sup>83</sup>

Despite calls from the Government for moderation, the Herenigde Party continued to gain strength. But internal rivalries developed between Malan and Pirow, founder of the totalitarian movement known as the New Order. Adherents of the New Order contended that liberation for South Africa would be secured only through a German victory. Others disagreed. They cited accounts of the war over the past several months. This, according to Saron, led "to a very serious divisional within the Herenigde Party ... with some leaders now

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<sup>80</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*. March 30, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 5. 285.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*. July 26, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4. 344.

supporting a plea for a drastically overhauled Democracy." Pirow's platform was clearly antisemitic and anti-democratic, but those calling for an overhauled Democracy were unclear in their objectives. In either case, the Board determined that both sections had much in common, united as they were in anti-Jewish discrimination. The Board's minutes reveal their anxiety:

The question arises what is the real cause of the conflict between Malan and Pirow? What are the things about which they differ? ... The answer is that whereas Pirow frankly wants a local Nazi regime (dressed up in the guise of a South African Christian-National Republic) Malan and his coterie are not yet prepared to go the whole hog; or if they are, they deem it expedient not to proclaim the fact.<sup>84</sup>

Meanwhile, antisemitic propaganda dominated some Afrikaner cultural organizations, especially van Rensburg's Ossewa Brandwag. Its original platform, infused with Nazi content, maintained that it was a non-political party of action prepared to defend Afrikaner interests with violence if need be necessary. It appealed to masses of Afrikaners, numbering 300,000 by early 1941.<sup>85</sup> Saron noted that the Ossewa Brandwag continued a bid to increase membership. Their effective boycott of political opponents had "adversely affected the position of the Jewish communities—not only in their businesses but also in their sense of confidence."<sup>86</sup> The activities of the Ossewa Brandwag were somewhat curtailed in 1941 with the passage of section 6 of the National Security Regulations. The government had in effect banned members of the Civil Service from participating in the Ossewa Brandwag. This had a

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<sup>84</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*. August 31, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4. 364.

<sup>85</sup> Gideon Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience (1910-1967)*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980), 129.

<sup>86</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. January 26, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4, 4. 258.

direct impact on its subscription rate, which was believed to bring them an income of 52,000 pounds per year. The organization responded by granting what they called "an honorable discharge" to those members affected by the ban.<sup>87</sup> Further they hinted at a connection between the government ban and a Jewish conspiracy. Their claim was that "memberships of organizations whose eyes are directed outside of South Africa—among them the Jewish Keren Hayesod or Zionist Organization and certain secret societies" had remained permissible.<sup>88</sup> The opposition was rife with antisemitism at every level. Yet, it is a telling fact that when the Smuts Government sought to curtail activities of this antisemitic group, they restricted membership from within its own Civil Service.

Throughout 1940 and 1941, the Ossewa Brandwag aligned itself with Pirow rather than Malan, which led to speculation that it would rival the Herenigde Party and eventually swallow it up.<sup>89</sup> The political leadership of the Ossewa Brandwag was dictated by the Herenigde Party. The struggle for political leadership between van Rensburg, leader of the Ossewa Brandwag, and Malan, leader of the Herenigde Party finally came to a head in the summer of 1941. Malan issued an ultimatum stating that if the Ossewa Brandwag did not accept the platform and views of the Herenigde Party by August 30, 1941, all Malanites would be instructed to withdraw their support and involvement in the Ossewa Brandwag.<sup>90</sup> The separation never took place and an attempt was made to patch the rift between the two in

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<sup>87</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*. March 30, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 5. 285.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*. August 31, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4. 364.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

early November 1941.<sup>91</sup> The hope was to reunite the two organizations in common opposition to Smuts' Government.

With the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the stereotype of Jews as revolutionaries again came to the attention of the Herenigde Party. Their editorials featured the dangers to South Africa from an Anglo-Soviet alliance. The Board noted, "the Hertzog paper *Die Vaderland* is no less intent on the Communist hunt than the Malanite papers, and that it repeatedly points to the Anglo-Soviet alliance as justification for the neutrality policy which it has adopted."<sup>92</sup> In other words, Communism and liberalism were linked as joint enemies of Afrikanerdom.<sup>93</sup> On July 14, 1941 in a report in *Die Burger*, Malan said that the policy of the Herenigde Party was synonymous with that of Germany.<sup>94</sup> Members of the Herenigde Party claimed no grievance against Germany and accepted Nazi beliefs. Their aim was to free South Africa from Jewish capitalism, making it a white man's republic with the Afrikaner in control under Malan's motto, "one people, one purpose, one leader."<sup>95</sup>

Toward the end of 1941, the local political scene shifted when Hertzog made a declaration contradicting his lifetime of service to democracy. In a one hundred eighty-degree turn, he began to champion National-Socialism as a new world order, claiming that it

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<sup>91</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. October 26, 1941. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 4. 385.

<sup>92</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. July 26, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4. 345.

<sup>93</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. May 25, 1941. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 4. 343.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. November 30, 1941. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 4. 400.

was part of Afrikaner folk life, "as old as the Afrikaner himself."<sup>96</sup> Frequent visits by van Rensburg and Pirow led to rumors that this pronouncement would be forthcoming:

It was not believed that General Hertzog would forsake the young and small Afrikaner Party—of which he was nominally the leader and which had been founded on the principles of nationalism and racial equality—he preached—for the dreams of the New Order or the Ossewa Brandwag."<sup>97</sup>

The Board analyzed Hertzog's new stance and concluded that it was not inconsistent with his past declarations. His blind spot had always been his view of Germany as the victim of international power games. He viewed the outbreak of war in 1939 as an attack on Germany, and one in which Germany would come out the victor. These views left the Jewish community in a precarious position. Smuts' new government, while not as openly sympathetic as they would like, was clearly their only hope, for the opposition parties were all now openly pro-German and anti-Jew. Any actions to support their European brethren would have to be carefully taken so not to invite physical violence. Worse yet, they feared that any precipitous actions might possibly lead to a weakening of Smuts' position, which could have national ramifications for all South African Jewry. As Babrow asked, if the Jews had a problem, to whom could they turn?

### An Appeal to South African Jews

The answer was, they turned inwards to themselves. Throughout the 1930s, the Board of Deputies had focused on issues of discrimination, libel suits, and economic restrictions directed against Jews. Indeed, there had been no shortage of incidents for them to

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<sup>96</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. October 26, 1941. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 4. 385.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

work on. With the outbreak of World War II, the Board felt compelled to turn its attention to the plight of Jews in Europe. Despite the foreboding local situation, they initiated the United South African Jewish War Appeal along with the South African Zionism Federation. This joint action made sense in light of the fact that many leaders of the Board were ardent Zionists. In fact, Zionism had always played a role in the South African Jewish consciousness. It was not until Malan's ascent to power, however, that Zionism was mentioned explicitly, compelling the Zionist Federation to react. Remarkably, until then, most antisemites had not perceived Zionism as a special threat as evidence of Jewish disloyalty to South Africa.<sup>98</sup>

Chief Rabbi Landau recognized that the two Jewish organizations had been initially organized with two different agendas. "Times have radically changed," he wrote, "the hour has struck for those two bodies to combine their efforts, moral forces and material resources, to help their people, who no one else is willing and prepared to help in spite of all sweet promises."<sup>99</sup> The Appeal called upon every organized Jewish movement in South Africa and every individual to support the efforts to relieve suffering of fellow Jews. "Now as always," wrote the *South African Jewish Chronicle*, "the blow falls upon the Jew with especial

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<sup>98</sup> Gideon Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience (1910-1967)*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980), 170.

<sup>99</sup> *The Zionist Record* (South Africa), "Shoulder to Shoulder: Stirring Message from Chief Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau," November 15, 1940, 7.



fury."<sup>100</sup> Jews everywhere would be singled out "by the forces of darkness and barbarism" for persecution and torture.<sup>101</sup> Rabbi Landau exhorted the Jewish community to unify:

If the words of Hillel have ever been true, they have never been more true today: 'If I am not for myself, nobody will be, and if I struggle single-handed, I am lost.' At this eleventh hour there is only one road—for both those Jewish bodies to meet, to march together hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder, and as far as it is humanly possible to avoid divided action and to force Jewish fate to yield to their combined effort.<sup>102</sup>

The unprecedented crisis imposed obligations upon South African Jewry to first support Jews in the South African armed forces, second to assist in the defense of Palestine, and third to aid in the general war effort in South Africa and for constructive war relief.<sup>103</sup> On the issue of Palestine, the Appeal argued that the fate of the Jewish people was bound up with that of the fortunes of Palestine. As the Appeal indicated: "Because of the place Palestine holds in the Jewish heart, because of the hopes and fears for its future, and because of the war clouds over its head, there has been an insistent demand that a large-scale emergency fund for Palestine war purposes be opened."<sup>104</sup> The Appeal reminded South African Jews that the Jews of Palestine were part of the Allied war front, and thus needed to be assisted and strengthened. Acknowledging the suffering of the victims of the raids upon

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<sup>100</sup> *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, "United South African Jewish War Appeal," October 23, 1940.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *The Zionist Record* (South Africa), "Shoulder to Shoulder: Stirring Message from Chief Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau," November 15, 1940, 7.

<sup>103</sup> *The Zionist Record* (South Africa), "A Fight on Many Fronts," November 1, 1940, 9.

<sup>104</sup> *The Zionist Record* (South Africa), "A United Appeal," Vol. XXXIII., No. 988, October 23, 1940.

Tel Aviv and Haifa, the Appeal insisted on directing funds to Palestine to relieve these sufferings and secure a Jewish National Home.<sup>105</sup>

Another thrust of Jewish concern dealt with the war effort. As noted above, the population in South Africa was divided in their sympathy for participating in the war. The Appeal urged Jews to raise their war consciousness and assist South African Jews at the front, along with their dependents: "In addition to the calls for local relief and assistance which have already arisen, many others have to be anticipated and we must be in the position to meet them."<sup>106</sup> The Appeal then addressed the plight of Jews abroad—"the cry of the Jewish victims of war rings in our ears and will not be stilled."<sup>107</sup> The *South African Jewish Times* ran an advertisement pleading for support.

The victims of war need your help! Million of Jews have been rendered homeless by the War. They suffer ten-fold the fate of the conquered under Nazi barbarism. We cannot, today, help these millions. But there are thousands and tens of thousands who have been able to flee from the Nazi terror and who now live as helpless refugees in neutral countries ... To help these Jewish war victims is our immediate duty. The United South African Jewish War Appeal, designed to cater for the many new needs of the Jewish people created by the War, here, in Palestine, and overseas, counts amongst its foremost tasks the care for Jewish War victims and refugees.<sup>108</sup>

The appeal did not mention South Africa's own restrictive immigration laws. There was recognition that whole communities had become Nazis' victims. As we have seen, this inconsistency persisted throughout the war period. Rather than dwelling upon their inability

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<sup>105</sup> *The Zionist Record* (South Africa), "The United Jewish War Appeal Starts," November 1, 1940, 7.

<sup>106</sup> *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, "United South African Jewish War Appeal," October 23, 1940.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> *South African Jewish Times*, "The Victims of War," November 8, 1940.

to alter the immigration standards, the community focused instead on rendering help where possible. Ultimately, South African Jews raised tremendous funds to help settle Jews in Palestine and other areas.

On November 7, 1940, the South African Jewish community convened a meeting at the Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg to enroll workers for this effort and to elect a Johannesburg Executive Board for the campaign. Mr. G. N. Lazarus, Chair of the Jewish Board of Deputies, applauded the joint effort with the Zionist. Proceeds, according to Mr. Justice Greenberg, would be divided among the two bodies. The Board was to deal with internal issues, while the Zionist Federation was to manage the Jewish national cause. (e.g. directing funds to Palestine.) The meeting ended with the audience's assurance that it would energetically support the campaign. In the months following, the campaign proved successful; the United Appeal showed an increase of 25% from the annual Keren Hayesod Appeal.

The secular New Year brought renewed support of the resolution for the United South African Jewish War Appeal. The *Zionist Record*, for instance, printed a resolution filled with hope and confidence in the ultimate downfall of Nazism.<sup>109</sup> The resolution called for Jews to make 1941 the year that liberation of the world prevailed over Nazism. Toward the latter part of January, a photograph of European Jewish refugees appeared in the *Zionist Record*. Pictured were approximately 100 men, women and children gathered together in a street looking dazed, confused and displaced. Two hands had been painted onto the photo surrounding these refugees in protection. The hands appeared to be almost embracing the refugees in a hug of protection from the flames that had been painted beneath their feet. The

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<sup>109</sup> *The Zionist Record* (South Africa), "A Resolution for 1941," January 3, 1941.

caption read: "Their Fate Lies in Your Hands."<sup>110</sup> As before, the War Appeal urged South African Jewry to continue to meet their obligation to their co-religionists abroad. "Redouble Your Help and Their Hope," it urged, "to strengthen the defense of Palestine, to aid the victims of war, to feed and resettle scattered refugees."<sup>111</sup> South African Jews could no longer distance themselves from their brethren overseas.

### **Antisemitism Continues to Rage in Parliament and in the Press**

The Jewish immigration question reappeared in the House on several occasions in the beginning of 1940. Although a mere 218 Jewish immigrants had entered the Union in 1940, the opposition attempted to manipulate figures and persuade the House that a much larger influx had taken place. Led by Malan, the opposition raised concern when its members discovered that the question pertaining to religious affiliation had been omitted from the 1941 Census form. According to Board minutes: "They insinuated that this omission was brought about through pressure from Jews and ... named the Jewish Board of Deputies as the culprit."<sup>112</sup> Even when a representative of the Statistical Council denied that the Board had made any such request on the subject, the opposition contended that the Government was attempting to conceal the accurate number of Jews in South Africa. One member incorrectly asserted that Jews comprised 7½ % of the population and concluded that when Jews exceed

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<sup>110</sup> *The Zionist Record* (South Africa), "Their Fate Lies in Your Hands," January 31, 1941, 15.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. April 27, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4. 300.

5% of the population, a Jewish problem existed.<sup>113</sup> Jews were further attacked for avoiding army recruitment and "not doing their bit."<sup>114</sup> There was no acknowledgment that Jews made up a considerable number of the forces fighting in the North.<sup>115</sup>

Racial antagonism continued in the Afrikaner press. The newest lie asserted that Jews were displacing Afrikaners in the professions. *Die Transvaler* alleged that 56.6% of the doctors in Johannesburg were Jewish. The newspaper published figures maintaining that Jews were penetrating the University and Johannesburg General Hospital, in large numbers. The article claimed that of the 906 medical students at Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg, 410 were Jews and only 198 were Afrikaners. The rest were English-speaking South Africans.<sup>116</sup> An editorial in this paper urged that the "the position must be remedied and among the measures which it recommends are the establishment of a separate Afrikaans medical faculty, greater attention by Afrikaners to the medical profession and an appeal to the Afrikaans patient to patronize Afrikaner doctors."<sup>117</sup> The motive was clear—to develop racial quotas in the economic and professional arena.

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<sup>113</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. April 27, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4. 300.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. August 31, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4. 366.

<sup>116</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. April 27, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4. 300.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

### Pro-Jewish Voices in South Africa

At the same time, there were voices raised against antisemitism in South Africa. Under the Emergency Regulations, the Board had succeeded in prosecuting several persons making "subversive" statements in the form of attacks on Jews. The Supreme Court had even upheld the conviction of Izak Zuidmeer, a well-known Greyshirt.<sup>118</sup> Still, as Saron insisted, the Jews needed to continue their fight for democracy, a fight strongly in contrast with what he called "the Christian-National ideal."

Meanwhile, Jewish hope in Smuts was not dimmed by the insufficient response to opposition attacks. At the United Party Congress in Bloemfontein, Smuts "gave a sober correction to the distorted perspective which the political chaos and confusion of the opposition is often inclined to produce."<sup>119</sup> Despite rampant antisemitism among his own cabinet members, Smuts took a firm stand against Nazism. "The alliance with Russia does not mean a changed attitude towards the ideology of Communism," insisted Smuts, "at this stage it is necessary to concentrate on the main task, namely the overthrow of Nazism."<sup>120</sup>

The community's optimism about Smuts was further heightened by Smuts' and Hofmeyr's Balfour Day broadcast. Smuts pleaded for justice for the Jew and the implementation of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, of which he was one of the original architects. According to the Board, this was "undoubtedly the finest and noblest plea for

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<sup>118</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. July 26, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4. 345.

<sup>119</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. October 26, 1941. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 4. 385.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

justice for the Jew that any statesman has made since this war began."<sup>121</sup> Smuts himself recognized that his influence on British politics was limited, but continued to take up the Zionist cause.<sup>122</sup> Hofmeyr, too, appealed on behalf of the Jewish community in South Africa. At his inauguration into the Society of Jews and Christians in South Africa, he explained that Nazis had attacked Jews not just as scapegoats but because the high moral values of Judaism were in direct opposition to all that Nazism professed.<sup>123</sup>

The Executive Council of the Board urged the Jewish community not to be lulled into complacency by less virulent anti-Jewish rhetoric. Jews would suffer if the covert Fascist leanings of the Nationalists and the overt Nazi sympathies of Pirow, (and now General Hertzog) were to command widespread support.<sup>124</sup> The Executive Council suggested that the internal political struggle among the Afrikaner opposition parties was diverting attention from the Jews. The Board believed that one avenue to combat antisemitism and deter racism was economic programs. In their words, "Once people have food and a roof over the heads ... they will the more readily perceive the false and wicked character of the slogans used by scheming politicians to stir up prejudice and hate against one or another race or group."<sup>125</sup> In comparison to the international antisemitism, Saron concluded, the episodes in South Africa

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<sup>121</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. November 30, 1941. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 5. 401.

<sup>122</sup> Gideon Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience (1910-1967)*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980), 44.

<sup>123</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. November 30, 1941. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 5. 402.

<sup>124</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. October 26, 1941. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 4. 386.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

were negligible. The South African Jewish fight is part of the fight for worldwide Jewry: "We have been passing through days of anxiety and more lie ahead ... let South African Jews be second to none in demonstrating their loyalty."<sup>126</sup>

### Interfaith Relations

The unrest in the political arena strongly influenced the relationship between the Jewish and Christian communities. In response, the Board attempted to orchestrate Goodwill Sunday, a day of prayer to unite the communities under the auspices of the Christian Council of South Africa, the Society of Jews and Christians, the Witwatersrand Church Council and the Cape Peninsula Church. Their efforts, though, came under attack in the press and in Parliament. The Nationalists "made a point of the fact that there could be no praying with or for Jews."<sup>127</sup> Discussions developed further on the so-called Jewish Question at the Afrikaner Council of Churches on March 28, 1940, where a special committee was established to determine whether the Jews are the chosen people. The committee concluded, "the Chosen People are not the Jews, but the believers in Jesus Christ and that there can be no talk of eventual mass conversion of Jewry or return of the Jews to Palestine."<sup>128</sup> This decision was accepted by a majority of 16 to 3. Months later, outside the political arena, the Johannesburg Diocesan Synod of the Anglican Church held an important conference devoted to the social and economic problems of South Africa. They made a plea for an improved

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<sup>126</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. April 27, 1941. Report prepared by G. Saron. Annexe 4. 300.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.



order of society, characterized by justice, good faith, economic security and racial understanding for all. The Board was quick to congratulate their stance:

Such an attitude on the part of a Church body should be taken very deeply to heart for us; for we know the allegations of disinterest in such fundamental problems, of preoccupation with the purely materialistic side of life that are often leveled—even wrongly—against Jews. The attitude of this Anglican Diocesan Synod should give a lead to Jewish bodies to get down in the same way to consideration of these vast problems of modern society.”<sup>129</sup>

### **The Jewish Press Reports Nazi Atrocities**

The Jewish press responded to the outbreak of war with vigor, and monitored and published activities of the Jewish anti-Fascist Committee in the Soviet Union. These reports confirmed that Germany intended to “exterminate” Jews.<sup>130</sup> The impact of these reports seemed to be somewhat blunted by a September 1941 statement by Lazarus. His article in *Jewish Affairs* displayed awareness that Jews were “special victims of Nazi tyranny,” but failed to recognize that they were to be massacred.<sup>131</sup> The Board tried to assist South African Jews in tracing their Baltic relatives. They attempted to reach the Russian Red Cross on three occasions, but to no avail. Eventually, a response was received from the British Ambassador in Moscow that they were unable to assist relatives who were not “Union Nationals.” Thus, the Board decided that they would “continue to watch the situation carefully with a view to ascertaining whether any other channel of communication exists.”<sup>132</sup> Meantime, reports of Nazi campaigns that specifically singled out Jews continued to emerge.

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<sup>129</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. October 26, 1941. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 4. 386.

<sup>130</sup> *South African Jewish Times*, June 29, 1941.

<sup>131</sup> *Jewish Affairs* (South Africa), 1(4), September 1941. 1.

<sup>132</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. September 28, 1941. 385.

Massacres were reported in Poland, along with the deportations from neighboring European countries of tens of thousands of Jews to Poland and Russia.<sup>133</sup> Jews were dying in Europe, and there was no answer to the question: "Where are the Allied countries?" With the opposition so strong in Parliament, Jews asked the question only privately so as not to threaten the fragile Smuts coalition.

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<sup>133</sup> *Zionist Record* (South Africa), November 7 1941.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **1942: THE BOARD TURNS ITS ATTENTION OVERSEAS**

#### **AS THE WAR IN EUROPE INTENSIFIES**

The year 1942 represented a turning point for all of South Africa. As we have seen, up to this point, Smuts' coalition had been somewhat tenuous. The war seemed an abstract concept to most South Africans, and many found it easy to be isolationist at best and pro-Axis at worst. This changed in 1942, as the effects of the war began to be felt on the home front.

On the international front Japan joined Germany and Italy, while the United States entered the war allied with Britain. As war escalated, the daily life of South Africans was interrupted. Gasoline was rationed, American imports were not forthcoming, and paper was restricted. Simultaneous with the realization that South Africa was firmly an Allied country came increased reports of Nazi atrocities. Although South African Jews felt no personal or immediate danger, they were concerned that Hitler would welcome an attack on the Cape of Good Hope, which would interfere with sea routes to the Middle East.<sup>134</sup> All these factors lead to greater visibility on the part of and a new flurry of activity by the Board.

#### **The Board Establishes Its Own Propaganda Campaign**

The earlier calls for public education as a tool to combat antisemitism were heeded as the South African Jewish Board of Deputies established a Public Relations Committee. The aim was two-fold: to monitor propaganda being received by the non-Jewish community and to foster a closer relationship between the Board and the Jewish community. In contrast to

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<sup>134</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. February 22, 1942. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 4. 441.

efforts of the previous year, the Public Relations Committee reported success with Goodwill Sunday on February 15, 1942 as several religious groups including the Christian Council of South Africa, the Methodist Synod, the Presbyterian Assembly and Congregational Union, came together for Goodwill Day. Moreover, all supported a Goodwill Week—more secular in nature—to begin on May 18. At the urging of the Board, the Hebrew Congregations invited members of the Christian community to attend Goodwill Services held on the Sabbath. In some Christian congregations, ministers joined with their Jewish counterparts in an exchange of pulpits. Throughout the Union, the Board noted that goodwill sermons countered some of the antisemitic campaigns aimed against the Jewish war effort.<sup>135</sup> The Board also circulated pamphlets in an attempt to improve the relationship between English and Afrikaner, European and non-European, and Jew and Christian.<sup>136</sup> They arranged for the distribution of the first book published on the Jewish question in South Africa, entitled *Israel die Sondobok* (Israel the Scapegoat). The book attempted to give a perspective on the role of Jews in history and downplay anti-Jewish stereotypes. Afrikaans and English translations were made available at very low prices and heavily promoted by the Board.<sup>137</sup>

#### **Internal Rifts within the South African Jewish Community**

At the same time, however, this increased activity also led to deep internal rifts within the South African Jewish community. The Zionist Federation began to criticize the Board

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<sup>135</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*. February 22, 1942. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 5. 443.

<sup>136</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of Public Relations Committee*. January 25, 1942. Annexe 5. 425.

<sup>137</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*. February 22, 1942. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 5. 443.

regarding several aspects of its war efforts.<sup>138</sup> Principally, the Board encouraged Jewish participation in the South African war effort, while the Zionists favored recruiting Jews to fight for Palestine. Furthermore, the Zionists regarded the Board's efforts to improve relations between Jewish organizations and their Christian counterparts as a diversion of effort. Only a year ago, as discussed, the Board and the Zionist Federation had merged their fund raising efforts. Part of the Appeal went to a War Victims Fund, which the Board understood to include support for South African Jewish families who had lost relatives in the war. The Zionists differed, stating that the main object had to be Palestine.

The Board convened a conference on March 15, 1942 to determine the future of the Appeal.<sup>139</sup> This implementation of the War Appeal Conference by the Board outraged the Zionist Federation who accused the Board of being anti-Zionist. The Board responded simply that it meant to extend the one-year mandate of the United Appeal, including money for the War Victims Fund. At the Conference, the Board and the Zionist Federation diverged sharply on the issue of Palestine. Mr. Nicolai Kirschner, a leader in the Zionist movement since 1936, proposed an amendment stipulating that the main objective was to fund Palestine as the only permanent home for Jews of the Diaspora. In the end, a general resolution, including the Zionist amendment, was approved by 164 votes to 121.<sup>140</sup> When Lazarus and his Executive Board were personally attacked for not promoting Zionism, Lazarus

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<sup>138</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Summary of Statement by the Chair*. June 7, 1942. Report prepared by G. Lazarus. Annexe IV. 486.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Statement of Chairman on the Board of Deputies Standpoint with Regard to the War Appeal Conference on March the 15<sup>th</sup>*. March 29, 1942. Annexe 4. 455.

emphasized the importance of a unified Jewish representation and refused to comment on the merits of the amendment.<sup>141</sup>

Lazarus insisted that the intention of the Board was to run the South African Jewish War Appeal according to guidelines set forth by the American Jewish Congress who had declared that there was really only 'one Jewish cause.'<sup>142</sup> He further maintained that the objective of utmost importance was advancing the welfare of the global Jewish community. In his words:

There have been unjustified and unwarranted attacks upon the Board in several Jewish newspapers published in this country. I say without hesitation that in this matter of the Conference, the Board has behaved with propriety, with due regard for the wide interests which it represents, and with restraint.<sup>143</sup>

In fact, by the year's end, the War Appeal proved five times more successful in collecting donations than the United War Appeal.<sup>144</sup> These funds were sent abroad to settle refugees both in and outside of Palestine and were also used to benefit Jews in South Africa.

Following the March Conference, the Board tried to address the issue of disunity in the South African community at their June 7, 1942 Meeting of Deputies. The Zionist Federation set forth their new strategy for local affairs: they now sought a more active role in Jewish education and in the local community, even proposing to capture seats on the Board itself. The Board was obviously alarmed by this proposal, and the members of the Board

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council Report of Public Relations Committee*. January 31, 1943. Annexe III. 609.

sent a letter to the Zionist Federation, stating their concerns<sup>145</sup>. The *Zionist Record* published both this letter together with the Zionist response that denied any intention to take over the Board. "Organized Zionism," they wrote, "will bend all its will and strength not to dominate the Board, but to infuse the leaders and the policy of the Board with an outlook and a spirit which derive from that all-embracing conception of Jewish life which is Zionism."<sup>146</sup>

Mr. Morris Kentridge, a Board member and Parliamentarian for the United Party, agreed with Lazarus. He, too, feared a split between Zionists and non-Zionists. Himself a Zionist, Kentridge was concerned that the Zionist Federation intended to organize a separate Jewish group in South Africa. He wanted Zionists to participate in local affairs and not just those of Palestine. To him, "it was becoming clearer day by day that a national home in Palestine would not be a solution of the Jewish question because thousands of Jews would be left in the Diaspora, but a solution would be facilitated if Jews could sit as a nation."<sup>147</sup> Kentridge condemned the phrasing used in the Zionist pamphlet, but was prepared to accept the disavowal in the *Zionist Record*.<sup>148</sup> He proposed that the two bodies meet to establish a basis for rapprochement. The Board proposed an amendment to Kentridge's resolution, stating that it was not in the best interests of the South African community to be dominated exclusively by Zionism. The declaration read as follows:

This meeting of deputies reaffirms the principle that the Board must be the recognized central institution of South African Jewry, it must be independent, democratic, representative of every section in the community,

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<sup>145</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Summary of Statement by the Chair*. June 7, 1942. Report prepared by G. Lazarus. Annexe IV. 486.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. 487.

<sup>147</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*, June 7, 1942. 479.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

and not subservient to any person or section inside the Board or to any person, group or organization outside the Board.<sup>149</sup>

Kentridge's resolution was passed by the Board, which provided a means for the two bodies to work out their differences and establish a closer working relationship. As the Board declared: "This meeting urges the Executive Council of the Board to invite the Executive Council of the Federation to a meeting at the earliest opportunity, with the object of hammering out differences and coming to a proper basis of harmony and cooperation."<sup>150</sup>

### **Opposition Parties Embrace Nazi Tactics**

If Government circles understood the gravity of the war situation, the Board noted that the Opposition did not. Incited by van Rensburg's speeches, the Ossewa Brandwag waged militant campaigns against war efforts by South African Jews. Van Rensburg publicly declared that the Ossewa Brandwag strove to be a South African version of the Nazi movement in Germany, the Falangist movement in Spain and the Fascist movement in Italy.<sup>151</sup> He called for an eradication of democracy and liberalism, which he claimed should be replaced by "discipline." Even Pirow's New Order broke from the Herenigde Party and came closer to the antisemitism of the Ossewa Brandwag.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. March 29, 1942. Annexe 5. 456.

<sup>152</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. February 22, 1942. Report prepared by E. Bernstein. Annexe 4. 441.



The New Order declared that their policy was based on a German victory that would disenfranchise the Jews and traitors like Mr. Hofmeyr.<sup>153</sup> The Greyshirts too, embraced a German victory. The Herenigde party continued to debate the Jewish question. Once again, Eric Louw proposed an amendment to de-naturalize German Nationals in the Union, but the Speaker ruled his amendment out of order.<sup>154</sup> In fact, by June, the Secretary for the Interior informed the Board that no fixed standard of the educational test for naturalization would be established. Furthermore the test would be made easier. "This" said Lazarus, "undoubtedly represented a step further."<sup>155</sup> While the test was supposedly less stringent, applicants would only be accepted if, for example, they were males that were part of the military or had been rejected for military service on medical grounds.<sup>156</sup>

Rumors resurfaced in the Afrikaans press and Parliament that few Jews were joining the army and that those who did had safe office positions. To dispute these allegations, the Board compiled a register of Jews serving in the armed forces. The Board noted, with special interest, that two Afrikaans newspapers, *Ons Land* in the Cape and *Die Volk* in Johannesburg, wrote about the Jewish contribution to the war. They actually used statistics from the Board's war register to dispute the allegations made about the Jews and to warn readers not to play into Nazi hands.<sup>157</sup> The Board managed to secure permission from

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<sup>153</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. March 29, 1942. Annexe 5. 456.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*, June 7, 1942. 478.

<sup>156</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of Aliens and Refugees Committee*. January 31, 1943. Annexe IV. 612.

<sup>157</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *General Review*. April, 1942. 469 B.

military officials to compare its register with that of the War Services Register. Initial investigation indicated that several names of Jewish soldiers appeared in the defense records that were not included on the Board's list. This indicated that Jewish enlistment was probably greater than the 7,500 names on the Board's register.<sup>158</sup> Though Jewish enlistment was relatively high, the Board pointed out that this was not grounds for complacency:

The need for recruits for all branches of the service remains, the need for participation in the Home Defense and for full support of all war funds remains. The war effort our community must make is not one to be reckoned in terms of percentages. It must be a maximum contribution. Nothing less than a maximum possible contribution will meet the case.<sup>159</sup>

### **Recognition of Tragedy: The Closing Months of 1942**

The South African Foreign Affairs Committee informed the Board of Deputies of a cable received by Jewish congregations throughout South Africa. The Chief Rabbi's Emergency Council in London had directly approached Congregations, requesting contributions for the United Jewish Charities. The cable called for all South African synagogues to make High Holy Day appeals for funds. The National Allocations Council of the United South African War Appeal had already allocated a sum of money to the Emergency Council, and as they had on a prior occasion, the Board notified the Emergency Council in London that the regulation of funds in South Africa should be handled through the Board.<sup>160</sup> The Foreign Appeals Committee placed a notice to this effect in the Jewish Press with the headline, "Overseas Campaigns:"

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies, Report of the Foreign Appeals Committee*. September 20, 1942. Annexe VII. 557.

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies desires to remind the Jewish Community that all collections and campaigns for overseas purposes require the prior authorization of the Board. Congregations and individuals receiving requests by cable or otherwise, are asked to communicate with the Board before complying with such requests."<sup>161</sup>

The South African Foreign Affairs Committee and the Executive Council of the Board continued to monitor reports of atrocities against the Jews in Nazi occupied Europe. Although South African Jews, like all of worldwide Jewry, were unaware of the death camps, they realized that Jews were being killed by the Nazis. The *South African Jewish Chronicle* reported on a camp at Oswiecim in Easter Upper Silesia (Auschwitz).<sup>162</sup> A later article published reports of Jewish deportation from the Warsaw ghetto and Paris to undetermined locations in Eastern Europe.<sup>163</sup> Editorials in the Jewish press urged South African Jews to contribute to the Jewish War Appeal campaign. There was by now little doubt as to Hitler's program of extermination. An editorial in the *South African Jewish Chronicle* insisted that, "one million Jewish souls have already perished in the awful holocaust by methods that beggar description."<sup>164</sup> The Board corroborated this report with receipt of a cable on November 11, 1942 from Tel Aviv. Dated nine days earlier, it reported that the Nazis had implemented a mass murder campaign against Jews. The cable explained that under the camouflage of forced labor, Jews were taken to distant woods and cruelly murdered.<sup>165</sup> The Jewish Agency in Palestine reported Jewish men, women and children were being deported to

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> *South African Jewish Chronicle*. March 27, 1942

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> *South African Jewish Chronicle*. October 2, 1942.

<sup>165</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Copy of Cable from Tel Aviv. November 2, 1942.

unknown places or systematically killed.<sup>166</sup> A statement issued by the United States government confirmed the reality of Hitler's threat to exterminate the Jews of Europe. The report asserted that 2,000,000 Jews had already been killed and that the remaining 5,000,000 Jews were at "imminent peril."<sup>167</sup>

With these reports in hand, the Executive Council of the Board was motivated to express publicly their horror and grief. A plea was made on behalf of the Jewish War Appeal to every South African Jew, challenging him or her to respond to the European tragedy:

Our people face today the worst crisis in its long and checkered history. The extermination of European Jewry is a declared war aim of Nazi Germany. Over two million have already been done to death with typical Teutonic thoroughness by the special 'Extermination Squads' organized for the purpose. The rest languish behind the barbed-wire barriers of over crowded ghettos in conditions which beggar description—starvation, disease and pestilence, lack of shelter and clothing—spared the ultimate fate only because of their usefulness to the hated tyrant in labor gangs.<sup>168</sup>

The plea urged South African Jews to examine their consciences and avoid their own personal and unnecessary luxuries, including lavish and ostentatious wedding and bar mitzvah celebrations, in order to support the War Appeal. The aim "is the winning of the war and the overthrow of Hitler."<sup>169</sup> In light of this, Jews were urged to reexamine whether they were partaking adequately in combat and in the home arena. The War Appeal urged Jews to

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<sup>166</sup> *South African Jewish Times*, November 27, 1942.

<sup>167</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*. December 6, 1942. Annexe IV. 590.

<sup>168</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. "When a People is Being Murdered, A Call to every S.A. Jew and Jewess. 1.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

"Pledge yourself to devote one day's earnings per month to this important fund."<sup>170</sup> There were three major objectives: to guarantee equal civil, political and national rights to Jews living everywhere; to establish Palestine as a Jewish national home; and to ensure freedom for Jews to migrate to any region of the world.<sup>171</sup> The call concluded on the following note: "This is a program for the individual. Only if you play your part in full measure can any cooperative effort be effective and helpful. Let your response be full, let your reaction be immediate. 'For why shall ye die, O house of Israel!'"<sup>172</sup>

The Jews' neighbors joined their efforts. Representatives of several Christian churches responded with sympathy, acknowledging the persecutions of Jews and condemning the Nazi atrocities.<sup>173</sup> Along with the Ecclesiastical Authorities, the Jews organized a day of Intercession on Sunday, November 22.<sup>174</sup> Within the Jewish community, daily activities were suspended and sports events canceled, while prayer services were held in synagogues throughout the country.<sup>175</sup> Recognizing that a more prominent forum would be necessary, the Board proclaimed Monday, December 14, as a Day of Mourning in order "to express the

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid 2.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*. December 6, 1942. Annexe IV. 589.

<sup>174</sup> *Zionist Record* (South Africa). November 20, 1942.

<sup>175</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*. December 6, 1942. Annexe IV. 589.

horror at the pitiless massacre of our co-religionists that is daily taking place, and to bring home to the non-Jewish public the enormity of the tragedy."<sup>176</sup>

On the Day of Mourning, the Board issued a summons to the Jews. Hitler, they said, openly proclaimed his intentions to annihilate the Jewish race: "We are witnessing one of the blackest chapters of Jewish martyrdom."<sup>177</sup> Reports from the United States State Department indicated that Nazis had originally herded Jews into ghettos of squalor and misery. Those not killed in mass murders had later been forced into labor camps, starved and tortured. According to the Board's summons, the Polish Prime Minister, General Sikorsky, had proof of these unbelievable accounts of Nazi barbarism.<sup>178</sup> The Inter-Allied Committee Report backed up these findings, stating that Jews were being deported to camps and executed by gas.<sup>179</sup>

*Jewish Affairs* published an editorial announcing the Day of Mourning. The writer acknowledged the true nature of the deportations and Hitler's threat to annihilate Jewry.<sup>180</sup> Simultaneously, the Board issued a summons to the community:

Let us mourn for the memory of those who have died. They have died *Al Kiddush Hashem* in sanctification of the Holy name. They suffered because they were born Jews and were living witnesses against Nazi iniquities.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 590.

<sup>177</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *A Summons to the Jewish Community of South Africa*. 1942.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies*. December 6, 1942. Annexe IV. 590.

<sup>180</sup> *Jewish Affairs*, 2(7), December 1942. 2.

<sup>181</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *A Summons to the Jewish Community of South Africa*. 1942.

The Board urged the Jewish community to action by asking: "What should we, what can we, do in this dark hour?"<sup>182</sup> They emphasized the need to save Jews overseas from Nazi tyranny and "bring aid immediately and in full measure to all those victims of Nazism who have escaped from the jaws of the oppressor, and are within our reach."<sup>183</sup> Recognizing that France, Belgium, Holland and other European peoples were risking their lives in defense of their Jewish communities, the Board asked South African Jewry to play an active role in "mobilizing the moral forces of South Africa."<sup>184</sup>

The Board circulated pamphlets to businesses requesting that they remain closed on December 29, in mourning for the 2,000,000 Jews that had been murdered. With full cooperation from the Zionist Federation, the Board, (under the chairmanship of Mr. David Hayden, Chair of the General Purposes Committee) secured non-Jewish participation of the Ecclesiastical Authorities. Stores were closed early in the large cities of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. Synagogue services ended with the *Kaddish* prayer for those who had perished, and public meetings were held in atmospheres described as having a somber Yom Kippur tone.<sup>185</sup> Sympathetic addresses and messages for the tragedy of world Jewry came from gentiles in the political arena, Christian churches and trade unions.<sup>186</sup> The Anglican Bishop, Geoffrey Clayton delivered a message from Prime Minister Smuts, to a gathering of

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies, Report of the Executive Council*, January 31, 1942. Annexe III. 610.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

approximately ten thousand people in Johannesburg. Smuts' empathy toward the Jews was clear. Nazi horrors toward Jews, he said, is unparalleled in history and cannot go unpunished.<sup>187</sup> Clayton himself made reference to the antisemitism in South Africa. This ideology, he warned, is what provokes "man to judge his fellows not on his merits, but according to the race to which he belongs."<sup>188</sup> The Reverend P. Swart, a Dutch Reformed Minister horrified at the crimes against Jews, said that he was speaking for thousands of Afrikaners when he expressed concern that, "today it is Jewry, but tomorrow it might well be our turn."<sup>189</sup>

Among the Jewish speakers were Rabbi Isaac Kossowsky, Kirschner, and Kentridge. Each denounced the indifference of those who had not supported Jews against the Nazis. Kentridge praised the resistance movements for ensuring that Hitler would not succeed. "The Jews," he said, "had stood at the graves of their oppressors and Hitler would prove no exception."<sup>190</sup> Kossowsky and Kirschner ended with a plea for the recognition of Jewish rights in Palestine and for a sheltering for Jewish refugees there.<sup>191</sup> Those in attendance realized that whole communities of Jews were being exterminated by such means as lethal gassing and mass shootings into open burial pits. While details and precise accounts of these murders were still lacking, the essence of the situation was real.<sup>192</sup> The Day of Mourning was

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<sup>187</sup> *South African Jewish Times*. January, 1, 1943.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Jewish Affairs* 2(8), January 1943, 3.

<sup>190</sup> *South African Jewish Times*. January, 1, 1943.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*



considered a success. It awakened " both Jews and non-Jews to a full realization of the enormities perpetrated by the Nazis against the Jewish population in their clutches, and ... providing the public with a tangible and dramatic means of giving expression to its feelings."<sup>193</sup>

The Board decided to follow up the Day of Mourning with practical steps to assist European Jewry. They sent a memorandum to Prime Minister Smuts urging the Allied and neutral countries to offer asylum for the duration of the war to "fugitives from the Nazi hell."<sup>194</sup> Measures were to be implemented for victims and potential victims to be taken to Palestine. They added:

The need is urged of a well-planned long-range policy calculated to assure the Jewish people after this war a status and a place such as will remove them once and for all from the unenviable position of the world's scapegoat which they have filled for 2,000 years.<sup>195</sup>

As the evidence shows, in this pivotal year of 1942, the Board finally felt able to campaign actively for help and rescue efforts on behalf of Jews in Nazi occupied Europe. It was no longer enough to seek assurances that South African Jews would not be subject to discrimination at home. By the end of the year, growing concerns for all Jewry finally changed the direction of the Board. Rather than concentrating on the internal political developments of the South African political parties, the Board turned its attention fully to overseas developments, world Jewry, and the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine.

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<sup>193</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Meeting of Deputies, Report of the Executive Council*, January 31, 1942. Annexe III. 609.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. 610.

## CHAPTER 5

### 1943-1945: SOUTH AFRICA AS AN ALLIED COUNTRY IN THE LATTER HALF OF THE WAR

As might be expected, by mid-1943 the War issue dominated the Provincial Council elections. Smuts' government managed an overwhelming victory over other politicians. Antisemitism, it should be noted, played only a minor role in these local elections.<sup>196</sup> However, in two regions where Jews were candidates, there was still organized support against them based upon their ethnic identity. While antisemitism was not as overt as in the past, pamphlets still circulated with hostile Jewish rhetoric. The Herenigde Party candidate in Pretoria declared, for instance, that "Jews sit at home and fill their pockets while Gentiles have to shed their blood on the battlefield. Keep the Jew out of Parliament."<sup>197</sup> A United Party candidate supporter shouted, "Don't vote for bloody Jews. They are the people who are making all the money out of the war."<sup>198</sup> The Board expressed concern over this new phenomenon—growing antisemitism among the English-speaking population in the Eastern Province.

This strange paradox typifies the situation in the closing years of the war: on the one hand, Smuts was firmly entrenched as the leader to guide South Africa out of the War, and Jews welcomed his sympathy for their cause. On the other hand, Smuts was unable to have much of an impact on the situation of Jews abroad, only counseling Jewish embassies to

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<sup>196</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of Public Relations Committee*. June 25, 1943. Annexe 6. 705.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

appeal to Heaven. With a growing knowledge of the Holocaust, the Board continued its more active role. No longer could South African Jews remain quiet out of fear for their own positions.

### **The Board's Call for Political Action in 1943**

On March 12, 1943, the Board in Johannesburg received a cable from the South African Jewish Chronicle in Cape Town. Rabbi Israel Abrahams, Chief Rabbi of Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, and his deputies from the Board and Zionist Federation had been awaiting Smuts to hand him a memorandum concerning Nazi persecutions of Jews. According to the cable, Rabbi Abrahams expressed disappointment at the lack of help and "emphasized the urgency of the tragedy that was threatening Jewry in view of the declared policy of extermination which was being carried out by the Nazis."<sup>199</sup> Smuts replied:

The position of Jewry in Europe baffled thought. It seemed incredible that such atrocities as the Nazis perpetrated could happen in the twentieth century. The Jewish people must not however despair. They would not be annihilated and from the remnant the people would grow again. Naturally the more that could be saved the better. First and foremost the war had to be prosecuted with the utmost ferocity so as to bring this state of affairs to an end in the minimum possible time.<sup>200</sup>

Meanwhile Smuts understood the Board's criticism of the British Government's White Paper Policy on Palestine, which prevented Jewish immigration to Palestine. Smuts stated that the White Paper would have to be revised, to allow the Jewish people to have a national home in Palestine. While Smuts acknowledged that the whole of Jewry could not

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<sup>199</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, "Cable from Jewish Chronicle." March 12, 1943. 1.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 3.

live in Palestine, he saw Palestine as a "focal point and place in the sun."<sup>201</sup> Smuts concluded, pleading with Jews not to despair. "It is now widely realized", he said, "that this smirch on our civilization must be removed. This persecution of Jews is an insult to our civilization and we must do something about it."<sup>202</sup>

The Board decided at this time to concentrate on combating local political and social antisemitism. Its new approach would be "to make sure that anyone repeating antisemitic slogans" understood that they were "playing Hitler's game and acting contrary to the national interest."<sup>203</sup> Saron was hopeful that those non-Jewish sections of the population influenced by antisemitic propaganda "would see the light" with the defeat of Nazism.<sup>204</sup> He emphasized the necessity to foster better relations with the Afrikaans community, and strengthen a spirit of national cooperation against Nazism. As important, Saron pleaded for greater collaboration among various groups Jewish groups to assist the Board's Public Relations division in its war effort.<sup>205</sup> Discussion among the various deputies again demonstrated the dissent over how to combat antisemitism, cultivate relations with the Afrikaners, educate Jewish children on their own religion and history, fight Fascism, maintain impeccable Jewish behavior, and diminish negative Jewish references in the press.<sup>206</sup> They viewed these internal problems as a threat to Jewish contribution in the war

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Menace of Antisemitism*. May 30, 1943. Annexe 5. 671.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

effort, and the discussion ended with Rabbi Kossowsky's logical plea that "Jews should put their own house in order."<sup>207</sup>

On August 26, 1943, Smuts agreed to meet with Isaac Gruenbaum, a recognized authority on the Jewish position in Europe and a representative of Jewish rescue efforts in Palestine. He informed Smuts that Jews in German-occupied territories were in grave danger. Mass murders in Poland continued, and Jews would be completely annihilated. German propaganda was filled with still greater antipathy toward Jews. In Gruenbaum's words, "They accuse the Jews of having incited the Allies to bomb the German trains."<sup>208</sup> Gruenbaum asked Smuts if it might be possible for the Allies to demand of Germany that these murders be halted. Smuts replied that those guilty would pay fully for their crimes. On the issue of providing ships for rescue, Smuts asserted that South Africa had agreed to bring in Jewish children, but "we cannot overcome the transport difficulties."<sup>209</sup>

Gruenbaum gave Smuts accolades, telling him that he was one of the greatest friends that the Jewish people had, having proved his friendship on more than one occasion. Yet it was evident from this conversation that even Smuts did not fully understand the implications of Jewish annihilation. Gruenbaum explained that "the Jews are annihilated in accordance with a premeditated plan."<sup>210</sup> Smuts responded by saying, "but in Germany there is a growing shortage of labor, and because of this there is the possibility that Jews will therefore

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Jan Smuts. *Report of Interview between Mr. I Gruenbaum and Prime Minister Smuts*, August 26. 1.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 2.

be engaged [to] work."<sup>211</sup> Gruenbaum countered that American sources in 1942 were privy to Hitler's insistence that food rations to Jews would be diminished and that a large percentage of Jews would be exterminated.<sup>212</sup> Smuts agreed that Jews were open to Nazi barbarism and are a *Sondebok*. (scapegoat). Gruenbaum reiterated the German plan to Smuts:

The Germans have carried out a devilish plan. At the beginning they isolated the Jews and debased them so that their position should not arouse any sympathy; that they would not even be considered s human beings in order that the plan to exterminate them should be facilitated. In Warsaw, for instance, daily, during the course of seventy days, 6,000 and some days as much as 10,000 Jews were led in an unknown direction and only then was it discovered that they, the Jews were led into separate camps in which there were special facilities organized for a mass extermination.<sup>213</sup>

While Smuts expressed his despondence at the insurmountable difficulties of the situation, he claimed still, that his "prophecy" pointed to Hitler's defeat and the destruction of his armies. Jews might then receive equal rights. "I will do all that is in my power," said Smuts on the issue of Palestine. "You must not despair, you must raise your eyes to heaven."<sup>214</sup>

Meanwhile, the Board collaborated fully with the American Jewish Conference in a unified response to the predicament of European Jewry.<sup>215</sup> With new information from the American Jewish Conference, Gruenbaum informed the Board and Smuts of armed

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Minutes*. August 29, 1943. 707.

resistance in the Warsaw ghetto. "Nothing like this," according to Gruenbaum, "has taken place since the days of the defense of Jerusalem and Betar against the Roman. An isolated handful of heroes, who had no hope of help or salvation, pitted themselves against a power which held down the whole of Europe."<sup>216</sup> News of the Warsaw ghetto Jews prompted the Executive Council of the Board to adopt unanimously the following resolution, which they communicated to the press:

That this Board place on record a tribute to the memory of the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto, who, with unforgettable heroism, took up arms and fought to the last man against their Nazi oppressors. That, mindful of their sacrifice, South African Jewry reiterates its determination to play its full part in the destruction of Nazism and all that it stands for, to spare no effort to bring succor and help to the victims of the Nazis, and to take all possible steps to ensure the permanent rehabilitation of European Jewry.<sup>217</sup>

The Executive Council recognized that heroism existed amidst other Polish communities, but that a memorial to the Jews of the Warsaw ghetto should be established in Johannesburg under the auspices of the Foreign Affairs Committee. This issue was not raised again until 1944, when it was decided that a public meeting take place to commemorate the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. The members realized that deep concern for the tragedy of European Jewry was not adequate. An appropriate response to the tragedy was needed. Lazarus emphasized that generous contributions to the Jewish War Appeal would demonstrate action.<sup>218</sup> The approach of Yom Kippur prompted members of the War Appeal Board to urge rabbis to discuss the tragedy of European Jewry. With Government sanction, the funds were sent regularly to Switzerland, Spain, and Portugal for

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<sup>216</sup> Isaac Gruenbaum, "The Most Gruesome Tragedy of our Days." September 1, 1943. 4.

<sup>217</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Minutes*. August 29, 1943. 709.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*.

refugees. Over 5,000 parcels were dispatched to refugees in Russia who had no relatives or friends to assist them.<sup>219</sup>

### **The Tragedy of European Jewry**

A Special Committee on the Tragedy of European Jewry was established under the Board's auspices. Appointed by the Executive Council, it sought to mobilize South African non-Jewish opinion about the European tragedy, raise awareness of the tragedy within the South African Jewish community, secure support for practical measures for relief, and implement measures for rescue and relief of Jewish victims of Nazism.<sup>220</sup> By September 1, 1943, the Committee received Gruenbaum's report, which was based upon first hand accounts by Jews who had escaped from Poland and European countries. Information derived from these sources along with the Polish and Jewish underground suggested that Himmler, Germany's Minister of the Interior, was responsible for mass murders and the bloody annihilation of the Jewish communities.<sup>221</sup> According to Gruenbaum, Hitler's response to Allied threats was to intensify terror against Jews and continue executions. As the world looks on helplessly, Gruenbaum writes, "there has been revealed to us the whole satanic plan to destroy the Jews—a plan which Hitler's executioners are carrying out with real German thoroughness."<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *Report of The Executive Council*. September 26, 1943.

<sup>220</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of The Special Committee on the Tragedy of European Jewry*. August 29, 1943.

<sup>221</sup> Isaac Gruenbaum, "The Most Gruesome Tragedy of our Days." September 1, 1943. 1.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.



Upon hearing these reports, the Special Committee sought an interview with the Prime Minister. They wanted to approach both Smuts and non-Jewish groups to secure confirmation that Smuts' government would provide "sanctuary in South Africa during the war period for Jewish victims of the Nazis."<sup>223</sup> In a draft letter to Smuts, the Board expressed their appreciation for his earlier sympathies toward the situation of the Jews, and their concern that immediate steps had not been taken to rescue those in jeopardy. The Board informed Smuts that Nazi exterminations had intensified. The word "deportation," they indicated, was synonymous with death. The Board made him privy to information from the American Jewish Congress that "Hitler's war against the Jews has resulted in the death or deportation of 5,000,000 out of a total of 8,300,000 Jews in Europe."<sup>224</sup> They informed Smuts that the Jewish community could not sit idly by while this "unimaginable holocaust" was taking place.<sup>225</sup> They approached Smuts on two key issues:

- (1) To assist in implementing the practical proposals made at the Bermuda Conference<sup>226</sup>
- (2) To allow victims of Nazi atrocities refuge in South Africa.

The memo reminded Smuts that he had informed the Deputation on February 26 that he was "making inquiries as to the possibility of relaxing or removing some of the 'red tape'

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<sup>223</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of The Special Committee on the Tragedy of European Jewry*. August 29, 1943.

<sup>224</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *The Tragedy of European Jewry*. Memorandum submitted to field Marshal, the Right Honorable J.C. Smuts, Prime Minister. September, 1943, in the hands of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> The Bermuda Conference was a British-American meeting that took place beginning on April 12, 1943, on the refugee problem.

in the administration of the immigration laws of this country."<sup>227</sup> The Board maintained that there had been no improvement, and that transit visas were still being denied. The meeting between the Board and Smuts eventually took place on September 8, 1943.

An additional goal of the Special Committee was to bring firsthand information about the atrocities in Europe to South African Jewry. They explained that "some well-known Jewish personalities" had escaped from Nazis, "and that it is hoped that it may bring one or more of them to South Africa with a view to enlightening the community on the detail of the Jewish tragedy."<sup>228</sup> A cable to the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the World Jewish Congress requested that those "personalities who have first hand contact with the situation in Europe" come to South Africa to conduct an enlightenment campaign.<sup>229</sup>

They were all concerned that smaller Jewish communities were ignorant about the Board. Thus the Communal Relations Committee established a plan with several aims. Their goals were focused upon educating the Jewish community about the Board's work, fostering cultural and spiritual programs, and enhancing Jewish communal life. Rabbi Abrahams, in an article published in the *South African Jewish Chronicle*, claimed "that in view of the eradication of the former centers of Jewish culture in Europe, a greater burden must fall on the remaining few Jewish communities, including South Africa, of continuing

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<sup>227</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *The Tragedy of European Jewry*. Memorandum submitted to field Marshal, the Right Honorable J.C. Smuts, Prime Minister. September, 1943, in the hands of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

<sup>228</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of The Special Committee on the Tragedy of European Jewry*. August 29, 1943.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

Israel's cultural heritage."<sup>230</sup> The Committee's immediate concern was "to stir South African Jewry out of its present apathy and lethargy."<sup>231</sup>

#### **1944: South African Jewry Acts as The War In Europe Reaches Tragic Proportions**

By 1944 there was no doubt in anyone's mind what was happening to Jews in Europe. As the war raged and Allied victory seemed more a question of "when" than "if", the Board turned to playing a more prominent and proactive role. They now sought to provide help to whatever refugees they could, as well as more actively combat the antisemitism of the political opposition.

In his general review of current developments in the Union in 1944, Saron noted that the word "Jew" had rarely been discussed in Parliament, except for the debate on immigration. Outside Parliament, however, reactionary and isolationist forces, which had fostered antisemitism, were still active. The Afrikaans press still presented Jews as an international group, pressuring the world for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. A dispute in the Garment Worker's Union pitted Afrikaans workers, represented by the Ossewa Brandwag, against the Jewish boss "who has different blood and a nose different from that of the workers."<sup>232</sup> Jewish hopes that the War itself would eradicate antisemitism were recognized as unfounded. Even with Hitler's defeat, the Board knew that spiritual, political and economic conditions would still be embedded in sections of the South African population. In South Africa, they feared there would always be "a tendency in wartime to

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<sup>230</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *Report of Communal Relations Committee*. December 5, 1943. Annexe V. 763.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *General Review*. March 26, 1944. 786.

seek scapegoats upon whom the people might vent anger for their disillusion and discontents."<sup>233</sup>

Against this backdrop, Eric Louw once again introduced an anti-Jewish amendment to Mr. F.H. Acutt's motion to "consider the advisability of European immigration on a large scale."<sup>234</sup> He repeated his now-familiar statements alleging a Jewish problem in South Africa due to disproportionate numbers of Jews employed in economic areas, especially the professions. Mr. Louw attempted to solidify his case that Jewish organizations had promoted Jewish immigration to South Africa. Quoting from documents stolen from the Board, "Mr. Louw adopted the familiar technique of selecting passages that suited his purpose, quoting them out of their context and of suppressing other material which were not favorable to his case."<sup>235</sup> These were the same documents that the Supreme Court considered in granting the interdict against von Moltke in 1938.

Saron believed that it was essential that the Board once again respond to Mr. Louw's allegations. The Board's statements of the latter 1930s that they were not pursuing Jewish immigration into South Africa had seemed appropriate at the time. But, as a deputy noted, "circumstances had changed. Six or seven years ago no one could foresee the fate that was to befall our brethren overseas."<sup>236</sup> The Board clearly felt that the time was ripe for a more direct response in Parliament, but it was not to be.

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<sup>233</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *General Review*. January 30, 1944. Annexe V. 779.

<sup>234</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *General Review*. March 26, 1944. 786.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 788.

Kentridge reported that members of the Nationalist Party had interjected the subject of Jews throughout the debate. Jewish members of Parliament, he explained, had been unable to voice their opinions due to the limited time available for private members' motions.<sup>237</sup> He did say however that, "there was considerable perturbation on the part of the Jewish community because non-Jewish members of the House had not risen in defense of the Jews."

<sup>238</sup> Kentridge did clarify that the Minister for the Interior "categorically repudiated any suggestion that the Government would lend itself to anti-Jewish discrimination."<sup>239</sup>

The knowledge that times and situations had changed extended into action. The Committee determined that insufficient time had passed since the Day of Mourning for another public meeting.<sup>240</sup> Instead, the Board intensified its work in nearby territories for refugees on route to Palestine. The Board assisted 90 German refugees in the Protectorate of Swaziland, assisting them with housing and work. In Northern Rhodesia, with the assistance of the local committee of Jewish residents, 221 refugees were supported in industry, commerce, farming, and mining. The Emergency Council had increasing difficulty, however, with the influx of travelers from Lisbon into Lourenco Marques who were utilizing this passage to Palestine.

Although they landed there as a temporary residence en-route to Palestine, the Council was unable to obtain work permits for the refugees. With the aid of the Zionist Federation, 238 ultimately left for Palestine and 59 to other destinations. A special mission

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<sup>237</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *Summary of Address by Mr. M. Kentridge M.P.*. June 26, 1944. Annexe VI. 860.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *General Review*. March 26, 1944. 789.

of the Board was dispatched to Kenya in response to appeals from resident Jewish population. A farm was purchased as a Rest and Training Center for educating refugees to do farm work, although the Emergency Council eventually had to vacate the farm as it was in a military zone.

Recognizing that many of the refugees were filling positions of those who had been called for military service, the Council estimated that approximately 75% of the refugees in these territories would lose their livelihood following the war.<sup>241</sup> Clearly this was a compelling problem.

Another major problem was Mauritius. The arrival on this island of 1585 Jewish refugees who failed to obtain permission to land in Palestine led to their detainment there by the British Government. The Emergency Council acknowledged the painstaking efforts of the local government to alleviate the pitiful conditions of these refugees. However, the Council was not permitted to visit the Island. Still, they dispatched to the camp clothing, books, medical supplies, food and ritual garb for the refugees. A letter of protest to the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in the Union strongly urged that a delegation be allowed to visit the detainees in Mauritius. His response was that appropriate London authorities were reviewing the request.<sup>242</sup> According to financial reports, "a total of 2,200 individuals have been attended to by this Council." The Council dispensed over 50,000 pounds in relief, maintenance, fares, and homes.<sup>243</sup> The Council, in making public their

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 799.

<sup>242</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *Summary of Statement by the President*. February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1945. Annexe V. 992.

<sup>243</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *General Review*. March 26, 1944. 801.

report, appealed for cooperation of other Jewish bodies and individuals, stressing that they were funded by the Jewish War Appeal.

Within the country, a continued more visible and public stance was called for. An Inter-Provisional Conference on the Board met to discuss the issue of public relations, concluding that the Jewish question could not be separated from the economic and political issues in South Africa or anywhere else. The Herenigde Party, the Ossewa Brandwag and the New Order all were continuing to exploit anti Jewish prejudice. They once again alleged their old cry that Jews dominated in commerce, professions, and businesses, and were inadequately represented in the armed forces. This was nothing new, but increasing numbers of the war-weary English speaking population were voicing wartime discontent against Jews.<sup>244</sup> There was disagreement on how to respond to this resurgence. Saron stated that "undue pessimism or defeatism in our own ranks weakens us for the fight and these must be strenuously combated."<sup>245</sup> It was clear that not all Jews yet recognized the danger and threat to their position in South Africa. The Board thus continued to deal with the issue of securing collaboration of the entire Jewish community. It was eventually agreed not to defend the Jewish community against false accusations, but to continue to emphasize the danger of antisemitism to society as a whole.

Against this overarching focus on relief work, the Foreign Affairs Committee reported that the Government had joined a United Nations Council for Voluntary Relief Abroad (UNRRA). The Board approached the Acting Chair, Mr. Justice Ramsbottom as to the possibility of representation on the South African division of the Council by the Board.

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<sup>244</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *Summary of Mr. Saron's Report on the Discussion on Public Relations*. August 27, 1944. Annexe V. 893.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 894.

They were informed that the composition of the Council could not be altered but voluntary associations, such as the Board, would be invited to send representatives to give input at conferences. The Board, after careful consideration, recognized that the Jewish community should be prepared to assist UNRRA with Jewish relief work. Furthermore, the Board informed UNRRA that it would immediately begin training for Jewish relief work in Europe and any volunteers needed by the South African Red Cross for immediate work would be referred to them.<sup>246</sup> A letter was addressed to the UNRRA Council, "giving an assurance that the Board will cooperate with the Council in every possible way and will be prepared to place at its disposal all useful material and information."<sup>247</sup>

The Foreign Affairs Committee further attempted to assist Jewish refugees in obtaining restitution of confiscated property in Europe. They established an advisory committee under the auspices of the Aliens and Refugees Committee that assisted applicants in formulating claims.<sup>248</sup> Their appeals to the Custodian of Enemy Property resulted in the following letter from him:

Any Jewish refugee in the Union having property in one of the enemy or enemy occupied countries is therefore at liberty to furnish me with the particulars of such property and the information will be passed on to the authorities concerned in due course for investigation with a view to safeguarding and restoring the property in question where possible.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *Report of the Foreign Affairs Committee*. November 26, 1944. Annexe VII. 953.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 954.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.



The Custodian intimated that while every effort would be made to approach the necessary authorities to safeguard and restore the properties in question, this Council could not accept responsibility for payment of compensation for lost or stolen property. "Although," he said, "the matter may of course come up for consideration when the time arrives to settle with the enemy."<sup>250</sup>

### **1945: The Community Looks Ahead as the War in Europe Winds Down**

Even as Germany's defeat seemed imminent, Eric Louw continued his libelous attacks on the Jews in the House. Mr. B.A. Ettlinger, President of the Board in 1945, suggested that Louw's latest attacks should not go undefended. He challenged Louw's claims that "an alarming number of Jews were still entering the Union."<sup>251</sup> Of the 16,118 people Louw claimed entered the Union between 1939-1944, he inferred that many had received permits for permanent residence. This figure was grossly exaggerated. The official number of permanent residence permits granted to Jews during the between 1940 and 1945 was, in fact, only 220. Ettlinger said that this in itself is "an unhappy reminder of how very few Jews had been able to find refuge in South Africa from persecution."<sup>252</sup> Those who had received permits were largely residents of Southern and Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo. According to Ettlinger, these facts were easily verifiable. Further, he said the immigration policies of the Union should be strongly condemned. In his words:

Having regard to the almost negligible contribution which the Union had made in recent years in providing a haven for persecuted Jews, it was all the

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *Summary of Statement by the President*. February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1945. Annexe V. 991.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

more to be deplored that this immigration bogey should still be used for antisemitic purposes.<sup>253</sup>

The Board maintained that after five and a half years of war, the Allied Nations were on the verge of victory. Sadly, this belief was met with despondency. The fact that Lithuanian Jewry had been decimated bereaved the many South African Jews who had lost so much of their families. The reality was becoming clear that very few Jews had survived the Nazis to be saved by the advancement of the Allied Armies, and it was believed that more than five million Jews had been destroyed.

Acknowledging this sad fact, the Board established a second Day of Mourning for March 14, 1945 corresponding to the Day of Fast and Mourning set to be observed in Palestine and the United States. This time there was no need for delicate language. In contrast to a few years earlier, the press release to various newspapers, unlike a few years earlier, specifically called this a **Jewish Day of Mourning** for "those martyrs of the House of Israel who died **AL KIDDUSH HASHEM**".<sup>254</sup> The press release continued:

The sites where formerly large communities, pulsating with Jewish life and endeavor, flourished, are now mere cenotaphs, their inhabitants deported to Nazi death camps. Famous centers of Jewish thought and learning, reservoirs of life-giving culture for the entire Jewish people, are now reduced to little more than a memory.<sup>255</sup>

The Board called upon South African Jews to honor the memory of heroic martyrs with pride, and also to praise those who continued to fight in the armies of the United Nations

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. "Jewish Day of Mourning Press Release." March 6, 1945.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

against Nazism. The Board then called upon South African Jews to dedicate themselves to the historic tasks imposed upon them.<sup>256</sup>

Let us resolve to do all that lies in our power to bring succor to our surviving brothers and sisters in Europe and to help them build up their lives anew.

Let us bend all our energies to safeguard the freedom and equality of Jews wherever they may be and to establish their rights as a free nation in their own homeland.

Let us carry on unrelentingly the common fight, together with all lovers of freedom, until the world shall be rid of Nazism and all its evil fruits.

Let us remember our age-old history, which has shown that after every national catastrophe comes a time of rebirth. In our generation, too, the Jewish people will find in themselves sufficient strength to build a new life.<sup>257</sup>

The Jewish Day of Mourning and prayer was held in the Johannesburg City Hall with 700 people in attendance. With the Mayor, City and Provincial Council members, and Jewish and non-Jewish clergy in attendance, all displayed their grief. The meeting opened with the words of Rabbi M. Wald, "We are gathered here to mourn the loss of over 4,000,000 Jews who have been done to death with diabolical tortures and maximum prolongation of agonies that numb the imagination."<sup>258</sup> A moment of silence followed as the gathering bowed their heads in remembrance to the victims of Nazi brutality. Rabbi Wald elaborated on the Nazi atrocities that had now been verified. He said that many Jews were beaten and starved to death in concentration camps. Others were machine-gunned in Polish forests or executed

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<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> *Dispatch* (South Africa), "Jewish Day of Prayer: Loathsome Monster of Antisemitism." March 15, 1945.

in gas chambers, frozen in death trains and buried alive with children in graves dug by fellow Jews.<sup>259</sup>

At this mass meeting, all acknowledged the feeble response to Nazi barbarism. While reactions in the Allied Countries were those of horror, they had not translated into action. As recorded, "The gates of civilized countries, with a few honorable exceptions, were bolted against the Jews, and even the doors of Palestine were only slightly opened."<sup>260</sup>

South African Jews wondered whether it was possible to ensure that Jewish survivors receive sanctuary somewhere until the gates of Palestine were opened. They unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon the Allied Governments to ensure that the perpetrators of these unspeakable horrors be brought to justice as war criminals. "If the Allied Governments make the cardinal mistake of not bringing to justice as common criminals all those guilty of war crimes we shall have all the wickedness over again—if not in our time, in our children's."<sup>261</sup>

Interestingly, there was also a prophetic call for South Africans to turn their gazes inward as well: "If we are to have a happy, ordered prosperous and free future for our loved South Africa it can only be by stamping out all racial inequities and injustices and all overt and covert attacks on those who by the accident of birth have a different ancestry."<sup>262</sup>

As hostilities in Europe came to an end, South African Jewry saw the time as one for rebuilding in the face of tragedy. The Board now worried about minimizing the forces that

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid. •

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

would continue to divide South Africa. Their membership knew that antisemitism had endured throughout the war years, as evidenced by Louw's latest tirades even during the closing months of the war. Rather than an end to the hatred, there was acknowledgment that pro-Nazi forces would "camouflage their real purposes."<sup>263</sup> Realignment of political parties and the amalgamation of pro-Nazi organizations were already taking place in South Africa. The Board concluded, "this is no time to sit back and make snug."<sup>264</sup> They echoed Smuts who said, "I do not think that any victory in war is final. The road is endless. This victory in war is simply a milestone on this great road. Let us look on our task in that spirit."<sup>265</sup>

In the light of future elections that would bring the Nationalist party to victory in postwar South Africa, these words were prophetic. The Jews of South Africa had survived the war years in their homeland, despite the many forces aligned against them. They would now have to rally together again, for continued injustice loomed ahead on South Africa's road into the latter half of the twentieth century.

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<sup>263</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies. *Summary of Statement by the President*. August 26, 1945. Annexe IV. 1053.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 1054.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

## CONCLUSION

My last visit to South Africa was in January 2000. It was a very different country than the one in which I had grown up. This time, Emily and I sat openly together drinking our afternoon tea in public. We were both adults now, and did not have to hide our friendship in the dollhouse. So much had changed. Apartheid was legally gone. Yet, from all the stares we received, I readily acknowledge that while some social change for the good has taken place, it has not yet been firmly established. Granting rights is one thing—actualizing racial integration is quite another. The fact that I noticed a lack of acceptance in public forces me to question what we South Africans have learned.

An entire decade before Apartheid was implemented, South African Jews were threatened by Nazi objectives. Before the system that shamed the entire world came to be, the same authors proposed legislation aimed at the Jews. Sensing danger, South Africa's Jews reacted and created a Board to voice their interests. Then, in the face of tremendous risks to personal welfare and antisemitic pressure, that Board acted as best it knew how to protect the civil and religious liberties of South African Jews, and at the same time respond to Nazism overseas.

My dollhouse was, in a sense, very much like the Jewish community of South Africa. Despite pressures and dangers pressing in from the outside, Emily and I could always have tea in our own little protected world. Inside it was safe. When the pressures got too strong to bear, the dollhouse no longer sheltered—my family left. When the pressure of the war grew too great for South Africa's Jews, they left the safety of their dollhouse—they spoke out, and acted as best they could.

In examining the response of South African Jewry to the Holocaust, the Board has come under serious attack for not mobilizing adequately and defying government policy. In the beginning of this thesis, I suggested that we study the actions of the South African Jewish community during the Holocaust and then determine for ourselves if it was reasonable to expect them to play an active role in the rescue of European Jews. Against the backdrop of rampant political and cultural antisemitism, it is understandable that the Board was cautious, and commendable that it firmly involved itself in the welfare of the worldwide Jewish community.

The marshaled evidence—newspaper articles, lengthy declarations, and minutes of the Board show strong support and sympathy on the part of South African Jews. The South African Jewish community was no different than other Jewish communities around the world; their hearts could little comprehend what their minds told them was true. We know that even many survivors of the Holocaust and victims could not acknowledge what was in store for them. How could we expect any more from the South African? We have, in effect, explored a Jewish communal response to the horrors in Europe. Eventually, South African Jewry raised its collective voice, publicly, in a fight for justice to assist its beleaguered co-religionists. To their credit, once they started, they never stopped speaking out against injustice.

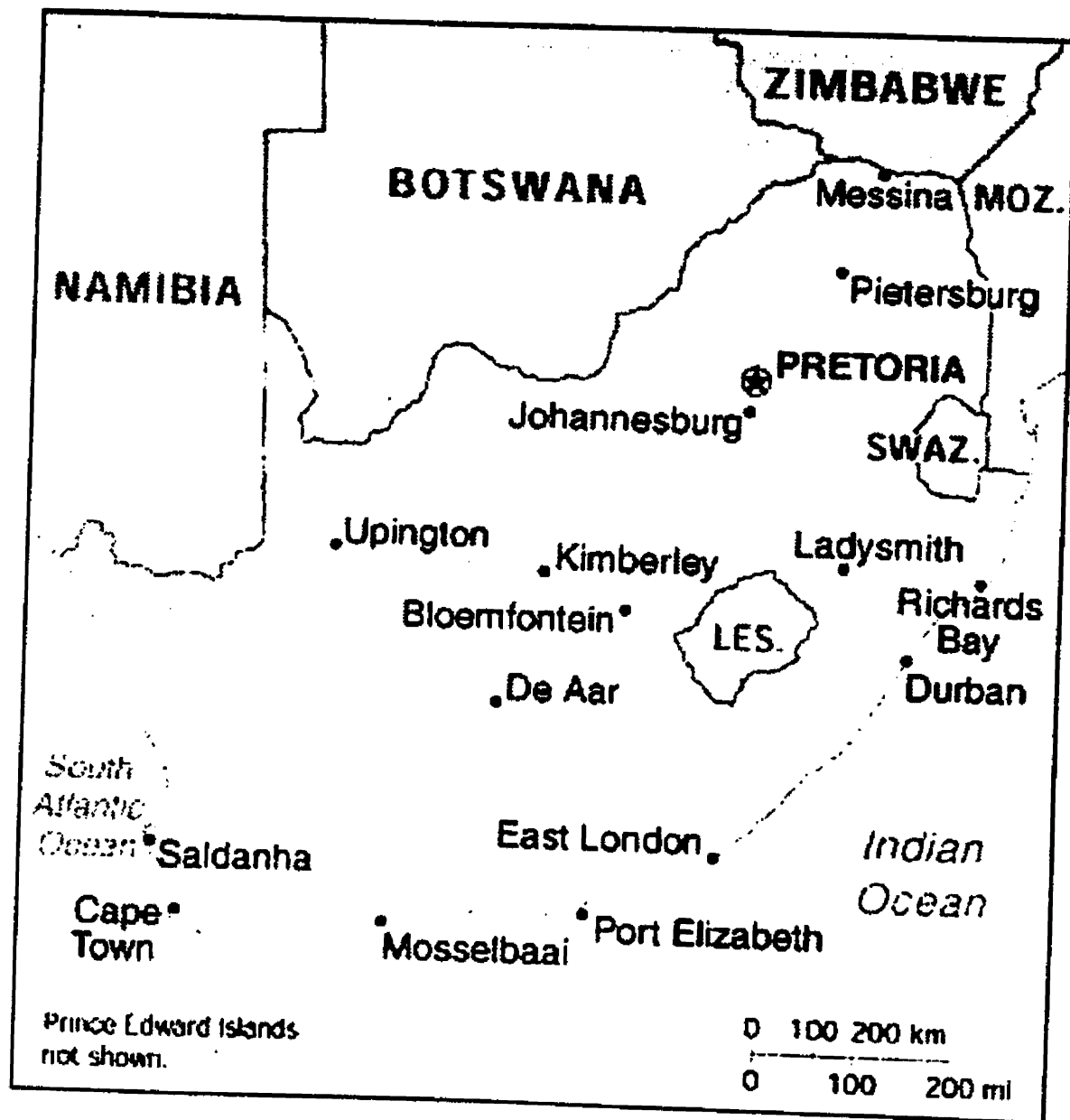
Furthermore, the Board acknowledged the need for a Jewish state—a refuge for Jews who had been deported, expelled, falsely accused, maligned—as well as for Jews longing for its blessings, its heritage, and its inspiration. Ultimately, South African Jews did not take the easy way out. Despite negative public opinion, and threats to their own security, South African Jews continued to support Palestine as a Jewish state.

As a child, living in South Africa, I never questioned the system of segregation where the minority-white population was able to take advantage of the non-white population. Walking down the streets, I never questioned why on park benches signs read, "Whites Only;" or affixed to bathroom doors were signs reading, "Whites Only." This was just part of my rigid disciplinary upbringing. It did not register until I asked why Betty, Emily's mother, who raised us, groomed us and cooked for us never sat down at the dinner table to eat with us. I would wait for Thursday evenings when my parents went out for dinner to sit in the kitchen and eat with Betty. While I never came into contact with black people other than those who worked in our home, I began to watch my father, a respected attorney, agonize over the criminally inequitable system. Perhaps it was easier then for Jewish South Africans to live in a so-called "fool's paradise." Jews of the 1930s and 1940s did not have this luxury. They were not safe from overt antisemitism. If not for the organized resistance of the Board, I can imagine walking down a street in Springs and finding benches and bathrooms with signs reading, "No Jews."



# APPENDIX A





a spectre?  
a pauper?  
a stranger?

**No! she is  
your sister**

beseeching you from Nazi Europe  
Can you ignore her cry?

THE S.A. JEWISH WAR APPEAL  
**WANTS YOUR ANSWER**

42



## Their Fate Lies in Your Hands

The war has created tremendous new problems for the Jewish people. The Defence of Palestine, Jewry's collective contribution to the war effort, must be strengthened. There are tens of thousands of war victims and refugees who must be aided.

*Redouble Your Help and Their Hope*

The most critical hour in our history has not found us a small people. We have met our obligations in the past. We will not fail now.

*Redouble Your Help and Their Hope*

TO STRENGTHEN THE DEFENCE OF PALESTINE  
TO AID THE VICTIMS OF WAR  
TO FEED, AND RE-SETTLE SCATTERED REFUGEES

*Support the*

*United S.A. Jewish War Appeal*

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