

THE HISTORY OF  
JEWISH EDUCATION

IN

SOUTH AFRICA

1841-1980

by

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VOLUME TWO: THE POST-WAR PERIOD

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PART SEVEN

IN THE TRANSVAAL

CHAPTER 33: THE FOURTH PERIOD IN THE HISTORY OF JEWISH  
EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE SOCIO-  
HISTORICAL SETTING FOR THE JEWISH DAY SCHOOL

The ten fateful years between 1939 and 1948 changed the Jewish people, and the course of Jewish history, as few periods of comparable length have done during its long annals. It was the decade of destruction and rebirth; of Holocaust, in which a third of the Jewish nation was systematically murdered, and of the rise of the State of Israel after two thousand years of wandering and waiting; of genocide and of national revival.

The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed the tremendously increased power of the disintegrative forces directed at Jewish life in the diaspora. The Holocaust destroyed the great centres of Jewish culture in Eastern Europe which had long served as a reservoir of strength and commitment for the whole Jewish world. Assimilatory forces could work almost unhindered amongst the Jewish minorities living in the open society of the western countries whilst in the one great community left in Eastern Europe, in Russia, the inimical regime proscribed Jewish communal and religious life, Jewish education, contact with the rest of the Jewish world, and accelerated the disintegration of Jewish group life and total assimilation.

This is the silent, bloodless Holocaust of the second half of this century.

Jewish education has reacted to this post-war situation in the free countries as it had indeed done to other challenges throughout the history of the dispersion. Jewish education is the "historic constant" of Jewish existence and has remained "the principal care" of Jewish communities since Flavius Josephus enunciated it during the first century of this era. The instrument that emerged to meet the educational needs of Jewish group life in the open society

of the post-war western world was the Jewish day school.

The concept of an all-day Jewish school providing both secular as well as Jewish instruction was not a meteor-like idea which flashed across the post-war educational horizon. On the contrary, the idea, in one form or another, goes back to emancipation days in Western and Central Europe. But in those schools, as also in the Jews' Free Schools of Britain of the early nineteenth century, the main educational objective was really integration in the general society. General education was the main concern and Jewish education was by comparison very subordinate. It was a school for Jewish children, rather than a Jewish school providing Jewish education of any depth. Hope Mill in Cape Town and the Johannesburg Jewish School were of the same genre. Technically speaking, they may have been Jewish integrated schools, but the Jewish educational aims were so limited and their Jewish content so small, that it is hard to conceive of them as real progenitors of the mid-twentieth century Jewish integrated school.

The Talmud Torahs in South Africa were established by the Eastern European immigrants as an overt act of rejection of the type of Jewish education provided by the Hebrew Public School. Although this Talmud Torah was far removed from the Heder of the home country insofar as the intensity of its Jewish education was concerned, it did strive to provide as comprehensive a system of Jewish instruction as possible within the limits of time imposed on it by its social environment.

Communal and professional leaders like Rabbis Mirvish, Zlotnik and Landau, Messrs Chideckel and Levin, Rev Cohen and Dr Resnekov, amongst others, entertained no illusions about the Talmud Torah with its supplemental instruction, and saw its grave defects. They dreamed of a "day school" to deepen, intensify and elevate Hebrew studies and rescue it from its inferiority, relegated to the "fag-end of the day"<sup>1</sup>

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1. See Chapter 31, p 382

and forced to operate as best it could in an artificial educational atmosphere so different from that of the general education.

So the concept of the "day school" was not a sudden discovery of the mid-century, an educational novelty of a particular age and day. It developed as the synthesis of two antitheses, of Talmud Torah and Hebrew Public School, or, if one steps further back into history, of old-world Heder and public school representing traditional education and modern secular instruction respectively.

The concept of the Jewish integrated (day) school evolved as a desirable solution to the inadequacies of public Jewish school as well as afternoon Talmud Torah. It assumed the form of the first and accepted the principle of intensive Jewish education of the second. But it was much more than merely a sum of the two or even an amalgam of them. It was directly fashioned by potent historical events: by the trauma of Holocaust and the national rebirth in the Land of Israel. Its objectives were shaped by the dangers of assimilation and threat of quiet disintegration posed by the open society of the western world. These were the three factors which shaped the new Jewish day school and which made it radically different from its predecessors of earlier years.

In spite of its inherent limitations, the Talmud Torah, in the main centres at least, attained a considerable measure of educational success in the hands of inspired and devoted educationists. There were pragmatists who accepted the acknowledged shortcomings of the supplemental school and made the best of the situation. A handful of idealistic teachers laboured to overcome these limitations and succeeded in extracting every ounce possible from the system. There were a number of schools which reached a high level of achievement in the late thirties and forties of the century, under exceptional headmasters and teachers. Most of the Hedarim, however, were no more than several teaching groups

taught in shifts by one or two teachers, with very little authority over the children and as little status in the community.

The inadequate nature of the Jewish education provided by the supplemental afternoon schools was all too obvious and was, indeed, widely acknowledged by leaders in the community. Even the best Talmud Torahs, operating under comparatively optimum conditions, were seen to be only partially effective instruments of Jewish education. The rational instrument was, and could only be, a "proper school, a morning school" in contrast to the supplemental class, a "day" school providing an integrated secular and Jewish education instead of the afternoon Hebrew lessons which competed with the recreational or artistic activities which were essential to the development of the child.

The form, then, was at hand in the government school, the content was at hand as well, in the better Talmud Torahs which gave an earnest of what could be achieved, though its own nature precluded it from advancing beyond a certain point. Form and content were combined in the new Jewish day school which began to evolve in South Africa from the forties and gathered momentum during the succeeding decades.

This new educational instrument, however, was also informed by a new spirit which distinguished it from the Jewish day schools which preceded them during the preceding half century. The new spirit was engendered by historical events of the mid-century Jewish world.

The new Jewish day schools began to emerge at a time when some of the best Talmud Torahs reached the peak of their achievement. At a certain stage their paths crossed and the evolution of the one could only continue at the expense of the other.

In some cases the new school entirely replaced the older. It created new norms of order and discipline; its buildings and facilities were no longer inferior to those of the

government school; its extra-mural activities were as varied, its teachers as adequately qualified, its esprit enlivened by a blend of religious tradition and new Zionist-national aspiration; its parent body was involved and motivated to a degree rarely encountered in government schools. In outward form, then, it accepted what were generally the norms of the ordinary government or private school. In content and spirit it set itself targets only remotely approached by the best of the Talmud Torahs.

During this rapid process of development, the Jewish day school encountered a number of serious problems: what was the exact nature of its Jewish education?; what were the specific objectives it wanted to set itself?; what were the educational instruments to be used and the exact nature of the methodology demanded by its situation? These the schools solved more or less successfully to the extent that any school is able to achieve perfect solutions in the art of its education. More daunting was the chronic problem of finding the financial resources to establish and maintain the schools.

The community accepted the challenge of finding these resources for its fast-evolving educational system, and this reflected not only the change in its spirit but also its new evaluation, conscious or intuitive, of the importance of Jewish education in the open society. In most countries of the West, the Jewish community is no doubt better off materially than its parents and grandparents were, but the massive financial overdrafts would disprove the image of a largely affluent Jewish society. The Jewish schools have no endowments worthy of the name. Their parent-body is not limited to the well-to-do who can afford a private education, or those in the medium income-bracket who are prepared to make sacrifices for Jewish education as an investment for their children. The Jewish school is for all who seek it; it belongs to the community, relies on the community for support, serves the community as its instrument for fulfilling the prime duty traditionally accepted by all Jewish communities

throughout the ages, that of Talmud Torah in the sense of the Mitzvah (commandment) to instruct the young in Torah in its fullest connotation.

The new Jewish day school has done all this. Woolf Harris and Rabbi M Ch Mirvish may have cried out bitterly against an apathetic community not having a care about the Jewish upbringing of its children or not giving support to the lay leadership for whom "every month-end meant misery".<sup>1</sup> The community of the last quarter-century has also changed considerably. Parents have been prepared to pay constantly rising fees; the community as a whole, including those who are not parents, has become more affluent and has therefore been not only willing but also capable of contributing of its substance for the construction and the maintenance of the schools on a regular basis and, what is most important, has sent its children to the schools in increasing numbers, truly a far cry indeed from the canvassing of the early days.<sup>2</sup> For the members of the Jewish community the Jewish day schools have become their principal care and, some would also have it, their principal pride and principal hope.

Not that all parents are actuated by the same reasons for sending their children to Jewish schools. Many care so deeply about the importance and value of Jewish education that they rate it on the same level as secular instruction. Some may be anxious about the effects of the intensified religious instruction programmes, broadly Christian in nature, in the government schools on the impressionable minds and spirits of young children. There are no doubt some for whom the main attraction is the very sound academic standards achieved by all the schools, or the personal attention given in the smaller classes which are the general rule in Jewish schools. Others again send their children because of social pressures, or even because it is plainly and simply fashionable. The Jewish schools of the

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1. See p 287

2. See pp 306-307 and Chapter 26.

seventies have achieved a reputation for sound academic achievement tempered by a spirit of educational experimentation which have become their hall-mark and have won the confidence of the educational world and of their own community, which tends more and more to look upon its admittedly expensive day school network as the surest means of preserving its ethnic and religious identity.

CHAPTER 34: ISAAC GOSS AT THE HEAD OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN  
BOARD OF JEWISH EDUCATION

Acting on the recommendations of the Daleski Commission<sup>1</sup> and the subsequent Educational Investigation Commission, the Board took steps to strengthen its academic and organisational authority by making three key appointments to its staff.<sup>2</sup> Mr (later Rabbi) J. Klewansky was engaged as Inspector-Instructor and Mr A. Misheiker as Organiser-Secretary in 1943 and in the following year Mr (later Rabbi) I. Goss, Principal of the Port Elizabeth Hebrew School, was appointed Assistant-Director of the Board<sup>3</sup>. Isaac Goss joined the service of the Board during what was termed "The Period of Bold Planning and Steady Advance"<sup>4</sup> in the Board's history - the era of Rabbi Zlotnik's leadership during which the Board was gearing itself for the following stage, the realisation of its plans and hopes under Isaac Goss who succeeded Rabbi Zlotnik as Director when the latter left for Israel in 1949.

Isaac Goss was born in Johannesburg in 1912 and studied Hebrew and philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand and at Jews' College, London. He served as principal of a number of Transvaal Talmud Torahs, lectured in the Hebrew Department under Chief Rabbi Dr J. L. Landau and came to Port Elizabeth in 1937 as principal of the Hebrew School where he stayed until 1944 when he left to take up the post of Assistant-Director of the S. A. Board of Jewish Education.

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1. See p 369

2. See Chapter 31, pp 386

3. Misheiker, A: "50 Years - The S. A. Board of Jewish Education" in the Report to the Eighteenth National Education Conference, op.cit., p 13.

4. See King David School 1948-1968, op.cit., p 23.

He later obtained smicha<sup>1</sup> and after his retirement from the Board's service in March 1980 retained his post as minister of a suburban congregation in Johannesburg.

Rabbi Goss's philosophy of Jewish education has found expression in his publications and essays as well as orally from numerous public platforms from which he has expounded his view throughout the Republic and amongst Jewish communities abroad.<sup>2</sup>

As the professional head of the Board he has directed its activities, determined its direction and laid the intellectual and ideological foundations for its activities extending over nearly two generations. Isaac Goss was one of the pilots of the new Jewish School of the South African Jewish community through its initial years of growth and its period of greatest expansion. It became the outstanding institution of the community and one of its major achievements during its history of one hundred and forty years.

Apart from Herzlia, all the other day schools in the Republic were established during his long tenure of office from 1949 to the present day, and with Herzlia too his contacts remained warm and close during all those years when he visited and inspected it, spoke from its platforms and participated in its conferences. For the schools directly controlled by or affiliated to the Board Isaac Goss was the highest educational authority for all these years; they looked to him for guidance, for spiritual leadership and for providing the philosophical foundations for their existence and development.

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1. Smicha: Hebrew - ordination as rabbi.

2. These include: Gleanings; Some Reflections on Jewish Education; Adventure of Jewish Education (1961); 'Olleloth (Hebrew); From the Fountain of my Thoughts (Hebrew). See p 405 footnotes 1 and 4

For Goss, Jewish education is based on the triple pillars of "God, Israel and Torah"<sup>1</sup> in their wider connotations of Judaism, Peoplehood of Israel and Homeland and Jewish Religious Culture and Thought based on Scripture and Revelation. This is the central theme of his philosophy of Jewish education and Hebrew is the golden cord that runs through it and links all three pillars in one unbreakable eternal bond.

Hebrew is the nerve-centre of the Jewish curriculum....From a Jewish point of view we teach Hebrew not only because of the inherent qualities of the language, not merely because it is the language of a living Israel but because those concepts which are untranslatable in any other language are necessary to the child and to us for our psychic welfare..... These words contain pictures and statements of Jewish history which one must feel in the original or remain ignorant of them always.<sup>2</sup>

He distinguishes between Hebrew education and Jewish education and regards those advocates of the former - who emphasise Hebrew language and literature to the exclusion of most else - as mistaken.<sup>3</sup> The triple values of Israel, Torah and God "have not lost their validity and form the only realistic basis for a curriculum in the Diaspora", and cites the eminent American Jewish leader, Rabbi Dr Abba Hillel Silver, that

we believe in, and transmit, Judaism not because we have any guarantee of its survival, but because it satisfies our people's needs as it did those of our ancestors in the distant past.<sup>4</sup>

Hebrew is not only a subject like history and others, wrote

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1. Goss, I: Adventures of Jewish Education: op.cit., pp 27, 58. See also "The Place of Hebrew in Jewish Education and Culture" in 'Olleloth (Hebrew : Gleanings) - Selection of Essays: cyclostyled, nd., p 2, and Reflections on Jewish Education in South Africa (Pacific Press, Johannesburg 1951) pp 12-13.
  2. Goss: Adventure of Jewish Education, op.cit., pp 30-31
  3. Goss: Reflections on Jewish Education in South Africa, op.cit., p 12.
  4. Ibid. See also "My Credo for Jewish Education" in The Zionist Record, 7 January 1972, p 15.

Goss,<sup>1</sup> but is the "nerve-centre of Jewish education" and is in fact indispensable to Jewish existence, as the noted historian and religious leader Solomon Schechter wrote:

If history has anything to say in the matter, the lesson it affords us is that the disappearance of the Hebrew language was always followed by assimilation and the disappearance of Judaism. The Hebrew language is not a mere idiom: it is in itself a religious symbol of history, a promise and a hope.<sup>2</sup>

To reconcile conflicting definitions, and objectives, in Jewish education, Goss evolved the complementary, if not compromise, concept of "traditional-national".<sup>3</sup> There had been sporadic controversy between those who advocated the dominance of instruction in religion and ritual as the main objective of Jewish education, on the one hand, and those, on the other, to whom the knowledge of the Hebrew language and its literature, as well as Bible, were the main aim. Goss's traditional-national Jewish education combined both: its watchword was the phrase "God, Israel and Torah", its "nerve-centre" Hebrew.<sup>4</sup> He was to return to this central theme in essays and addresses; it was to serve as his pragmatic guideline during the decades of his service as the educational head of the Board of Jewish Education in the sub-continent.<sup>5</sup>

Goss wrote in the deep shadow cast by the tragedy of European Jewry and in the brilliant light of the re-born Jewish State, both of which "have invested the old theme of Jewish education with a new meaning".<sup>6</sup> In these new historical times not

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1. Ibid., p 43.

2. Cited in Goss: Reflections on Jewish Education in South Africa, op.cit., p 43.

3. Information supplied in a letter to the writer, 29 October 1979.

4. See p405 and Goss: "My Credo for Jewish Education" op.cit.

5. See The Zionist Record and S A Jewish Chronicle, 21 November 1969, p 9, for a report of his address at the Fifteenth Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education.

6. Goss: Reflections on Jewish Education in South Africa op.cit., p 18.

to know is no longer merely ignorance, contends Goss, it is "callous indifference, lack of feeling and lack of sensitiveness".<sup>1</sup> Jewish knowledge and Jewish understanding have become necessary, even urgent.<sup>2</sup>

The number of pupils in Jewish schools could be increased greatly if parents were educated to understand that Jewish education was necessary not merely and solely to ensure Jewish continuity and survival, but also to meet the justified needs of the child if he is to develop into "a well-integrated personality, happy and contented".<sup>3</sup> The Jewish child needs Jewish education as much as it needs him.<sup>4</sup>

To raise the levels of Hebrew education in South Africa in terms of the reality of the South African scene, Goss called for rigorous steps to enlighten the community and convince it of the need to double the enrolments in the schools.

Another problem was summed up in the phrase "too late and too early",<sup>5</sup> the fact that most children commence their Jewish education some years after they have embarked on their general schooling, and terminate it at Barmitzvah. Ideally Hebrew education should extend from Nursery School to Matriculation.

Nursery education needed expansion and improvement and if the Talmud Torah was to remain the school for the majority of Jewish children then the problem of retaining its pupils

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., pp 19-20

4. Goss: "My Credo for Jewish Education", op.cit.

5. Goss: Adventures of Jewish Education, op.cit., pp 26-27

to the end of the secondary school stage was one of the most urgent and vital facing Jewish education.<sup>1</sup> The other fundamental problem was the acute shortage of suitable Hebrew teachers, on which the very future of Hebrew education in this country depended. He called for the creation of a favourable public opinion in the community towards the profession, so that the status and respect to which it was entitled would serve to attract suitable young people. Such potential teachers should be identified whilst still at school and should be imbued with a spirit of national service by their own teachers, and only decently treated teachers, Goss stressed, could be expected to exert such a useful influence.<sup>2</sup> Only a properly organised and housed seminary operating at high academic and professional levels could produce teachers of a calibre required by the schools. Regular refresher courses in Israel would act as a stimulus to teacher and teaching, and, adds Goss, even a house needs repainting from time to time, and teachers must certainly be continuous learners.<sup>3</sup>

In reviewing the achievement of the Board at the time,<sup>4</sup> Goss stated that "in an education that is dynamic the educational needs must perforce always outstrip the achievements"<sup>5</sup>, and each achievement, indeed, brings with it additional problems. A number of well-equipped Talmud Torahs had been erected because congregations were beginning to realise well-equipped hygienic schools were as important as attractive synagogues. The number of nursery

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1. Goss: Some Refelections on Jewish Education in South Africa op.cit., p 21. This essay was written in 1950 when Goss himself was as yet unsure of the future of the day school.

2. Ibid., p 23.

3. Ibid., p 24.

4. About 1950

5. Ibid., p 29

schools had increased and standards improved; and Regional Committees had been set up for Natal and the Eastern Province which would serve to involve the local areas directly in Hebrew education and provide the framework for consultation and communication between the Board on the one hand and the local authorities and teachers on the other.<sup>1</sup>

Isaac Goss summarises the philosophy of post-war Jewish education in his essay "Jewish Education Looks Ahead".<sup>2</sup> It is not merely concerned with how best to teach a number of subjects traditional to the Jewish school curriculum:

it is in a profound sense related to the whole question of adjustment and survival of the Jew. Ultimately Jewish education is the major instrument of Jewish unity and continuity.... of Jewish survival.<sup>3</sup>

Writing but a few years after the establishment of the Jewish State Goss accounts for the greatly increased interest in Jewish education by

the powerful revival of Jewish consciousness and of Jewish conscience brought about by the great tragedy and the stirring drama of our day.<sup>4</sup>

Jews had been challenged to understand, to know the meaning of their modern history and Jewish education is the "debt Jewish parents owe to their children for their personal integrity and security",<sup>5</sup> for the values by which to live and aspire to happiness. Without it the portals are wide open to alienation and assimilation. And viewed in this context

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1. Ibid., p 30.

2. Ibid., pp 35-39

3. Ibid., p 36

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

the Jewish educator "is not merely a pedagogue but an indispensable soldier",<sup>1</sup> the inspired and inspiring bringer of understanding, knowledge and skills, and moral fortitude to the Jewish child.

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1. Ibid., p 39

CHAPTER 35: THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE KING DAVID  
SCHOOLS OF JOHANNESBURG: 1948-1980

The historic report of the Educational Investigation Commission set up by the S A Board of Jewish Education in 1943 recommended, inter alia, that a "model day school" be established.<sup>1</sup> It was an innovative proposal in that it wanted the Board, which was merely an administrative body exercising inspectorial and supervisory functions only, actually to establish a school. The rationale for this step was that such a model institution was needed to serve as an example to guide and encourage other bodies to set up similar institutions in which Jewish studies would come into their own and take their place at the side of general studies.<sup>2</sup>

If successful such a Jewish day school would be able to exert a strong influence on the shaping of the life and character of the community, predicted Rabbi Zlotnik.

The Commission's "model day school" was launched at a special conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education held on 9 November 1947<sup>3</sup>, and a site was acquired in the suburb of Linksfield for this purpose.

The King David Primary School, Linksfield

The King David Primary School was opened with 44 pupils in

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1. See p 381

2. See p 382

3. King David Schools 1948-1968 : Twentieth Anniversary Brochure  
(S A Board of Jewish Education, Johannesburg, 1968) p 23.

1948 in the back rooms of the Herber House Hostel.<sup>1</sup> The School moved across to its new Linksfield premises in August 1950. Mr A Lipschitz was appointed principal in 1952 when the primary school was completed with the opening of a Standard V class.

The School grew rapidly; by 1957 there were over 700 pupils on the roll and, reported Mr Lipschitz, he was forced to restrict admissions because of lack of accommodation.<sup>2</sup> The headmaster's report also indicated that five hours were devoted weekly to Hebrew in Standards I, II and III and six hours in Standards IV and V; festivals and days of note in the Jewish calendar were marked by appropriate educational activities, and that the Ivrit B'Ivrit method was used in teaching Hebrew. Contacts with the newly-established State of Israel were encouraged by the educational projects of the Jewish National Fund.<sup>3</sup> The young School was paying much attention to its Jewish curriculum and the creation of a Jewish atmosphere in as well as outside the classroom. And, added Mr Lipschitz, the pupils of the School had won praise for their behaviour and deportment.<sup>4</sup> One of his problems was what to say to hundreds of parents who could not get their children into the School.<sup>5</sup>

Dr A Beron assumed the principalship in 1959 after the death of Mr Lipschitz. The growth of the School continued

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1. Mrs Sykes was principal during the first year and was succeeded by the veteran educationist Mr I H Harris, former principal of the Jewish Government School, who occupied the post until the end of 1951 by which time the enrolment had risen to 385. Ibid., p 60.
  2. Lipschitz, A: "The King David Primary School" in the Report to the Eleventh National Educational Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education, Johannesburg, August 1957.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Was this statement made to rebut biased criticism about the lack of discipline in the Jewish school?
  5. Lipschitz, A: op.cit.

during his term of office: by 1963 the enrolment had topped the one thousand-mark "and the clamour for admission remains undiminished....our very size is answer enough that we are needed and are performing a vital function", wrote the headmaster in his report, which also contained a vigorous rebuttal of the "segregation bogey", which was evidently still an issue at the time - and the charge that King David School lived in an unreal and isolated world.<sup>1</sup> The vision of Rabbi Zlotnik, he wrote later, was no longer a dream; "the buildings were filled with Jewish children".<sup>2</sup>

The reason for the phenomenal expansion of King David School may be found in the words of Dr Beron: the day school was obviously supplying a widely-felt need of the community for a better Jewish education than that provided by the part-time afternoon Hebrew School, circumscribed in time, vitiated by absenteeism, condemned by circumstances to educational inferiority, summarily terminated at Barmitzvah.<sup>3</sup>

A decade of Israel's independence had created new pride in Jewish Peoplehood and Jewish culture: Jewish education deserved a dignity and status which the Talmud Torah could hardly give it. The Holocaust in which European Jewry and Jewish culture had perished had produced a feeling - sub-conscious or conscious - that all surviving Jewish communities were the heirs to the martyrs and their tradition and a determination that the heritage of Jewishness was to be

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1. Beron, A: "The King David Primary School" in The Report to the Thirteenth National Education Conference, Johannesburg February 1964.
  2. King David Schools 1948-1968: op.cit., p 61
  3. For a telling analysis of the innate and irreversible defects of the afternoon Hebrew School in the post-war period, see Shlomo Levin's Report of the Port Elizabeth Hebrew School, December 1962, cited on p 584, footnote 6.

transmitted in a manner worthy of it. These were the emotions and motivation that actuated Jewish parents - firstly and foremostly the Zionistically committed - to send their children to the new Jewish schools. Some may have understood all this but hazily; for others there may have been more common considerations. With the departure of the caring parents, the Talmud Torah lost not only numbers but also the best sources of its dynamism and support: its decline became inevitable.

The enrolment grew to 1 140 a few years later, making the King David Primary School at Linksfield the largest of its kind in South Africa.<sup>1</sup> "There was spiritual contact and association with the Holy Land in all facets of our (Hebrew) teaching", stated Dr Beron, as well, of course, in many of the School's extra-mural activities.<sup>2</sup> In praising the routine work of the School, the Inspectors of the Transvaal Education Department had made special mention of the "enterprising spirit in the experimental fields in education".<sup>3</sup>

The School under Dr Beron gained wide recognition for its interesting educational experimentation and innovative didactic approach. Special classes were opened for slow learners who were working to a modified syllabus and the ongoing experiment in teaching methods was in its sixth year,

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1. Beron, A: "The King David Primary School, Linksfield" in the Report to the Fourteenth National Education Conference, Johannesburg, April 1967.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. Dr Beron's experiments in the teaching of reading and arithmetic, involving some 700 children, had already attracted the attention of educationists; hearing sweep-screening as well as sight screening had been introduced by him. He had also brought in a number of curricular and didactic innovations, all of which greatly interested the Departmental Inspectors. The Administrator of the Transvaal had officially opened a class for the hard-of-hearing children. See Dr Beron's "Report to the Sixteenth National Education Conference", 22 July 1972.

reported Dr Beron in 1972. Another experiment - in Perceptual Training - begun in 1969 had proved a success and had been introduced into the Departmental Schools.<sup>1</sup>

Dr Beron retired at the end of 1975 and was succeeded by Mr A Rubinowitz who was then principal of the High School at Victory Park. There was an unexpected drop in the numbers by 1978, even though the Bernard Patley Junior School in Yeoville had been transferred to Linksfield when the little School was closed at the end of 1977.<sup>2</sup> Mr Rubinowitz attributed this to such factors as emigration, the fall in the birth-rate and the economic recession. Economies had to be introduced wherever possible, sizes of classes had been increased and the staff reduced.<sup>3</sup> The fall in numbers was to prove transitory; by 1980 the enrolment had risen again and stood at 1 120.<sup>4</sup>

#### The King David High School, Linksfield

The High School, as a separate entity, was established in 1955 when a Form IV was opened. Mr N Sandler was appointed principal and took his 92 pupils across to the temporary premises leased from the Transvaal Education Department at

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1. Beron, A: "The King David Primary School, Linksfield" in the Report to the Sixteenth National Education Conference, Johannesburg 22 July 1972.
  2. Rubinowitz, M: "The King David Primary School, Linksfield" in the Report to the Eighteenth National Education Conference, Johannesburg 3-6 August 1978
  3. Ibid. No class was larger than 31 however: no special educational programmes had been terminated however; in fact, a Psycho-Social one had been added to deal with personal and behavioural problems.
  4. Information supplied in a letter from Mr N Sandler, Director of Secular Studies of the S A Board of Jewish Education, 31 March 1980

the Waverley School.<sup>1</sup> At the end of 1956, the first group of eight boys and girls of King David wrote the Transvaal School-Leaving Certificate Examination: the new Jewish Day School in Johannesburg had reached full development.<sup>2</sup>

The High School enrolment also grew rapidly: it more than doubled - to over 230 - after two years, when it moved to Linksfield, reported Mr Sandler, who noted that Hebrew was a compulsory subject and the tradition of the daily service for the whole School at the opening of the school day had been introduced.<sup>3</sup> Mr Sandler's report depicted a growing and busy School, with a full range of extra-mural activities.<sup>4</sup>

The Ulpan Study Programme was launched in 1963, when a group of 23 Form III pupils was sent to Israel on an intensive three-months' course of Hebrew Studies supplemented by educational tours and work on a Kibbutz.<sup>5</sup> This scheme was the outcome of discussions between Mr Sandler and the writer originating in an idea propounded by Mr Nahum Levin, of the Department of Education and Culture for the Diaspora of the World Zionist Organisation, during his visit to South Africa some seven or eight years previously.<sup>6</sup>

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1. King David Schools 1948-1968: op.cit., p 60.
  2. Misheiker, A: "The S A Board of Jewish Education 1954-1957" in the Report to the Eleventh Conference: op.cit.
  3. Sandler, N: "The King David High School" *ibid.* The service took about 25 minutes.
  4. Reference was made to the first visit of the Herzlia contingent to King David in June 1957.
  5. King David Schools 1948-1968: op.cit., p 24.
  6. See Report of Mr Levin's speech at a Meeting of the S A Zionist Federation, Johannesburg, in the S A Jewish Chronicle, 1 April 1955, p 4.

Mr Sandler brought the idea to practical realisation and in time extended the Ulpan to include pupils from all Jewish high schools in the Republic.<sup>1</sup> The programme remained very much the same, though the venue changed several times. With the growth of the scheme, two Ulpan courses have been organised during recent years, the Youth Centre at Kiryat Moriah, in Jerusalem, having become the permanent venue.<sup>2</sup>

Mr Sandler's reports to conferences of the Board towards the end of the sixties contain interesting information about the growing School. The system of compulsory prayers had been extended to include Minhah (afternoon service); and from 1967 Hebrew was allocated eight periods in Forms I-III, and nine in Forms IV and V.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Mr Sandler could inform the conference that ninety percent of those who had passed Form V since 1956 had proceeded to tertiary education; that half the students at the Zlotnik Seminary were former Davidians, and that there were twelve former pupils on the staff.<sup>4</sup>

The Schools at Linksfield were filled to overflowing and towards the end of 1969 Mr Sandler reported that his enrolment exceeded 800.<sup>5</sup> Very interesting is the

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1. A Herzlia contingent participated in the 1964 Ulpan.
  2. From its inception in 1963 to 1978, 1 579 pupils have participated in the S A Schools' Ulpan Project. See the Report to the Eighteenth National Education Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education, 3-6 August 1978, p14.
  3. Sandler, N: "The King David High School, Linksfield" in the Report to the Fourteenth National Education Conference, Johannesburg, April 1967. Was the extension of compulsory prayers due to pressures exerted on the Board by members of the Rabbinate?
  4. Ibid.
  5. Report to the Fifteenth National Education Conference, November 1969.

information he gave of a radical change in the policy of compulsory prayers: morning prayers had become optional for Forms III, IV and V. The services were named Minyan Shlomo in memory of Dr Shlomo Levin, the Assistant Director of the Board, whose "intercession with the Chief Rabbi to permit voluntary prayers had been successful.....it had conduced to an easing of tension".<sup>1</sup> It was a reference to obvious difficulties flowing from the system of compulsory prayers in existence at the High School from the earliest days and provides a sidelight on the relationships between the Board and the Rabbinate.<sup>2</sup>

There were a number of problems which worried the headmaster and which provide a commentary on education at the beginning of the seventies. He was concerned about the rapid turnover of staff due mainly to the attraction of better conditions in commerce and in the private colleges. The fact that 44 out of a total of 55 of its teachers were ladies very obviously compounded problems of discipline in his co-educational School, bearing in mind the modern social phenomenon of diminishing parental control.<sup>3</sup> Only about five percent of King David pupils sat the Transvaal Secondary School Certificate Examination<sup>4</sup> in contrast to some fifty percent of the total for the Province: as a result it was no wonder that many of the ninety percent who went on to University were ill-fitted to do so, and naturally encountered difficulties at the tertiary level.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. This did not grant exemption from Matriculation and did not qualify pupils for admission to university.

5. Sandler, N: "The King David High School, Linksfield" in the Report to the Fifteenth Conference, op.cit.

The tenor of the report was defensive: it was obvious that the headmaster desired to refute criticism levelled against the School from various quarters and based on ignorance or prejudice. Dependent as it was on voluntary communal support it was, ipso facto, vulnerable to unwarranted criticisms directed at it for a number of wrong reasons.

By 1972 the enrolment at the King David High School had risen to 980 and Mr Sandler noted all the problems attendant upon such rapid growth.<sup>1</sup>

Mr E M Wolf<sup>2</sup> reported in 1975 that the enrolment of the High School had been maintained at just short of 1 000 pupils and that, in addition to the complex of existing Hebrew studies, a composite subject - Jewish Studies - consisting of Jewish History, Laws and Customs, Jewish Thought, History of Israel and Mishna had been introduced and was being taught by specialist teachers.<sup>3</sup>

The High School also suffered a drop in numbers towards the end of the seventies.<sup>4</sup> Whilst this was at least partly occasioned by emigration, the main reason was the phenomenon of the withdrawal from the School of growing numbers of pupils at the end of Forms III and IV to enrol them in the private colleges which offered - or even guaranteed - better academic

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1. Sandler, N: "King David High School, Linksfield" in the Report to the Sixteenth National Education Conference, Johannesburg, 22 July 1972.
  2. He succeeded Mr N Sandler as principal of the King David High School in 1974.
  3. Report submitted to the Seventeenth National Education Conference, Johannesburg 9-12 October 1975. The Report contained two interesting items: over 4 000 pupils had been admitted during the 21 years of the School's existence, and that 98,2% of all candidates had passed the Matriculation Examination since 1956.
  4. From 986 in 1977 to 907 in 1978: see Mr E M Wolf's Report to the Eighteenth National Education Conference, Johannesburg 3-6 August 1978.

results in the matriculation examination than the candidates could expect to obtain if they remained at school. The criterion for admission to choice faculties at university was matriculation results, hence the trend to transfer to the colleges which were totally geared to the single-minded attainment of these criteria.<sup>1</sup>

Mr Wolf further reported that the new subject of Jewish Studies was receiving increasing attention as an essential component of the curriculum, but particularly inspiring - and inspired - teachers were required to teach it successfully.<sup>2</sup>

By 1980 the enrolment had risen again, to reach a record level of 1 110<sup>3</sup>, and it would appear that King David had succeeded in solving the problem of what Mr Sandler termed the "pirating of pupils by private colleges".<sup>4</sup>

#### The King David Schools at Victory Park, Johannesburg

To meet the demand by parents of the western suburbs of the city, a branch of the School was opened by the Board in the suburb of Victory Park in 1960.<sup>5</sup> Here too the enrolment increased by leaps and bounds and the first high school forms were opened in the primary school buildings in 1963. By 1968 the total enrolment had reached 480 pupils.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Oral information given by Mr N Sandler, Director of Secular Studies of the S A Board of Jewish Education, to the writer during discussions in Johannesburg on the 2 and 3 April 1978.
  2. Wolf, E M: "The King David High School, Linksfield" in the Report to the Eighteenth Conference, op.cit., An interesting point is that King David had adopted the Herzlia tradition of the Rosh Hodesh service for the whole School.
  3. Information in a letter from Mr N Sandler, 31 March 1980.
  4. See footnote 1 above. This was aided by a change in the policy of admissions adopted by the University by which personal interviews to assess personality and character traits would supplement the previous tally of academic examination symbols.
  5. Mr C Pakter was principal till 1966 when he was succeeded by Mr B Meyers.
  6. King David School 1948-1968: op.cit. p 62

Whilst the Primary School was a busy and expanding school,<sup>1</sup> the growth of the High School at Victory Park was much slower: many pupils who had completed the primary stage were not continuing their education in the King David High School.<sup>2</sup> Pupils admitted into Form IV, reported Mr Wolf, were exempted from having to take Hebrew as one of their subjects.<sup>3</sup>

To counteract the relatively numerous withdrawals at the end of the primary stage - which coincided with Barmitzvah - the Board decided to transfer the Standard V to the High School, a step which had been indeed recommended in the new Differentiated System of Education. By 1978 the High School could report its highest enrolment in its history<sup>4</sup>, whilst the primary School had suffered a fall in numbers, in common with the sister schools in Linksfield.<sup>5</sup> Mr Wolf reported on the success of ex-pupils of his School in all faculties of the University "which has vindicated the long-term effects of Jewish day school education".<sup>6</sup>

In 1980 the High School enrolment at Victory Park had climbed to 508; there were 600 children on the roll of the primary School.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Meyers, B: "King David Primary School, Victory Park" in the Report to the Fifteenth National Education Conference, op.cit. There were over 500 pupils in the School at the time.
  2. Wolf, J: "The King David High School, Victory Park" in the same report. Mr Jeffrey Wolf had succeeded Mr M Rubinowitz as principal on the latter's assumption of the principalship of the King David Primary School at Linksfield.
  3. It was obviously too late for such late admissions to reach required levels; ordinarily, the pupils in this category would not be admitted, but this was obviously done at Victory Park to boost lagging enrolment.
  4. Wolf, J: "The King David High School, Victory Park" in the Report to the Eighteenth National Education Conference, Johannesburg, op.cit., The enrolment was 417.
  5. Meyers, B: in the same Report. There were just over 600 pupils in the primary school in 1978.
  6. Mr Jeffrey Wolf was obviously reiterating the point made by his brother, headmaster of the High School at Linksfield, and for the same reason - to counteract the claims - and pull - of the private colleges.
  7. Information supplied by Mr Sandler in his letter of 31 March 1980

CHAPTER 36: THE SOUTH AFRICAN BOARD OF JEWISH EDUCATION  
AND ITS AFFILIATES: 1950-1965

The decade of Mr Harry Herber's tenure of the post of President (1942-1951) was a period of expansion and development in the history of the Board. Acting on the recommendations of the Zlotnik Commission, it strengthened its administration, increased its professional staff and embarked on a new policy of establishing educational institutions.

In 1944 the Board opened its first directly-controlled institution - a hostel for country children in Yeoville, Johannesburg, later named Herber House.<sup>1</sup> By the middle fifties, Herber House accommodated 71 children from all over Southern Africa, most of whom attended the King David Schools.<sup>2</sup> The Zlotnik Teachers' Seminary was the other institution opened in 1944 in an "almost clandestine move", so uncertain was the response at the time.<sup>3</sup>

The report submitted to the Eleventh Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education provides a detailed picture of the activities of the Board - and indeed of the state of Jewish education in Southern Africa outside the area of the autonomous Cape Board - during the mid-fifties.<sup>4</sup>

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1. The hostel in Cape Town had been in existence three years by then.
  2. "Herber House: Hostel for Jewish School Children" in the Report submitted to the Eleventh National Education Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education: Johannesburg, August 1957. By this time some 600 children had passed through its portals.
  3. Goss, I: (Director, S A Board of Jewish Education) "The Structure of Hebrew Education in South Africa" in the Report to the Eleventh Conference, op.cit., : see also Adventure in Jewish Education : op.cit., pp 67-72.
  4. Report to the Eleventh Conference, op.cit.

The Seminary, under Rabbi A Hilewitz, had since its inception graduated 84 students, and of the 37 on the roll in 1957, 31 were South African born, six being men.<sup>1</sup> The curriculum consisted of pedagogics, Hebrew and Jewish studies, including such subjects as Mishna, Rambam (Maimonides), Mediaeval Hebrew Literature, History and Siddur.<sup>2</sup> The Seminary provided Hebrew instruction for students of the Technical College who were taking the Nursery School Teachers' Course and organised refresher courses for teachers in service. Seminary graduates were teaching in schools throughout the country.<sup>3</sup>

The two other institutions established by the Board during the same decade were the Rose Gordon Model Hebrew Nursery School in Yeoville, and - of greater importance - the King David School in 1948.<sup>4</sup>

The rapidly increasing commitments to its expanding institutions created very serious financial problems for the Board, which the limited contributions from the as yet young United Communal Fund could not altogether solve. To launch its Building and Endowment Fund in 1955, it invited Rabbi Kopul Rosen, the noted Anglo-Jewish religious leader and founder of Carmel College,<sup>5</sup> to come to South Africa as its guest-of-honour.<sup>6</sup> The success of the drive enabled the Board to embark on its building programme, and, in addition, the public addresses of the eloquent visitor were

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1. Hilewitz, A: "The Rabbi J L Zlotnik Seminary" in the Report to the Eleventh Conference, op.cit.
  2. Ibid: The report stated that Yiddish was also taught.
  3. Ibid.
  4. See pp 411-412
  5. Situated outside London, Carmel College was the first Anglo-Jewish "Public" School.
  6. Misheiker, A: "The S A Board of Jewish Education, 1954-1957" in the Report to the Eleventh Conference, op.cit.

of great value in serving to focus the attention of the Jewish community on the importance of Jewish education and the work of the Board in this vital field.<sup>1</sup> However, the financial difficulties of the Board were far from over and Misheiker soon again referred to the problems facing the Board in its endeavours to finance the expanding demands of its activities and institutions.<sup>2</sup>

Mr Goss, in his Director's Report, surveyed the educational scene at the time.<sup>3</sup> Eighty-eight Hebrew schools were controlled by or affiliated to the Board in all the provinces and the Rhodesias, with about 7 500 children enrolled in the various schools ranging from nursery school level to matriculation.<sup>4</sup> The schools under its supervision were divided into three areas each under a Regional Committee and a Regional Director.<sup>5</sup> Inspections were carried out by the Director and Regional Directors who also engaged in public relations work wherever possible. A unified syllabus had been adopted by the Board and the United Hebrew Schools and was regularly reviewed and up-dated.<sup>6</sup> No fixed method was laid down, reported Mr Goss: the Natural Method (Ivrit B'Ivrit) or the Mixed Method (Shitta Me'Urevet) or even translation could be used because "there was no magic

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid. In 1941, the Board's budget was about £1 000 per annum; by 1957 it had risen to £90 000.

3. Goss, I: "The Structure of Hebrew Education in South Africa" in the Report submitted to the Eleventh Conference: op. cit. : see also Adventure in Jewish Education : op.cit., pp 67-72.

4. Excluding the Western Province and South-West Africa which were under the aegis of the independent Cape Board of Jewish Education.

5. Mr J Klewansky was Regional Director for the Transvaal Region; Mr E Levite served in the same capacity for Johannesburg, being Director of the United Hebrew Schools of that city, and Mr Sam Ernst was in charge of Natal. There was no Regional Director for the Eastern Province Committee. Mrs R Osrin was head of the Board's Nursery Schools' Department.

6. Ibid.

wand which could dissipate the difficulties of instruction in the supplemental school".<sup>1</sup>

The Director wrote of the "phenomenal and heartening growth" of the day schools with their first Matriculation class in 1956. Durban, too, already had the beginnings of a day school and it was in this institution that the South African Jewish community felt it could find the more intensive Jewish education for which it was searching, concluded Mr Goss.

The Regional Director for the Transvaal, Mr J Klewansky, reported that there were about 3 500 pupils in the over 60 part-time and day schools under his department, in all the provinces and the Rhodesias.<sup>2</sup> There was a shortage of teachers in the country communities but the problem was partially solved by engaging some local Hebrew-speaking ladies to assist with the simpler stages of teaching after having received some guidance. A relieving teacher was needed to fill-in when a one-teacher school was left unattended. As for content, stress was laid on instruction in Siddur, though Humash and Prophets were also taught because these were "the founts of Jewish culture, religion and history".<sup>3</sup> He strongly disapproved of the lifeless translation method and was opposed to the call to curtail the five-day teaching week.<sup>4</sup>

Mr E Levite, the Johannesburg Regional Director,<sup>5</sup> reported on the schools under his control,<sup>6</sup> whilst Mr Ernst, Director for Natal, indicated that there were over 400 pupils in the

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1. Ibid.

2. Klewansky, J: "Report of the Transvaal Regional Director" in the Report to the Eleventh Conference, op.cit.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. He doubled as the Director of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg.

6. See p 448

Durban United Hebrew Schools, and there had also been an increased enrolment in the country schools of the Jewish Educational Council.<sup>1</sup> The Durban United Hebrew Schools comprised two nursery schools, the Sharona Primary School with its first three classes, two Talmud Torahs and three suburban branches.<sup>2</sup>

The most important event in the history of Jewish education in Natal, stated Mr Ernst enthusiastically, was the decision to extend the morning school, with a Standard II to be opened in 1958 and one class a year thereafter.<sup>3</sup> He also mentioned the Pupils' Congregation which hundreds of children attended on Sabbaths and festivals and the School Forum which provided cultural and social activities for past pupils.<sup>4</sup>

There were 31 schools in the Board's Hebrew Nursery Schools' Department with an enrolment of over 1 700 children;<sup>5</sup> most of the schools were modern in design and it was planned to replace older buildings, reflecting the positive attitude of Congregations towards the nursery school movement. The Board's Department supervised schools from Salisbury in the north to Port Elizabeth in the south.<sup>6</sup> Mrs Osrin stated that her Department emphasised to the Parents' Association that the nursery school was "not a substitute for the home but a part of it".<sup>7</sup>

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1. Ernst, S: "Report of the Natal Regional Committee" in Report to the Eleventh Conference, op.cit.
  2. Ibid. There were close on 300 children in the two afternoon schools; girls, by 1956, formed 36% of the enrolment.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Osrin, R: "The Hebrew Nursery Schools' Department" in the Report to the Eleventh Conference, op.cit.
  6. Ibid.
  7. Ibid.

The review of the rapidly expanding day schools completed the report to the Eleventh Conference. During the first part of its existence the Board's activities and authority had been circumscribed; then followed the period of consolidation and planning for the second period which was marked by much activity and rapid expansion which catapulted the Board into a dominant position of authority over the major areas of Jewish education in this sub-continent.

These developments brought forth many difficulties and problems and the Eleventh Conference in 1957 heard an apposite parable from Jerusalem. It was contained in a message from its former director, Rabbi Judah Leib Zlotnik-Avida, who quoted a pertinent tale from the Midrash. He had heard, wrote Rabbi Zlotnik, that the Board was beset by financial and other worries and problems and his message to conference was one brief sentence: "may they be with you for many years".<sup>1</sup>

The Twelfth Conference of the Board set up a commission under the chairmanship of Mr Justice S M Kuper "to consider ways and means of finding adequate sources of income to meet the national requirements of the Board".<sup>2</sup> The Kuper Commission published its recommendations in April 1961<sup>3</sup> recommending that the S A Zionist Federation should provide direct

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1. See Zlotnik, J L : "Message to Eleventh Conference" in the Report to the Eleventh Conference, op.cit.

The Midrash related that when Rabbān Gamaliel's daughter was about to leave her home to get married her father's parting blessing to her was that her future home be "full of worries and anxieties". The bearing and rearing of children was the greatest of blessings, clearly implied the Sage, but it was "inseparable from worries and anxieties".

2. Cited in the Hebrew Education Commission 1960. (Kuper Commission): Johannesburg: 1961.

3. Ibid. See also Chapter 37.

assistance to the Board to help it meet its capital and regular expenditure, and that a new hostel for country children be built to replace Herber House, to be attached to King David School.<sup>1</sup>

The Zionist Conference held in September 1961 did not accept the recommendations of the Kuper Report in their entirety. In a compromise resolution it agreed to assist the Board to cover the expenditure it incurred in its national activities only.<sup>2</sup>

By the early-sixties trends but generally discerned previously were coming into strong focus: the country and city Talmud Torahs were on the decline. The great shift in South African Jewish education had clearly passed the point of no return: the day school was rapidly superseding the afternoon part-time school.

Rabbi Klewansky reported a drop in the enrolments at country Hebrew schools except for those at Welkom and Carletonville.<sup>3</sup> In a number of country communities the wives of the ministers who possessed some Hebrew knowledge had, with some training, been able to cope with beginners' classes and thus helped to solve the problems of those schools where the minister was also the sole teacher.

Referring to demands by parents to reduce the number of teaching hours, Rabbi Klewansky stated that even in a five-day teaching week with full attendances it was "difficult to

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1. Ibid., pp 5-6.

2. Misheiker, A: "Three Years of Progress" in the Report to the Thirteenth National Education Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education, 15-16 February 1964. Under the heading "national" activities were included the head office administration, the inspectorate and the Zlotnik Seminary. Excluded were the hostel, King David Schools and the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg.

3. Klewansky, J: "The Transvaal Regional Committee" in the Report to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit. There were 66 schools in his Department (four of which were day schools) in three provinces and Rhodesia with just under 4 000 pupils.

impart very much knowledge" and to accede to such a drastic request "would perhaps be fatal to our Hebrew educational structure" he wrote prophetically.<sup>1</sup>

The report of the Johannesburg Regional Committee recorded that the United Hebrew Schools, out of an enrolment of 1 773 in the 22 schools controlled by or affiliated to this body, only 471 were of the age of thirteen and over.<sup>2</sup>

The Natal Regional Director of the Board, Mr S Ernst, reported considerable progress in that province.<sup>3</sup> The Sharona Primary and High School, which by then had reached Standard VII, had an enrolment of 336 pupils. Mrs Osrin, Head of the Board's Nursery Schools' Department, had regularly examined the two nursery schools in Durban with their 130 children; the two city Talmud Torahs together had 145 children on their rolls. Mr I Kahanovitz was principal of the Sharona School and Mr J B Nowitz Head of the Hebrew Department.<sup>4</sup>

The number of Hebrew nursery schools under the jurisdiction of the Board had increased during the preceding seven years and their enrolment exceeded 2 000, with waiting lists at most schools.<sup>5</sup> Parents welcomed the basic Jewish education provided by these schools which served to introduce the children to Jewish laws and customs pertaining to festivals and Sabbath and also taught them Hebrew songs and simple vocabulary.<sup>6</sup> The Board itself controlled the two nursery schools attached to King David School, whilst the rest belonged to congregations or to the United Hebrew Schools.

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1. Ibid.

2. Kretzmer, M: (Chairman): "The Johannesburg Regional Committee" in Report to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit. See also pp449-450

3. Ernst, S: "Natal Regional Committee" in Report to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit.

4. Ibid.

5. Osrin, R: "The Hebrew Nursery Schools' Department" in the Report to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit. 20 of these were in Johannesburg, out of a total of 55 in the city.

6. Ibid.

Since the Twelfth Conference in October 1960, 19 students had graduated from the Zlotnik Seminary. Of the 30 students on the roll in 1964, eleven were from King David<sup>1</sup>, but the shortage of teachers remained serious.

In addition to the King David Schools in Johannesburg, the Theodor Herzl in Port Elizabeth and Sharona in Durban, there were four other day schools affiliated to the Board in as many centres in South Africa. The Bernard Patley Junior School had been in existence since 1952 and served as a feeder school to King David.<sup>2</sup> Shortage of available space precluded any expansion beyond preparatory school level. The Carmel School in Pretoria was opened by Mr I Goss in January 1959 with 41 pupils in the first three classes, under Mrs R Grossfeld. The School was established under the auspices of the Pretoria United Hebrew Congregation in two rooms in the Miriam Marks Hebrew School in Hatfield.<sup>3</sup> In time the growing school moved to its new buildings erected in Groenkloof. There were 169 children on the roll in 1961 when the School went up to Standard III<sup>4</sup> and over 250 when the primary School was complete in 1963. The School reported a wide range of cultural and Jewish extra-mural activities and earned very satisfactory reports from inspectors of the Department and the Board of Jewish Education.<sup>5</sup>

The primary schools in Bulawayo and Salisbury, respectively, had been established and were making good progress. The

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1. Hilewitz, A: "The Rabbi Zlotnik Seminary" in the Report to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit.,
  2. Milner, M: "Bernard Patley Junior School" in the Report to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit. The School went up to Standard I and had 167 pupils in 1964.
  3. Carmel Primary School Magazine 1962, p 43.
  4. Ibid., p 46
  5. Grossfeld, R: "Carmel Primary School" in the Report to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit.

Sharon School in the capital had been established by the Rhodesian Zionist Council and Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies in November 1960. "It was the realisation of a dream of many years standing",<sup>1</sup> though it had taken much persuasion to convince the Salisbury communities of the necessity of a day school.<sup>2</sup> Sharon opened in 1961 with seven pupils, after enthusiastic preparations, in the Talmud Torah buildings.<sup>3</sup> As was typical of the early days of most South African day schools pupils were hard to find in the "somewhat conservative Jewish population of Salisbury" recorded the report blandly in an obvious reference to the customary polemics surrounding the early history of Jewish day schools everywhere. By 1963 there were 54 pupils at the School and it moved across to more spacious premises at the Sephardic Hebrew School.<sup>4</sup> The enthusiasm and devotion of the leaders and parents of this little school emerge from this report. "The prospects were bright" for it: they were "undeterred by gloomy predictions.....doubts and uncertainties were overcome". Inspectors of the Department of Education were very satisfied with the standards of the School which had "a healthy problem" - how to accommodate the growing waiting list of pupils.<sup>5</sup>

In Bulawayo, the Carmel School opened in 1958 in the Talmud Torah premises and in its modern buildings had developed into a busy school with over 130 pupils.

The report to Conference included obituaries on two central figures in the history of Jewish education in South Africa.

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1. "The Sharon School - Salisbury" in the Report to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit.
  2. Ibid. There were two organised communities in Salisbury in those days - the Sephardic and the Ashkenazi.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Ibid.

Rabbi J L Zlotnik-Avida died in September 1962 and his successor eulogised his "planned creative activity".<sup>1</sup> Zlotnik had effected a "turning-point of epochal importance" in Jewish education in the sub-continent. To him it was not so much the substance of learning as much as the spirit of learning and the attitude of enquiry that mattered.<sup>2</sup> Rabbi Kopul Rosen, a pioneer of the modern Jewish Day School Movement in the English-speaking countries also died in the same year. During his two visits to South Africa to lead the drives launched by the Board his impressive oratory and fine personality had done much to advance the idea of the new type of Jewish education in this country and had contributed greatly to its acceptance by a great part of the community.

The early sixties were marked by great activity and expansion in all directions. The Jewish Day School Movement in the Republic had undergone rapid expansion during a comparatively short space of time. By the mid-sixties over 10 000 children were enrolled in the institutions under the Board, ranging from nursery schools to teachers' college.<sup>3</sup> The old Herber House Hostel was closed at the end of 1964 during which year construction commenced on the new hostel in the school grounds at Linksfield.<sup>4</sup>

The upkeep of the expanding school network caused the Board serious financial problems. The capital costs and the provision of the necessary facilities had placed great strains on the Board whose sources of income, besides fees, were the voluntary contributions of the community. In addition to the four day schools, the Board had to maintain the Talmud Torahs of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg,

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1. Goss, I: "Tribute to Rabbi J L Zlotnik-Avida" in the Report to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit.

2. Ibid.

3. Misheiker, A: "Three Years of Progress" in the Report to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit.

4. King David Schools 1948-1968: 20th Anniversary Brochure: op.cit., p 32.

run its administration and also find the wherewithal for what was termed its national activities.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 33: These were the Teachers' Seminary, the Inspectorate and the Hostel.

CHAPTER 37: TWO REPORTS ON JEWISH EDUCATIONThe Hebrew Education Commission Report (The Kuper Commission)

The expansion of its activities inevitably led to the aggravation of the Board's financial difficulties, though it hardly permitted such problems to place any serious limitations on its work or to inhibit the growth of the King David Schools. The Board drifted into a state of chronic financial crisis, interrupted now and then by an urgent appeal to the community in a "campaign" headed by some notable from overseas brought over for the purpose or by desperate pleas for help to the main communal organisations.

At its conference in 1960 The S A Board of Jewish Education, "deploring" the fact that the response of the Jewish community was not yet commensurate with the requirements of the Board, decided to appoint a commission to consider ways and means of

- a) placing the educational institutions of Johannesburg on a sound financial footing, and
- b) finding adequate sources of income to meet the national requirements of the Board.<sup>1</sup>

The conference called on the S A Zionist Federation to give full support to the Board "in view of the growing demand for additional facilities".<sup>2</sup>

The Commission regretted that the scope of its enquiry had not been widened to include an overall communal planning scheme both with regard to the raising of monies from the community and with regard to the priorities of the different objectives which the community wishes to achieve.<sup>3</sup>

It noted that the Commission set up in the Western Province<sup>4</sup>

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1. Cited in the Hebrew Education Commission Report (Kuper Commission), Johannesburg 1961, p 1.

2. Ibid. The Hon Mr Justice S M Kuper was invited to chair the Commission which held the first of its 23 meetings on the 19 December 1960.

3. Ibid., p 1.

4. The Herbstein Commission, see pp 532 et seq.

had been authorised to include this matter in its terms of reference and had accordingly dealt with the subject of communal discipline in the matter of the raising and spending of communal funds. Such powers had unfortunately not been assigned to the Kuper Commission which was limited to an investigation of the financial requirements of the Board of Education without reference to the "running efficiency" of any institution.<sup>1</sup>

The community owed a deep debt of gratitude to the Board for its achievements during the previous decade, stated the report. In spite of all the financial obstacles and considerable volume of opposition to be overcome, the success of the Board in establishing and developing institutions to provide a Jewish education for the children of Johannesburg was one of the most significant successes the Jewish community of South Africa had achieved.<sup>2</sup>

The report recommended that Herber House be closed as the building was no longer suitable and it was being run at a serious deficit. A new hostel should be erected in its place in the grounds of the school at Linksfield and attached to it. A large, efficiently-run hostel was not only educationally desirable but would effect considerable saving. The Commission recommended that both the Board of Deputies and the Zionist Federation should render financial assistance to the Board of Education. Both organisations were already engaged in youth and student work and the Commission noted that "it seems to us that the provision of Hebrew education for children throughout the country is more urgent and a greater priority".<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Kuper Commission Report, p 2.

2. Ibid., p 3. There were over 2 000 children in the King David Schools and another 2 000 in the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg. The Zlotnik Hebrew Teachers' Seminary had graduated 114 teachers during the previous decade.

3. Ibid., p 6.

But the main source of revenue, concluded the Commission, was that "never-failing source" - the Jewish community of Johannesburg.<sup>1</sup> The Board should persevere in its general appeals for its current requirements and it behoved the Zionist Federation and the Board of Deputies to render every possible assistance to carry this out successfully by taking all such practical steps as they could "to implement their protestations of sympathy and support".<sup>2</sup> The Board's capital requirements for its essential building operations could only be met by the Zionist Federation, a step which might very likely elicit much criticism, but unavoidable nonetheless. If the S A Jewish community wished Hebrew education to maintain its course and its tempo of qualitative and quantitative development then it would have to agree to the Commission's findings or provide the money required by the Board by its own special efforts. The onus was on the Jewish community to provide its wanted support to all three - the Israeli United Appeal, the United Communal Fund and to the Board of Jewish Education.<sup>3</sup> The findings of this commission - and the prestige of its Chairman - gave the imprimatur to what was to become accepted during the following two decades - that Jewish education in its difficulties had the right to look to the Zionist Federation for relief from its pressing financial burdens.

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1. Ibid., p 7 Clause 4.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p 8.

The Adar Report: An Analysis of Jewish Education in South Africa in the Mid-Sixties

Apart from its financial troubles, the Board had worries and problems of a more direct educational nature. These resulted from internal differences over its aims and activities, generally flowing from ideological disagreements amongst its members, or due to clash of personalities in the leadership.<sup>1</sup> To meet the criticisms and resolve the tensions, the Board decided to invite an overseas expert to make what the Chairman said would be an impartial and objective assessment of Jewish education in South Africa.<sup>2</sup> Professor Zvi Adar, noted Israeli educationist of the Hebrew University, would arrive in August to study and assess the Jewish education provided by the Board, identify its problems and suggest solutions. The report of this one-man Commission was issued in the following year and constitutes one of the most valuable studies of Jewish education in this country.<sup>3</sup>

The Adar Report referred indirectly to the tensions within the Board that had prompted it to decide on this survey, in the hope that the resulting recommendations would compose the differences within the leadership on a number of divisive issues. And again these centred round the religious content of the Hebrew curriculum at the Board's day schools and the Jewish atmosphere prevalent in them.

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1. The Zionist Record and S A Jewish Chronicle 21 February 1964 p 4, reported the controversy at the recent Conference of the Board when the Mizrachi moved that students from South Africa should be sent to the religious seminary in Israel to complete their courses: see also ibid. 9 October 1964, p 9 where Mr L Sachs, newly-elected Chairman of the Board, replied to "reckless criticism of the Day Schools".
  2. Ibid., 21 February 1964.
  3. Adar, Z: Jewish Education in South Africa : A Report (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1965). Whilst he devoted most of his attention to Johannesburg, Professor Adar visited most of the other centres as well.

Goss had formulated the concept of a National-Traditional Jewish Education as a compromise, no doubt, between the opposing sides in the Board on the question of the place and quantum of formal religious observance and instruction in the schools.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Adar analysed this concept with critical care. Traditional education, in the context used and understood by the Board and its director, meant an education that concerned itself with transmission of Jewish tradition. This created an obvious problem because only a section of the community was traditional: the majority was probably not traditional in its practices, including a sizeable minority which belonged to the Reform Movement. Many may still have had a positive attitude for tradition, but there was a wide range of its observance in the Jewish home, observed Adar quite correctly.

The crux of the matter, asked the Report, was how to make a traditional type of Jewish education in the above-mentioned connotation of the term really meaningful to the Jewish child and the Jewish home, the home of the "lost generation".<sup>2</sup> There was a danger that the education long associated with and provided by the Heder would appear as an anachronism to the children. The child would see Jewish studies and tradition as related to a particular stage in his personal development which he was obliged to pass through and to outgrow.<sup>3</sup> It was a fact that the vast majority

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1. See p 437 : there was a long history of disagreement in the Board on these issues, going back to pre-war days when Rabbi I Kossowsky had headed the ultra-orthodox wing engaged in this "ideological controversy". See p 343
  2. The Lost Generation: term generally applied to those who had no, or very little, Jewish education and were regarded as having been ostensibly "lost" insofar as meaningful Jewish commitment and living were concerned: very likely a popular exaggeration of what was, however, a real problem.
  3. Adar Report., op.cit., p 4.

of Jewish children "retreated" from Jewish education and tradition: they lived in, and adapted to, their concrete world, which was a gentile English-speaking South Africa.<sup>1</sup>

Adar did not regard this as assimilation, but rather as a process of "deculturation"

a process of being culturally released from something regarded as trivial and quite unnecessary, namely Jewish education and Jewish tradition.<sup>2</sup>

The latter were quite irrelevant to general education and to preparation for a profession. They had to be paid some kind of hasty due until the age of thirteen and could then be left alone, after which one "may start concentrating on what really matters".<sup>3</sup>

This besetting problem of the Talmud Torah was also present in the day school: education could not render itself oblivious to the milieu in which it existed. Professor Adar analysed some of the traditional practices of the day schools in Johannesburg, beginning with the compulsory daily prayers ordained by the Board.<sup>4</sup> The synagogue was the focal point of Jewish communal life and there was no better way of learning to pray - to feel at home in the synagogue - than by prayer itself, reasoned the Report. But monotony and boredom were likely pitfalls and to avoid this Adar advocated variety in the morning prayers at the primary level. Certain sections could be selected for interpretation and study in order to make the whole service more meaningful. It was obvious, however, that the problem assumed more serious dimensions at the secondary level where there was a greater danger of boredom resulting from compulsion.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., pp 4-5.

5. Ibid., p 5.

If in the course of acquiring certain skills the children developed a negative attitude to the practice, stated Adar, what they learned would be of little value.<sup>1</sup> It was vital therefore to develop positive attitudes and Adar called for a changed approach in order to combat routine and the resulting negative attitude. The major enemy of the traditional element in Jewish education was the mistaken method adopted to attain it - the insistence on mechanical reading from the Siddur, wrote Professor Adar. It was an approach only too likely to breed opposition in adolescence, and needed to be replaced by "meaningful reading and a certain understanding".<sup>2</sup> One particular prayer should be emphasised from time to time, interpreted and explained. This would make it comprehensible and could provide variety and interest to prayers which would then have educative effects. It would lead to a study of prayer in general, in its most exalted expression in the Psalms, and to a conception of the significance of prayer as the expression of the state of mind and spirit of a person, concluded Professor Adar.<sup>3</sup> This was his conception of what traditional education was and should be - and was very different indeed from the practice in the Board's schools. It was a careful, reasoned - and even gentle - condemnation of that practice as educationally untenable and self-defeating.

Adar did not stop at this point in his examination of traditional education. To him the traditional basis of

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1. The acquisition of skills, learning the order of the services and, in some cases even to conduct them, and generally becoming acquainted with the liturgy - was the main reason advanced in favour of compulsory prayers.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p 6.

of Jewish education was a much wider concept than the conducting of prayers only. Apart from the learning of skills and the fostering of attitudes there were two other major aspects of Jewish education - the imparting of knowledge and the development of understanding. Jewish tradition transmits great human values expressed in the famous writings of Judaism. Traditional Jewish education should make the pupils aware of at least some part of the great spiritual heritage of ours and focus on the values which Judaism has crystallised.<sup>1</sup>

Adar warned against the narrow interpretation of traditional education which might so easily strait-jacket Jewish education into the teaching of festival customs and the recitation of daily prayers. Traditional, Jewish and human education are interwoven

and it should be borne in mind at all times that Jewish education is the education of the Jew as a person and as a Jew on the basis of the great human heritage of Judaism.<sup>2</sup>

The report proceeded to deal with the second element of the traditional-national formula, which was proof of the deep affiliation of the community to the movement of Jewish national renaissance, to Zionism and to Israel. This movement had from the outset endeavoured "to renew the face of Jewish education".<sup>3</sup> Hebrew education in South Africa - especially the day schools - fell within the context of this national movement, and "national" education in this context was to be interpreted as the formation of a deep sense of attachment to the renewal of Jewish life in the Land of Israel and some familiarity with Hebrew culture. In other words, stated Adar, National Education was the sum of Zionist education with Hebrew education.<sup>4</sup> The Jewish

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p 6.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

schools and their teachers had endeavoured to transmit such a deep felt sentiment for Israel and Zion to the pupils and imbue them with "a natural affection for, and a sense of attachment to, Zion".<sup>1</sup> The report stressed the need for a stimulating and challenging syllabus for the upper classes to engage the interest of the pupils and foster an understanding of, and identification with, the Jewish People and the Land of Israel.

Professor Adar made an interesting analysis of the role of the Zionist Youth Movements in the framework of Jewish education in this country and how these could be profitably integrated into the more formal education provided by the school.<sup>2</sup>

The question was whether traditional and national education could be integrated. Adar answered in the affirmative, pointing to the fundamental fact that "the inculcation of the heritage of Jewish culture lies at the very root of a traditional and a national education alike".<sup>3</sup> The study of Hebrew, of great works in Hebrew, familiarity with the Jewish heritage, the feeling for and the understanding of the great values inherent in, and flowing from, Jewish culture -- in all these the traditional and national overlap. These constituted the real and true Jewish education and was in accord with the aims of South African Jewish education which was traditionally and nationally orientated. Jewish education in South Africa had created its own integration of these two elements and this combination allowed for a meaningful and unified Jewish education.

Returning to the raison d'être of the investigation, Professor Adar deplored the ideological and political controversy which had been permitted to infiltrate into the sphere of Jewish education. Great harm would be done if

1. Ibid., p 6.

2. Ibid., p 7. : for a more comprehensive treatment of the subject, see Chapter 53 pp 644 et seq.

3. Ibid., p 8.

it were made the arena for internal dissensions, permitted to be vitiated by unnecessary disagreement and sterile argumentations and exposed to complex pressures from various quarters.

The whole controversy of traditional versus national, or, in other words, of Judaism versus Hebraism, he derisively described as the geography of the Siddur versus the slight ability to chatter in Hebrew. Both were wrong, both devoid of content, both were unacceptable. Hebrew was the language of Siddur, Torah and Jewish learning - "without Hebrew there is no Jewish education worthy of the name".<sup>1</sup>

The report noted that there had been a certain "sealing-off" of Judaism against Hebraism and Israelism - a hint and more of contempt for Hebrew, an indifference or worse to Israel.<sup>2</sup> This did not accord with the true spirit of South African Jewry and should be opposed: it would reduce Jewish education to mere empty form, devoid of content.<sup>3</sup>

Adar expressed admiration for the South African Jewish community for its achievements in the field of Jewish education, especially in the light of the fact that it had no way of enforcing such an education on anybody.<sup>4</sup> No one could claim that such an education was unavailable to anybody; what could be claimed was that levels could be different, which was another matter. The network of schools in the Jewish educational system was "strong proof of constructive and creative powers" within the community even though it lacked any political authority.<sup>5</sup>

The Adar Report was at one and the same time a vindication

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1. Ibid., p 9.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p 10.

5. Ibid.

of the work and aims of the Board and the direction it was taking as well as a careful criticism of important aspects of its work. Called into being to settle differences, the one-man Commissioner made a lucid and in-depth analysis of the philosophy underlying Jewish education in this country not forbearing to criticise and condemn, albeit gently, and at times by implication only, where and whom he felt necessary. The implementation of its recommendations was left to the future. The report itself was not published in South Africa.

CHAPTER 38: THE UNITED HEBREW SCHOOLS OF JOHANNESBURG  
IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

The decline of the Talmud Torah as an institution was an inevitable concomitant of the growth of the Jewish day school during the post-war period and provides an interesting and indeed rare phenomenon of the quite rapid process of change from one school system to another. Within the space of one generation Jewish education in South Africa was the scene for a virtual metamorphosis, the more remarkable because it was not caused by dictate of authority or sudden reform, but by the inevitable evolutionary forces emanating from the social and historical changes in the Jewish community in this part of the sub-continent and in the Jewish People. The Talmud Torah was unable to meet the felt group and individual needs of the society which it had served for several generations, and this society created a new and better instrument for the purpose of the instruction of its young which it deemed essential and meaningful. Society creates its educational institutions in its own image, and the second half of this century provides an example of this truism on an admittedly small, but nonetheless authentic, scale.

Social change may be the cause or the result of educational change; in the Jewish community in South Africa the changes within, and around it, were so fundamental that the pace of educational change was dramatically accelerated: within a matter of under two decades the one school system was replaced by another different from it, because the community demanded it.

The first signs of this phenomenon became apparent in Johannesburg soon after 1945 when the Doornfontein Talmud Torah closed as a result of the rapid decrease in the

Jewish population of this suburb.<sup>1</sup> There is reference in the report to the pressures brought to bear on the leadership to reduce the number of teaching days; decline in numbers inevitably went hand-in-hand with decline in quantity of instruction and, of course, lowered achievements. The Executive resisted this and reiterated its determination to make every effort to maintain the five-day week wherever possible.<sup>2</sup>

The United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg of thirty years ago had eighteen schools with a total enrolment of 1 058 children taught by forty two teachers, nineteen of whom were full-time. The Regional Director of the S A Board of Jewish Education acted as the Director of the United Hebrew Schools, whilst the Council of the latter body was the Regional Committee of the Board.<sup>3</sup>

The chronic shortage of finance<sup>4</sup> and the inadequate support of the Communal Fund led the Council of the United Hebrew Schools to consider making a direct appeal to the community.<sup>5</sup> There were close on 1 200 pupils in the affiliated schools and thirteen pupils wrote Hebrew as one of their matriculation subjects.<sup>6</sup>

The process of growth reached its high point in 1954 when the

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1. Report of the Executive of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg for 1951, p 1.
  2. Ibid. Though it is apparent from the tone of this section of the Report that the Executive was not at all confident about the future.
  3. The Zionist Record 6 June 1952. p 7
  4. Ibid. It lacked the resources to meet the teachers' demands for increases in salary and for the creation of a pension fund.
  5. "Report of the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg" in the Zionist Record 27 March 1953, p 6.
  6. Ibid.

total enrolment reached 2 360 pupils in the 26 schools controlled by or under the aegis of the United Hebrew Schools.<sup>1</sup>

Mr E Levite, the Director, could claim that the United Hebrew Schools were the largest teaching institution in the Union being responsible for the Jewish education of over 2 200 children in about 25 schools belonging or affiliated to it.<sup>2</sup> It had entered the record number of 25 pupils for Hebrew in the Matriculation examination, representing half the total number who had written the subject in the Transvaal in 1955.<sup>3</sup> To encourage closer contact amongst the schools under its jurisdiction an annual sports day was organised in 1954 for the first time and had proved a great success.<sup>4</sup> Most schools had a five-day teaching week.

In a detailed analysis of the work and structure of the United Hebrew Schools during the mid-fifties which appeared in the Zionist Record, Henry Katzew described the institution as "the spinal column of Jewish education in Johannesburg".<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the chain of schools actually belonging to it, there were sundry Hebrew classes for Jewish pupils in Government schools, most of them held in the early mornings before the opening of the ordinary school day. There were other schools and classes which were merely affiliated to the United Hebrew Schools and, though in fact autonomous, still received assistance from it, followed the unified curriculum it laid down for all its schools, set its Barmitzvah

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1. "Report of the Twenty-Seventh Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg" in the Zionist Record 25 March 1955, p 14.
  2. Report and Balance Sheet of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg for the Year Ending 31 December 1955: "Director's Report" submitted to the Twenty-Eighth Annual General Meeting 22 March 1956.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Katzew, H: "Remarkable Chain of Afternoon Hebrew Schools" in the Zionist Record, 20 July 1956, pp 8-9

examinations and benefited from the bursaries and grants it provided.<sup>1</sup>

The twenty-two constituent and affiliated schools included the Bernard Patley Junior School,<sup>2</sup> the Sydenham and Cyrildene Talmud Torahs each with its 150 pupils, the Mayfair School with but 60 children: the Hebrew classes at the H A Jack Primary School held daily from 7.20-8.00a.m and similar ones at the Parktown Boys' High for 34 boys of post-Barmitzvah age.<sup>3</sup>

To obviate the conflict between afternoon Hebrew classes and sport, the United Hebrew Schools introduced an inter-schools soccer competition and an annual sports day.<sup>4</sup> Mr Levite informed Katzew that he was not convinced of the efficacy of the early morning classes at government schools: late-coming was a problem and the classes lacked the corporate spirit of a proper school.<sup>5</sup>

The Director could report later with satisfaction that parents were enrolling their children at Hebrew schools at a younger age than was generally the case in the past.<sup>6</sup> Preparations were in hand for the first Hebrew eisteddfod (Zimriya) and some of the twenty matriculants who had taken

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1. See the "Executive's Report" in the Report and Balance Sheet of the United Hebrew Scholls of Johannesburg for 1955.
  2. The Bernard Patley Junior School in Yeoville, with 151 pupils in the infant classes, was a day school.
  3. Katzew, op.cit. and Report and Balance Sheet for the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg for 1956
  4. Katzew optimistically asserted that "sport is no longer the enemy of Jewish education".op.cit., p 8
  5. Ibid., p 9.
  6. "Director's Report for 1956" in The Report and Balance Sheet of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg for 1956 submitted to the Twenty Ninth Annual General Meeting 27 March 1957.

Hebrew as one of their subjects were studying rabbinics or had enrolled at the Zlotnik-Avida Hebrew Teachers' Seminary.<sup>1</sup> Year after year the Director deplored the irregular attendance of so many pupils and the Council of the United Hebrew Schools recorded its dissatisfaction at the small proportion of girls who attended its Hebrew schools.<sup>2</sup>

"The national-traditional approach (in constructing the curriculum) was the right path", wrote Mr Goss who had been supervising the work of the United Hebrew Schools during the absence of Mr Levite<sup>3</sup>: as such, Humash and Siddur were central to the syllabus. Twenty-seven pupils wrote Hebrew for their School Leaving Certificate in 1958, and this was the strongest motivation for continuing their Hebrew studies beyond Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah: the demands of the examination also ensured certain qualitative scholastic standards in Hebrew.<sup>4</sup>

By the sixties the numbers were beginning to drop; the report for 1960 mentioned the numbers of children transferring to the day school - a highly desirable trend.<sup>5</sup> The number of pupils offering Hebrew for their matriculation had decreased to 16.<sup>6</sup> The report was also critical of the new fashion of a two-hour period of Hebrew twice a week, considering that the minimum was five hours which should be

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1. Ibid. Of the 2 100 children in the United Hebrew Schools only 237 were over the age of thirteen.
  2. Ibid., submitted to the Thirtieth Annual General Meeting 31 March 1958
  3. Ibid., for the year 1958.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Report and Balance Sheet for the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg for 1960. p 6
  6. Ibid.

spread over five days of the week.<sup>1</sup>

So the decline in numbers continued, accompanied by a hidden decline in quality of the education and, inseparable from both, a deterioration in the attitude of both parents and children towards their Jewish education. The committed and caring parents sent their children to the developing day schools and left the Talmud Torah field almost entirely to those for whom Hebrew education did not rank over-highly in their personal and their group scale of values. This parental indifference was all too easily transferred to the children to whom Jewish education naturally became a mere appendage to their general schooling to be experienced - or endured - till Barmitzvah or Batmitzvah which became at the same time the goal and the end of their Jewish education.

By 1962 the number of pupils at the United Hebrew Schools over the age of thirteen was under 200,<sup>2</sup> and in the following year the total enrolment was given as 1 663.<sup>3</sup> The Council had met with a disappointing response to its efforts to establish early morning classes at high schools, and it reported that

one is driven to the inevitable conclusion that parents in general are simply not interested in seeing their children receive a reasonably higher Hebrew education.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., for 1962. p 7.

3. Ibid., for 1963. p 7.

4. Ibid., for 1964. p 5. Of a possible 300 pupils at Greenside High School only 20 joined the early morning Hebrew classes. Hardly more attended these classes at Parktown Boys' High.

The enrolments continued to drop,<sup>1</sup> some of the "schools" had been reduced to mere groups of children receiving instruction in early morning classes at government schools. Only two schools had an enrolment of over a hundred in 1969.<sup>2</sup> There was increasing difficulty in finding enough teachers for these Talmud Torahs and classes, and students of the Zlotnik-Avida Teachers' Seminary had to be employed. The United Hebrew Schools were encountering increasing difficulties in running their schools.<sup>3</sup> One school withdrew from the United Hebrew Schools when its request to operate on a three-day week was turned down,<sup>4</sup> and the report summed up the position - sadly and almost defeatedly - in these words:

....for the rest, the problems of the afternoon schools are still the same: the unwillingness of pupils to carry on after Barmitzvah is with us as always. In addition attendances are not as good as they should be.<sup>5</sup>

The United Hebrew Schools, stated the report for 1969, "was undergoing a very trying time".<sup>6</sup>

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1. 1 474 in 1967; 1 141 in 1969. The Bernard Patley Junior Day School with about 150 pupils was included in these figures. In 1967 only 156 were over the age of thirteen, whilst in 1969 eighteen of the thirty-one schools and classes listed had enrolments of 30 children. In the same year only 6 pupils wrote Hebrew for their matriculation. See Annual Reports for 1967 and 1969, passim.
  2. Ibid for 1969, p 15., and one of these was the Bernard Patley Junior Day School.
  3. "Executive's Reports" in Report and Balance Sheet of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg for 1968, p 5, and for 1969, pp 6-7.
  4. Ibid., for 1968. p 5
  5. Ibid.
  6. Ibid., p 8.

The enrolment was maintained at over 1 100 until 1974, of which number about a third were girls and 106 were over the age of thirteen.<sup>1</sup> Sixteen candidates had written Matriculation Hebrew during the period 1972-1974 and 68 girls had passed the Batmitzvah Proficiency Test during the same years.<sup>2</sup> A Shabbat Camp had been held and a Zimriya took place in 1974. The new syllabus stressed the teaching of religious customs and practices of synagogue and home.<sup>3</sup>

In 1978 there were only two pupils preparing to write Matriculation Hebrew; the Batmitzvah class numbered 38 girls.<sup>4</sup> To foster a spirit of unity amongst the schools special combined functions and projects were organised on a number of occasions to involve all schools.<sup>5</sup> There were about 400 children in the early morning classes at government schools at which attendance was very good, noted the report. A teacher had also been appointed for the twelve Jewish children at the St Vincent School for the Deaf.<sup>6</sup>

By contrast with the early morning classes, the picture as far as the afternoon schools was concerned was not so satisfactory, ran the report. The two-day teaching week

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1. Report of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg submitted to the Annual General Meeting 21 February 1975.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Report by Chairman of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg submitted to the Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education, 3 August 1978, p 1.

5. Ibid. : examples - a Lag B'Omer Function; a Humash Project and a Jerusalem Day Project, p 2.

6. Ibid., p 2.

had become the pattern which "is, in effect, one day per week owing to absenteeism".<sup>1</sup> The United Hebrew Schools had resisted the introduction of this pattern in vain; it had been quickly adopted by most of the congregational Talmud Torahs and as a result achievements had diminished greatly.<sup>2</sup> To compound all these problems, the United Hebrew Schools were beset by chronic and serious financial problems.<sup>3</sup>

The total enrolment in the 23 schools under the United Hebrew Schools at the end of 1979 was 974, divided into 109 classes taught by 64 teachers.<sup>4</sup>

At the beginning of 1980, The Zionist Record carried a report on the only pupil from a Johannesburg Talmud Torah to have taken Hebrew as a subject for the Transvaal School Leaving Certificate, adding that it was a number of years since candidates from an afternoon school had done so.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 3.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Information supplied by the S A Board of Jewish Education, 22 February 1980. Ten of these "schools" were early morning classes; twelve had fewer than 25 children each and but 22 of the total were over the age of thirteen.

5. The Zionist Record, 25 January 1980, p 3.

CHAPTER 39: THE SOUTH AFRICAN BOARD OF JEWISH EDUCATION:  
A REVIEW OF THE YEARS 1965-1975

A comprehensive overview of Jewish education in South Africa during the last fifteen years is given in the reports submitted to the five national education conferences of the Board during this period and a number of ad hoc meetings that were called in between.<sup>1</sup>

The Fourteenth National Education Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education heard that there were 10 339 pupils in the full range of educational institutions - from Nursery School to Seminary - under the jurisdiction of the Board.<sup>2</sup> Professor Zvi Adar of the Hebrew University had been brought out to study the activities of the Board and his report, running to some 40 000 words, would be regarded as "a blue-print for Jewish education for years to come".<sup>3</sup> The growth of the Jewish day schools had continued apace since the previous conference.<sup>4</sup>

A conference of all the Jewish day schools in the Republic was convened in Johannesburg in November 1966, when a national council was established.<sup>5</sup> It was a development which was inevitable, though the extent of the co-operation

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1. The King David Schools and the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg are dealt with separately and in detail in Chapters 35 & 38 and the Cape in Chapters 45-48 (passim)
  2. Report submitted to the Fourteenth National Education Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education, Johannesburg 15-16 April 1967
  3. Ibid.: see Chapter 37 for his report.
  4. The enrolments in all Jewish day schools affiliated to the Board had risen from 3 279 in 1964 to 4 200 in 1967, of which number 2 646 were in the King David Schools and Bernard Patley Junior. Together with Herzlia and Weizmann in Cape Town the total was 5 500: *ibid.*
  5. Ibid.

and co-ordination between the schools remained more apparent than real for the next decade. The Jewish day schools had so much in common - be they aims, achievements, difficulties or problems - that they had to get together sooner or later, even if the early meetings of this nature revealed considerable disagreement on such matters as the Ulpan scheme, compulsory prayers and hours allocated to Hebrew, for example.<sup>1</sup> South African Jewish education had evolved to a stage where its institutions were advanced enough organisationally and qualitatively to desire to co-operate with one another and, moreover, be in a position to effect such a step. Never before in the history of the community had there been such a gathering of its educational institutions. A conference of South African Talmud Torahs would have been simply inconceivable.<sup>2</sup>

The new hostel was opened in 1966 in Linksfield and had a hundred boarders in 1967.<sup>3</sup> Refresher courses for Hebrew teachers were organised in Israel during 1964 and 1965 and some 140 teachers attended similar courses in Johannesburg in 1966 by Prof Adar and Mr Aharon Rosen<sup>4</sup> who had been specially brought out from Israel by the Boards in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Mrs Osrin retired from the post of Head of the Board's Nursery Schools' Department at the end of 1966 after twenty years' service, during which period the number of schools had

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1. See, for example, the Verbatim Transcript of the Proceedings of the Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education, Johannesburg, held on 11-12 May 1968, pp 18-51.
  2. Another Conference of Lay Leaders of Jewish Day Schools was held in Cape Town in June 1974. It discussed such topics as - The Financial Situation of Jewish Schools; Hebrew Teachers from Israel; Ulpan; Teacher Training in South Africa. See Transcript of Proceedings of the Conference. There were meetings during subsequent years in Durban and Johannesburg.
  3. Report to the Fourteenth Conference.
  4. Ibid. Mr Rosen was an expert in the teaching of Hebrew to adults.

grown from one to thirty-one and the quality of its education had advanced notably.<sup>1</sup>

The Board's financial problems remained unsolved. Eminent guests were brought from overseas occasionally to launch financial drives and fees had to be raised from time to time in a constant endeavour to cope with escalating expenditure.<sup>2</sup>

A fall in the numbers at country schools was reported and ascribed to the movement of the Jewish population to the cities, and Rabbi Klewansky sounded a warning against what he termed the new trend to curtail the number of teaching days.<sup>3</sup> The chronic shortage of teachers was alleviated somewhat by utilising some final-year Seminary students.<sup>4</sup>

Rabbi Hilewitz could state with justification that it became more apparent from year to year that the Seminary ensured, to a growing extent, the existence of Jewish education in this country.<sup>5</sup> He had stressed the fact, he added, that locally-trained teachers were "more readily acceptable to the pupils of our schools than teachers from Israel or elsewhere".<sup>6</sup>

The Rhodesian Jewish schools had also made good progress. Sharon School, in Salisbury, with 155 pupils had moved in 1964 to its new premises in Milton Park.<sup>7</sup> The School

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1. Osrin, R: "Hebrew Nursery Schools' Department" in the Report to the Fourteenth Conference. The Nursery School Association of South Africa had invited Mrs Osrin to carry out inspections of other schools on its behalf.
  2. The Jewish Education Fund established in 1958 and the subventions from the United Communal Fund were insufficient for this purpose.
  3. Klewansky, J: "The Country Schools" in the Report to the Fourteenth Conference, op.cit. The number of schools fell to 51,
  4. Ibid.
  5. Hilewitz, A: "The Rabbi J L Zlotnik Hebrew Teachers' Training College" in the Report to the Fourteenth Conference. 8 male and 19 female students had graduated from the Seminary in the previous three years. *ibid.*
  6. Ibid.
  7. Bullock, R: "The Sharon School - Salisbury" in this Report. The School had reached Standard IV. Mrs V Todes, the head-teacher since its inception had retired and had been succeeded by Mrs Bullock.

had once again earned favourable reports from the Government Inspectors. It enjoyed a good reputation for its modern methods and experimentation, and some groups had appeared on local television in programmes illustrating Jewish festivals.<sup>1</sup> Carmel in Bulawayo had reached Standard V since the previous conference with an enrolment of 159. Its former pupils had done well in high schools to which they had been admitted, "which was a testimony to the standard set in the School".<sup>2</sup> The report contained a reference to "the uncertainty of the present political and economic situation in the Rhodesias".<sup>3</sup>

In Durban, Carmel College with its close to 500 hundred pupils had moved into its new buildings; the first group had written the matriculation examination at the end of 1966.<sup>4</sup> It was the only school in the country to receive a provincial grant but this was not high enough to solve its financial problems. The report recorded the customary religious and other extramural activities and that Carmel was sending its first participants to the Ulpan.<sup>5</sup>

Its namesake in Pretoria could also report good progress.<sup>6</sup> The high school had reached Form III level and had moved to its new premises at the end of 1965.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. "The Carmel School, Bulawayo" in this Report.

3. Ibid.

4. Kahanovitz, I: "The Carmel College - Durban" in this Report.

5. Ibid.

6. Grossfeld, R: "The Carmel Primary School - Pretoria" in this Report. There were 325 pupils on the roll.

7. Ibid. : there were close on a hundred pupils in the secondary school.

This report featured a new day school that had been established since the previous conference. This was the East Rand Hebrew High School in Benoni which had opened with 17 pupils in its Form I in the premises of the Benoni United Hebrew Institutions.<sup>1</sup> The Rev Mr L Mirvis had persuaded this body to establish a day school in Benoni and had obtained the support of the other main towns on the East Rand.<sup>2</sup> Mr L L Spruyt, the retired headmaster of a high school in a neighbouring town, had been appointed head-teacher and an enthusiastic Parent-Teachers' Association had been organised and Chief Rabbi B M Casper performed the official opening in 1967.<sup>3</sup>

The Adar Report issued in 1965 had closely examined the concept of traditional-national Jewish education,<sup>4</sup> referring obliquely to the prior differences of opinion which had produced this compound concept which was obviously a compromise between two extremes. What were somewhat vaguely termed ideological differences had divided the Board's leadership on and off for years.<sup>5</sup> The Fourteenth Conference in April 1967 accepted with acclaim the "charter", recording the agreement reached by the Director of the Board and Chief Rabbi B M Casper reconciling the two emphases on the strictly religious and the more traditional/pragmatic approaches.

The agreement was more apparent than real and the ideological controversy soon began to simmer again, no doubt exacerbated by the personalities involved on both sides. The Ulpan was a serious bone of contention: Mr L Sachs, the Chairman

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1. "The East Rand Hebrew High School" in this Report.
  2. Benoni was chosen because it was centrally situated in relation to Boksburg, Germiston, Brakpan and Springs, being but twenty minutes by train from any of these.
  3. Ibid. The Report to the Conference contained abridged accounts of the other institutions under the Board which have been reviewed in other chapters.
  4. See pp 438 et seq.
  5. See p 437 for example.

of the Board, pressed for the permanent venue to be at the Midrasha (College) at Sde Boker<sup>1</sup> in the Negev southern region. Chief Rabbi Casper publicly criticised the preference for Sde Boker over Jerusalem at the beginning of 1969,<sup>2</sup> and he returned to the whole subject in a special article in the Rosh Hashana issue of the same paper later in the year.<sup>3</sup> After the "Charter"<sup>4</sup> had been drawn up, hopes were high that it would usher in a new era in Jewish education, and that they would plan a "fuller programme of Jewish studies" for the day schools. After the Conference nothing, however, was effected.

The major cause of the friction which evoked public controversy centred round the Israeli Ulpan Tour and the decision to base it at Sde Boker.<sup>5</sup> Only by much effort was a compromise reached and one group was sent to Jerusalem. This was symptomatic of the approach to the fundamental bases and aims of Jewish education: Jerusalem epitomised the living force of Judaism, its inspiration and eternal hopes which could exert powerful educative influences and shape the future outlook of the pupil; to pass over it was to reject all that it stood for, and the whole issue went to the very heart of Jewish education in South Africa.

Chief Rabbi Casper was critical of those who made the "even, mid-way course.....shunning extremes" their guide-lines in education, who entertained the "absurd fear lest a too-intensive Jewish education will make the pupils too Jewish".<sup>6</sup> (A religious commitment was a vital basis for Jewish education.)

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1. It had been founded by Mr David Ben-Gurion.
  2. Zionist Record and S A Jewish Chronicle, 7 February 1969 p 18: his views were shared by Cape Town.
  3. Casper, B M (Chief Rabbi): "Behind the Education Issues" in Zionist Record and S A Jewish Chronicle, 12 September 1969, pp 30-31 and p 79.
  4. See p 458
  5. See above.
  6. Casper: op.cit., p 31.

He was critical of teachers and principals who taught the skills of Jewish observance but failed to give a personal example. It was the communal leadership which was to blame for this "half-hearted religious lip-service and play-acting".<sup>1</sup> The teachers were seen by the pupils as the image of Jewish life; intention, commitment (Kavanna) had to be behind observance otherwise Judaism was presented as if it were a museum-piece. It was futile to bring up the excuse that conflict between home and school had to be avoided. The Jewish school had to counterbalance the weak Jewish home.<sup>2</sup> Pre-eminent is the importance of Hashkafa, Weltanschauung: and this permeated the controversy over Ulpan, the selection of teachers,<sup>3</sup> the attitude to prayer, and the hours of tuition of Jewish subjects.<sup>4</sup>

The controversy flared up as the date of the Conference of the Board in November that year approached<sup>5</sup> and spilt over into the press. It revolved round the resolution submitted by the S A Rabbinical Association<sup>6</sup> and counter resolutions of the Executive Council reaffirming the principle of a

balanced Jewish education based on broadly traditional-national lines as practised in our schools (which is) the most suitable form of education for the majority of South African Jewish children.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 32.

2. Ibid.

3. The Torah Department was rejected by the S A Board of Jewish Education.

4. Ibid., p 79.

5. Zionist Record and S A Jewish Chronicle, 24 October 1969, p 14 featured a prominent article entitled "Religious Issue Conflict at Education Conference"; see also Editorial in the same paper 7 November 1969, p 2 "A Prickly Resolution".

6. This proposed that teachers of Jewish subjects should be observant themselves and that the Executive of the Board should be guided at all times in religious issues by the Chief Rabbi and/or the Rabbinical Association and should not be decided by a majority vote.

7. Zionist Record and S A Jewish Chronicle, 24 October 1969, p14

"Sparks Fly at Education Conference" were the headlines in the Zionist Record which reported that "two outlooks, both within the term national-traditional, came into rasping conflict".<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Goss, opposed the watered-down resolution of the Rabbinical Association moved by Rabbi Bernhard which was turned down by Conference. The ideological controversy was, in public at any rate, over, and the philosophy of a national-traditional Jewish education was vindicated.

"The phenomenal development of Jewish education has been the great silent revolution of South African Jewry" is the opening sentence of Mr Misheiker's report to the Fifteenth Conference of the Board in 1969.<sup>2</sup> The enrolments in the day schools affiliated to the Board had risen to 4 500, with 1 500 in the supplemental schools.<sup>3</sup> Another conference of the South African day schools had been held in May 1968 to discuss common aims and problems.<sup>4</sup> No fewer than 152 Form III pupils, drawn from all schools, constituted the 1969 Ulpan contingent,<sup>5</sup> and a great event in the history of South African Jewish education was the visit of Mr David Ben-Gurion to this country. He had spoken at the Jewish schools and made a deep impression on the children.

The conference heard of the Board's continuing financial difficulties and the unavoidable rises in school fees,

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1. Ibid., 14 November 1969, pp 6-7.

2. Misheiker, A: "The Board and its Institutions" in the Report submitted to the Fifteenth National Education Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education, Johannesburg 8-9 November 1969.

3. Ibid.

4. See p 455

5. See this Report

though it was pointed out that these were still well below those of the private schools.<sup>1</sup>

The drop in the numbers of pupils and schools in the country was continuing and what was a particular cause for worry was the growing tendency to decrease weekly teaching hours.<sup>2</sup>

The country Hebrew school was the only channel for Jewish education in those areas and as such was vital for those dwindling communities where, indeed, the chronic shortage of teachers was felt most. The Director urged that suitable personnel be brought out from Israel to serve these congregations and their little schools.<sup>3</sup>

Mrs S Metz was the new Head of the Hebrew Nursery Schools' Department which directed the 40 schools affiliated to the Board in South Africa and 3 in Rhodesia.<sup>4</sup>

Reports from the two Rhodesian day schools<sup>5</sup> recorded that standards and enrolment figures were being maintained, due attention was paid to festivals<sup>6</sup> and parents were actively involved in running the schools.

Mr Kahanovitz reported from Durban that the first group of Carmel pupils had participated in the 1968 Ulpan to Israel and that the Natal Education Department had introduced its

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1. Stone, R: "The Board's Finances" in this Report. It was pointed out however that other private schools had no particular commitment to the community as the Jewish school had. The Jewish school was needed by the Jewish community for the special instruction it provided for the children; to raise the fees to prohibitive levels would therefore deprive those who could not afford them of their legitimate rights to a Jewish education.
  2. Klewansky, J: Transvaal Regional Director: "Country Schools" in this Report
  3. Ibid.
  4. There were 2 100 in these schools, with 198 teachers.
  5. Report to the Fifteenth Conference.
  6. Four hundred parents and children attended the school Seder before Passover.

own Hebrew Examination at the matriculation level in 1967.<sup>1</sup> Similar reports of successful work achievements, of busy extra-mural activities, of very active parent participation and backing were sent in by the Pretoria Carmel Schools.<sup>2</sup>

The East Rand High School, under the energetic veteran headmaster, Louis Spruyt, had also made good progress. By 1969 it had reached Form III, sent a token contingent to the Ulpan and already needed extra accommodation for its 80 pupils.<sup>3</sup> This perceptive non-Jewish principal defined the objects and ideals which actuated the founders of his school in these words:

....instructing the Jewish child in the religion and traditions of the Jewish People, especially fostering a love for, and instilling a knowledge of, the Torah....(and) teaching the Hebrew language.<sup>4</sup>

The Sixteenth Conference heard that the total enrolment in the day schools had increased by over a thousand pupils since 1969<sup>5</sup>, and the other institutions of the Board had maintained their rate of progress. But the increased needs of the Board and the escalation of costs had greatly magnified its financial problems so that it had been constrained to seek assistance from various communal bodies who had come to realise that the financial troubles of the Board were a matter of concern to the community as a whole.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Kahanovitz, I: "Carmel College - Durban" in the Report.
  2. The first group of 26 pupils of this school had written the matriculation examination of the Transvaal Education Department in 1968.
  3. Spruyt, L L: "East Rand Hebrew High School" in this Report.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Misheiker, A: "The Board and its Institutions" in the Report to the Sixteenth National Education Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education, Johannesburg 22-23 July 1972.
  6. Stone, R: "Financial Comment" in this Report

Rabbi Klewansky's report was largeley negative in nature.<sup>1</sup> The number of country pupils had declined to about 1 300; Israeli teacher-ministers brought out to serve country congregations had proved disappointing because they took a long time to adjust to their new circumstances, frequently knew little English and lacked the knowledge of teaching Hebrew as a foreign language.<sup>2</sup> He reported, with regret, that the majority of country schools now worked on a three-day week time-table, and as a result it was impossible to cover the syllabus.<sup>3</sup>

The Talmud Torahs of the Johannesburg United Hebrew Schools were being inexorably eclipsed by the day schools; there was a drastic fall, not only in total enrolments, but also in such significant areas as numbers of schools, children over Barmitzvah age, Batmitzvah Examination candidates and pupils offering Hebrew as a matriculation subject.<sup>4</sup>

Mrs Metz could report that the number of nursery schools under her Department had risen to 46 and pointed out that the nursery school served as a channel for bringing knowledge of, and feeling for, Judaism and tradition to parents as well as pupils.<sup>5</sup> The Board's own two nursery schools at Linksfield and Victory Park, with 200 and 140 children respectively, were "the best of their kind".<sup>6</sup>

The day schools in other centres reported that progress had been maintained in all areas of their work, that inspectorial reports were favourable, and enrolments on the increase.

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1. Klewansky, J: "The Country Schools" in this Report.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid: more positive points were that there were close on 1 500 pupils in the four day schools (outside Johannesburg) under his department and that an itinerant-relieving teacher had been appointed to help when needed in one-man country schools.

4. Katz, R: "The United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg" in this Report.

5. Metz, S: "The Hebrew Nursery Schools Department" in this Report.

6. Ibid.

Mr Spruyt reported that his school in Benoni, with its 110 pupils, was now called Hillel High School and its motto was Kadimah.<sup>1</sup> It was a busy little school, maintaining close links with other Jewish schools in the Republic and its matriculation class had achieved very good results in the Transvaal School Leaving Examination in 1971.<sup>2</sup>

The Carmel School in Bulawayo, however, reported a fall in numbers and increasing financial problems. Intent on maintaining links with sister schools in the south, it had sent a contingent of pupils to visit other Jewish schools in the Republic. Post-primary Hebrew classes were organised for former pupils who desired to offer this subject in their O-Level examinations.<sup>3</sup> Sharon in Salisbury also reported a drop in numbers, partially attributable to the rise in school fees and congregational dues. The Board of Governors of the School was fully representative of the main institutions and congregations in the community in addition to parents and donors.

The report to Conference contained an unusual and interesting analysis of Jewish education in Rhodesia, a stock-taking, as it were, of the state of affairs near the end of an historical era for the country and the community.<sup>4</sup> It was moreover an analysis pertinent to much of Jewish education south of the Limpopo. The total number of Jewish children at school in Rhodesia was 1 139. In Bulawayo 29 out of 30 Jewish children over the age of 12 never entered a Jewish classroom again; Salisbury was only slightly better at 26. Those who had expected that children who had been exposed continuously for seven years to Jewish education "under conditions of regularity and normalcy" would have imbibed some enthusiasm

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1. Hillel was a famous religious leader noted for his learning and humanity who lived in Palestine towards the end of the first century before this era. Kadimah : Hebrew - Forward.
  2. Spruyt, L L: "The Hillel High School - Benoni" in this Report.
  3. Ramsay, A G: "Carmel School - Bulawayo" in this Report
  4. "Post-Primary Education in Rhodesia" in this Report.

for things Jewish and for continuing with some modicum of Jewish education (during their high school stage) were disappointed.<sup>1</sup> The blame for this the anonymous writer laid at the door of the parents and the community who were just not sufficiently enough interested in post-primary Jewish education to convince the young people that Jewish education was intrinsically worthwhile. The volume of high school work, organised school sport and extra-murals left little time for Jewish education; moreover, the Jewish curriculum (in the Talmud Torahs) was boring and failed to attract.<sup>2</sup>

The writer of the report proceeded to give various suggestions for changes in the curriculum and even mentioned Saturdays and Sunday mornings as suitable times for study. He concluded his article with two questions which summarise the gist of what he had written and epitomise its unreality:

How can we persuade the pupils to enrol?

How can we get them into the classroom?

Both questions he left unanswered because there are really no answers to these agonising questions except one which the South African Jewish community had itself found a generation earlier. There was no other way of providing a secondary Jewish education than the creation of a Jewish high school in which it will be integrated with the general curriculum. The very issue had been the subject for long debate in Cape Town during the early fifties when the leaders of Herzlia hesitated in perplexity as they pondered the prospect of opening a high school.<sup>3</sup> In Rhodesia the numbers in the Jewish primary schools were too small<sup>4</sup> - or the obstacles too great - to impel the leaders and parents to proceed with the next stage. Perhaps it was too late.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. See pp 504 et seq.

4. Hillel High School at the time had but 110 pupils and gave every indication of being a viable institution.

The Board's activities under the new Chairman, Mr I Greenstein, continued to expand and the institutions under its jurisdiction maintained the tempo of their growth in the mid-seventies.<sup>1</sup> The enrolment in the day schools had risen to about 7 500 and the nursery schools had also grown in numbers.<sup>2</sup> Since 1972, reported Mr Misheiker, great strides had been made towards effecting closer liaison between all Jewish day schools in the Republic.<sup>3</sup> Three conferences of the lay leadership of the schools had been convened in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, respectively, by Mr Greenstein to deal with problems common to all and consult on united objectives and common plans.<sup>4</sup> Closed ranks were particularly essential to deal with the crises occasioned by the chronic - and escalating - financial burdens. By the mid-seventies the schools were arguably the most dynamic institutions in the community and, in spite of their financial weakness, the most successful ones. The parents represented very probably the bulk of those most involved in its major bodies, like the S A Zionist Federation and the Jewish Board of Deputies, and at the Cape, at least, were the most active elements amongst the collectors for - and donors to - the United Communal Fund.<sup>5</sup> With 7 500 pupils and many thousands of former pupils, the ambit of the Jewish school by the last quarter of this century very probably encompassed the majority of the Jewish community in South Africa in one manner or another.

Greenstein perceived this, drew the Cape schools into close relationship with the Board without coercing them to affiliate

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1. Misheiker, A: "The S A Board of Jewish Education" in the Report submitted to the Seventeenth National Education Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education, Johannesburg, 9-12 October 1975.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Mr Greenstein had especially succeeded in drawing the leaders of the Cape Town schools closer to the Board.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Oral information supplied by Mr W Katz, Treasurer of the United Communal Fund, Western Province, 30 April 1980

officially, and gave the whole movement a framework which, even if based on informal personal bonds, made it no less efficacious.

Effective unity of the Jewish day schools was finally achieved with this development, at the third level of full co-operation.<sup>1</sup>

The continuing decline in numbers in both the country Talmud Torahs and in the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg was again reported.<sup>2</sup> Mrs G Ludwin had been appointed in 1973 deputy-director for Johannesburg in charge of extra-mural activities aimed at enriching and reinforcing the Jewish curriculum of the afternoon schools and fostering a spirit of unity amongst them.<sup>3</sup> The Director of the United Hebrew Schools drew attention to the growing importance of the early morning classes in the government schools which, at least, had the advantage of a five-day teaching week.<sup>4</sup>

There were 23 students at the Rabbi Zlotnik-Avida Hebrew Teachers' Seminary in 1975, and the report noted that since its establishment in 1944 about 260 teachers had graduated from the college and had obviously played a vital role in Jewish education in South Africa since then.

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1. The first links were established in 1957 at the pupil-level with the first contingent from Herzlia to King David: this was followed by the Headmasters' Association, founded in 1970 (at a second attempt). The last link - at the teachers' level - has, strangely enough, not been forged as yet.
  2. Rabbi Klewansky reported that there had been a drop of over 800 in the 42 schools under his Department, whilst the total enrolment in the 25 Johannesburg Supplemental Hebrew Schools stood at 1 171 with only 106 over the age of thirteen: see Report to the Seventeenth Conference, op.cit.
  3. These included the "Hebrew Eisteddfod" (Zimriya: Hebrew - literally - Song Festival), Batmitzvah Quiz; week-end camps; functions to mark Jewish festivals, and films.
  4. Katz, R: (Director): "The United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg" in this Report.

A welcome development was the transfer of the Pedagogic Centre to the Board in 1973. It had been established by the S A Zionist Federation to provide audio-visual material for schools and bodies involved in adult education. Located in the buildings of the old Hebrew High School in Wolmarans Street, the Centre was developed as an inseparable adjunct to instruction in Jewish subjects in the Board's schools.<sup>1</sup>

A successful refresher course given by two Israeli educationists had been organised in co-operation with the Cape Board of Jewish Education and had attracted over 150 teachers.<sup>2</sup> The report on the nursery schools again indicated growth and progress in the 48 schools affiliated to the Board's Department.<sup>3</sup>

The reports from the Jewish day schools in Pretoria, Durban and Port Elizabeth indicated sustained progress and good academic results. Mr M Cohen reported that a Jewish Studies Programme had been introduced at Theodor Herzl, conducted mainly in English and consisting of Mishna and Talmud selections, History and Shulhan Aruch.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the Hebrew Language Examinations (Eida)<sup>5</sup> set by the Cape Board of Jewish Education were written by Standards V, VII and X, even though Hebrew studies at Theodor Herzl were officially supervised by the S A Board of Jewish Education.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Misheiker, A: op.cit., in this Report.

2. Ibid.

3. Metz, S: "The Hebrew Nursery Schools" in this Report. There were 3 968 children in these schools. In Cape Town there were 14 schools, reported Mrs Metz, run by the Hebrew Nursery Schools Association of the Union of Jewish Women with 755 pupils and 42 teachers.

4. Cohen, M: "Theodor Herzl School, Port Elizabeth" in this Report. See p 151

5. See p 587

6. Cohen, M: ibid.

Sharon in Salisbury reported a further drop in the enrolment which now stood at 137, and there was difficulty each year in balancing the budget, "in common with all other day schools in South Africa".<sup>1</sup> The picture in Bulawayo was a little better: the enrolment stood at 144 and the Hebrew Department was supervised by Rabbi Zwebner and Mr Wagner.<sup>2</sup>

Hillel School had decided to establish a primary department and a start had been made in 1974 with the simultaneous opening of a Grade I and a Standard V. Shabbatons<sup>3</sup> had been held at various venues on the East Rand.

For the first time the conference report contained figures for the enrolments in the schools of the Yeshiva College complex in Johannesburg which had heretofore remained aloof from the Board, but had decided to affiliate in 1973.<sup>4</sup> The afternoon school had opened in 1955 and the day school was started with 6 pupils three years later.<sup>5</sup> The School grew steadily, and in 1969 a girls' high school - the Menorah High - was opened with 26 pupils, by which time there were some 500 pupils in all branches.<sup>6</sup> On that occasion Rabbi A H Tanzer, the Rosh Yeshiva<sup>7</sup> and builder of the school network could say that South Africa had become

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1. Cliff, S W: "Sharon Day School - Salisbury" in this Report.
  2. "Carmel School - Bulawayo" *ibid*.
  3. Lichtigfeld, D D: "The Hillel School - Benoni" in this Report. The roll stood at 199. Shabbaton: Hebrew, from Shabbat - The Sabbath: services and functions organised to take place during the Sabbath day.
  4. Information contained in a letter from Rabbi I Goss, General Director of the S A Board of Jewish Education, 28 January 1980.
  5. *Ibid*.
  6. The Zionist Record and Jewish Chronicle 31 January 1969 p 15.
  7. Rosh Yeshiva: Hebrew: Head of a Talmudical College.

part of the Torah Movement in Jewish Education.<sup>1</sup> By 1980 the primary school enrolment was 300 and the high school roll stood at 220.<sup>2</sup>

Its curriculum reflected the ideology of the orthodox founders and leaders. Torah studies held pride of place in it, with emphasis on the Oral Law - Mishna, Talmud and Commentaries. Modern Hebrew received attention as preparation for writing Hebrew in the Matriculation Examination.<sup>3</sup>

March 1980 saw the retirement of Rabbi I Goss from the post of General Director of the Board, but a short while later he was to travel to Israel to receive the Shazar Prize<sup>4</sup> for Hebrew Education in the Diaspora at the hands of President Navon.<sup>5</sup> It was a crowning and public recognition of the S A Board of Jewish Education and its half a century of great achievements in the field of Jewish education in South Africa. And it was a well-deserved honour, too, for the former general director who had personified the Board for over thirty years.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Information supplied by Rabbi Goss in the above letter. The nursery school had 120.

3. Ibid.

4. See p 567

5. The Jewish Herald 20 May 1980, p 14.

6. Ibid.

PART EIGHT

IN THE CAPE

CHAPTER 40: THE CAPE BOARD OF JEWISH EDUCATION DURING  
THE NINETEEN-FORTIES: RESNEKOV AND  
BIRNBAUM AT THE HELM

In his opening address to the Fifth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education, Dr Charles Resnekov highlighted three main contemporary concerns of Jewish education at the Cape.<sup>1</sup> He first made a strong appeal to congregations to give a fair deal to their teachers who were the "backbone of our educational system"; urged that more attention be paid by parents to the Jewish education of their daughters and reiterated the urgent need for a seminary to provide training for teachers and ministers.<sup>2</sup> The Board's hostel, added Dr Resnekov, had received good support in the community and it would be opened at the start of the academic year a few weeks later.<sup>3</sup>

Dr Birnbaum, Director of the Board, made a call for the syllabus to be brought up to date and made realistic by bringing into it the message of the "Movement of Hope" - Zionism.<sup>4</sup> School attendance - one of the weaknesses of the supplemental school - in the schools under the aegis of the Board was, he averred, more satisfactory than in the schools in the rest of the Union, and in other respects, too, the position in the schools under the Board's jurisdiction compared favourably

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1. Fifth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education held in Cape Town on 1 January 1941.

2. S A Jewish Times 10 January 1941, pp 2 and 10.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p 10.

with those of other parts of the country.<sup>1</sup> Conference heard that the standard of Jewish education had improved greatly since Dr Birnbaum's appointment.<sup>2</sup>

The Board took justifiable pride in the establishment of the hostel, which opened with nine children at "Greenhill" in Vredehoek Avenue.<sup>3</sup> An article in the Jewish Chronicle a little later - almost certainly emanating from the pen of Dr Resnekov - wondered how the community had tolerated the absence of a hostel for so long a period and asked why similar ventures had not been launched elsewhere in the country.<sup>4</sup> The claims for "this meritorious achievement" may, in retrospect, seem to be exaggerated and the importance attached to it by the article likewise disproportionate in relation to all the nine children at "Greenhill". But it was the first hostel in Cape Town since Hope Mill had closed about forty years earlier: it was, indeed, at the time the only official institution of its kind in South Africa. At the opening ceremony in April, Dr Resnekov stated that the country communities had already expressed their gratitude to the Board for opening a hostel and that enrolment had risen during the first term to fifteen boarders.<sup>5</sup> If not a paying

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1. Ibid., p 10. He calculated that about 33 per cent of all school-going pupils in other areas received "a normal Hebrew tuition" by comparison with 44 per cent in the area under the Cape Board. The percentage of girls was also higher - 31 per cent of the total enrolment, against 23 per cent.
  2. Ibid.: "Report by Dr I M Hurwitz, Vice-Chairman of the Cape Board of Jewish Education".
  3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 23 January 1941
  4. S A Jewish Chronicle 31 January 1941 p 81
  5. The Zionist Record 10 April 1941, p 17.

proposition from the financial point of view, it was already paying spiritual dividends.<sup>1</sup>

The Board's negotiations with the government immigration authorities and its representations to the Minister of the Interior for permits to bring in sorely-needed teachers and ministers were to no avail. The establishment of a seminary appeared to be the only solution to the urgent problem of the unavailability of teachers.<sup>2</sup> The chairman would interview the Zionist Federation and the S A Board of Deputies in Johannesburg to ascertain what support these bodies would be prepared to give to such a seminary.<sup>3</sup> The S A Jewish Chronicle in due course carried a report of the favourable reception accorded to Dr Resnekov by both bodies to whom he reported on the activities of the Board.<sup>4</sup> They "viewed with great satisfaction" the establishment of the hostel and lent their support to the opening of a seminary in Cape Town for Hebrew teachers and ministers to fill the many vacancies existing in country areas.<sup>5</sup>

The minutes early in the new year record the concern of the Board about the falling enrolments in some Talmud Torahs and the numbers in the morning school had also decreased.<sup>6</sup> Disappointing too were the nursery schools which were "just a luxury for the parents": few, if any, children went on to enrol in the morning school or Talmud Torahs.<sup>7</sup> At the

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1. Ibid.: By the end of 1941 there were 22: and the hostel was by then called The Herzlia Residence for Jewish School Children. See S A Jewish Chronicle 26 December 1941, p 898.
  2. Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 3 July 1941
  3. Ibid.
  4. S A Jewish Chronicle 25 July 1941 p 524
  5. Ibid.
  6. There were 40 pupils in 1941 and but 25 in 1942: see Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Board 8 February 1942.
  7. Minutes of the Meeting of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 8 February 1942.

Board's request the Education Department had sent an inspector to the morning school and the report would be published in the press in due course. Steps would be taken to increase enrolments.<sup>1</sup>

A side-light on the importance of the private teaching of Hebrew in those days is provided by a discussion in the Board on the appointment of a principal for the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah.<sup>2</sup> It would urge the Committee of that School to advertise that it was a full-time post and the appointee "should not indulge in private tuition".<sup>3</sup> This practice was probably accountable for the decline in the enrolments of some Talmud Torahs and was itself the result of dissatisfaction with the levels of tuition in so many of these institutions of the day.

The Board was desirous of exercising supervision over private tuition, and whilst the teachers themselves went so far as to admit that the existing unsupervised position was unsatisfactory<sup>4</sup> they refused to let the Board assume effective control over what they considered to be their legitimate rights to teach whom they pleased and which, moreover, was an essential source of income to eke out their inadequate salaries.<sup>5</sup>

Mr H Herber, Chairman of the S A Board of Jewish Education, had visited the hostel during his stay in Cape Town.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., 23 April 1942

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 26 August 1942.

5. Ibid., 26 October 1942

6. Ibid. : another visitor was Rabbi Meir Berlin of Jerusalem who was favourably impressed.

Early in 1943 the Board heard that the S A Board was to appoint a Commission to investigate Jewish education in the country and Rabbi Zlotnik was due in Cape Town to visit schools and gather data concerning the local situation.<sup>1</sup> Dr Birnbaum was authorised to proceed to Johannesburg to join the Educational Investigation Commission which was to commence its work on 29 April, and during his stay there would visit a number of schools.<sup>2</sup>

There were frequent contacts between the two Boards on the perennial question of amalgamation, the seminary and the Educational Investigation Commission.<sup>3</sup> There were, evidently, differences between Dr Birnbaum and Mr D Mierowsky. When the former was refused entry into the Johannesburg Hebrew Schools, the Cape Board wired Mr Herber that its director would not serve on the Commission together with the unco-operative Mierowsky.<sup>4</sup>

An interesting item reported to the same meeting was a proposal made privately by Dr Charles Hurwitz, vice-chairman of the S A Board, to provide financial assistance for the establishment of a Teachers' Seminary in Cape Town.<sup>5</sup>

Serious moves to establish a United Board of Jewish Education were made during 1943 and a draft constitution was actually drawn up to be submitted by the executive of the Cape Board

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1. Ibid., 24 February 1943.

2. Ibid., 18 April 1943

3. See Chapter 30

4. Minutes of the Executive Meeting of the Cape Board 17 May 1943

5. Ibid.

to a joint meeting with the S A Board in Johannesburg<sup>1</sup> and it would appear that a large measure of agreement was reached, it was subsequently reported.<sup>2</sup>

Dr Birnbaum's report to the Sixth Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education provided an interesting overview of the state of education in the western half of the country, stretching from Oudtshoorn to Windhoek, under the jurisdiction of the Cape Board, during the last years of the war period.<sup>3</sup>

While some of the larger schools had improved standards and had succeeded in lowering the average age of enrolment whilst raising that of school-leaving,<sup>4</sup> smaller schools, on the other hand, had shown signs of deterioration, numerically as well as in the quality of tuition.<sup>5</sup> This was due to the continuous shift of Jewish families into the towns and the continuing fall in numbers in country schools, to which phenomenon Dr Birnbaum had drawn attention in a report during the previous year.<sup>6</sup> It was a problem which was compounded by the growing shortage of teachers and ministers.

Dr Birnbaum deplored the practice of so many parents who enrolled their children at odd times during the year and the failure of so many to accept the concept of a "school course" in Jewish education. Children were withdrawn at will:

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1. Minutes of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 1 December 1943
  2. Ibid., 2 January 1944.
  3. S A Jewish Chronicle 25 February 1944 pp 89-90
  4. Ibid.: "the leading school" (The Cape Town Talmud Torah) under the Board had opened a Standard IX and established evening classes for its graduates.
  5. Ibid.
  6. Minutes of the Meeting of the Board 30 August 1943

"scholars do not graduate from the school but simply desert it", added Dr Birnbaum.<sup>1</sup> Education of the parents was an essential part of Jewish education.

He was disappointed, reported Dr Birnbaum, to point out that, in spite of all the efforts of the Committee of the United Hebrew Schools, the experiment of the morning classes had not proved "a complete success".<sup>2</sup> The enrolment in the fourth year of their existence was 62. The fact that the Jewish population was moving out of the neighbourhood and was, indeed, widely scattered was certainly a contributory factor to the small enrolment, but the main resistance to the School was the objection to what was regarded as a "segregated" educational system, an argument which he rejected at length.<sup>3</sup>

The number of children receiving private tuition had increased whilst its quality had declined, stated Dr Birnbaum; many of these children received only one lesson a week and he deplored the continued refusal by the private teachers to accept the Board's supervision.<sup>4</sup> Barmitzvah Examination Certificates issued by the Board had become almost universally accepted and the Batmitzvah Dedication classes and the annual ceremony were welcome developments in the provision of Jewish education for girls.<sup>5</sup> The proposal to open a teachers' seminary had unfortunately elicited little response and the Board would instead organise refresher courses for practising teachers.

In his opening address to Conference, Dr Resnekov stated that the country districts had been all but denuded of their Jewish population "due to the unpleasantness which is well-

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1. Report to the Sixth Conference of the Board, op.cit.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Rabbi I Abrahams had inaugurated these at the Great Synagogue in the Gardens.

known to have occurred there"<sup>1</sup> - a reference to the sharp anti-Semitic feelings rampant in the country towns during the war years.<sup>2</sup> But in spite of the growth of the Jewish population in the larger centres, it was a great disappointment to note that the numbers in city schools had shown no corresponding increase.<sup>3</sup> And, continued Dr Resnekov pessimistically, even the experiment which the United Hebrew Schools had made, at great expense, in founding a day School had practically failed, as the Director's report indicated: even the quality of its Jewish education had not come up to expectation.<sup>4</sup>

Parents were not behind Jewish education, he continued, and rumblings were already heard objecting to the five-day week; it would undermine Jewish education. He also deplored the failure to reach an agreement with the Teachers' Association to work out a scheme for the control of private tuition in spite of the general acceptance that such a step was mandatory. The lack of response to the proposal for a teachers' seminary was a cause for disappointment: the blame lay with the community which did not remunerate teachers satisfactorily, failed to establish a pension scheme and did not grant the teacher the status he deserved.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to these disappointments, the hostel was a notable success for the Board, said Dr Resnekov, and encouraging too was the successful financial drive and the promise of the amalgamation of the two Boards.<sup>6</sup>

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1. S A Jewish Chronicle 3 March 1944, pp 105-108

2. Saron, G: in Saron and Hotz, op.cit., pp 381 et seq.

3. S A Jewish Chronicle 3 March 1944, pp 105-108

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p 106.

The issue of amalgamation was deferred to await the next conference of the S A Board planned for the following year. The Board kept in touch with the country communities: its representatives visited them on various occasions, inspected the schools, addressed meetings on education and enlisted financial support.<sup>1</sup>

Adult classes were established by the Board in a number of places in Cape Town, and Dr Birnbaum had been sent to Israel to recruit badly-needed teachers on contract, and four had subsequently come out.<sup>2</sup> The hostel had a waiting list and the problem of private teaching "had not yet been normalised".<sup>3</sup> The authorities were most reluctant to grant permits to bring in teachers and ministers, and the only solution, stated the report, lay in establishing a local seminary, if the youth could be attracted.<sup>4</sup>

The end of the war saw the return of stability in the schools, reported Dr Birnbaum.<sup>5</sup> The enrolment had risen from 925 in 1944 to 1 020 in 1945, though it had not as yet returned to the 1939 figure of 1 120.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the number of children being taught privately had also increased, with no supervision over them. The discussions on the unification of the two Boards had been carrying on spasmodically with no agreement in sight, and the negotiations with the government departments about the importation of teachers

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1. See Minutes of the Meetings of the Board on 3 August 1944 and 7 September 1944. Dr Resnekov and Mr Goldschmidt, the treasurer, travelled to the Northern Cape and South-West Africa, for combined enlightenment and financial purposes, with successful results.

2. "Report of the Council Meeting of the Cape Board of Jewish Education": in S A Jewish Chronicle 31 August 1945, p 449

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 12 July 1945.

6. Ibid.

had been equally long-drawn out and indeterminate.<sup>1</sup>

An interesting innovation was the post-matriculation course in Palestine for a group of 14 students, 6 of whom were from Cape Town, organised in collaboration with the S A Board. The protracted unity negotiations were still proceeding in 1947, though opposed by Rabbi Abrahams and Mr Gitlin: Dr Resnekov had explained the Cape's standpoint during his visits to Port Elizabeth and Durban to remove the false impression that his Board was the stumbling block in the way of unity.<sup>2</sup>

The "Herzlia Residence for School Children" was officially opened on 9 November 1947 in Incholm Place,<sup>3</sup> and by 1948 the number of boarders had risen to 58 children and 8 students.<sup>4</sup>

The Board generally concerned itself with problems of the local Talmud Torahs, dealing with staff, enrolments, standards of work, and general organisation.<sup>5</sup> With the visit of Mr Herber to Cape Town the unity negotiations took a favourable turn: a memorandum of agreement was indeed signed, after differences of an organisational nature had been finally settled.<sup>6</sup>

By 1948 Dr Resnekov could report to the Council of the Board

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1. Ibid., 18 November 1945. See also "Report of the Council Meeting of the Cape Board of Jewish Education" 13 January 1946, which also heard that the former property of the Jewish Aged Home in Incholm Place had been acquired and would be converted as a hostel with a capacity for about 50 boarders.
  2. Ibid., 14 October 1947.
  3. Minutes of the Executive Meeting, 16 November 1947.
  4. Minutes of the Council Meeting of the Board 4 April 1948
  5. See for example, the Minutes of the 16 November 1947 and 4 January 1948 dealing with the unsatisfactory situation at the Sea Point Talmud Torah where the enrolment had remained at 112 for the previous twelve years despite the considerable growth of the community in that area during the period.
  6. Minutes of the Executive of the Cape Board 4 January 1948: the same minutes record that Mr Charles Levy was appointed organising-secretary of the Board in February 1948.

that the Herzlia Day School "was a signal success" with an enrolment of 170 pupils up to Standard VI. The day was not far off, he added, when the necessity for a "huge central Jewish day school served by a fleet of buses" would compel the community to bring it into being.<sup>1</sup> He again called for fair salary scales for teachers and regular increases, so that teachers could maintain "a dignified and decent standard of living".<sup>2</sup> And there was no pension scheme as yet.

When the S A Board in Johannesburg failed to accept the provisions of the 1947 memorandum of agreement between Mr Herber and Dr Resnekov, the Cape Board decided to inform its sister body that "a satisfactory basis for unity does not exist".<sup>3</sup>

Dr Resnekov reported that the honorary officers of the Board had discussed a proposal - most probably his own - to establish "a large day school for all children of the Peninsula" at some future date.<sup>4</sup> He had ascertained from the municipal authorities that an area of ten acres might be obtained in the vicinity of the Kenilworth race course.<sup>5</sup> Such a unified day school would meet the needs of children "of the outlying suburbs" for a "proper, normal Jewish education".<sup>6</sup>

The Seventh Conference of the Board on 9 January 1949 heard of the passing of three notable figures in the history of Jewish education at the Cape. Morris Alexander had rendered

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1. Minutes of the Council Meeting of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 4 April 1948.

2. Ibid.

3. Minutes of the Executive Meeting of the Board 16 May 1948

4. Ibid., 11 July 1948

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid. Dr Resnekov was again looking far ahead: over twenty years were to elapse before a younger generation repeated the same procedure, for the same reasons, see p 561

a life-time of public-service to the general and Jewish communities and had included Jewish education amongst his public duties during the thirties.<sup>1</sup> Rabbi M Ch Mirvish was the first orthodox rabbi in Cape Town and had played a leading role in Jewish education since 1908. He was a founder of the United Hebrew Schools and an indefatigable advocate of the day school.<sup>2</sup> And a few months before Conference, the Board had lost its Director who, during the decade of his labours, had raised the standards of Hebrew education at the Cape to levels hitherto unattained.<sup>3</sup>

Dr Resnekov outlined the progress made since the previous Conference. The hostel in its renovated premises would open the academic year with close on 70 boarders in residence; the day school, with its 200 children, "introduced normality into the lives of the children who no longer resent their Jewish studies" which used to conflict with their rightful pleasures and sports in the afternoon.<sup>4</sup>

He pointed out that the religious instruction syllabus introduced into departmental schools would cause confusion in the minds of Jewish children who were exposed to Christian teaching during scripture lessons in the mornings and to Jewish instruction in the afternoons, and such confusion was aggravated by the "lukewarm traditional home-life".<sup>5</sup>

With the Jewish people, it was only the fittest - in a spiritual sense - who survive; the other also survive, but not as Jews. The long-term solution was the Jewish day-school.<sup>6</sup>

1. See pp 111 and 286.

2. See Chapters 17 et seq. (passim)

3. S A Jewish Chronicle 14 January 1949 p 7

4. "Report of the Seventh Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education" in S A Jewish Chronicle 14 January 1949 p 7.

5. Ibid., p 8.

6. Ibid.

The report before Conference recorded the failure of the S A Board to adhere to the unity agreement which Mr Herber had sincerely supported. And another negative matter was the failure to establish a seminary; the community had been thrown on its own resources by the almost total prohibition on the immigration of teachers and ministers.<sup>1</sup>

The one-year's post-matriculation study course in Israel which he had suggested a few years previously had proved to be "a wise educational investment".<sup>2</sup>

"Judaism is not a subject to be taught, but an attitude to life" stated Dr Resnekov in his peroration. He urged the community to give total support to Jewish education, to maintain its quality, to back the teachers, to see that all children are instructed in their heritage, not to begrudge it financial aid, to place it in the forefront of the activities of the community, to see that Jewish education should mould the character of the children for the future.<sup>3</sup>

This was to be Dr Resnekov's last address to a Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education which he had created and guided for twenty years.

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1. Ibid.

2. See p 481

3. Dr Resnekov's address to Conference: S A Jewish Chronicle 14 January 1949 pp 7 et seq.

CHAPTER 41: THE CAPE TOWN TALMUD TORAH AND THE DAY SCHOOL  
FROM THE MID-FORTIES TO THE MID-FIFTIES

A Decade of Expansion and Progress

In 1945, Mr Z Avin succeeded Mr Alexander Levin as principal of all three schools. He had arrived from Latvia as a young man to take up a post in the Cape Town Talmud Torah in 1928 and had taught at the school since then. During this period the enrolment rose to unprecedentedly high levels, the curriculum of Hebrew studies grew in scope and depth and the Minyan Joseph Youth Congregation too took on renewed life under Mr Avin's single-minded guidance.

Zalman Avin was noteworthy for the warm personal rapport he established with his pupils. He actually personified their Hebrew education for them. His personality as Jewish educationist was an important factor which contributed markedly to the progress of the schools during the decade or so of their greatest development.

Unsparring of himself, enthusiastic, unusually patient with children and patently empathetic, Zalman Avin was personally largely responsible for the very considerable progress of the Cape Town Talmud Torah and its little progeny, the day school. During this period he introduced small but interesting innovations into the Minyan Joseph whose great educative value he realised fully.<sup>1</sup> Boys - and girls - would learn religious customs by doing, not merely by listening. The

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1. Girls were included in the services by being allotted portions of the week's scriptural readings in Hebrew and English on Friday evenings, short poems suited to the particular time of the year, and, of course, the ceremonial lighting of the Sabbath candles. Even the young children whose acquaintance with the Siddur was very recent were allotted verses of the Lecha Dodi hymn in the Friday evening service for which due preparation was excitedly undertaken. The congregation sang many parts of the service.

entire service was so organised as to be a real educational experience for the young readers and cantors.

It was a child-centred Jewish education which Avin introduced and practised by personal example, based as it was on the personal relationship between teacher and pupil. Avin, however, was a committed Zionist and Hebraist: Ivris B'Ivris was the prevailing system in classroom and outside it. And because he infused his own strong feelings into his teaching and his relationship with his pupils, education under Avin was basically affective in nature. He inspired many, perhaps even the majority, of his pupils with some measure of his own enthusiastic love for Hebrew and traditional culture, and regarded it as his calling to impart it to the young. Nor were old pupils forgotten: special functions for them were arranged by Mr Avin from time to time.

The enrolment remained stationary at 360 at the time of his assumption of the principalship, with the morning classes, now including a Standard III, numbering but a modest total of 69.<sup>1</sup> The Committee approved the badge designed by the well-known artist H V Meyerowitz<sup>2</sup> for the morning school. The little morning school, housed in the same buildings in Hope Street and using the very same classrooms in which the Talmud Torah classes were taught in the afternoons, was slowly beginning to assume its separate identity.

An important decision was taken at the meeting of the Combined Education Sub-Committees of the two schools a few weeks later: the morning school was given its name - Herzlia.<sup>3</sup> It was a word with emotive connotations for the Committee and

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1. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of the Cape Town United Hebrew Schools: 12 February 1945.
  2. Henry Vladimir Meyerowitz carved the splendid doors of the National Art Gallery in Cape Town.
  3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Education Sub-Committees of the United Hebrew Schools and the Hyman Liberman High School: 22 March 1945.

the community, derived from the name of the founder of the Zionist Movement, Theodor Herzl. In addition, the word had a specifically educational connotation: it was also the name of the first all-Hebrew high school of modern times - Gymnasia Herzlia founded in Jaffa in 1906 and absorbed a few years later in Tel Aviv<sup>1</sup>, the first all-Jewish city to be established since the dispersion over eighteen hundred years previously.

The same meeting decided to send letters to all Peninsula Talmud Torahs requesting them to encourage those of their pupils who desired to continue their Hebrew education to come to the Hyman Liberman High School because, ran the letter, "it is known that in most Talmud Torahs in the Peninsula there are no higher classes than Standard V".<sup>2</sup>

The little branch of the Cape Town Talmud Torah in Oranjezicht was ailing. The question of teachers' salaries came up regularly, no doubt occasioned by the constant rise in the cost of living during war-time, and the subject of the pension fund also reappears in the minutes now and again, though nothing conclusive is done about it. In mid-year, the maximum fee was raised to £1 per month.<sup>3</sup>

The nursery school on the premises was put under the control of the principal, but the Union of Jewish Women would undertake financial responsibility for it. The Education Sub-Committee was hesitant about the opening of a Standard IV in Herzlia in 1946 with only ten potential pupils. A Parent-Teachers' Association Committee was established and gave promise of active participation in school activities.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Hebrew for "Hill of Spring": founded as a suburb of Jaffa in 1909.
  2. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Education Sub-Committees: 22 March 1945
  3. Minutes of the Committee of the United Hebrew Schools, Cape Town: 12 June 1945
  4. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Education Sub-Committees: 2 August 1945

The Oranjezicht classes remained unsatisfactory and the drives were so successful that an unprecedented bank balance was reported in December.

A Standard IV was, however, opened in January 1946, and the enrolment in the morning school exceeded a hundred for the first time.<sup>1</sup> The total enrolment in all sections of the School at Hope Street was 429 with 17 in the continuation class. The Oranjezicht classes, it would appear, had not been closed down. The Cape Town Hebrew Congregation made a substantial contribution to the cost of running the schools; the Beth Hamedrash Hachodosh Congregation in Vredehoek also helped, but to a much smaller degree, whilst the New Hebrew Congregation's support was about a third of what the latter body contributed. The old distance between the Gardens Synagogue and the one in Roeland Street was exacerbated by disharmony between their respective rabbis and the establishment of the Yeshiva Tahkimoni by the Roeland Street Congregation. When some pupils left the Talmud Torah to join this Talmud class the School Committee was sufficiently disturbed to interpret it as a step aimed at "undermining the existence of the Talmud Torah"; and it asked the Board of Jewish Education to investigate this situation.<sup>2</sup>

Avin not only appreciated the educational value of the Minyan Joseph as an essential extra-mural activity supportive of the religious education in the schools, he was also aware of the need for proper public relations work. Before Rosh Hashanah<sup>3</sup> in 1946 he invited the Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor and Mrs A Bloomberg, to a Sabbath Eve Service which Rabbi Abrahams also attended and addressed.<sup>4</sup> The

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1. Minutes of the Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools' Committee: 24 February 1946.

2. Ibid., 12 June 1945

3. Rosh Hashanah: The Jewish New Year: a two-day religious festival which falls in September.

4. It had become a tradition for the Rabbi of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation to attend two Sabbath Eve Services during the year, before the Passover and Rosh Hashanah festivals.

decision was taken to open a Standard V in the morning school at the beginning of 1947 when Mr I J Cohen, the first locally qualified male teacher to be appointed to the staff of Herzlia, joined the school.

In the annual report for the year 1946<sup>1</sup> the Chairman, Mr M H Goldschmidt, referred to the "remnants of the Holocaust" in the camps. Europe could no longer supply Jewish learning and culture, and "the education of our youth must therefore be our primary care" runs the report.<sup>2</sup> Although the good enrolments testified to the growing confidence which parents had in the school much greater support on the part of a greater section of the community was essential for the "central institutions of Jewish education in the Cape".<sup>3</sup>

Herzlia Day School opened in 1947 with an enrolment of 140 in seven standards, and Mr D Miller, Headmaster of the Cape Town High School, who had carried out an examination at the end of the previous year, was very impressed with the progress made.<sup>4</sup>

Physical training, woodwork, music and sport were introduced in emulation of the public schools. The Hebrew inspector, Dr A Birnbaum, Director of the Cape Board of Jewish Education, reported on "the naturalness of the approach to the Jewish subjects by the scholars"<sup>5</sup> in contrast to the position in the afternoon schools. The Jewish day school had passed the experimental stage...

(it was) now a proper school where the child can develop according to its ability in a thoroughly Jewish atmosphere.<sup>6</sup>

The growing day school was clearly developing all features of

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1. Annual Report of the United Hebrew Schools and Herzlia Day School for the year ending 31 December 1946
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Minutes of Meeting of the Education Sub-Committee: 6 February 1947
  5. Annual Report of the United Hebrew Schools and Herzlia Day School for the year ending 31 December 1946
  6. Ibid.

a proper primary school. It was instilling growing confidence into the educationists as well as into the community and lay leadership.

Mr Avin wrote in the report that "we are remnants of the saved" yet, after the great catastrophe, the Jewish community still remained so complacent towards Jewish education.<sup>1</sup> He asked whether the Cape Town community appreciated "such spiritual affluence" as it possessed in its central school which comprised Nursery School, Day School, Talmud Torah, Matriculation Classes, Youth Congregation, Library, extra-curricular functions. Distinguished visitors to the school had asked the same question and Mr Avin wondered why only a fraction of the community's children benefitted from the education provided by this highly-regarded institution.<sup>2</sup>

"European Jewry is no more"<sup>3</sup> is the sorrowful burden of the reports of the mid-forties. This was the terrible shadow which darkened the lives of the Jewish communities throughout the world, including the "colony of Lithuania" at the tip of the African continent which had been fated to survive its "motherland", for Lithuanian Jewry was no more by 1945.

Addressing themselves to their communities, the leaders cried that apathy towards Jewish culture meant playing into the hands of the destroyer and completing his terrible work. Assimilation was but the holocaust in other, admittedly humane, terms.

Whilst the general committee of the United Hebrew Schools waged an unending struggle to make ends meet - and the growing day school speedily compounded the financial burdens - the

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. See Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools: 1 June 1947.

Education Sub-Committee devoted itself to the academic work and progress of the schools. Herzlia, with its 143 pupils, was "the pride of the whole community...the first school of its kind in the Union..."<sup>1</sup> The financial problems were worthwhile. The bogey of every committee was the bank overdraft and one can almost feel, across the years, the rising anxiety and helplessness of the committees of yesterday as they watched its inexorable rise. They looked desperately for succour to congregations and other institutions, organised "drives" and Yom Kippur Appeals, turned to the national bodies - the Zionist Federation and the Board of Jewish Deputies - and somehow managed to survive.

There were doubts whether the Committee was in "a position to withstand the rising expenditure": there was a need to spread the responsibility for the upkeep of Herzlia across the whole community of the Western Province. It was the old ideal and hope of leaders of former years who regarded the United Hebrew Schools as the school of the whole community which was therefore responsible for its upkeep. With the aggravated problems of maintaining the far more expensive day school, this line of thinking became more insistent, and certainly more valid.

Herzlia drew its children from a widening circle in the community: its uniqueness as an educational experiment was of importance to the local community certainly, and, indeed, to the whole of South African Jewry.

A note, heretofore unheard, is audible in the report for 1948<sup>2</sup>:

we have seen the fulfilment of the age-old dream,  
the consummation of our most cherished hopes

wrote the Chairman, referring to the historic United Nations resolution of 29 November 1947 to partition Palestine into

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1. Ibid.

2. Report of the United Hebrew Schools and Herzlia School for the two years ending 31 December 1948

the Jewish and the Arab states and to the establishment of the State of Israel on 15th May 1948.<sup>1</sup>

The enrolment of the Schools was the highest on record: there were over 500 children in all departments, but, ran the report, the school was not receiving the support it deserved; it was the duty of the community to enable the School to fulfil its tasks.<sup>2</sup> Herzlia was now a complete primary school: a Standard VI had been opened at the beginning of 1948 when there were 225 children on the roll. Mr D Miller, the honorary examiner, pointed out that Standard VI indicated the holding power of the school.<sup>3</sup> Though finances continued to be extremely worrisome, the Committee could not refrain from expressing its pride in its developing day school.<sup>4</sup>

The growing pressure on space led the Committee to consider the construction of additional classrooms in Hope Street and the possible purchase of a plot of ground in Highlands Estate, situated at the foot of Table Mountain, as a possible site for a new school building.<sup>5</sup>

A special meeting was called to authorise the purchase of four-and-a-half acres in Highlands Estate for the future expansion of the day school to the secondary level.<sup>6</sup> Rabbi I Abrahams and Mr W Harris supported the proposal and the latter ironically recalled the protests of a decade or so earlier against the "grandiose ideas" of erecting the new building in Hope Street.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.: Standard VI was by then the first standard of high school.

4. Ibid.

5. Minutes of the Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools' Committee: 14 February 1949

6. Special General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools: 7 April 1949.

7. Ibid.

The Committee was inspired to new activity: it launched a determined public relations drive to enlist communal support and stir interest in the new project. By mid-year Herzlia had 239 pupils; it was decided, however, not to embark on the secondary school project as yet.<sup>1</sup>

There were two moves towards communal co-operation involving the School. The first was a combined financial campaign with the Astra Girls' Hostel, perhaps the first step towards the emergence of the United Communal Fund; the second was the partnership with the Cape Board of Jewish Education in planning the development of the newly-acquired site in Highlands Estate. The Board already had a hostel for country children and had opened a modest teachers' seminary staffed by some teachers of the United Hebrew Schools.<sup>2</sup>

Dr A Moar succeeded Dr A Birnbaum, who had died in 1948, as Director of the Cape Board of Jewish Education. Like his predecessor, he took an active part in the deliberations of the Education Sub-Committee of the United Hebrew Schools. To relieve the shortage of teachers, former pupils were encouraged to enter the profession and several teachers were brought out from Israel.

By mid-1950 the enrolment had reached 600, about evenly divided between the day and afternoon schools. The burden of the double principalship was too great for Mr Avin to bear and Mr A Chosack, vice-principal of the Jewish Government School in Johannesburg, was appointed the first full-time principal of Herzlia in 1951.<sup>3</sup> The reputation of the School was high. Important visitors were impressed by what they saw and were laudatory in their comments. Chief Rabbi I Brodie of England said that he was amazed at what he

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1. Minutes of the Meeting of the Education Sub-Committee:  
23 June 1949

2. Ibid., 20 July 1949

3. Mr Avin was henceforth responsible for the afternoon school only, viz. the United Hebrew Schools and the Hyman Liberman High School.

saw during his visit to the Schools.<sup>1</sup> In November 1950 the report of the Education Sub-Committee recorded the historic fact that the enrolment for Herzlia for the first time exceeded that of the afternoon school.<sup>2</sup> Standard VI was still the highest standard, but it was planned to open a Standard VII in the old building on the Highlands site as a first step towards extending the School to Standard X.

Dr Moar, Director of the Cape Board of Jewish Education, urged the introduction of two forty-minute periods of Hebrew daily in place of the full sixty-minute one allotted to the subject. The Committee was reluctant, feeling that this was too long and would take time away from their general education.<sup>3</sup>

Another milestone in the development of Herzlia was the formation of the Parent-Teachers' Association under the chairmanship of Mr S S Master. It was to play a significant role in the growth of the School from then onwards.

Mr Avin reported that in numbers and in levels the Cape Town Talmud Torah were unique in South Africa:<sup>4</sup> the pupils who had completed their primary schooling at Herzlia were doing well at government high schools; many ex-pupils were taking Hebrew for the Junior Certificate and Matriculation Examinations, but he deplored the actions of those parents who were guilty of the old sin of removing promising pupils from the Talmud Torah on attaining their Barmitzvah.<sup>5</sup>

During the six years of his principalship, Avin witnessed the quite remarkable growth of the day school. He took it

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1. Report of the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools: 30 July 1950
  2. Minutes of the Meeting of the Education Sub-Committee of the United Hebrew Schools: 14 November 1950
  3. Ibid., 17 December 1950
  4. Ibid.
  5. Ibid.

over when it had reached Standard III and had an enrolment of 69; he handed it over as a fully-developed primary school of eight standards with over 300 pupils. The Talmud Torah was at its peak educationally and numerically. Extra-curricular activities like the Minyan Joseph, Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah functions, and Ongei Shabbat (Sabbath socials) were successful and valuable educational activities.

The Cape Town Jewish schools housed in - or crammed into - the red-brick building in Hope Street under Mr Zalman Avin truly constituted an educational institution unique in South Africa for its quality and size.

### The Early Fifties

The final year of Mr Avin's principalship of Herzlia was a particularly eventful one in the history of Herzlia. With the growth of the School and the extension of its Hebrew education, and especially when the quality of its education and particularly of its secondary classes gained it a fine reputation, the Committee felt that it was entitled to the support of the community of the whole city, to which it had brought great credit.<sup>1</sup> When country children began to arrive at the School after the hostel of the Cape Board of Jewish Education was moved to Incholm Place, off Hope Street, in 1947, Herzlia felt justified in expecting assistance from country areas as well.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Minutes of Special Meeting of the Committee of the United Hebrew Schools and Representatives of Congregations and Institutions: 21 February 1951
  2. Minutes of Committee of United Hebrew Schools: 20 October 1948

By 1951 Herzlia was a complete primary school with over 300 children, with a fair number coming from the city's suburbs. The Committee felt it had a strong case when it requested all sections of the community to rally to the support of the day School.

It was a far more expensive School than the Talmud Torah; for every hour of Hebrew tuition provided, four-and-a-half hours of general instruction had to be given. No wonder then that the financial problems of the school seemed to be beyond solution. The overdrafts snow-balled, the current expenditure rose inexorably. Teachers of the day school had to be paid departmental salaries, extra-mural facilities comparable to those existing in government schools had to be provided; there was not even a cent forthcoming from the government: fees were very low and many pupils were exempted from paying.

The leaders of the School cast round for sources of income, but these proved to be either spasmodic in nature or limited in scope. There was only one way out, concluded the leadership: it was for the whole community to undertake financial responsibility for the Schools on a regular basis, as indeed it was obligated to do according to Jewish tradition.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee was moving in this very direction when it discussed the subject of a "Communal Chest" some time in 1947. Mr M H Goldschmidt, the Chairman, had discussed the idea with a visitor from New York where such a fund existed to meet communal requirements. It was an idea with possibilities, but Cape Town was evidently not ready for it as yet: the report stated that the idea was "to be discussed later".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., 11 August 1948, 20 October 1948 and 10 January 1952.

2. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools 13 November 1947

It was evidently not forgotten entirely. With the growing financial burdens occasioned by the rapid expansion of Herzlia, the Committee took steps to involve the whole community in its responsibility. A special meeting was called with representatives of congregations and institutions of the Cape Town community, the object of which was to put Herzlia on a sound foundation.<sup>1</sup> The help of the whole community was required to establish a full high school, stated Mr. Goldschmidt, and the community must come to the aid of the School in providing the large sum needed for the building and for sporting facilities.<sup>2</sup>

Mr Louis Gradner, a former mayor and president of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, proclaimed at the same meeting that Herzlia was the responsibility of all congregations, "a national institution".<sup>3</sup>

It was a great step forward in the old struggle of the lay leadership for total communal recognition and responsibility. What they could not achieve for the United Hebrew Schools they finally achieved for Herzlia. The difference obviously lay in the fact that the day School was unique in the community and, indeed, in the country, whereas there were Talmud Torahs in many other places throughout the land.

#### The School and the Cape Board of Jewish Education

The minutes of the Education Sub-Committee at the time reveal a growing tension, bordering on conflict, between the

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1. Special Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools' Committee and Representatives of Peninsula Congregations and Institutions: 21 February 1951
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.

Principal and Dr A Moar, Director of the Cape Board of Jewish Education. The issue was the extension of the time to be devoted to the instruction in Hebrew subjects, from 60 to 75-80 minutes per day. It was impossible to lengthen the teaching day to meet Dr Moar's demands, as the rooms and bus had to be made available to the afternoon Talmud Torah. There were other differences over the suitability of young teachers employed in the school and the methods adopted by the Director in his inspections.<sup>1</sup>

There are references in the minutes to the intermittent skirmishing on these and other subjects between Moar and Avin.<sup>2</sup> What emerges from all this is the clear impression of the aim of the Board and the Director to establish a measure of control over the developing day school. Perhaps they saw the growing importance of its position in the community - it was on the way to becoming a central school - as the United Hebrew Schools could not be. Control of this truly communal school would, ipso facto, ensure for the Board a central place amongst communal institutions and at the same time raise it to the status enjoyed by the S A Board in Johannesburg. Rabbi Mirvish had seen the possibility of friction in the thirties<sup>3</sup>; it was inherent in the situation in Cape Town and would continue for years to come.

The disagreements boiled down to the basic question of who in the final analysis was responsible for the conduct of Hebrew tuition in the School. Dr Moar claimed that he was, whilst the chairman averred that the Principal bore final responsibility.<sup>4</sup> It was an issue, left undecided then, which was to crop up during later years and would come

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1. See Minutes of the Education Sub-Committee of the United Hebrew Schools: 27 September 1949, 26 February 1951 and 20 November 1951.

2. Ibid.

3. See p 368

4. Minutes of Education Sub-Committee of the United Hebrew Schools, 26 February 1951.

to a head in the controversy over centralisation some two decades later.

The representative committee<sup>1</sup> took the next step of meeting with the representatives of the Board of Deputies and the United Communal Fund.<sup>2</sup> The latter had come into existence shortly after Mr Goldschmidt had raised the subject of a communal chest at a school committee meeting in 1947,<sup>3</sup> and its achievements were still limited, falling short even of its quite modest target.<sup>4</sup> This meeting discussed the accession of Herzlia to the United Communal Fund and it was later decided that a fixed sum would be made available to the School toward meeting the demands of current expenditure. The United Hebrew Schools would launch a special building fund separately at a suitable time.<sup>5</sup>

The School Committee entered into discussions with the Cape Board of Jewish Education<sup>6</sup> about its plans for a high school to be housed at Highlands with a Standard VII to be opened in 1952. The Board, on its part, proposed using the old house at Highlands for its seminary and nursery school. Mr A Chosack, the newly appointed principal, took up his duties in July 1951. The establishment of a Standard VII was postponed for another year because there was no room at Hope Street and also the extra expenditure such a step would involve.

The differences of opinion with Dr Moar were still not settled. They were spelt out clearly enough at one of the meetings of

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1. See pp. 496-497

2. Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of the United Hebrew Schools, 1 March 1951

3. See p 496

4. In 1949 it managed to collect £65 000 for all its beneficiary institutions instead of its proclaimed target of £100 000 for the two years.

5. "Suitable times" were when no other financial drives were in operation.

6. Minutes of Combined Meeting: 24 April 1951

the Education Sub-Committee which the Director obviously attended regularly. He was intent on retaining the controlling say in the School, so that the Herzlia Day School, in his words, should progress as desired and as required by the Cape Board of Jewish Education.<sup>1</sup>

The claim of the Board to the right of exercising authority over the Day School was a logical consequence of the policy of the School Committee - to make Herzlia the responsibility of the whole community. If this was so, then it was perfectly consistent that its Jewish education at least ought to be controlled by the community's central educational body which already supervised, and to a large extent controlled, the several dozen Talmud Torahs of the Western Cape and South West Africa. Prima facie it was a logical argument and Dr Moar and his Board based their claims and actions on it. The parallel was to be found in Johannesburg where the S A Board of Jewish Education controlled the fledgling King David Day School established a few years previously. Perhaps it was only natural that the Cape Board should see itself in the same role in Cape Town.

The Board and its Director, however, failed to see the important differences in the respective situations of the two Boards. In Johannesburg the S A Board created the day school as a conscious step and controlled it ab initio, whereas at the Cape Herzlia grew organically out of the independent Talmud Torah, remained under the control of its Committee, was led by the same principal for over a decade of its existence and shared the same school building for many years.

The Cape Board and its Director failed to appreciate this organic nexus between the afternoon and the day school and

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1. Minutes of the Meeting of Education Sub-Committee of the United Hebrew Schools, 26 July 1951

this failure led into the blind alley of the later move towards "centralisation", the first steps towards which Dr Moar took at the meetings of the United Hebrew Schools' Education Sub-Committee in 1951.<sup>1</sup>

The contention of the Board that, on the analogy of its counterpart in Johannesburg, it was entitled to control the growing day school was reinforced by a strange arrangement with the United Communal Fund, which decided to allocate a portion of the proceeds of its financial drive to Herzlia School via the Cape Board of Jewish Education which they considered a national institution.<sup>2</sup> The claim to this national status was surely part of its conception of equality with its northern partner; its inspectorial rights over the Talmud Torahs in the towns of the Western Province and the ones in Oudtshoorn, Upington and Windhoek, gave it some justification for it. So as a national institution it felt it was fully justified in exercising its control over the city day school.

Mr Avin reported to the Education Sub-Committee that Sunday classes would end at 11.10a.m. to enable children to have more free time.<sup>3</sup> Fridays would therefore be extended to 6.00p.m. It was, on the face of it, a small enough change but significant nonetheless. It was the first evidence of a diminution in teaching time in the Talmud Torah, the first retreat from the old six-day week of tuition.

Mr Chosack also crossed swords with Dr Moar at meetings of the Education Sub-Committee on the methods of his inspection. "Inspection became examination", Mr Chosack

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1. See pp 498 and 500

2. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools, 7 August 1951

3. Minutes of the Education Sub-Committee, 24 October 1951

charged.<sup>1</sup>

The atmosphere evidently grew tense, with the Director of the Board arrogating to himself dictatorial powers over the Hebrew education at Herzlia. A special sub-committee finally agreed to Dr Moar's demand - justified in retrospect - to allocate a little additional time to Hebrew and to divide it into two periods daily.<sup>2</sup>

When Mr Avin relinquished the principalship of the day school, Mr Joseph Abitz was appointed Head of the Hebrew Department at Herzlia.<sup>3</sup>

The United Hebrew Schools' Committee Meeting at the beginning of the 1952 school year again reflects the deep anxiety regarding the grave financial position.<sup>4</sup> Members were urged to participate actively in the United Communal Fund drive for funds, to ensure that campaign would reach its target so that the full promised allocation would be available to the School. It was the beginning of a new direction in the collection of public funds, to prove ultimately of great significance for the future of the School.

The Committee heard a very interesting report of an interview between members of the School Executive and officials of the Cape Education Department, arranged with a view to lessening the burden of the Committee.<sup>5</sup> The message brought back from the Education Department was explicit enough: unless total control of the school was handed over no help would be forthcoming. The delegation reported that the Department was quite prepared to take over the school as it stood, buildings and all, but the Committee would have to permit the Department to change the curriculum as it wished. The Hebrew part would be reduced to the

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1. Minutes of the Education Sub-Committee of the United Hebrew Schools, 20 November 1951.

2. Report of Special Sub-Committee, 9 December 1951

3. Minutes of the Education Sub-Committee of the United Hebrew Schools, 9 December 1951. Mr Avin, of course, retained the principalship of the United Hebrew Schools and the Hyman Liberman High School. See p

4. Minutes of the Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools' Committee. 13 February 1951.

5. Ibid.

minimum, so that in their view the whole Jewish atmosphere built up by hard work for so many years would be destroyed. The School would be opened to non-Jewish children as well. The Executive therefore came to the conclusion that no good purpose would be served by any further discussion.<sup>1</sup>

Dr J Harte stressed that the day School was not the responsibility of the centre of the city only, but of all the suburbs and the Cape Province as a whole.<sup>2</sup> In view of the grave financial problems the Committee should lay the position before all congregations and institutions and they should be told that unless they rendered assistance the School would be closed, and the existence of all of them might end with this generation.<sup>3</sup>

However desperate the position was the lay leadership recoiled from the easy way out. To hand over the school to the Government and to accede to its conditions would mean a desirable termination to the unremitting financial struggle to make ends meet, but it would ipso facto also mean the termination of Herzlia as a Jewish school. The story of Hope Mill and the Johannesburg Jewish School was no doubt still fresh in their minds and some of them may have even personally experienced that episode. The Jewish world had changed too much during the forty-five years and longer since Hope Mill and the Johannesburg Jewish School had been handed over. In any case Hope Mill and Herzlia were poles apart in so many essential respects and it could hardly be expected that the leadership of the younger school would react in an identical manner when faced with the identical problem - the heavy financial burdens. To obtain relief, Mr Goldschmidt and Dr Harte therefore made personal approaches to the committees of the three city congregations and had

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1. Mr M H Goldschmidt confirmed this in an interview in his office in Cape Town on Thursday 12 July 1979.
  2. See p 495
  3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of the United Hebrew Schools, 13 February 1952

received sympathetic hearings.<sup>1</sup>

Haim Winokur's was a dissident voice on the Committee. He doubted whether "these sources (the synagogues) were of any use".<sup>2</sup> To his mind only the United Communal Fund, the umbrella financial drive for the main institutions of the community, held out the prospect of a solution to their problems, and they therefore had to make the United Communal Fund Campaign a success.

In an interview with the S A Jewish Chronicle, Dr Harte, the Chairman, stressed that the School did not belong to any synagogue or congregation but to the whole community which should therefore take responsibility for running it.<sup>3</sup> The School was developing a new self-image; there was a new dignity in Dr Harte's statement that

in the past we had the unpleasant task of sending collectors from door to door to collect funds for (the School's) maintenance: but this will not be continued.....the four-and-a-half acres will be used for a high school.<sup>4</sup>

The onus was on the Jewish community as a whole to provide for the maintenance and expansion of Herzlia.<sup>5</sup>

Thus the financial burden began to weigh more and more heavily on the Committee. It put the opening of a Standard VII in doubt, but the Education Sub-Committee<sup>6</sup> feared that if a Standard VII were not opened then Standard VI, already in existence, would have to be closed. The detrimental effects of such a development would be obvious, and Herzlia would be condemned to remain a primary school for ever. Rabbi Abrahams urged that a Standard VII be opened. The community would rally round and parents would

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. S A Jewish Chronicle, 25 April 1952, pp 12 and 14.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Minutes of Meeting of the Education Sub-Committee, 12 August 1952

help. It would be realised that the day School "is the most important institution in the whole of the Cape".<sup>1</sup>

It was the Rabbi who swayed the apprehensive Committee. ✓  
A Standard VII would be opened in 1953. As the building was overcrowded, room in the Zionist Hall across the road would be obtained and the growing Parent-Teachers' Association undertook to assist in providing amenities and in the upkeep. Moreover, a Standard VIII would be established in 1954.<sup>2</sup>

The prospect of erecting a school at Highlands for Herzlia was a challenge to the Committee, the Parent-Teachers' Association and the community. A sustained appeal was launched in the pages of the S A Jewish Chronicle early in 1953.<sup>3</sup> A special meeting was called in January to launch the campaign for a new high school and elect a building committee. Abrahams' eloquent and powerful advocacy was directed at the community from the printed page, pulpit and public platform.<sup>4</sup> Rabbi E J Duschinsky, spiritual leader of the Cape Town Orthodox Hebrew Congregation (Beth Hamedrash Hahodosh), himself a survivor of the Holocaust, pointed out that the first step taken after the liberation of the survivors of Nazi terror in Europe was to build Jewish schools. In South Africa there was freedom to build Jewish schools and the community owed it to its younger generation to provide them with proper facilities.<sup>5</sup> ✓

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1. Ibid.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of the United Hebrew Schools, 20 August 1952.

3. The S A Jewish Chronicle of 6 February 1953 (published in Cape Town) prominently featured an interview with Mr B Wilder, Chairman of the Herzlia Building Fund Campaign, (p 8), and carried a leading article (p 4) entitled "Step Forward in Education".

4. See special interview published in the S A Jewish Chronicle 13 March 1953, p 10.

5. S A Jewish Chronicle, 6 February 1953, p 7

The S A Jewish Chronicle featured other interviews in subsequent issues. Dr I M Hurwitz, Chairman of the Cape Board of Jewish Education, vigorously presented the case for a Jewish school and refuted the bogey of segregation.<sup>1</sup>

The issue of the following week printed an interview with Mr M H Goldschmidt, Chairman of the Cape Committee of the S A Board of Jewish Deputies, strongly supporting the appeal for Herzlia.<sup>2</sup>

Rabbi Professor Abrahams presented the most telling and comprehensive case for the high school in particular, and for the day school in general. It was a blend of reason and emotion expressed with the full force of his customary eloquence. If they stopped at Standard VII, in medias res, the good done up to Standard VII may be undone in un-Jewish secular schools, and added that "we build for generations to come". Herzlia belonged to the community as a whole and must be built by the collective and concerted efforts of every section thereof: the climax was, typically, a midrash:

our Egyptian oppressors used to immure Jewish children in place of bricks: this appeal seeks to reverse the process. We ask for bricks and in turn you will receive Jewish sons and daughters who will be inheritors of our Faith, torch-bearers of our culture, builders of our People.<sup>3</sup>

The building-fund campaign was launched and leading members of the community came forward to involve themselves in the new excitement and activity.

In 1953, Mr Avin reported a drop in the enrolment in the Talmud Torah: the Committee accepted it as inevitable in view of the expanding numbers in Herzlia.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., 20 February 1953, pp 9-10

2. Ibid., 27 February 1953, p 9

3. Ibid., 13 March 1953, p 10

4. Minutes of the Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools' Committee, 26 April 1953.

The minutes of the meetings of the Education Sub-Committee reveal the emergence of certain differences involving the headmaster, leading members of the School Committee and the Parent-Teachers' Association, primarily centred on the question of the award of prizes at the end-of-year ceremony. It would appear that this was the flashpoint of deeper tensions which finally led to the resignation of Mr Chosack. Mr I J Cohen, the vice-principal, was appointed acting headmaster as from April 1954, by which time a Standard VIII had already been opened.<sup>1</sup>

The fall in the Talmud Torah enrolment continued. With the creation of successive high school classes at Herzlia pupils no longer transferred to the afternoon school. There was, in addition, a noticeable increase in the movement of Jewish families to the suburbs.<sup>2</sup>

In May of 1954 an agreement was reached with the Cape Board of Jewish Education to establish the Charles Resnekov Hebrew Educational Centre on the Highlands site.<sup>3</sup> The United Hebrew Schools would proceed to build a high school at Highlands while the existing building on the site would be used as premises for the Board's seminary and nursery school.

In July the minutes record that the writer was appointed principal of Herzlia from the beginning of the 1955 academic year.<sup>4</sup>

The general financial position remained precarious, and the Committee, as usual, cast round for sources of relief: loans were raised from two charitable institutions which had available capital.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Minutes of the Committee of the United Hebrew Schools and Herzlia, 14 December 1953

2. Ibid., 10 November 1953.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Combined Committees of the United Hebrew Schools and the Building Fund, 17 May 1954.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools' Committee, 22 July 1954.

5. Ibid., 5 August 1954.

After fifteen years of sharing the same premises with the Cape Town Talmud Torah in the red-brick building in Hope Street erected in 1938 for the afternoon school, Herzlia was at last about to obtain its own home specially built to accomodate its expanding high school section. It had been handicapped by having to share rooms and limited facilities with afternoon classes whose system of education differed considerably from its own. Once it had committed itself to the creation of a full high school, the Committee could not avoid proceeding with the erection of a new building to house it.

CHAPTER 42: THE CAPE BOARD OF JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE 1950S

Dr A Moar was appointed to succeed Dr Birnbaum as Director of the Cape Board of Jewish Education in mid-1949,<sup>1</sup> and after the death of Dr Resnekov, Dr I M Hurwitz was elected Chairman.

A certain ambivalence surrounded the attitude of the Board towards the importation of teachers from Israel. It needed these contract-teachers to alleviate the acute shortage which had become chronic but Dr Hurwitz already stated in 1951 that it was common knowledge that not all of the Israeli teachers had proved satisfactory and that the Board had had unpleasantness with these in one or two instances.<sup>2</sup> But there were no local teachers available and the Board had no alternative but to bring out teachers for the schools and congregations under its jurisdiction. It is interesting to note that the same meeting was informed that it was the policy of Johannesburg not to bring out teachers from overseas.<sup>3</sup>

Tension had developed between Dr Moar and teachers of Hebrew at the Herzlia Day School over the report he had submitted on the examinations conducted by him at the School.<sup>4</sup> The Teachers' Association supported its members at Herzlia against the Director and the Board finally decided to back its Director, by endorsing his judgement and, in fact, commending him for the boldness of his exposure of the true position of Hebrew at the Day School.<sup>5</sup>

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1. See p483

2. Minutes of the Executive Meeting of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 6 November 1951

3. Ibid., this policy very soon became a dead letter.

4. They alleged that the report was unfair and denigrated the work they had performed.

5. Minutes of the Executive Meeting 22 November 1951.

Relations between the Board and the Director were also not uniformly cordial and the minutes on one occasion recorded Dr Moar's "unconstitutional and irregular conduct in regard to three separate matters".<sup>1</sup>

The minutes of the Board, and of its Education Sub-Committee under Chief Rabbi Professor I Abrahams, indicate that it operated, in effect, as an over-all School Committee supervising the affairs of some fifteen Hebrew schools in the city and its environs affiliated to it. Country schools were decreasing in numbers and size and the cursory supervision over them was exercised during the infrequent visits by the Director. A little seminary established by the Board provided courses in the afternoon to a handful of students and nursery school teachers who wished to improve their Hebrew.<sup>2</sup>

The dynamism and image of the Resnekov-Birnbaum period would seem to have become things of the past. Its activities by the early fifties had become circumscribed in nature; meeting after meeting dealt with the abilities and possible transfers of one or two teachers, the problem of a few nursery school pupil-teachers who knew no Hebrew and problems in the relationship with the Director.<sup>3</sup> The Board finally re-affirmed its authority in all matters of policy and education generally and defined the Director's functions as merely advisory in nature.<sup>4</sup>

Teachers for religious instruction were appointed to five schools with large Jewish enrolments and the Board undertook to submit a syllabus in this subject to the Department of Education.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Minutes of Executive Meeting 30 January 1952: no details were given.
  2. Minutes of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 11 February and 18 February 1952.
  3. See Minutes of the meetings of the Board and its sub-committees during February and March 1952.
  4. Minutes of the Board 26 February 1952
  5. Ibid.

Dr Moar's report to the Eighth Biennial Conference reviewed the activities of the Board during the foregoing three years, from the time of his appointment in 1949,<sup>1</sup> and gave a picture of the state of Jewish education at the Cape during the early fifties. It was favourable in nature, to the point of being complimentary, recording the great progress made and the "high level" of the standard of achievement reached in most Talmud Torahs.<sup>2</sup> He highlighted the "modern methods of teaching.....the modern Hebrew text-books"<sup>3</sup> and the highly qualified, experienced Hebrew teachers in many of the schools.<sup>4</sup>

There were nine nursery schools under the supervision of the Board which had been visited regularly and their Hebrew play activities inspected and reported on to the Hebrew Nursery Schools' Association.<sup>5</sup> The report recommended the erection of an intermediate class between nursery school and Talmud Torah to bridge the gap of several years between the two.<sup>6</sup>

The Board had 29 schools affiliated to it, thirteen of them in the country areas stretching from Oudtshoorn to Windhoek.<sup>7</sup> Dr Moar divided them into three categories: good ones with good teachers; mediocre ones which were "really not bad..... but not quite good"; and some schools which were unsatisfactory, due mostly to staff problems of one kind or another.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Report of the Director to the Eighth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 22 August 1952

2. Ibid.

3. He was referring to the Ivrit I and Ivrit II readers compiled by himself and Blesovsky.

4. Director's Report to the Eighth Conference, op.cit.

5. Ibid., p 1

6. Ibid., p 2

7. There were 1 424 pupils in these schools with 47 teachers: about one-third were girls. Windhoek had 35 children; Upington 22 and De Aar 8 (See Minutes of 6 May 1952)

8. The Director's Report, op.cit., p 2.

Teachers were appointed even though they lacked proper qualifications, so great was the shortage: these needed constant, intensive guidance to help them carry out their duties properly.<sup>1</sup>

During the first examinations he had carried out, the Director had tested each pupil individually "in order to gain a clear picture of the achievement of each child.....and (to) become acquainted with the position in each Talmud Torah".<sup>2</sup> The Director's written reports of these oral tests<sup>3</sup> were submitted to the school committees who looked upon them as a perfectly reliable evaluation of both the knowledge of the child and the level of work of the teacher. It was a situation open to possibilities of misunderstanding, lack of objectivity and even subtle pressure.

The report referred more than once to the need to introduce "the most modern educational methods....(and to) use the very best methods of teaching, as found out by modern psychological and progressive educational practice"<sup>4</sup>. Whilst lay committees would be impressed by such phraseology, it is easy to see how many teachers were irritated by such jargon and rejected such evaluations of their work out of hand.

As for the publication of the Hebrew readers Ivrit I and II for the first standards of the Talmud Torah, it was the first time that Hebrew teaching texts had been compiled and published in South Africa, noted the report, and these texts had, indeed, "entirely modernised the teaching of the Hebrew language".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 3.

2. Ibid. : It was a system which was to lead to friction between Dr Moar and many teachers who claimed that such a brief sampling of knowledge taken from nervous and even over-awed children was not a fair measuring-rod of the child's achievements.

3. Generally the child had also to write a few lines of dictation or composition.

4. The Director's Report to the Eighth Conference, op.cit., pp 3-4.

5. Ibid., pp 4-5: he also urged the publication of a third book in the same series and of a suitable text for the teaching of Jewish history.

The Board had brought over ten Israeli teachers to fill the vacancies in the schools under its aegis. They needed guidance to help them adjust to the new conditions they found in the local afternoon schools, and only in a few cases had contracts been extended.<sup>1</sup> Religious instruction had been introduced into eight government schools and the syllabus drawn up for this purpose comprised Bible (in English), festivals and customs, the Jewish calendar, history and Bible stories, together with benedictions and Siddur hymns.<sup>2</sup> As many of the children did not attend Hebrew school, these lessons were the only Jewish instruction many of them had.<sup>3</sup> Boys were examined orally and individually for the Barmitzvah Certificate Examination, whilst the Batmitzvah examination was a written one.

The Teachers' Seminary had been established on a small scale in June 1949, the first group graduating in September 1951.<sup>4</sup> The results were disappointing and the report called for the creation of a teachers' college worthy of the name.<sup>5</sup>

The Board had established a small seminary which consisted of two afternoon classes and Dr Moar was ambivalent about the results. A special syllabus was required for the nursery school students.<sup>6</sup> Dr Moar advised that the seminary be placed on proper footing and that it should be expanded to provide a three-year course like the Zlotnik Seminary in Johannesburg which had 37 students.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p 6.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p 8.

5. Ibid.

6. Minutes of the Board Meeting 11 May 1952

7. Ibid.

The Board could not make up its mind on the matter and some members urged that Cape Town students be sent to join the seminary in Johannesburg. It was obvious that it was not satisfied with the manner in which Dr Moar was running the existing seminary nor did it have confidence in his proposals for improving the little institution.<sup>1</sup>

Matters came to a head in mid-1952 after the Board had set up a special sub-committee to investigate the workings of the seminary and make proposals for improvements. Mr Avin was appointed to head the reorganised seminary, the staff of two would be changed and Dr Moar would terminate his supervisory duties.<sup>2</sup> The Board laid the blame for the failure of the seminary at the door of the Director who had no definite plan or scheme<sup>3</sup> and had not exercised sufficient supervision. The Board was still at a loss as to what to do about the future of the seminary and, for that matter, about extending the period of service of the Director: the relationship between the executive officers of the Board and Dr Moar was becoming increasingly difficult.<sup>4</sup>

In the Chairman's report to the Council Meeting of the Board at the end of the year<sup>5</sup> Dr Hurwitz mentioned that the seminary had in the recent past graduated thirteen teachers to fill urgent vacancies but the Board still had to fall back on the "costly process" of importing teachers, not all of whom were satisfactory, however.<sup>6</sup> He deplored the fact that one-third of the boys and two-thirds of the girls of school-going age

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1. Ibid. : Chief Rabbi Abrahams was, as usual, against any co-operation with Johannesburg.

2. Ibid., 19 June 1952

3. Ibid., 22 June 1952

4. Ibid.

5. S A Jewish Chronicle 12 December 1952, pp 7-8

6. Ibid.

did not attend Jewish schools, and also condemned the practice of some parents who sent their children to Hebrew school at the age of ten or eleven, because this resulted in undesirable disorganisation.<sup>1</sup>

The reorganised seminary under Mr Avin had thirteen students<sup>2</sup> and Mr Samuel Cohen would be brought out from Israel to assume the post of principal.<sup>3</sup> An important step was the decision taken at a combined meeting of the Zionist Federation, the Board of Deputies and the two Boards of Education to establish a pension fund for teachers for which Cape Town had long pressed.<sup>4</sup>

More and more time of the Board was being spent on matters concerning its staff, especially its Director, conditions of service of some teachers from Israel and such trivia as details of hostel equipment and organisation and minor seminary arrangements.<sup>5</sup>

The Parent-Teachers' Association of Herzlia School requested the Board to change the name of the hostel to obviate the confusion caused by the sharing of the same name. The Board rejected the request. The seminary with ten students divided into three levels was hardly viable: the new principal had not arrived as yet.<sup>6</sup>

An interesting development was the opening of a residence for Jewish university students in Rosebank, a joint venture with

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1. Ibid.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 26 February 1953.

3. Ibid., 14 April 1953.

4. Ibid.

5. After protracted and involved negotiations the Board finally renewed Dr Moar's contract under threat of litigation against it: see Minutes of the Board 23 April 1953.

6. Minutes of the Education Sub-Committee of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 27 April 1953

the Cape Committee of the Jewish Board of Deputies. The residence housed twelve students.<sup>1</sup> A later meeting again referred to the difficulties and delays experienced in obtaining entry permits for teachers chosen in Israel on a contract basis, in spite of promises made previously by the immigration authorities to the Board.

Dr Hurwitz and Chief Rabbi Abrahams interviewed the Superintendent-General of Education to obtain his consent to the Board's proposal to send Jewish teachers into departmental schools to give instruction in Judaism, during general scripture periods, to Jewish pupils. Dr Moar would be permitted to visit the schools to supervise these lessons.<sup>2</sup>

Mr S Cohen arrived from Israel to head the seminary which, in the interval, had given the Board much cause for worry.<sup>3</sup> It was transferred from the premises of the United Hebrew Schools in Hope Street to Rosecourt Youth Centre in Breda Street.

The same meeting confirmed that the Board would relinquish its rights to the property and site at Highlands Estate to the Herzlia School which wished to take over the entire area for its own use.<sup>4</sup> The institutions on the site would continue to be known as the "Dr C Resnekov Hebrew Educational Centre".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., 3 August 1953

3. Ibid., 5 October 1953

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., and Minutes of 2 November 1953

The seminary still presented problems and members of the Board were far from convinced that it would succeed in producing the number of teachers needed by the schools or attain the academic levels required for the upper classes.<sup>1</sup> Some members were in favour of the handful of students being sent to the Zlotnik Seminary in Johannesburg or to train in Israeli teachers' colleges.<sup>2</sup>

Dr Hurwitz attacked the schools and parents who accepted the "pernicious system" of one or two lessons a week, but the habit was by then too deeply ingrained to be changed.<sup>3</sup> He called for the appointment of a Youth and Adult Education Officer and for greater financial support for the Board.<sup>4</sup>

Dr Moar recorded progress in most schools, thanks again to "modern methods and modern Hebrew text-books" and also to the "highly qualified and experienced teachers" in many schools.<sup>5</sup> The number of schools under the Board was thirty-two, with 1 738 pupils, about one-third of them girls.<sup>6</sup> Once again the Director divided them into three categories according to the well-worn criteria used on previous occasions,<sup>7</sup> and that it all depended on "the most modern educational methods....as followed by the modern psychological and progressive educational practice", and so on.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Chief Rabbi Abrahams mentioned that Dr Donges had stipulated that the community should open a seminary of its own before it could be expected to be granted entry permits for teachers. To close the seminary would therefore prejudice any chances of bringing in teachers.

3. "Report of the Ninth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education" in S A Jewish Chronicle 26 November 1954 p 9.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p 10. The Board had recently decided to print Ivrit III

6. Ibid.

7. See p 511

8. "The Director's Report" in S A Jewish Chronicle 26 November 1954, p 10.

These were the arid clichés of educational thinking in the Board's leadership during the mid-fifties as the community stood at the crossroads of its educational development. The old era was drawing to a close, there was abundant evidence that the Talmud Torah supplemental school was set on its course of inevitable decline. A new school was about to supersede it, and instead of clear-sighted guidance to help it advance along uncharted paths into the future, the leadership of the Board, professional and lay, engaged in sterile and trivial activity, mouthed empty platitudes and descended to intrigue and conflict. The seeds of the decline of the Board were sown during the fifties: it is fortunate that the new school that emerged was not organically part of this institution; it remained free to move into the future and find educational answers to the challenges of new and changed times.

The Director reported that close on a thousand Jewish children in departmental schools were receiving Jewish religious instruction.<sup>1</sup> For many of them, especially the girls, this was the only source of Jewish knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

The Treasurer's report to Conference indicated that the Board's finances were in an unsatisfactory condition, that the United Communal Fund had failed to reach its quite modest target and could not provide the full subsidies so that essential activities had to be curtailed.<sup>3</sup>

In his report to the Council Meeting of the Board at the beginning of 1957, Mr M H Goldschmidt indicated that the seminary had been reorganised the previous year. Students

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p 11, "Treasurer's Report".

were required to major in Hebrew at the University and would concurrently receive supplementary lectures daily at the seminary to widen their knowledge of the language and its literature and also receive instruction in method.<sup>1</sup> The hostel was full but the premises were old and there was need for a new and more roomy building.<sup>2</sup> And there was a reference again to the expense involved in bringing teachers from Israel.

Mr Goldschmidt welcomed the progress of the Day School with its "eminently satisfactory" academic results, its growing enrolment and its fine new building being erected at the Dr C Resnekov Education Centre at Highlands.<sup>3</sup>

The Weizmann Preparatory School went up to Standard II, but its continued growth was hampered by lack of finance.

The Board's religious instruction programme continued in nine schools. Some 400 children attended the twelve nursery schools of the Hebrew Nursery Schools' Association and new premises were being erected at a number of congregations for these schools. The Board was concerned about the tendency to curtail hours of tuition in afternoon schools and was strongly opposed to such changes.<sup>4</sup> The teachers' pension fund was all but complete.

The state of Jewish education at the Cape in the late fifties is fully described in the reports submitted to the Tenth Biennial Conference of the Board in 1958.<sup>5</sup> Touching on the

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1. Chairman's Report to the Council of the Cape Board of Jewish Education February 1957, p 1.
  2. Ibid. There were 54 boys and 10 girls at the hostel under the Rev Martin Bloch.
  3. Ibid., p 2.
  4. Ibid., p 3.
  5. Chairman's Report to the Tenth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 9 March 1958.

lamentable scarcity of recruits for the Hebrew-teaching profession Mr Goldschmidt stated that since its inception in 1949 the seminary had produced 21 Hebrew nursery school teachers and 11 Hebrew primary school teachers: five additional teaching diplomas had been issued.<sup>1</sup>

About 600 children were in the Religious Instruction classes in the nine schools where the Board provided teachers. Whilst the principals had proved very co-operative, the work could not be expanded because of limited personnel and lack of funds.<sup>2</sup>

The enrolments of the Hebrew schools under the Board rose from 1 785 in 1955 to 1 939 in 1957.<sup>3</sup> Mr Goldschmidt again strongly condemned "the trend to reduce hours of tuition from the minimum five one-hour periods a week".<sup>4</sup> The time allotted to Hebrew at Herzlia had actually been increased from the beginning of 1958.<sup>5</sup> The Hebrew Teachers' Pension Fund had finally been established and a source of great pride to the community was the growth of Herzlia, now housed in the fine new buildings at Highlands. The hostel was full and the erection of new and modern premises could not be delayed much longer.<sup>6</sup>

Dr Moar defended the individual examination system which he conducted personally by invoking "modern educational practice"

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1. Ibid., p 2. A number of these graduates were no longer teachers or had moved away.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p 4. This included the day schools.

4. Ibid. The regular protestations by the Board would indicate that the "trend" was growing.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p 5.

and "common agreement amongst progressive educationalists" to the effect that of the two types of oral examination the individual one was superior to the method of examining the class as a whole.<sup>1</sup> In the latter system, averred the Director of Jewish Education at the Cape, "the batch of brighter pupils" gave all the answers. And so, he continued, even though the individual examination might involve the examiner in more time and effort during the examination, "it gives a clear picture of the attainments of each pupil in every subject of study".<sup>2</sup>

The argument, bolstered by "psychological" reasons of various sorts and expressed in suitable jargon, may have convinced most of the hundred delegates at Conference, but was strenuously opposed by principals and teachers alike as psychologically unsound, educationally untenable and lacking all objectivity.<sup>3</sup> This palpably invalid measuring instrument could - and was - obviously be used at will to condemn or praise, and it occasionally led to the absurd situation that a laudatory report on a teacher's work would be followed, within a matter of months, by one diametrically opposite in nature.

After he had completed the annual examinations in the Talmud Torahs, continued Dr Moar in his report, he had a "clear

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1. Director's Report submitted to the Tenth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education p 3.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Mr Avin, Principal of the Hebrew Schools, and Mr A Chosack, Headmaster of Herzlia School, amongst others, had expressed their opposition to the antiquated system on more than one occasion, and it remained a bone of contention between Dr Moar and the teachers for years. It caused misunderstandings between school committees and teachers, influenced appointments and promotions and served to enhance the power of the examiner over the teachers.

picture of the achievements of any pupil in any of our Talmud Torahs",<sup>1</sup> a remarkable claim indeed considering the five to ten minutes' duration of the "examination" and the close on two thousand pupils in the schools.

In the light of all this, what exactly could be the value of the "pedagogical suggestions" that accompanied the Director's annual reports,<sup>2</sup> and what were the effects of such a system on Jewish education as a whole at the Cape? Initially Dr Moar also operated his "system" in the day school, but though it had no power to eliminate it, Herzlia in effect rejected it in toto by its own oral and written examinations in Hebrew and cognate subjects which alone constituted the School's evaluation of achievement in this area of the curriculum. These results were included in the total quarterly and annual schedules of marks and in the reports issued to pupils. Dr Moar's examinations became increasingly irrelevant and were vigorously opposed especially when it was obvious that they were blatantly tendentious.

The report mentioned that Ivrit I was already in its third printing of 5 000 copies and all three books of the series were in general use in schools throughout the country. The Director urged that the series be completed as soon as possible by the publication of the next three books.<sup>3</sup> The old syllabus which had been in existence for nearly twenty years had been replaced by one more in keeping with the requirements of the day and drawn up "in the light of modern educational thought and practice in the progressive countries of Europe and America".<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 3

2. Ibid.

3. These were never published.

4. Director's Report, op.cit., p 5.

About 150 boys and girls had been examined during 1957 for the Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah Certificates awarded by the Board. As for the Religious Instruction provided by the Board's teachers in government schools, their special value lay in the fact that for a considerable number of children this was the only kind of Jewish education they received, though they could not, of course, be comparable in quality to the tuition given in the Talmud Torahs.<sup>1</sup>

The Director's report devoted considerable space to Hebrew in the day schools.<sup>2</sup> This section is both wordy and lukewarm in its evaluation of the efforts and achievements of others. As usual it was peppered with professional jargon and generalities. The underlying intention was to reaffirm publicly that it was he who was responsible for Hebrew at the schools, that Hebrew tuition in all the classes was under his constant and regular supervision.<sup>3</sup> This, however, was not in accordance with the real state of affairs and was a herald of future tensions and even conflict between the Board - as represented by the Director - on the one hand, and Herzlia School on the other. It was, unfortunately, to culminate in the diminution of the role played by the Board in Jewish education at the Cape, to its total severance from the day schools, and to the abdication of its functions so laboriously created by its founders and leaders who had envisaged it as a vital force for the benefit of Jewish education in this part of the country.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., Herzlia then had 22 classes and Weizmann Primary had 4.

3. Ibid., p 8.

CHAPTER 43: HERZLIA SCHOOL: 1955-1959 - EXPANSION  
AND DEVELOPMENT

When the writer assumed the principalship at the beginning of 1955 the enrolment stood at 423, with only seven pupils in Standard IX, which was then the highest class. The Hope Street building was overcrowded and the small playground was grossly inadequate for a school of these numbers. To afford some relief the Kindergarten classes had to be moved to the old house at Highlands.

Finding money for the building was only part of the problem for the lay leadership. What caused it even greater worry was the sure knowledge that a numerically expanding school meant a growing expenditure and, moreover, a high school was bound to be much more expensive than a primary department.

Paradoxically enough there was hidden strength in its financial weakness. Its day school was proving to be a success: it was beginning to attract pupils from across the whole spectrum of the community. The sight of uniformed pupils of a Jewish high school was a novelty to the community, which did not remain unimpressed. Contacts were constantly strengthened with the community in a number of ways. With the growing enrolment, increasingly wider circles of the community were drawn into the ambit of the School's life and activities. The academic standards reached were quite impressive: the Hebrew levels too were greatly superior to those of the afternoon schools.

The School earned a sound reputation for itself in the community: it inspired confidence; the indifferent were gradually won round and those who were actually hostile to it, for whatever reasons, in time fell silent.<sup>1</sup>

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1. The main opposition was based on the old cry that it was a segregated "ghetto" school out of place in the open society.

By its very nature as an educational institution involving hundreds of families Herzlia became one of the major institutions of the Cape Town Jewish community as no other institution, religious or charitable, could aspire to be.

It was a congested school with some of the classes scattered in odd corners where place had been found to add on rooms.<sup>1</sup> Informality in teacher-child relationships and pupil-school relationships, inherited from the Talmud Torah, not infrequently bordered on the lack of good order. The School was in need of external form to complement its good content. Form and formality were given their place in school life without spoiling the essentially warm teacher/school-and-pupil relationships. The organisation and conventions of the schools of the Cape Education Department were introduced into the day School to blend with the existing good school-pupil rapport. It proved to be a successful blending which was conducive to a relaxed and largely voluntary discipline.

September 1955 saw the start of the actual construction of the buildings at Highlands. On Sunday 21 October 1956, the foundation-stone ceremony took place before a large assembly of the community.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the year seven candidates sat for the Matriculation Examination of the University of South Africa. It was the first ever matriculation class composed of pupils who had (with one exception) received all their schooling in a Jewish day school.<sup>3</sup>

The results of the Junior Certificate Examinations at the end of 1955 and 1956 were also very satisfactory. The enrolment for 1956, when Herzlia was complete from Sub A to Matriculation, had increased to 475. There was a

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1. A make-shift science/biology laboratory had to be constructed out of part of a cloak-room.
  2. Report of the United Hebrew Schools for the 2 years ending 31 December 1956 presented at the Annual General Meeting held on 30 July 1957.
  3. Ibid.

realisation that the financial problems of the School would be aggravated with the development of the new school, but the United Hebrew Schools would have to depend more on the United Communal Fund as its main source of revenue and the report stated that

members of our Committee have taken a very active and prominent part in the United Communal Fund (and)...the Western Province Zionist Council has granted a loan to ease the financial burden.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, three charitable organisations had made substantial loans from their accumulated funds to the School as a result of the personal persuasion of Rabbi Abrahams.<sup>2</sup>

The enrolment in 1957 leaped up to 550 with 14 pupils in Standard X. The appreciable intake above Sub A indicated that the School was attracting more and more parents and pupils. In fact, the old deplorable phenomenon of pupils being withdrawn before completing their schooling in the standards available at Herzlia was actually being reversed.<sup>3</sup>

Out of a total of 41, nine periods were allocated weekly to Hebrew as an external examination subject and to the supplementary subjects under the heading of Ivrit which was a compulsory subject examined internally.<sup>4</sup> Matriculation Hebrew was too circumscribed in content and its examination so closely wedded to mechanical translation that it was largely incompatible with the Ivrit B'Ivrit<sup>5</sup> tradition which Herzlia had inherited from its progenitor, the Cape Town Talmud Torah.

The principal's report for 1957 expressed the relief and delight of pupils and staff alike at finding themselves at

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., Principal's Report.

4. Ibid.

5. Sephardic pronunciation had been adopted at the School, hence the final 't' in place of the 's'

last in the spacious class-rooms of their new and imposing school set in the beautiful surroundings at the very foot of Table Mountain.<sup>1</sup>

The year saw another important innovation in the academic sphere. The Committee had been persuaded that an endeavour should be made to obtain permission to write the Cape Senior Certificate Examination instead of the Matriculation Examination set by the Joint Matriculation Board in Pretoria. The advantages to the School would be obvious. The Joint Matriculation Board was a distant examining body: its syllabuses were determined by persons who were not necessarily au fait with the educational milieu of the School; its administration, too, was impersonal and distant.<sup>2</sup>

The School delegation, led by Rabbi Professor Abrahams, put the request to Dr Meiring, the Superintendent-General of Education. In essence the rationale was that Herzlia knew the educational world of the Cape Education Department in which many of its teachers had already served. The professional leadership had full confidence in the Department which was so near to the School in the educational no less than the geographical sense.<sup>3</sup> The Department in due course acceded to this request and the first Cape Senior Certificate Examination was written at the end of 1957.<sup>4</sup>

Extra-mural activities were expanded. The School magazine containing articles in English, Afrikaans and Hebrew appeared in improved form from 1955; cultural clubs were organised; the School joined various schools' sports leagues;<sup>5</sup> the

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1. Ibid.

2. These were the reasons advanced by the writer and accepted by the School Committee.

3. The delegation put these views to Dr Meiring: the writer was present at the interview.

4. Herzlia is one of the two private schools in the province which write the Cape Senior Certificate Examination.

5. League matches were moved from Saturdays to weekdays to accommodate Herzlia.

presentation of one-act plays in the official languages and Hebrew was instituted as an annual event; the folk-dancing group, choir, and gymnastic squad appeared at a number of functions, including the large public gatherings to mark the celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut.<sup>1</sup> Herzlia went out to meet the community.

Functions to mark historical and religious days of note in the Jewish calendar were integrated into the general educational life of the School. The Minyan Joseph School Congregation continued its useful work under Mr Avin, but now mostly attracted children of Herzlia. Links with the new State of Israel were encouraged through the educational activities of the Jewish National Fund.

Herzlia took the initiative in another pioneering step: the first group of pupils was sent to visit the King David School in Johannesburg.<sup>2</sup> These inter-school meets have since then become a feature of the Jewish day schools in Southern Africa and have helped to establish close bonds between the growing number of Jewish schools; and, what is more important, to create valuable personal friendships amongst the children of the South African Jewish community.

The enrolment for 1959 rose to 683. For the first time the number of girls exceeded 200.<sup>3</sup> The criteria for admission above the sub-standards were based upon the availability of space and upon the level of Hebrew knowledge of the applicant. The principle was established that all children of the community had the right to be admitted to Herzlia if there was room for them and if they could integrate into the Hebrew classes.

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1. Israel's Independence Day.
  2. The first contingent of 59 pupils left Cape Town on 22 June 1957.
  3. Report submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia, 29 July 1959

Pupils sat for the Afrikaans Taalbond Examinations and for the internal Junior and Senior Hebrew Proficiency Examinations at the end of Standard VIII and Standard X respectively.<sup>1</sup> An interesting innovation was the establishment of an elected Students' Council. The shortage of sporting facilities, it was reported, would soon be alleviated by the completion of the school field and another tennis/netball court.

The first speech night and prize-giving function to be held in the new hall was reported at the end of 1958. On the 19th April 1959, the Hon Mr Justice J Herbstein addressed the first Commemoration Day Assembly, when the School was open to inspection.

A valuable innovation in the Hebrew Department was the School Seder<sup>2</sup> held in the hall before Passover when pupils were introduced to the forms and traditions of this festival celebration. It was a tradition which took root over the years and in time the School Sedarim<sup>3</sup> came to be organised for all sections of the school and attracted many interested parents. All pupils wrote the Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah examinations of the Cape Board of Jewish Education. Morning services were instituted during the year when the new synagogue was opened in the presence of a large congregation which witnessed the ceremonial procession of the Torah scrolls brought up from the Hope Street Talmud Torah, whose principal, Mr Avin, had been appointed Supervisor of Hebrew at Herzlia.<sup>4</sup> The meeting heard that the afternoon school was shrinking simultaneously with the growth of the day School.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., Principal's Report

2. Seder: Hebrew: Festive celebration held in Jewish homes on the first evening of Passover.

3. Sedarim: plural of Seder.

4. Annual Report for the two years ending 20 December 1958 presented at the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia: 29 July 1959.

5. Ibid.

The report records an interesting item: a commission had been set up during the year "to investigate the financing of Jewish education", under the chairmanship of the Hon Mr Justice Joseph Herbststein. The status of the body was an indication of the changed attitude of the community towards the School and, more specifically, proof that its financial troubles were now the concern of the whole of the community.<sup>1</sup>

The annual general meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia, presided over by Mr M Melamed, heard that the enrolment had reached 760: it was a gratifying growth for the School but the new building was also becoming full.<sup>2</sup> Morning services which were held daily before school hours on a voluntary basis, in the tradition of the Sabbath services of the Minyan Joseph, were recognised as being of considerable educational value.

Herzlia was the first modern Jewish high school in South Africa and there was no ready-made curriculum of Hebrew/Jewish studies in existence to serve as precedent or as model. So the senior Hebrew course evolved empirically; it was somewhat eclectic in nature, containing elements of the syllabus of the upper classes of the Cape Town Talmud Torah, the continuation classes, the syllabus set for Senior Certificate Hebrew and, later, elements derived from the Israeli schools. Those responsible for shaping the Hebrew curriculum during the fifties relied on their own experience and good sense to establish a suitable course of Hebrew studies.<sup>3</sup>

The report reviewed the wide range of extra-mural activities

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1. Ibid. See Chapter 44.

2. Report of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia for the year ending 31 December 1959 presented at the Annual General Meeting: 14 June 1960.

3. Ibid., Principal's Report for the year ending 31 December 1959

comprising those directly connected with Jewish festivals and days of note, which, strictly speaking, belonged to the area of affective education and were difficult to evaluate. There were those of a more general nature in which the initiative and sense of responsibility on the part of the pupils were encouraged.

In the words of the Chairman, finance remained "the problem of problems".<sup>1</sup> The report of the Cape (Herbstein) Commission on Jewish Education was not to hand as yet and the meeting heard that a similar commission was due to be set up in Johannesburg.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Annual Report of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia for the year ending 31 December 1958 submitted to the Annual General Meeting, 29 July 1959
  2. The Kuper Commission set up by the S A Board of Jewish Education. See Chapter 37.

CHAPTER 44: THE COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION (WESTERN PROVINCE): THE HERBSTEIN REPORT: A CHARTER FOR THE DAY SCHOOL

The Commission was sponsored by the Western Province Zionist Council, the Cape Committee of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies and the Cape Board of Jewish Education. The Chairman was the Hon Mr Justice Joseph Herbstein, with Advocate D Cohen and Mr M H Goldschmidt as members and Mr A Abrahamson as Secretary. It was set up towards the middle of 1958 "to enquire into and report on the adequacy and finances of the system of Hebrew education in the Western Province."<sup>1</sup>

After the issue of its interim report, the Commission decided that it would be impossible for it to deal in detail with all the terms of reference. The sponsoring bodies, at its request, therefore agreed that it deal with the problem generally.

The Commission heard the evidence of many individuals and representatives of institutions and organisations, and considered memoranda submitted to it.<sup>2</sup> Over 600 Jewish householders were selected at random of which number just short of 420 were actually interviewed personally and asked to reply to the questionnaire drawn up by the Commission.<sup>3</sup> All this evidence was required by the Commission in its search for a "reliable view of the attitude of the Jewish community generally to the problem of Jewish education in the Cape Peninsula, and more particularly to the Day School

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1. Report to the Sponsoring Bodies by the Commission on Jewish Education (Western Province), Cape Town, 29 May 1961 (typed).

2. The writer gave oral evidence to the Commission and also submitted a written memorandum.

3. Ibid., Clause D Section 5 pp 1-2, Annexure C, p 17.

Movement".<sup>1</sup> A further step taken by the Commission was the convening of a meeting of representative Jewish leaders "to discuss the whole problem of Jewish education,...(including) the financial difficulties arising therefrom, suggestions for solving it, and the support which was likely to be forthcoming from the community".<sup>2</sup>

From a study of the survey and from the views expressed at the meeting, the Commission concluded that there was no such unanimous or general support for the Day School Movement as its protagonists had claimed in their evidence.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, communities in the Northern and Southern Suburbs felt that they could not, and did not, derive any real benefit from Herzlia and, in consequence, they should concentrate their support on their respective Talmud Torahs.

Whilst there was consensus that all Jewish children should receive some Jewish education, there was "considerable division of opinion as to the quantum which was either necessary or desirable".<sup>4</sup> Opinions in this regard varied from five lessons to two or three a week.

Most leaders were pessimistic about the prospects of a third campaign for funds for the day schools. Interest in Sea Point centred on the Weizmann Primary School<sup>5</sup> and the Commission felt that such a school was absolutely necessary and that support should be given to the Sea Point community to establish such a full primary school for which Herzlia would be the high school.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., Clause D, Section 5 p 1.

2. Ibid., Clause D, Section 7 p 1.

3. Ibid., Clause D, Section 8, p 2

4. Ibid., subsection c.

5. Weizmann School was a day school established in the premises of the Sea Point Talmud Torah in 1953. See Report of the Annual General Meeting of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah, 24 August 1953

6. Report to the Sponsoring Bodies by the Commission on Jewish Education (Western Province), op.cit., Section 9 p 2.

The Commission confirmed the central place of Herzlia in the educational system of the Jewish community which,

despite certain opposition, had already reached its numerical capacity.....but those who had been responsible for the establishment of the school had not paid nearly enough attention to the financial implications involved in the venture.....failed to have proper regard to the inordinately heavy burden which the community would have to shoulder.<sup>1</sup>

It was a criticism, in a restrained enough tone, of what others, less inhibited, had termed the reckless spending by the Herzlia leadership and the involvement of a largely reluctant community in debts which it could not afford to pay. Herzlia would swallow the community's total resources to which others were also entitled. The School, ran the more extreme argument, would bankrupt the community.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission considered that the cumulative financial problems of Herzlia could well lead to the closing down of the School. It was an eventuality which the Commission shuddered even to consider, since it would from every point of view be calamitous for the community.<sup>3</sup>

The situation was so urgent that the Commission issued an interim report on 24 November 1959, urging that steps be taken to forestall any possible crisis. A special campaign would have to be launched to bring relief to Herzlia from its capital liabilities, and periodical campaigns would also have to be held in between the Israeli United Appeal and United Communal Fund for the general educational needs of the School. The Commission was against using Israeli United Appeal money for these purposes, as it was the duty of each community to look after the

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1. Ibid., Clause E, pp 2-5

2. The writer heard these opinions expressed publicly at Jewish meetings as well as privately by some leaders of the community.

3. Report of the Herstein Commission: Clause E, Section 12, p 3.

educational needs of its children.

The Commission was of the opinion that if the parlous position of the Herzlia School was placed before the community there would probably be a sufficient response to ease the situation. There was no need to liquidate all the capital liabilities for there was no obligation on the present generation to hand over to future generations a debt-free School, while it had to ensure that the School would be able to be carried on and handed over to the next generation as a viable institution.<sup>1</sup>

As for the proposal to levy a tax for education, the Commission pointed out that unless the community were organised on a Kehillah<sup>2</sup> basis with enforceable powers of taxation, no such general compulsory tax was possible.<sup>3</sup> Sufficient had not been done to enlighten the Jewish community on the importance to it of the Herzlia School and of its obligations to that School.<sup>4</sup>

Another strong recommendation was that the community exercise communal discipline in freezing all further projects until the suggested campaign had been held.<sup>5</sup>

In its final report in May 1961, the Commission quite radically revised the opinion it expressed in its interim report a year-and-a-half previously in regard to the support in the community for the day schools. The Commission felt that there was sufficient evidence that there had been a change of attitude on the part of the Jewish public in the Cape Peninsula towards Hebrew education generally and towards

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1. Ibid., Clause E, Section 17, p 4

2. Kehillah: Hebrew: Community: overall communal organisation with authority to tax and exercise general control.

3. Ibid., Clause E Section 18 p 4.

4. Ibid., Section 19

5. Ibid., Section 20, pp 4-5

the Day School Movement in particular. The basis for this was the very substantial increase in the number of pupils at the Herzlia School which had become so overcrowded that it had compelled the School Committee to send the sub-standards back to the Hope Street building, and by consistent growth of the Weizmann Primary School.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst the reasons for this change in attitude had not been specifically investigated, the Commission felt that it was obvious that it was due to the significant recent changes in political and sociological conditions in South Africa,<sup>2</sup> the increasing appeal of Israel, and last, but by no means least, the high standard of education at the Herzlia and Weizmann Schools.

It is arguable whether these reasons are sufficient to explain this change in attitude. The expansion of the day schools between 1959 and 1961 was not a sudden occurrence. The growth of the Day School Movement had, in fact, been gathering momentum since the beginning of the fifties and the support in the community had been cumulative since then. These were inter-related: the more pupils the schools had, the wider the circle in the community that was involved and that could be approached for support. The Commission may have misinterpreted the opinions of the 419 families surveyed, or the communal representatives it had consulted had themselves not adequately understood the growing importance of the Day School Movement in the community.

The Commission again urged that there be a general moratorium on communal spending<sup>3</sup> and recommended that the sponsoring bodies should inaugurate a local campaign for Herzlia, which

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1. Ibid., Clause F, Section 27, p 6.

2. The reference to the Sharpeville incident and its consequence on the internal and national political scenes.

3. Ibid., Clause G, Section 30, p 6.

was the prime priority.<sup>1</sup> It further recommended that charitable institutions (who were, it was common knowledge, in a sound financial position) should cover the fees waived by the School as remissions for deserving pupils.<sup>2</sup> It foresaw the establishment of a number of primary day schools,<sup>3</sup> linking up with Herzlia as a central high school, but until this was achieved the local Talmud Torahs should not be closed down, though it recommended that the Cape Town Talmud Torah be closed and merged with Herzlia.

Whilst not evaluating the nursery schools as part of the Jewish educational system, the report stated that it felt it was essential to avoid any gap between the time the child left the nursery school and was admitted to another Jewish school. If this gap was of any duration, the nursery school lost the greater part of its value.<sup>4</sup>

The report further recommended that the hostel for country children run by the Cape Board of Jewish Education in Incholm Place be closed down because of its unsuitability. It should be replaced at some time in the future by a hostel run in conjunction with the Herzlia School. It also considered the "possibility and desirability" of Oranjia, the Cape Jewish Orphanage in Oranjezicht, providing facilities for children of country districts. This matter, stated the Commission, should be reconsidered from time to time in the hope that the difficulties might be surmounted.<sup>5</sup> The Teachers' Seminary, which had only three students in 1959, should be closed at the earliest possible date.

The Commission reviewed the subject of the availability and training of teachers and concluded that there existed a reasonable possibility that the day schools would influence

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1. Ibid., Section 32.

2. Ibid., Clause H, Section 34, p 7.

3. Ibid., Clause J, Section 36B, p 7.

4. Ibid., Clause L, Section 38B, p 8.

5. Ibid., Clause M, Section 42, p 9

a number of its graduates to take up teaching as a career.<sup>1</sup> However, the immediate problem of finding Hebrew teachers remained unresolved. It would be necessary for some years to continue the policy of obtaining teachers from Israel, though the evidence laid before the Commission suggested that it was a policy which had not been completely successful. The ideal to be striven for was a teacher who had received training partly in South Africa and partly in Israel.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission reiterated the need for communal discipline so that the wider needs of the community should be given preference over "parochial interests and personal desires".<sup>3</sup> It recommended the setting up of a small permanent committee of leading members of the community which would have the authority to establish such discipline by virtue of its moral standing in the community. This recommendation led to the setting up of the Western Province Priorities' Board which has exercised control over the planning and erection of structures for all communal bodies and institutions.

The Herbstein Commission, the first such serious in-depth investigation of the problems of Jewish education at the Cape, made valuable suggestions and laid down guidelines for future development of education during the sixties and seventies.

It was the first charter in South Africa for the day school, and while it refrained from passing judgment on those aspects of education in which it felt itself unqualified - it expressly stated that those belonged to pedagogical experts - it identified them, suggested sober and practical ways of

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1. Ibid., Clause N, pp 9-10.

2. Ibid., Clause N, Section 5, p 10.

3. Ibid., Clause Q, Section 63, p 11.

solving the financial headaches of the community and, above all, introduced some sound proposals for bringing order and self-discipline into a situation which was fast reaching crisis point for the community, with ominous prospects of "calamitous results for the community."<sup>1</sup> It was, moreover, the "Charter of the Day Schools" in another sense: it was a survey by a publicly respected and recognised body, whose status and responsibility were accepted by the community.

In short, The Herbststein Commission unequivocally proclaimed to the community that the new educational institutions it had created - its day schools - were its total responsibility. This was what the community had by then accepted, and it was indeed the desirable position.

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1. Ibid., Clause E, Section 12, p 3.

CHAPTER 45: THE CAPE BOARD OF JEWISH EDUCATION: 1960-1970.

The Eleventh Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education welcomed Mr Asher Eliezer Rivlin who had arrived from Israel to succeed Dr Moar as Director of the Board in 1960.<sup>1</sup>

Reviewing the work of the Board, Mr Goldschmidt reported that the seminary had not been a success and he himself doubted the real value of the Board's religious instruction courses in departmental schools.<sup>2</sup> The hostel was also a serious problem because it was in a bad state of repair but the most glaring problems that faced them were the large number of children who were still not getting a Jewish education and the decreasing volume of tuition at Talmud Torahs, which had been reduced to three or even fewer times a week.<sup>3</sup> Mr Rivlin would revise the syllabuses for the Cape schools. Conference also heard that from 1962 Hebrew would be removed by the Joint Matriculation Board from its group of third languages, consisting of Latin, Greek, French and German, and would no longer count as an alternative to mathematics to fulfil certain requirements for admission to university.

The Conference accepted the recommendations of the Herbstein Report<sup>4</sup> and decided on emergency measures to obtain relief for the critical financial position of the Board and Herzlia.

Rivlin had had two-and-a-half years' service behind him when he reported to the Twelfth Conference in 1963 on the educational as well as organisational levels.<sup>5</sup> The new syllabus

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1. Report of the Eleventh Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 5 March 1961

2. "Chairman's Report to Conference", *ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. See pp 532 et seq.

5. Director's Report submitted to the Twelfth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 17 March 1963

for Hebrew schools had appeared and reflected a desirable amalgam of traditional-religious knowledge with modern Hebrew.<sup>1</sup> A seminary class had been re-established consisting of students selected on the basis of their sound knowledge of Hebrew, and was unique in this regard and unlikely to be repeated in the future. Of the 57 Hebrew teachers serving in the schools affiliated to the Board just less than half were qualified, most of the others were minister-teachers, and twelve were from Israel.<sup>2</sup>

Rivlin called for the expansion of "the vital institution known as the Day School" without in any way harming the interests of the Talmud Torah, which could, and should, derive its educational vitality, programmes and methods from the former.<sup>3</sup>

This was the two-stream education as understood by Rivlin, with the admittedly weaker one drawing sustenance from the stronger and for a certain time this simultaneous development continued before the one superseded the other. Order and efficiency in every aspect of organisation and administration were essential: the children were the first to note differences in this regard between their secular schools and their Talmud Torahs.<sup>4</sup>

Rivlin's dynamic and capable leadership was given early expression in his syllabus, with its interesting statement of

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1. Ibid., p 3.

2. Ibid., p 6.

3. Ibid., p 7.

4. Ibid., p 8.

aims and objectives of Hebrew education for the primary school, Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah examinations and Religious Instruction in secular schools.<sup>1</sup> Running to over one hundred pages it was the most detailed analysis hitherto made of the total body of instruction, didactics, methods of evaluation and time allocation for South African Jewish education on a scientific basis. The material was carefully classified for every subject according to standards, divided into sections for every term, given a suggested time allocation for major sub-sections, a scheme outlined for the evaluation of achievements and a detailed methodology indicated.<sup>2</sup>

Rivlin's initiative as well as his achievements in this field were unprecedented, and the publication of his syllabus marked a significant advance in Jewish education in this sub-continent. It has remained basically unchanged since then, its pedagogical relevance, its methodological effectiveness and its orderliness and comprehensiveness together constituting an educational achievement which has remained a model for others.

The Conference of the Board in 1963 welcomed the opening of the Herzlia branch in Rondebosch and referred to the first thirteen pupils from Weizmann who had proceeded to Herzlia High School at the beginning of the academic year.<sup>3</sup> The seminary had nine students who would in due course qualify to teach primary Hebrew.<sup>4</sup> The Board had reluctantly closed the hostel at the end of 1961 in accordance with the recommendation of the Herbstein Education Commission.<sup>5</sup>

The Commission had urged that a new hostel be attached to the Herzlia School and the Board had indeed acquired a site

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1. Rivlin, A E: HaTochnit shel HaLimudim Ha'Ivriim LeVatei HaSefer HaYomiim u-LeVatei HaSefer shel Aharei HatZohorayim: Hebrew: Syllabus of Hebrew Studies for the Day and Afternoon Schools (Cyclostyled, Cape Board of Jewish Education, Cape Town, 1961-1962). : See Appendix I.

2. Ibid., p 3.

3. Chairman's Report to the Twelfth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 17 March 1963.

4. Ibid., p 4.

5. Ibid., p 6.

adjoining the School for the purpose. With the closure of the hostel the Board lost the only institution under its direct control and once again became merely an advisory body with no power base except its moral authority.

The nursery schools could also report good progress, stated Mr Goldschmidt, who termed them as "an important recruiting field for the day schools and Talmud Torahs".<sup>1</sup> The Board entertained growing reservations about the value of Jewish religious instruction in secular schools. Whist the knowledge gained by the children was very slender it was liable to keep children out of Hebrew schools because parents regarded the Jewish tuition received in these classes as quite sufficient.<sup>2</sup> The Board finally decided to terminate this programme in the primary schools but it was being continued for a trial period in some high schools.<sup>3</sup>

A comprehensive picture of Jewish education at the Cape during the seven-year period from 1958 to 1964 was provided by Dr A E Rivlin in his review published in mid-1964.<sup>4</sup>

Whilst the numbers in the day schools had risen during this period those in the afternoon schools had decreased simultaneously, so that the actual numerical gain was just under 200 pupils, mostly girls, he notes with satisfaction.<sup>5</sup> Rivlin identified the problems besetting the afternoon school which had persisted in spite of numerous and varied endeavours in the past to solve them.<sup>6</sup> No survey had been made, added

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1. Ibid., p 7 : the enrolment exceeded 500 with waiting lists at most of the eleven schools.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Rivlin, A E: Hebrew Education in the Cape and South West Africa (Cape Board of Jewish Education, Cape Town, 1964 : cyclostyled).
  5. Ibid., pp 3-4 : interesting ratios were: boys to girls in the afternoon schools 70 per cent to 30 per cent.
  6. Ibid., p 4.

Rivlin, to ascertain the number of Jewish children who did not attend a Hebrew school, nor was there a responsible officer to deal with "public enlightenment"<sup>1</sup>, with statistical research, and with the publication of findings on attendances and enrolments.<sup>2</sup>

Looking for the reasons for these phenomena, Rivlin states that Jewish education ranks low in the scale of social values of the Jewish community. Secular education holds pride of place: it is the key to the social and economic future of the child and as such its demands are incomparably stronger than those of Jewish education. The eclipse of Jewish education for the girls after the Batmitzvah and the reasons for the absenteeism before that stage, are to be sought in the primacy for them of education in such social graces and accomplishments as dancing, elocution, music and art: over-emphasis on these admittedly valuable cultural pursuits worked first and foremost to the detriment of Hebrew education.<sup>3</sup>

The Jewish school is all too frequently out of touch - if not in direct conflict - with the home: it neither reflects the ideals of Jewish society nor does it mirror its mores. To that extent Jewish education becomes irrelevant to children and parents alike. Having attained the desirable objectives of Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah it has no further objectives ahead of it, has no further role to play in the real life of the child and the home and is therefore abandoned, leaving the entire adolescent field to secular

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1. Zlotnik termed it "propaganda" : see p 373

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p 6.

education.

For Rivlin, absenteeism was the main obstacle to progress and the most alarming problem.<sup>1</sup> He gave the average of 30 per cent absences at most of the afternoon schools and most of the teachers had long "lost the will and the strength to fight the evil", which not only irreparably harmed the quality and lessened the quantity of scholastic achievement but was also gravely damaging to the morale of the school and the community.<sup>2</sup> And what was amazing, added Rivlin, was that the curtailment of the five-day week to three or even two lessons weekly had not improved the position.

He was worried about the declining number of veteran teachers from Eastern Europe especially vital in the secondary sector and wondered who would take over from them, and perturbed too at the low ratio of male to female teachers at the Cape which did not exceed 1 to 5.<sup>3</sup> Especially serious was the growing shortage of minister-teachers for the small country schools.

The relationship between the day schools and the Board was normal and close which did not completely apply to the afternoon schools because of the difficulties inherent in their situation which were apt to lead to friction or at best to compromise. Lacking stable and firm compulsory guiding principles laid down by government educational authorities, the progress or retrogression of Hebrew schools depended on the quality of the men who constituted the school committees.<sup>4</sup> There were cases of "unhappy choices", stated Rivlin laconic-

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1. Ibid., p 7.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p 9.

4. Ibid., p 12.

ally.<sup>1</sup> Salary scales for teachers were outdated and riddled with anomalies. An interesting statistic is that an average number in a city class was 12, and in the country towns and villages only 5.<sup>2</sup>

Rivlin identified the nine main problems of this type of school as: a disturbing minority of qualified teachers and those capable of using modern teaching methods; the reduction of weekly teaching from 6 or 5 lessons to 3 or 2; irregular attendance; little homework; small and irregular attendance at children's services; late starting age (7, 8 or 9); arbitrary (first) enrolment, at any time during the year; the exodus at Barmitzvah/Batmitzvah age; non-homogeneous classes as regards age and achievements; numerous and frequent changes of staff.

An inherent defect in the constitutional structure of the educational system has perpetuated these problems - the Board's lack of legal authority. Because of this it was unable to tackle the faults which time and conditions had produced and which conservatism and plain inertia had done little to reform.<sup>3</sup>

The comprehensive syllabus for Cape schools, though not free of shortcomings, had delivered teachers from the interminable search after immediate and remote aims, from gropings for teaching methods, from the problem of looking for texts and teaching aids and from unnecessary worry concerned with the allocation of times to various subjects.....the syllabus had become a living manual in the hands of many teachers.<sup>4</sup>

Before he returned to Israel at the end of 1964 Rivlin initiated a tradition which has continued uninterruptedly since then. Matriculants were invited to officiate at

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1. Ibid., p 13.

2. Ibid., p 16.

3. Ibid., p 17.

4. Ibid., p 27.

all services on an appointed Sabbath annually, to render various scriptural and liturgical readings, and deliver short addresses appropriate to the occasion in a spirit of thanksgiving to mark the impending termination of their school careers. The first such special Matriculants' Sabbath took place on the Sabbath of 30/31 October 1964 in the Great Synagogue in Government Avenue and different synagogues in the city and suburbs became the venues for these celebrations during subsequent years.<sup>1</sup>

Mr Z Lenz, who succeeded Dr Rivlin at the end of 1964, drew up an interesting memorandum on the future of the day school - as he perceived it - for the consideration of the Board.<sup>2</sup> Herzlia School had at the time been faced with the urgent problem of finding suitable alternative accommodation for its little Southern Suburbs Branch which had to move out of the premises of the Rondebosch Hebrew Congregation where it had been originally established.<sup>3</sup>

Mr Lenz strongly implied that the leaders of Herzlia were misled in desiring to undertake further expansion of their institution. In his opinion it had already reached optimum size, though he understood their motives and enthusiasm to establish branches - in this case the one in the Southern Suburbs which was encountering problems at the time.<sup>4</sup>

What was needed therefore was a centralised body to popularise the Jewish day school and to plan the establishment of such institutions where required. The unwillingness of the

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1. See "Memorandum from the Headmaster of Herzlia to the School Executive" 5 October 1964.
  2. Lenz, Z: "Memorandum dealing with the Future of the Day Schools in the Area of the Cape": submitted to the Chairman of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 1 September 1965: the memorandum flowed from a joint meeting of the Board and the Herzlia Committee convened to deal with this, and other problems.
  3. See pp 557-558
  4. Ibid., p 1.

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  3. See pp 557-558,
  4. Ibid., p 1.

Rondebosch and Claremont Congregations to co-operate in providing suitable premises for the day school showed that such endeavours, however well-intentioned, would not be the correct way of establishing additional day schools.<sup>1</sup>

Pointing to another negative aspect of the existing situation, Mr Lenz deplored what he regarded as the open competition and even rivalry between Weizmann and Herzlia day schools, who vied with each other and gave the impression that they regarded themselves - and acted - as different bodies. The solution was, thought Mr Lenz, to create one central body to take charge of the day schools and take initiatives where necessary. Such a central body would have the power to tackle such long-standing problems as pensions and teacher training for all schools of the region. In addition, such a body would be able to introduce unity in the "character and ideology" of the day schools - a clear enough reference to differences in policy and objectives apparent for some time between Herzlia and Weizmann.

Such a central body should be the Board of Education. Its first tasks would be the consolidation of the troubled day school in the Southern Suburbs, then proceed to investigate the need for a similar school in the Northern Suburbs and, finally, seek the reasons for the unwelcome phenomenon of the "fall-off" of Weizmann pupils who pass Standard V and do not continue with their Jewish education at Herzlia High School. A solution for the last problem, Mr Lenz considered, might lie in extending Weizmann to include one or two high school standards, or in giving a new direction to Herzlia by converting it into a Comprehensive School to cater for those Weizmann pupils whose parents feared their children would be

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1. Ibid., p 2.

unable to cope with the allegedly high academic levels of Herzlia.<sup>1</sup>

Mr Lenz returned to the subject of centralisation in his report to the Thirteenth Conference of the Board some six months later.<sup>2</sup> Not all of the 24 schools under the supervision of the Board were, implied the Director, carrying out the spirit and letter of the syllabus. There was need for unified control to effect more efficient administration and, more particularly, to compel all schools to abide by the educational goals laid down for all by the Board in the unified syllabus. This strongly confirmed his argument in favour of a central educational authority which he had advanced as a solution to the problems of the day schools and which he had set out in his memorandum of September 1965.<sup>3</sup>

Mr Goldschmidt estimated that only 50-60 per cent of Jewish school-going children were receiving a Hebrew education.<sup>4</sup> The problem of the teacher-shortage had evaded solution and regrettably a number of Talmud Torahs had had to yield to pressure on the part of parents to reduce the hours of

1. Ibid. Mr Lenz had had experience of the comprehensive schools in Israel but obviously was not aware that there was no such institution in the school system of the Cape Education Department, though the curriculum made provision for a number of practical subjects like Typewriting, Woodwork, Shorthand and Art, which Herzlia already offered to less academically inclined pupils.
2. Director's Report submitted to the Thirteenth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 27 March 1966.
3. See pp 547-8 : Mr Lenz reiterated that only the Chief Rabbi, by virtue of his long-standing sponsorship of the day schools, and as the ideological guide of Jewish education, together with the Executive of the Board of Education were the only ones to decide on the opening of day schools: see Director's Report to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit., p 4. The issue of centralisation was to continue to engage the attention of the Board and the various school committees, especially that of Herzlia, for some years and was only settled by the Hoffman Commission of Enquiry in 1973.
4. Chairman's Report to the Thirteenth Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education, p 1. There were 1 338 pupils in the day schools and 1 031 in the Talmud Torahs: ibid., p 2

tuition.<sup>1</sup> The Board had published a number of texts and educational aids at considerable expense.<sup>2</sup>

The enrolment at the Hebrew nursery schools had grown to over 700 and besides the supervision exercised by the Board daily Hebrew lectures had also been provided at Barkly House for students and seminars organised for serving teachers.<sup>3</sup> Study days<sup>4</sup> were also held every quarter for other teachers.

Mr Goldschmidt reviewed the welcome progress and growth of the day schools and the opening of the Herzlia School Hostel. Professor Z Adar, Head of the School of Education at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, had been invited to carry out an investigation of Jewish educational institutions in South Africa in the latter part of 1964 and the comprehensive reports of his study had been received by the Board which would give its serious consideration to its recommendations.

Mr H Dagan, who had followed Mr Lenz as Director in July 1967, expressed his reservations about the educational validity of the personal examinations carried out by his predecessors and demanded that the system be replaced by an objective evaluation of results.<sup>5</sup> He was even more doubtful about the usefulness and reliability of the written reports on these examinations sent to school committees: he preferred personal discussions.<sup>6</sup> He too opened a "seminary" which turned out to be, as in previous cases, no more than several lessons a week strung together to serve as an intensive course in Hebrew together

1. Ibid., p 2.

2. These included: Laws and Customs (M Herczl and A E Rivlin) Parts I & II: Roneod: Am Yisrael (A E Rivlin and Z Amit): Hebrew: The People of Israel - a history: Mavo LaTanach (Rivlin, Rosen and Rubinowitz) Hebrew: Introduction to the Bible Text for Secondary Classes.

3. The Chairman's Report, op.cit., pp 5-6

4. Yemei Iyyun : Hebrew: Study Days: intensive refresher courses.

5. Director's Report submitted to the Fourteenth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 18 August 1968, p 2.

6. Ibid., p 3.

with elements of method.<sup>1</sup> He endeavoured to find a solution to the worrying problem of the high "fall-out" from Weizmann in addition to dealing with the other intractable problems of the afternoon school; these he summed up in the telling sentence - "the afternoon school desk has a negative psychological effect on the child".<sup>2</sup> To attract the child, then, ways should be found to make his stay at (afternoon) school "attractive and enjoyable" argued Mr Dagan and he proposed a novel approach to effect this. A play-room should be established alongside the school equipped with educational games, suitable magazines and books, as well as audio-visual material. He also stressed the value of school assemblies, but omitted to add suitably organised outdoor and indoor games under supervision.<sup>3</sup>

He also touched on the subject of centralisation which had been in the air for some years. The issue, however, came to a head during the tenure of office of his successor, Mr A Zeevi.

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1. Ibid., p 4.

2. Ibid., p 5.

3. Ibid., p 6.

CHAPTER 46: HERZLIA SCHOOLS: 1960-1980

The last two decades have witnessed the continued growth and the ascendancy of the Jewish day schools in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth as the normative institution of Jewish education in the community. There has been a deepening and extension of their social base, their academic reputation has been firmly established, the expansion of their facilities has proceeded apace in spite of intermittent financial crises which may have inhibited this development for short periods here and there.

In the new complex in Highlands Estate<sup>1</sup> the numbers rose steadily from year to year so that the School underwent extensions on several occasions.<sup>2</sup>

The sound levels in Hebrew were also well-known. Rabbi I Goss was invited to carry out an inspection and submitted a laudatory report to the Committee.<sup>3</sup> Parents were playing an increasingly active role in the running of the School and actually constituted the majority on the Committee.<sup>4</sup> So crowded were the premises at Highlands

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1. Originally named the Charles Resnekov Educational Centre by agreement with the Cape Board of Jewish Education which co-operated with the United Hebrew Schools in acquiring the site after the end of the war. See p 492
  2. Enrolments rose from 773 in 1960 to 852 in 1965, reaching 1 000 in 1973. After the accession of Weizmann Primary School in 1976 the enrolment figure was 1 711. In 1980 the total enrolment was 2 143, of which number 1 010 were girls. The main growth point was in the Southern Suburbs Primary Branch.
  3. Report of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia for the year ending 31 July 1960 submitted to the Annual General Meeting 6 July 1961.
  4. Ibid.

that the infant classes had to be returned to the Hope Street school for a time.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the usual sporting and cultural activities there gradually developed at Herzlia a range of extra-mural activities directly associated with the various festivals and days of note in the Jewish calendar to supplement and consolidate the work in the class-room or to highlight certain religious customs and ceremonies.

....these serve to engage the imagination and sentiments of the child and constitute some of the invaluable qualities of the day school.<sup>2</sup>

Another tradition which crystallised at the School was that of trilingualism in a number of fields.<sup>3</sup>

Visitors from overseas or other parts of the sub-continent were almost invariably taken to see what their hosts regarded as one of the major institutions of the Jewish community. This contact with interesting personalities and stimulating ideas became for many children a valuable educational experience.

Mr A E Rivlin, the Director of the Cape Board of Jewish Education, who had been brought out from Israel in succession to Dr Moar, concerned himself actively with the Hebrew studies at the School and compiled the first anthology for the study of Hebrew literature in the senior High School.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid. : Principal's Report.

3. The School magazine carried articles and reports in English, Afrikaans and Hebrew: and the annual dramatic presentations almost invariably offered plays in each of these three languages: see Headmaster's Report at Speech Night 6 December 1960.

4. Rivlin, A E: (ed): Leket Herzlia (Hebrew: Herzlia Anthology): Bible and Literary Selections for Standards IX and X of the Herzlia School. (Cyclostyle process: Cape Town, 1961)

The School motto was announced at speech night in 1961.<sup>1</sup> It consisted of the first two words of Theodor Herzl's famous call to the Jewish People,<sup>2</sup> appropriate enough to the School which bore his name and educationally apposite as well.

The year 1962 saw an important and unprecedented development in the history of Jewish education in Southern Africa when the principals and heads of Hebrew Departments of the Jewish day schools assembled at Herzlia in the first conference of this nature to be convened in this country. It was in itself symbolic of the new type of school that had emerged during the second-half of the century and the new spirit that had engendered it.

Inter-school contacts had gradually evolved since the first Herzlia contingent set off for King David in 1957 to play a series of sports fixtures and participate in cultural and other functions.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the absence of co-operation between the governing bodies of the Schools and the two Boards of Jewish Education, principals realised the need to meet in order to consult together on problems common to all day schools and to share their experience in this new area of Jewish education.<sup>4</sup>

The newer and smaller schools received the suggestion of a meeting readily, desirous as they were to learn from the

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1. Principal's Report at Speech Night: 27 November 1961
  2. Im Tirzu En Zu Aggada (Hebrew: If you wish it, it will not remain a legend) The motto was composed of IM TIRZU - If you wish it.
  3. These visits have taken place annually since then, each School acting host to the other in alternate years. The contingents exceeded a hundred pupils on occasion and the visits afforded a means of valuable personal contact on pupil and parent levels.
  4. The idea of such a meeting began to crystallise during the Herzlia-King David inter-school visits of the previous four or five years.

valuable experience of the older-established schools which had much to offer that was useful. It was to mark the beginning of the end of the virtual isolation in which each school existed and was to open the period of regular co-operation and consultation on the professional and personal levels which was to serve as a paradigm for the ultimately similar close co-operation amongst Jewish schools in this country in later years.<sup>1</sup> The headmasters pointed out the way for the lay leaders to co-ordinate their efforts in solving some of the main problems common to all schools to the benefit of all.<sup>2</sup>

The steady expansion of the School aggravated its financial problems and on occasion led to crises which forced the leadership to turn for urgent assistance to the main communal bodies such as the Zionist Council and the Cape Committee of the Board of Deputies.<sup>3</sup> The annual general meeting of 1962 was informed that the School was trying to obtain greater support from the United Communal Fund to help cover the growing deficits which were carried forward from one year to the next "with no prospect of paying".<sup>4</sup>

The Talmud Torah was declining rapidly and the report of the principal, Mr Avin, in 1961 read like a poignant dirge for an historic institution approaching the end of the road.<sup>5</sup> He

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1. Principal's Report at Speech Night, 11 December 1962
  2. This co-operation enabled the schools to speak with one voice in their approaches to the S A Zionist Federation and S A Jewish Board of Deputies for support on the one hand, and the State educational authorities, on the other.
  3. See the Herbstein Commission Report which recommended a financial drive to relieve the School of its heavy accumulated financial burdens. These bodies, together with the Cape Board of Jewish Education, organised the Western Province Jewish Day School Campaign for this purpose: See Report to the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia 9 August 1962.
  4. Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting, 9 August 1962.
  5. Report of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia for the year ending 31 December 1960 submitted to the Annual General Meeting 6 July 1961.

recalled the words of a former chairman who had stated that the day when the Talmud Torah would be closed and the day school would be full to capacity would be a great day in the annals of Jewish education at the Cape. That "great day", wrote Mr Avin in his report, was at hand: "Of its former brilliance only a spark is left....to light up but seven classes".<sup>1</sup> Mr Avin's long association with the Cape Town Talmud Torah came to an end when he resigned in December 1961 to assume the principalship of the Talmud Torah in Sea Point.

The first group of pupils who had passed Standard V at the Weizmann Primary School were admitted into Herzlia High School at the beginning of 1963.<sup>2</sup> The Committee was obviously disappointed that only about half the number who had completed the primary stage of the day school at Sea Point were continuing with their secondary education at Herzlia.<sup>3</sup> Mr S Walt was prompted to tell the meeting that unless the seven years of Jewish primary education was properly completed at a Jewish high school it was a negation of the whole purpose of Jewish day school education and a waste of the labour and the money expended by the community.<sup>4</sup> This problem was to remain a cause for concern and even generated some tension between the leadership of the two Schools during the next decade.<sup>5</sup>

Not unconnected with this issue but more positive in

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1. Mr Avin's Report: Ibid.
  2. Report submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia 24 July 1963.
  3. Eleven pupils went on to Herzlia High School.
  4. Ibid., Chairman's Report
  5. See, for example, *ibid.*, 3 December 1967.

significance was the establishment in 1963 of a branch of the School in Rondebosch to cater for the children residing in the southern suburbs of the city.<sup>1</sup> Few were coming in from Sea Point where Weizmann was attracting most of the enrolments and of these, barely a half was ultimately proceeding to Herzlia High School. There were growing congregations with many young families in the suburban centres south of the city, and the Committee saw that the potential for expansion lay in that area. It would itself take the initiative in establishing a school but would ensure that such a branch remain closely bound to Herzlia in order to obviate a repetition of the problem connected with Weizmann.<sup>2</sup>

When an approach was made by a number of parents residing in the area for a day school to be opened there they found the Committee receptive to the suggestion. The Rondebosch Hebrew Congregation agreed to provide a classroom in its premises and the first branch of Herzlia was opened there in January 1963.<sup>3</sup>

The growth of the little school was slow;<sup>4</sup> the Committee, anxious about the restricted accommodation and fearful of escalating expenditure it might involve itself in, set its sights modestly on a preparatory school.<sup>5</sup>

A crisis occurred when the Rondebosch Congregation decided it could no longer accommodate the little school and the

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1. Principal's Report at Speech Night, 10 December 1963.

2. See p 556

3. There were eight children in the Sub A class: see Report to the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia 24 July 1963.

4. There were under 40 pupils on the roll in the first three standards by 1965: see Report to the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia 20 October 1965

5. Ibid.

Committee had to turn to the Claremont Congregation with a request to house the classes in its Talmud Torah premises. There was opposition in the Congregation to admitting the day school<sup>1</sup> but permission was finally granted and the Southern Suburbs Branch moved across to Claremont in 1966 where it shared classrooms with the afternoon school of the Congregation. There it remained until it moved into its own buildings in Constantia in 1973.

In the meantime the Cape Town Talmud Torah continued to decline; its enrolment dropped and a three-period week was introduced.<sup>2</sup> Symbolic of the imminent end of the Talmud Torah was the decision to sell the old premises in Hope Street which by then housed only the few afternoon classes.<sup>3</sup>

The buildings in Highlands had to be expanded to accommodate the growing school<sup>4</sup> and plans were launched in 1964 to erect a hostel near the School.<sup>5</sup> At the same annual meeting Mr Walt made another call to Jewish schools for mutual co-operation stating that no Jewish school in the Republic could exist in a vacuum: problems were not specific to any school or province but were common to all.<sup>6</sup>

He reiterated that the School would continue to adhere to the principle that, notwithstanding the growing financial problems besetting it, Herzlia would not lower educational standards

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1. Some elements opposed the day school in principle whereas some leaders feared that it would draw off pupils from their Talmud Torah.
  2. Report to the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia 24 July 1963.
  3. Ibid., 29 July 1964.
  4. Ibid., 20 October 1965.
  5. Ibid.
  6. Ibid.

for the sake of effecting financial economies: in the main, classes would not be overcrowded and staffing levels would be maintained at desirable levels.<sup>1</sup>

An interesting innovation was the Shabbat Habogrim<sup>2</sup> which was introduced in 1964 at the suggestion of Dr Rivlin. Another special tradition was the Family Barmitzvah Service for boys who were due to celebrate their Barmitzvah in the ensuing half-year.<sup>3</sup> These services were organised with the full participation of pupils in order to make their educational impact as effective as possible and became valuable traditions at the School.<sup>4</sup>

1964 also saw the beginning of the Ulpan<sup>5</sup> Project, when a contingent of eight pupils from Standard VIII joined the South African Schools' Ulpan in Jerusalem during the last quarter of the year on this intensive Hebrew course "to improve their Hebrew and their minds and revive their spirits".<sup>6</sup>

The foundation-stone of the new hostel was laid in 1965

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1. Ibid.

2. Shabbat Habogrim: Hebrew - Matriculants' Sabbath: boys and girls of Standard X classes officiated at all the services on a fixed sabbath, read scriptural selections, delivered addresses and participated in functions of a social nature in their honour; it was a form of thanksgiving service to mark the end of their school careers.

3. Girls who were preparing for their Batmitzvah were later included.

4. Principal's Report at Speech Night, 7 December 1964.

5. Ulpan: Hebrew - intensive course of study, academy. The first group (from King David High) had gone on a similar course at the end of the previous year. The Ulpan scheme had crystallised from discussions between Mr Nahum Levin, Director of the Department of Education and Culture of the World Zionist Organisation and the writer during the former's visit to Herzlia in 1955. See the S A Jewish Chronicle of 1 April 1955 for a report of an address by Mr Levin to the S A Zionist Federation in Johannesburg on this subject. The writer discussed this suggestion with Mr N Sandler, Headmaster of the King David School, during subsequent meetings. Mr Sandler succeeded in organising the first scholars' Ulpan in 1963.

6. Principal's Report at Speech Night, 7 December 1964.

in preparation for its opening at the beginning of the following year.<sup>1</sup>

"Meet the Community" Project was another valuable innovation introduced in 1965. Pupils of Standard X were taken to visit various institutions of the community and were able to learn at first hand of the organisational structure of its welfare and cultural bodies. The experiment was a success and became another tradition at Herzlia.<sup>2</sup>

Inter-school meets were expanded to include primary schools when the first contingents from Weizmann and Herzlia travelled to Theodor Herzl in Port Elizabeth.<sup>3</sup>

Mr Walt returned to the subject of inter-school consultation<sup>4</sup> and announced that Herzlia would welcome the opportunity of having discussions on a national level on the recommendations of the Adar Report which had been issued earlier.<sup>5</sup>

The hostel opened in 1966 with 24 boarders from country towns and work finally began on developing the urgently needed sports fields at the nearby van Riebeeck Park.<sup>6</sup>

The enrolment in 1967 exceeded one thousand for the first time, with 75 children in the Southern Suburbs Branch at Claremont.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Report to the Annual General Meeting 20 October 1965.

2. Principal's Report at Speech Night, 8 December 1965

3. Ibid.

4. Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia 9 November 1966

5. Adar, Z: Jewish Education in South Africa: The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. 1965

6. The School's poor facilities spurred on Mr D Davson, a member of the executive, to undertake this single-handed: see Report to the Annual General Meeting 9 November 1966.

7. Report to the Annual General Meeting 3 December 1967.

And once again Mr Walt enunciated the basic principle that "Herzlia belongs to the community" and would accept every Jewish child whose parents wanted to give him a Jewish education: to effect this the School would even provide extra Hebrew coaching to help new pupils to adjust to the Hebrew levels at Herzlia.<sup>1</sup>

The need for extra accommodation at Claremont arose with the growth of the Southern Suburbs Branch<sup>2</sup> but the Congregation rejected the School's proposal to construct extensions to their existing Talmud Torah premises and the Committee - supported by the parents of the Branch School - came to the unavoidable conclusion that a new school site would have to be found and a new building erected.<sup>3</sup> To relieve the acute pressure on space it was decided to move the higher class of the Southern Suburbs Branch to the School at Highlands at the beginning of 1969 where they were integrated with the Standard V's there.<sup>4</sup>

As no suitable text was available, the School published a literary anthology for Standards VIII and IX Hebrew.<sup>5</sup> The hostel was filled to capacity with a waiting list for 1968-1969.<sup>6</sup>

An historic decision was taken in 1968. The Cape Town Talmud Torah which had been housed at the Herzlia building

1. Ibid.

2. There were 112 pupils on the roll by 1968.

3. Report of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia for the year ending 31 December 1967 submitted to the Annual General Meeting in 1968.

4. Ibid.

5. Katz, M E: (ed): Leket Herzlia: Helek Beth (Hebrew: Herzlia Anthology Part II) (Herzlia School, Cape Town, 1967)

6. Report to the Annual General Meeting 3 December 1967: extra accommodation had to be rented in 1969.

at Highlands since the Hope Street school had been sold some years previously, was to be closed and the remaining pupils would be absorbed by the Sea Point Talmud Torah.<sup>1</sup> Mr Gitlin's "great day" had arrived,<sup>2</sup> but implicit in his phrase was the hope that the Cape Town Talmud Torah would in all certainty produce an educational institution better and greater than itself, and in this respect Gitlin was vindicated historically. The Cape Town Heder, as it was popularly known, had found a new lease of life in successfully responding to new challenges and to the demands of new times. Other Talmud Torahs had failed to do so, and in failing to adapt had perforce to disappear, or, at best, to decline to a position of minor significance in Jewish education.

After its metamorphosis into Herzlia, Cape Town's communal Jewish educational institution reached levels of achievement hardly dreamt of by the pioneers who had led it during its earlier years and struggled to build up its image as the premier Hebrew School of the whole community of the city.

It had planted the seeds of its resurrection within itself when it had established its "internal branch" a generation and more previously.<sup>3</sup>

Annual reports of the late sixties refer to the continued growth of Herzlia and the resulting serious pressures on the

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1. Report of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia for the year ending 31 December 1967.

2. See p 556

3. See p 281 for Alexander Levin's description of the opening of the first morning classes in the Talmud Torah in Hope Street, Cape Town.

available accommodation,<sup>1</sup> the great value derived from visitors of note<sup>2</sup> and the growing scope of the inter-schools' sporting and cultural meetings in which the newer Jewish high schools elsewhere in the Republic participated keenly.<sup>3</sup>

An interesting innovation in the field of Hebrew studies was the introduction of the Hebrew Language Examination (Eida) set by the Cape Board of Jewish Education.<sup>4</sup>

The desirability of greater contacts between Jewish day schools in the Republic beyond those created at the pupils' level was again aired in public.<sup>5</sup> There were no moral or logical reasons except plain inertia and parochialism why the component parts of the new and expanding Jewish educational system should be permitted to continue their existence in virtual isolation when co-operation and co-ordination had so many advantages to offer.<sup>6</sup>

In an obvious reference to the high drop-out of pupils completing Weizmann School the School announced that pupils whose parents intended to keep them at Herzlia only until they reached Barmitzvah would not be accepted into the school.<sup>7</sup>

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1. In 1968 there were 70 pupils in the matriculation classes, the highest number ever. See Headmaster's Report at Speech Night 10 December 1968.
  2. A visitor of note to the School in 1969 was Mr David Ben-Gurion.
  3. King David High School (Victory Park) and Carmel High of Pretoria accepted invitations to come to Herzlia to join the traditional contingent from King David High at Linksfield in 1968.
  4. Eida : Acronym from Irgun Dovrei'Ivrit : Hebrew - Organisation of Hebrew Speakers. Mr A Zeevi, Director of the Board based this examination on the Afrikaans Taalbond Examinations which gave him the idea.
  5. Headmaster's Report at Speech Night 9 December 1969
  6. The exception to this was The Theodor Herzl School in Port Elizabeth which maintained close and friendly contacts with Herzlia.
  7. Headmaster's Report at Speech Night 13 October 1970: the application form was duly altered to include a clause to this effect.

No meeting of headmasters had taken place since the initial one in 1962 when there were only two Jewish high schools in South Africa.<sup>1</sup> The lay and professional leadership in Johannesburg were not convinced of the immediate benefits of maintaining ongoing contacts on such a formal basis so that further meetings were discontinued. In the interval new Jewish high schools had been established in various centres and it was these who strongly supported the move for such meetings to be resumed. Herzlia once again took the initiative to convene such a conference in Cape Town in August 1970 when the Association of Headmasters of Jewish Schools was established.<sup>2</sup>

There were two important curricular innovations in Jewish studies in the high school during the early seventies. A comprehensive programme for Contemporary Jewish Studies was organised round nineteen main themes dealing with current issues and problems confronting Jewish society in the modern world.<sup>3</sup> The second innovation was the introduction of a Jewish Sources Programme into the Senior High School, intended to introduce pupils to the main stream of Jewish Thought through the study of selected texts, in Hebrew as well as in English, ranging from Scripture to twentieth century thinkers.<sup>4</sup>

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1. See p 603

2. By this time Jewish schools were responsible for the education of some 6 000 children. See Headmaster's Report at Speech Night 13 October 1970.

3. Katz, M E and Cohen, M: Contemporary Jewish Studies (Hebrew: Yediat Yahadut Yameinu) ; Syllabus for Senior classes of the Herzlia High School (cyclostyled: 1970) The emphasis in this programme was on the exposition of the current nature of the problem area and on discussion rather than on formal instruction. The historical setting was included as written work and research to reinforce the work in the class. The less formal method was an integral part of the new programme.

4. Katz, M E: (ed): Toda'ah Yehudit (Hebrew: Jewish Consciousness) Selection of source material for Standard X. Hebrew, with some English translations. (Photostat process, Herzlia School, Cape Town 1972). Toda'ah Yehudit, Part II, Selection of source material in Hebrew (with some translations) for Standards VIII and IX (Herzlia School, 1974)

The introduction of the Differentiated System of Education in the Cape presented a serious problem for Herzlia and indeed for the other Jewish high schools in the country. This concerned the decision of the Joint Matriculation Board to group Hebrew with the subjects which could be offered on the standard grade only, whereas other classical and modern languages were given the status of higher grade subjects.<sup>1</sup>

The School took the initiative in an endeavour to reverse this proposed relegation of Hebrew to what was in effect an inferior status<sup>2</sup> and co-ordinated similar representations by the Association of Headmasters of Jewish Schools and by Rabbi I Goss to this end.<sup>3</sup> These endeavours were successful and in due course when the Differentiated System of Education was introduced into Standard VIII in 1974<sup>4</sup> Hebrew was classified as a subject to be taken on the higher grade and included in the "third language group".<sup>5</sup>

The Inspectors of the Cape Education Department who carried out the first full panel inspection of the School reported that "in most respects Herzlia was well up to the level of the best Departmental schools".<sup>6</sup>

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1. These constituted the "third language" group. At least three subjects taken on the higher grade were required for university entrance; in addition, the mark allocated to such subjects was 400 instead of 350 for a subject on the standard grade.
  2. Shorthand and woodwork, amongst others, were standard grade subjects.
  3. See Memorandum submitted by the Herzlia School to Mr S Theron, Director of Education for the Cape, 6 October 1971 (typed): also Headmaster's Report at Speech Night 17 October 1972.
  4. The School had been invited to assist in the drawing up of the core syllabuses in Hebrew for the Joint Matriculation Board and the Cape Education Department as part of the new curriculum of the Differentiated System of Education: see Headmaster's Report at Speech Night 17 October 1972.
  5. For about a decade during the late fifties and early sixties Hebrew was not included in the same group as modern and classical languages ("third languages") and did not carry equal weight in meeting the requirements for matriculation exemption.
  6. Headmaster's Seventeenth Annual Report at 1971 Speech Night Function.

The tradition of inter-school contacts reached its climax when over 220 pupils from other Jewish high schools in the Republic gathered at Herzlia for a School Maccabiada of sporting and cultural functions.<sup>1</sup> The second meeting of the Association of Headmasters of Jewish Schools took place in Pretoria during the year,<sup>2</sup> and the report called for the creation of a National Council for Jewish Education which would provide a framework for co-operation and co-ordination of effort on the part of all the Jewish day schools in Southern Africa.<sup>3</sup>

The School's first permanent synagogue was consecrated in the same year after having been moved from one temporary location in the school buildings to another.<sup>4</sup>

The School's financial position became much stronger in the seventies. The United Communal Fund<sup>5</sup> had increased its contribution and there was also increasing support from institutions and charitable foundations.<sup>6</sup> It established an endowment fund to cover the shortfalls in the fees which were fully or partially reduced for almost one-fifth of the pupils.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. This was the first permanent home of the Minyan Joseph Congregation since its foundation in the old Hope Street school in 1926. The furnishings and appointments were transferred from the synagogue of the defunct Malmesbury Hebrew Congregation. See Headmaster's Report at Speech Night 17 October 1972.

5. Parents of the School took an increasingly active part in running the Fund and became the leading figures in it. The Fund in time created a favourable image for itself in the community for careful budgeting and control of the spending of its beneficiaries.

6. Report of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia for the year ending 31 December 1972.

7. This was the Herzlia Remissions Trust Fund.

At the end of the year came the news that the School had been awarded the Shazar Prize for Jewish Education in the Diaspora "for its all-round achievements in the cause of Jewish and Hebrew Education".<sup>1</sup> Herzlia was the first South African Jewish educational institution to receive this honour.<sup>2</sup>

The new school to house the Southern Suburbs Branch was opened in Constantia in April 1973 by the veteran communal leader and former chairman of Herzlia, Mr M H Goldschmidt.<sup>3</sup>

The year was saddened first by the passing of Mr Sydney Walt, a builder-pioneer of Herzlia and its chairman during a long period of its development, and then by the trauma of the Yom Kippur War.<sup>4</sup>

The Southern Suburbs Branch far exceeded its expected growth and reached an enrolment of 260 in its new complex at Constantia and the first class of the Herzlia Preparatory School was opened in Milnerton.<sup>5</sup> Pointing to the clear evidence of public interest in, and support of, the School, Mr W Robinson could state in his report to the annual general meeting that "the community regards Jewish education today as its top priority, and Herzlia as its own institution".<sup>6</sup> Significant was Mr Robinson's statement that regular meetings were taking place between the lay-leaders of all Jewish

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1. Report for the year ending 31 December 1972, op.cit.
  2. The award was established to mark the eightieth birthday of the President of the State of Israel, Mr Z Shazar, to be made to outstanding Jewish schools and educationists in the Diaspora.
  3. The enrolment of the School was 174: Mrs L Perlman was the principal.
  4. The Schools' Ulpan Group remained in Israel during the War and at the end of the year 20 senior pupils spent the summer vacation in Israel where they were billeted in private homes of pupils of the host school in Ramat Gan.
  5. Report of the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia 17 July 1974. The total enrolment exceeded 1 100: by 1975 the roll at Southern Suburbs rose to 310. The Committee pursued a vigorous policy of "recruitment".
  6. Ibid.: Chairman's Report: this had been the ideal - and claim - of the United Hebrew Schools of Cape Town for the previous fifty years.

educational bodies in the Republic and that there were hopes "to form a national body to co-operate on those problems which were common to all".<sup>1</sup>

The Practical Course provided by the Differentiated System of Education which was being implemented in the High School was introduced in 1974<sup>2</sup> and a drastic fall was reported in the number of country children at the hostel, which was attributed to the decline of the Jewish population of outlying areas.<sup>3</sup>

An interesting event was the first visit to the School of an Administrator of the Cape: Mr A H Vosloo was welcomed at Herzlia towards the end of October and his presence symbolised the friendly contacts between the School and the Education Department.

An historic development was the decision of the Weizmann Primary School to amalgamate with Herzlia.<sup>4</sup> This was evidence of the growing unity in the community, as well as the realisation of the obvious advantages of forming part of a well-integrated complex of day schools with over 1 300 pupils.<sup>5</sup> On the territorial scene there was a definite move towards closer co-operation with the leadership of the S A Board of Jewish Education.<sup>6</sup> Mr S J Lifschitz was transferred as Senior Primary Principal in charge of Weizmann, in succession to Mr I J Cohen, and on the retirement of the

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1. Ibid.

2. Headmaster's Report at Speech Night 23 October 1974

3. Report of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia for the year ending 31 December 1974. In 1975 there were only 19 country children in the hostel of a total of 32.

4. Headmaster's Report at Speech Night 20 October 1975

5. The Weizmann leadership saw the rapid growth of the Herzlia Southern Suburbs Branch: there were 390 pupils on the roll at this school in 1976.

6. This was almost certainly accelerated by the unsettled political conditions of the second half of 1976.

writer in 1977, Mr M D Kessel, Principal of Carmel College, Durban, was appointed principal of Herzlia.

The annual general meeting in 1976 authorised the change of the name of the School to the United Herzlia Schools to reflect the new situation created by the accession of Weizmann.<sup>1</sup>

More and more city children were being admitted to the hostel and the Committee initiated discussions with the Oranjia Jewish Orphanage on the possibility of amalgamation for the purpose of creating a children's home to meet the needs of all Jewish children of the community requiring accommodation and special attention.<sup>2</sup>

The enrolment of the United Herzlia Schools in 1976 reached 1 711 children and additional accommodation had to be provided at all three centres to cope with the rising numbers.<sup>3</sup>

The annual general meeting in 1977 heard that the enrolment had climbed to close on 1 900, that the hostel had been amalgamated with Oranjia and the building would be converted to house the Primary School at Highlands.<sup>4</sup> An estimated sixty per cent of all Jewish Sub A children were pupils at Herzlia.<sup>5</sup> The report stated that the Parent-Teachers' Associations of all constituent schools had combined under

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1. Report of the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia 15 September 1976

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Report submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the United Herzlia Schools 9 October 1977.

5. Ibid.

a Co-ordinating Council which was devoting more attention to cultural programmes in addition to customary fund-raising activities long associated with these bodies.<sup>1</sup>

In his chairman's report to the annual general meeting in 1978<sup>2</sup> Mr Levitt referred to the establishment of a Jewish Studies Department under Rabbi L W Herring to integrate and co-ordinate instruction in religion and tradition previously included in the complex of Hebrew studies.<sup>3</sup> Hebrew would remain a compulsory subject for all pupils.<sup>4</sup> The School "enjoyed a close relationship"<sup>5</sup> with the S A Board of Jewish Education, reported Mr Levitt, and co-operated with it on such matters as finance, teacher training, Ulpan, and general policy.<sup>6</sup>

The report submitted to the annual general meeting in 1979<sup>7</sup> recorded that the Primary School had occupied the converted hostel and that a special refresher course of eight months' duration had been organised at the Hebrew University for

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1. Ibid.
  2. 17 September 1978.
  3. The actual number of Hebrew periods was reduced to eight a week, whilst three were allocated to Jewish Studies.
  4. The Herzlia representatives had introduced a motion to this effect - to be binding on all schools affiliated to the S A Board of Jewish Education at the Conference of that body in August 1978.
  5. Co-operation and consultation based on personal ties rather than formal agreements.
  6. Report to the Annual General Meeting 17 September 1978.
  7. Report for the year ending 31 December 1978 submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the United Herzlia Schools 18 July 1979.

young teachers of the Hebrew Department and had been successfully concluded. It was welcomed as a positive step towards alleviating the chronic shortage of senior Hebrew staff. The United Communal Fund covered about sixty per cent of the operating loss for the year,<sup>1</sup> whilst the number of pupils receiving remission of fees had risen to just below nineteen per cent of the total enrolment.<sup>2</sup>

Changes in the administration, school organisation and leadership control have been reflected in the last few reports as Herzlia geared itself to cope with its rising enrolment<sup>3</sup> and the problems of running a private educational institution of such magnitude and complexity in South Africa on the threshold of the last two decades of this century.

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1. Treasurer's Report submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the United Herzlia Schools 18 July 1979.
  2. Information supplied to the writer by the Financial Director of the School on 5 February 1980.
  3. The enrolment figure for 1980 is 2 134 in all constituent schools. Boys outnumber girls by just over 120, though girls form the majority on the high school roll of 696. See Memorandum supplied by the Headmaster 29 January 1980.

CHAPTER 47: THE NEWER JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS OF THE CAPE PROVINCE:  
SEA POINT AND PORT ELIZABETH

The Talmud Torah and the Weizmann Primary School of the  
Green and Sea Point Hebrew Congregation in Cape Town

At the beginning of the sixties there were three Jewish day schools in the Cape Province: in addition to Herzlia, with its primary and secondary departments, there was the Weizmann Primary School which shared the premises of the Sea Point Talmud Torah at the rear of the Weizmann Hall complex, and in Port Elizabeth was the young Theodor Herzl School in Walmer.

Like Herzlia a few miles away towards the centre of the city, Weizmann School grew organically out of an existing Talmud Torah and remained in the premises of the afternoon school from the very outset.

As the Jewish population of the suburb grew in size after the post-war period, so did its Talmud Torah<sup>1</sup> which reached a turning-point in its history with the decision to establish the first class of a day school.<sup>2</sup> Dr H Myers, Chairman of the Talmud Torah Committee, was the moving spirit behind this step which he first advocated at the general meeting in 1952 and towards the implementation of which he worked vigorously.<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Report of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah submitted to the Annual General Meeting, 28 June 1948, gave the enrolment as 140 which increased to 190 by 1952: see also the Report to the Tenth Annual General Meeting, 25 August 1952.
  2. Report submitted to the Tenth Annual General Meeting of the Sea Point Talmud Torah 25 August 1952
  3. Ibid.

He was forthright in his criticism, deploring the fact that so many Jewish children in the suburb received no Jewish education and deprecated the indifference of parents who were not giving their moral support to the Talmud Torah, and were confusing their children by failing to create a Jewish atmosphere in their homes.<sup>1</sup>

The Weizmann Preparatory School opened at the beginning of 1953 with 15 Sub A pupils. In his report to the general meeting later in the year<sup>2</sup> Dr Myers could not conceal his disappointment at this poor start to the day school. The Talmud Torah, however, was flourishing in its new and spacious premises, and the nursery school on the site had over 60 children where "the first breath of the Jewish spirit is infused into them".<sup>3</sup>

Dr Myers again returned to the subject of day schools stating that the vast majority of thinkers agreed that the Jewish day school was the most effective instrument to retain the youth, for with the best will in the world it was still not possible for the afternoon Heder "to lay the foundations of a deep-rooted Judaism in our children".<sup>4</sup>

The growth of Weizmann was slow during the first years. In spite of canvassing, advertising and sermons, and the constant urgings of Myers, the school rooms remained empty. There were 30 pupils in the day School the following year and Dr Myers called for an adult education project to make parents aware of their responsibilities in regard to the Hebrew

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1. Ibid.

2. Eleventh Annual General Meeting of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah, 24 August 1953.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

education of their children.<sup>1</sup> 1955 saw a turn for the better<sup>2</sup> and the general meeting<sup>3</sup> was informed that the writer, who had been appointed principal of Herzlia at the beginning of the year, had agreed to act as honorary principal of the Weizmann Preparatory School; and, added the ever sanguine Dr Myers, foundations were being laid for the development of the day classes into a full primary school.<sup>4</sup>

The prospect, however, caused some measure of anxiety amongst the Herzlia School leadership who feared that the growth of a rival day school in the location of the densest Jewish population in the city would have adverse effects on the growth of the older school. The limited resources of the United Communal Fund would now have to be shared between the two schools. Such considerations however remained largely unexpressed and the worst fears never materialised.<sup>5</sup>

During the last years of Dr Myers' chairmanship the Talmud Torah was at its peak with a Yeshiva Ketana<sup>6</sup> of seventeen boys at its apex.<sup>7</sup> The day school roll had hardly grown since the previous year and Dr Myers entertained serious doubts about its prospects of permanence.<sup>8</sup> The Nursery School was located in the same congested premises and he

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1. Twelfth Annual General Meeting of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah, 10 August 1954.
  2. The enrolment went up to 68: See Report to the Thirteenth General Meeting, 23 August 1955.
  3. The Thirteenth Annual General Meeting of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah, 23 August 1955.
  4. Ibid.
  5. The writer counselled co-operation between the two Schools and expressed this in practice by his regular personal visits to Weizmann and constant contact with Dr Myers.
  6. Hebrew: literally, a small Yeshiva: a junior Talmud class.
  7. Report of the Annual General Meeting of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah, 20 August 1956.
  8. Ibid. : it went up to Standard II.

feared that its presence would inhibit the expansion of the day school which might have to be frozen at Standard II. The same report contained his interesting prediction that Herzlia would be the school in Cape Town with several primary schools to feed the Herzlia High School.<sup>1</sup>

The Cape Board of Jewish Education and the Herzlia School Committee persuaded the Sea Point leadership to limit the growth of its day school till the end of 1958<sup>2</sup> and arranged for those children who had passed the highest standard at Weizmann to be transported to Herzlia to continue their primary schooling there. To give concrete expression to this mutual co-operation Dr Myers was invited to join the Herzlia Committee and Mr I J Cohen, Vice-Principal of Herzlia, was permitted to take over as honorary principal of Weizmann, continuing the tradition of co-operation between the schools initiated by Dr Myers several years previously.

As the enrolment at the Weizmann Preparatory School began to climb the numbers at the Talmud Torah began to decline.<sup>3</sup>

The decision was taken in 1959 to build up the School to full primary school level<sup>4</sup> and Mr I J Cohen was appointed the first full-time principal from the beginning of the 1961 school year at which stage the numbers in the day school had outstripped those in the Talmud Torah.

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1. Ibid.

2. Report of the Annual General Meeting of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah, 3 September 1957.

3. In 1958 the figures were 260 in the Talmud Torah and 88 in the day school. By 1960 they were 195 and 162, respectively; this tendency became more marked in succeeding years. See Annual Reports of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah for these years.

4. Report of the Seventeenth Annual General Meeting of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah, 29 September 1959. The Congregation which provided the premises and gave the School financial support, as well as the Cape Board of Jewish Education, gave their approval to this step.

The first group of pupils to have completed their primary schooling at Weizmann were admitted into Herzlia School in 1963<sup>1</sup>, in which year Mr Z Avin assumed the principalship of the Sea Point Talmud Torah.<sup>2</sup>

The chairman's report to the general meeting in 1966 made reference to an unexpected and vexing problem that was causing concern to the leadership of the two schools and the Board.<sup>3</sup> It had become apparent that many pupils who were passing through Weizmann did not proceed to Herzlia to receive their high school Jewish education.<sup>4</sup> It was a problem which persisted for a decade and longer, and was to lead to some tension between the lay leaders of the schools. There were voices on both sides which were critical of the waste of effort and money involved in curtailing Jewish education at the end of the primary stage, before the child could be exposed to the intensive Hebrew instruction at the important adolescent level. It was tantamount to the transfer of Talmud Torah, with its glaring defects, from the afternoon to the morning hours - at about eight times the cost. In effect, the Barmitzvah barrier had been moved from afternoon to morning school: parents were exploiting the School and cynically defeating its aims.<sup>5</sup>

By the end of the decade the enrolment at Weizmann rose to near 400, whilst the Talmud Torah was facing insoluble problems because, as the chairman's report put it, it was really in concept not in keeping with present-day conditions.<sup>6</sup> Yet it was a necessity for those who would otherwise get no

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1. Report of the Annual General Meeting of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah, 19 November 1963.

2. Ibid. The enrolment had by then shrunk to just over 100.

3. Ibid., 28 November 1966.

4. Ibid.

5. See, for example, Report to the Annual General Meeting, 25 March 1969.

6. Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah, 23 March 1970.

Jewish education at all.

The Weizmann Primary School under Mr I J Cohen continued to maintain its enrolment at well over 400 and reports give a picture of a busy school with active sporting and extra-mural activities.

The Talmud Torah, now teaching three times a week, increased its enrolment to about 120 for a time, but the principal reported that it was impossible to draw up a time-table in view of the clashing extra-mural activities of the pupils.<sup>1</sup> And every year the reports alluded to the disappointing number of Weizmann pupils who proceeded to Herzlia High School.

A spirit of co-operation between the schools developed gradually, and from 1972 representatives of Herzlia were co-opted onto the Committee of the Sea Point School.<sup>2</sup> But, in spite of this, the percentage of pupils who failed to continue at Herzlia still remained very high.<sup>3</sup>

There were only 60 pupils in the Talmud Torah by 1975 and the Committee considered establishing early morning classes at departmental schools to obviate the insuperable obstacle of afternoon extra-murals.

On the retirement of Mr I J Cohen at the end of 1975, Mr S J Lifschitz was appointed principal of Weizmann.

The steadily growing co-operation between the two schools over the course of the previous few years culminated in their amalgamation and the School became the Weizmann Herzlia Primary School in 1976, a constituent school of the United Hebrew Schools of Cape Town.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting, 14 April 1975.

3. Generally about 40%.

4. Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting of the United Hebrew Schools - Herzlia, 15 September 1976. The meeting paid tribute to Mr I J Cohen who had died on 20 June 1976. He had been the longest serving senior teacher in the Cape Town Jewish Day Schools Movement.

The decline of the Talmud Torah could not be halted and the general meeting in 1979 was informed that the School had been closed at the end of 1978.<sup>1</sup> Arrangements were made to provide instruction in Hebrew and religion at the Sea Point Boys' Primary School each weekday morning from 7.30a.m to 8.00a.m. under the supervision of the Cape Board of Jewish Education, with the approval and support of the Congregation.<sup>2</sup> Jewish children from other schools would be entitled to join these classes which would be run on an experimental basis for one year, at the end of which a decision would be made about their continuance.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Theodor Herzl School of Port Elizabeth

About five years after the Jewish day school in Cape Town was closed in 1932<sup>4</sup>, the first class of a similar pioneering institution was opened in the Clevedon Road premises of the Port Elizabeth Hebrew School by its principal Mr (later Rabbi) I Goss, in 1938, with Mrs R Lipschitz as teacher.<sup>5</sup> There were fifteen pupils in the class by the end of that year and the enrolment in time increased to about forty children with three standards comprising the school. Mrs I Newman took charge in 1942 and remained in control until the School closed down in 1954.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Green and Sea Point Talmud Torah presented to the General Meeting, 13 May 1979.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid. : there were 32 boys in the early morning classes at the Sea Point Boys' Primary School in 1980 (information supplied by the Cape Board of Jewish Education - 15 May 1980)
  4. See p 284.
  5. Symon, S H: ed: The Story of the United Hebrew Institutions of Port Elizabeth: (Port Elizabeth Hebrew Institutions, 1976).
  6. Ibid.

The first families to send their children to the Clevedon Road English-Hebrew School came from orthodox elements of the German refugee community and others who were unable to get their children admitted into certain government schools at the time because of overcrowding. The complete government syllabus was taught with one period of Hebrew daily.<sup>1</sup>

The Port Elizabeth Afternoon Hebrew School had a succession of principals after Mr Goss left in 1944 on his appointment as Assistant Director of the South African Board of Jewish Education in Johannesburg. By 1958 it was located in two places under the energetic principalship of Mr (later Dr) Shlomo Levin, with a combined enrolment of about 300 pupils. The main School was on the Hill in Clevedon Road and there was a branch with about 80 pupils in Summerstrand.<sup>2</sup>

Levin reported that classes were taught from three to seven periods a week and he himself taught some pupils at the Grey High School who took Hebrew as a subject for their Senior Certificate Examination.<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Dr J Vainstein, the minister of the community, had also persuaded the principals of two other high schools to permit pupils who so desired to offer Hebrew as one of their subjects for the Junior and Senior Certificate Examinations.<sup>4</sup>

Levin was obviously trying to extend the ambit of Jewish education to include areas outside the walls of the Talmud

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1. Ibid. Mrs Newman had been trained at the Grahamstown Training College.
  2. Principal's Report of the Port Elizabeth Hebrew School, 13 February 1958. The School was a constituent body of the United Hebrew Institutions which had been established in 1943.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Ibid.

Torahs.<sup>1</sup>

A source of pride was the fact that there were 44 pupils above Barmitzvah age in the Talmud Torah.<sup>2</sup> Jewish boarders from the Collegiate School attended study groups at the synagogue after service on Saturdays. The day School opened after an interval of four years, reported Levin, had 21 pupils: it was as yet unnamed.<sup>3</sup>

"The establishment of the day school in 1959 flowed from a great enthusiasm and desire for Jewish education" declared a report of the Theodor Herzl School a few years later.<sup>4</sup> Forceful advocates of such a step were Rabbi Dr J Vainstein, and Shlomo Levin; a number of parents had, in addition, submitted a petition to the United Hebrew Institutions in 1958 calling for a public meeting to be convened to consider the opening of a day school.<sup>5</sup> In due course the large and enthusiastic gathering in the Emmanuel Hall empowered the United Hebrew Institutions to draw up plans for such a school.<sup>6</sup>

A special Fact-Finding Commission was appointed by the United Hebrew Institutions to investigate the feasibility of establishing such a school and to draw up a blue-print for it by July 1958.<sup>7</sup> It visited Johannesburg and Cape Town for consultations and members personally inspected the existing day schools in those places. Its comprehensive report covering all aspects of the proposed structure and the financing of the project was accepted by the parent body in

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1. Principal's Report to the United Hebrew Institutions of Port Elizabeth, 12 February 1959: there were early morning classes in Hebrew at a number of government schools and Judaism classes in others.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Report of the Theodor Herzl Primary School to the Thirteenth National Education Conference in Johannesburg, February 1964.
  5. Symon: op.cit.
  6. Twentieth Commemorative Issue of the Theodor Herzl School: 1979, p 7.
  7. Symon: op.cit.

October 1958 and the decision was taken to open a day school in January of the following year.<sup>1</sup>

There were 21 children in Sub A when the School in due course began its existence in the Clevedon Road premises.<sup>2</sup> In September, the United Hebrew Institutions agreed to accept the name suggested by the parents - the Theodor Herzl Primary School.<sup>3</sup>

The enrolment at the little School grew to over 100 pupils by 1962 when it moved across to its new home in Walmer which was formally opened by Rabbi Dr J Vainstein.<sup>4</sup>

With the growth of the School the United Hebrew Institutions deemed it desirable that Theodor Herzl have its own committee independent of the Talmud Torah which had controlled it for the first few years.<sup>5</sup>

By 1963 there were 141 pupils in the five standards at Theodor Herzl which had by then evolved a distinctive personality and acquired a sound reputation.<sup>6</sup> The Departmental Inspectress of Kindergartens issued a favourable report on her inspection,<sup>7</sup> a bursary fund was established to help poorer children and an impressive Children's Thanksgiving Service was recorded.<sup>8</sup> A very active Parents' Association

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1. Ibid.
  2. Its motto was: HaMilah Ha'Ivrit Goeleth: Hebrew: The Hebrew Word Redeemeth - probably suggested by Shlomo Levin.
  3. Twentieth Commemorative Issue of the School Magazine, 1979: op.cit., p 7.
  4. Report of the United Hebrew Institutions of Port Elizabeth for 1962.
  5. See The Report of the Theodor Herzl Primary School to the Thirteenth Conference, op.cit., Mr Lucien Levy was the first chairman.
  6. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of Theodor Herzl School 8 May 1963.
  7. Ibid., 14 August 1963
  8. Ibid.

made a valuable contribution to the development of the School.<sup>1</sup>

There were contacts between the day schools in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town from the very inception. Both Schools followed the curriculum of the Cape Education Department and Levin was keen to learn from the accumulated experience of the older School with which it had so much in common.<sup>2</sup>

In 1964, with the enrolment close on 200 up to Standard IV, the Council of the United Hebrew Institutions again set up a commission authorised, on this occasion, to investigate the full implications of establishing a high school.<sup>3</sup>

Basing itself naturally on the experience of Herzlia the Commission carried out a thorough examination of such aspects as cost structure, staffing and provision of facilities for the proposed high school. It accepted the principle of non-acceptance of pupils without an adequate knowledge of Hebrew into post-primary classes and strongly recommended that

it is essential that the United Hebrew Institutions lay down a firm policy which should state that the purpose of day schools is not to provide secular education - which is a government responsibility - unless it is complementary to Hebrew education.<sup>4</sup>

The Commission expressed the opinion that such a statement would obviate problems that might well arise when members of the United Hebrew Institutions might claim the right of admission for their children even though these had an insufficient knowledge of Hebrew and would therefore be unable to fit into the Hebrew classes at the school.

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1. Report to the Thirteenth National Conference, op.cit.
  2. Shlomo Levin had had no direct experience of the local educational system. He was born and trained in Israel and had been brought to Port Elizabeth to fill the post of principal of the Talmud Torah in 1958.
  3. Symon: op.cit. The writer was invited to proceed to Port Elizabeth for consultations in this connection in May 1964.
  4. "Report of the Commission to Investigate the Establishment of the Theodor Herzl High School" cited in Symon: op.cit.

Shlomo Levin was appointed principal of the High School as well and a Standard VI of 22 pupils was opened in 1966.<sup>1</sup> He laid stress on the creation of a Jewish atmosphere in the School, the fostering of general and Jewish extra-mural activities, and the maintenance of contacts with sister schools in other parts of the Republic. The new high school building was opened in 1967<sup>2</sup> and Symon writes of "the great joy and excitement" as the Standards VI and VII pupils carried their desks across to the new High School building.<sup>3</sup> Shlomo Levin resigned at the end of 1967 on his appointment as Assistant Director of the S A Board of Jewish Education and was succeeded by Mr Mark Cohen<sup>4</sup> who was to guide Theodor Herzl to full development as a high school.<sup>5</sup> He resigned in 1976 to become principal of Yeshiva College in Johannesburg and was succeeded by Mr M D Danker.

The Emmanuel Hall site was sold in 1977 and the Nursery School with its 75 children was subsequently moved to its new premises in Walmer.<sup>6</sup> The Talmud Torah, now reduced to an enrolment of but 31 pupils, was moved to the Rev Abraham Levy Centre adjoining the synagogue in Glendinningvale Road.<sup>7</sup>

A serious note was struck in the President's Report: "at the moment our Port Elizabeth community is a diminishing one,

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1. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of the Theodor Herzl School, 12 May 1966.
  2. Ibid., 8 March 1967. There were 44 pupils in the first two standards of the secondary school.
  3. Symon: op.cit.
  4. He was vice-principal of Herzlia School: the grandson of the Mr Mark Cohen, principal of Hope Mill at the turn of the century. See pp 107 et seq.
  5. The first matriculation class wrote the Cape Senior Certificate Examination in 1970. The enrolment was then 343.
  6. "Report of the President of the United Hebrew Institutions of Port Elizabeth" in the Annual Reports and Accounts for 1977. p 1.
  7. Ibid., p 6. "The Afternoon School".

which poses numerous problems for our Institutions.....and our School Committees".<sup>1</sup>

The School welcomed the Minister of National Education, Dr P J Koornhof, to its twentieth anniversary celebrations on 19 August 1978.<sup>2</sup>

The report for the following year referred to the special endeavours of the Committee to increase the enrolment: it had "so successfully enrolled so many new students for our Schools".<sup>3</sup> The report stated that the community was in a "cycle of negative growth"<sup>4</sup> and urged all those who wish to maintain their identity to fight tooth and nail for the preservation of our communal institutions which had been so laboriously created during the past fifty years.<sup>5</sup>

The history of the afternoon Hebrew School in Port Elizabeth during the second half of the century followed the identical pattern of such schools in other centres of the Republic where day schools were established in the post-war era. There was an inevitable decline in numbers as well as in quality as the new day school superseded the supplemental Hebrew School. Levin had endeavoured to introduce system and order into the afternoon schools but he realised clearly enough the unchangeable nature of its educational limitations<sup>6</sup> and himself experienced the frustrations of the conscientious

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1. Ibid., p 1.

2. Twentieth Anniversary Commemorative Issue of the School Magazine, 1979: op.cit., p 7

3. Report of the President of the United Hebrew Institutions of Port Elizabeth for 1978, p 2.

4. Ibid., p 7. It cited the Meyer Report which had "pinpointed the stagnancy of growth within our Jewish community". The enrolment figures for 1979 were 285 in Theodor Herzl: 25 in the Talmud Torah and 88 and 45 in the Pre-Primary Schools at Walmer and Summerstrand, respectively. (Information supplied in writing by the United Hebrew Institutions of Port Elizabeth, 14 January 1980).

5. Ibid., p 7.

6. The Principal's Report on the Port Elizabeth Hebrew Schools, December 1962, contains a penetrating analysis by Levin of the irremediable defects of the afternoon Hebrew School.

teacher.<sup>1</sup> He therefore directed his energies and idealism to the development of the day school.

By 1976 the enrolment at the Talmud Torah had dropped to 36 and in the following year the little school left its old home on the first floor of the Emmanuel Hall on the Hill and moved to two classrooms attached to the synagogue. It was "the end of a glorious era in the history of Jewish education in Port Elizabeth"<sup>2</sup> Poised on the threshold of the last two decades of the century, the numerically diminishing Jewish community of Port Elizabeth faced one of the most serious problems of its long history - how to maintain the viability of its cherished institutions in the rapidly changing circumstances of the immediate years ahead, and foremost amongst them, the Theodor Herzl School.

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1. See, for example, the Principal's Report for 1963 and Levin's Report to the Meeting of the United Hebrew Institutions for October 1963.
  2. Annual Reports and Accounts of the United Hebrew Institutions of Port Elizabeth for 1977. p 6.

CHAPTER 48: THE CAPE BOARD OF JEWISH EDUCATION: THE HISTORY OF THE LAST DECADE

Mr A Zeevi arrived from Israel to assume the post of Director of the Board in 1970 and in mid-1971 published the provisional revised syllabus for the primary school which was later reviewed and then issued in its final form in January 1973 separately for the day school and the Talmud Torahs.<sup>1</sup>

The syllabus strongly reaffirmed the Ivrit B'Ivrit method and rejected the allegedly logical reasons for instruction in the vernacular.<sup>2</sup> Whilst not as detailed nor as innovative as Rivlin's syllabus on which it was largely based, it is noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, it completely integrated audio-visual aids of various kinds as an essential part of the methodology of Hebrew instruction and, indeed, made these inseparable from content matter and from the total learning process involved in the acquisition of the language skills and texts of what is essentially a third language to the children.<sup>3</sup> The second innovation in the syllabus was the replacement of the "global method"<sup>4</sup> of teaching reading to beginners by a composite one relying largely on the old "analytical" approach, for which the Board produced suitable

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1. Zeevi, A: Tochnit HaLimudim LeVet HaSefer HaYesodi: Hebrew: Syllabus for the Primary School (Cape Board of Jewish Education, Cape Town, 1973: photo-process)
  2. Ibid., pp 1-2.
  3. The flannel-board and flash-card of a decade earlier when Rivlin's syllabus was published had been superseded by the overhead projector and its transparencies, which the teacher had at hand and made an effective arm of method. The pillar on which Zeevi's syllabus rested was the overhead projector.
  4. Usually called the "Look-Say" Method

teaching aids.<sup>1</sup>

To supply the new material and teaching aids, the Board established a Pedagogic Centre at the beginning of 1971<sup>2</sup> which, in time, was expanded by the appointment of a special staff to prepare the educational aids required for all the subjects of the Hebrew curriculum at all levels of the school.<sup>3</sup> The teacher in charge of the Centre visited schools weekly to monitor the use of the audio-visual material and maintained constant contact with teachers to advise and guide them in how best to integrate these in the syllabus to best effect.<sup>4</sup>

Zeevi had been impressed by the Afrikaans Taalbond<sup>5</sup> Examinations which he had witnessed at Herzlia and introduced similar language examinations for Hebrew at the Standard V, VII and X levels for which he awarded diplomas and badges with the words Irgun Dovrei 'Ivrit.<sup>6</sup> It was written by most day school pupils in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.<sup>7</sup> Adult Hebrew classes had been re-organised under the Board so that the enrolment had risen to about 400 students: the religious instruction programme in government schools, on the other hand,

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1. Report of the Director to the Sixteenth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 12 November 1972 pp 2-3.
  2. Ibid., pp 25-28.
  3. Ibid., p 27
  4. Ibid., p 28. The Director's report recorded that during the past two years the Centre had produced 12 study aids in the form of pamphlets, work-books and booklets, as well as sets of transparencies, ranging in number from 22 to 480 in one set, on seven sections of the syllabus: see *ibid.*, pp 30-31.
  5. Taalbond: Afrikaans: Language Union: established in Natal in 1915 and written annually on the last Friday in October throughout the country. The three levels are Voorbereidende (Preparatory), Laer (Lower) and Hoër (Higher).
  6. Irgun Dovrei 'Ivrit: Hebrew: Organisation of Hebrew Speakers, or Hebrew Taalbond, as it was popularly termed, or Eida from its acronym, Hebrew for "I Shall Know" : See also Zionist Record and Jewish Chronicle 6 February 1970, p 15.
  7. Director's Report, *op.cit.*, pp 32-33

was not a success and was in danger of closing down.<sup>1</sup>

The main interest in Zeevi's report lies in his strenuous endeavour to effect a radical reorganisation of Jewish education at the Cape by centralising all its institutions in the Cape Board of Jewish Education.<sup>2</sup>

Jewish education will become more effective, more rational and more economical when "one hand will direct it" exclaimed Zeevi; only then will solutions be found for the problems besetting it.<sup>3</sup>

The extent of the Board's existing authority in the final analysis depended on the degree of the acceptance and recognition of its say by the institutions concerned, and really rested on nothing more substantial than the realisation that it could render specific services required by the schools, such as the supply of teachers, provision of books and aids, and inspectors. There were occasions when schools which had differences with the Board on one matter or another chose to ignore it or by-pass it, and defied the limited sanctions threatened by the Board. Zeevi made centralisation the main issue of his report to Conference.

The "fall-off" from Weizmann remained the outstanding unsolved problem of the day schools and to see this "Barmitzvah exodus" transferred into the day school, which had been ab initio specifically established to eliminate it, gravely troubled

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1. Ibid., pp 39-40.

2. Ibid., pp 11-23.

3. Ibid., pp 11-13. Zeevi was, of course, well-acquainted with the position in Johannesburg where the S A Board had control of the schools, in contrast to the Cape where the local Board was merely an advisory co-ordinating body dependent on the voluntary co-operation of the constituent institutions which remained independent with complete control over their finances.

the leadership of the schools for years and provided much of the case for centralisation.<sup>1</sup>

The Board set up a commission under Mr B.W Hoffmann to enquire into the feasibility and desirability of centralising Hebrew education, as proposed by the Director.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the oral and written evidence led before the Commission, two members were deputed to report on the structure of the system in Johannesburg.

In considering the historical background of Jewish education at the Cape; the Commission recognised that the Jewish schools and Talmud Torahs had been established spontaneously by individual congregations or groups in the community "as and when the need for them was felt".<sup>3</sup> Apart from assisting in the initial stages, the Board played no direct and ongoing part in the establishment of these institutions, which had remained autonomous, each "seeking sustenance for its continued existence, particularly in the financial field, from its local community".<sup>4</sup> The Board had not fulfilled the function of a central body in control of the network of schools, financially or otherwise.

Organically, Hebrew education in Johannesburg differed radically from its counterpart at the Cape. There the S A Board had created the entire network virtually itself, and carried the total financial and administrative responsibility for it.

The Commission saw that to adapt this system of centralised

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1. Ibid., p 21.

2. The Report of the Hoffmann Commission of Enquiry on Centralisation of Hebrew Education in the Western Province: B W Hoffmann, Chairman: W Levitt, Secretary (Cape Town, 1973) Cyclostyled: p 1.

3. Ibid., p 2.

4. Ibid.

control to the Western Cape would

entail a complete re-orientation of attitude within the entire local community and lead to an upheaval of not inconsiderable proportions.<sup>1</sup>

It found that the putative advantages which centralisation would confer were in reality not substantial enough to justify so radical an alteration in the status quo. Whilst it conceded that there were facets of the existing system at the Cape which called for improvement and reform, there were no major defects which could not be rectified within the framework of the existing system by consultation and mutual co-operation.<sup>2</sup> The Commission further concluded that there would be "no material and substantial advantages to be derived from centralisation" which would have been sufficient justification for the radical changes advocated by the representatives of the Board, and the disadvantages of such a step might indeed have serious consequences.<sup>3</sup>

With this endeavour to re-organise and re-establish its authority finally aborted, the Board became a mere onlooker as two concurrent developments which affected it fundamentally took place. The first was the solution to the Herzlia-Weizmann problem which had been one of the strongest arguments in favour of centralisation. The leadership of both schools began a gradual process of consultation in a combined effort to arrive at a solution to the long-standing problem created by the failure of children - and their parents - to continue with the secondary phase of Jewish education at Herzlia.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 3.

2. Ibid., p 9

3. Ibid.

4. The fall-off in some years approached 70 per cent, contrasted with 5,5 per cent who dropped out at the end of both primary schools at Herzlia. Ibid., pp 20-21.

Concomitant with this movement towards the unity of the two day schools in Cape Town was a similar movement towards close co-operation between the leadership of the Herzlia Schools and that of the S A Board of Jewish Education in Johannesburg. This was prompted by a mutual realisation that co-operation amongst all the day schools would be to the benefit of all and, indeed, essential. The Cape Board, bravely independent to the end, was by-passed by these developments. And when it abdicated its inspectorial functions in the day schools a year or two later, it was relegated to the position of a supervisory body over the fast diminishing afternoon schools.<sup>1</sup>

Mr H Lamdan followed Dr A Zeevi as Director of the Cape Board in 1973. His report to the Seventeenth Conference of the Board indicated the degree of dependence of the Cape Jewish schools on the contract teachers from Israel.<sup>2</sup> The system of bringing out teacher-shlihim<sup>3</sup> on contract from Israel had its obvious advantages; indeed, some would have it, the teacher-shlihim kept the Jewish schools in the Western Cape open. They did provide a ready supply of staff for the essential needs of the schools in the Cape where local training of teachers was at best spasmodic but certainly largely inadequate from the qualitative aspect and totally so in numbers. In addition, Israeli teachers personified much that was positive in and characteristic of the living Hebrew education of Israel; the best of them no doubt provided a stimulus to pupils and colleagues alike.

All too frequently these positive considerations blinded many to the disadvantages of the contract system which could quite

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1. By 1978 the numbers were down to 624; two years later to 500. The number of Talmud Torahs fell from 19 in 1973 to 10 in 1978.

2. Director's Report submitted to the Seventeenth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 8 September 1974, p 10: there were 20 teacher-shlihim filling posts in Cape schools at the time; and a total of 41 full-time and part-time local teachers: ibid., p 11.

3. Shlihim: Hebrew: emissaries (plural of shaliah)

easily outweigh the benefits it brought. To the teacher-shaliah the South African educational world and its community-setting were unknown and strange, the language of communication with the child was but imperfectly known to the newcomer, - if at all. It took valuable months for the shaliah to acclimatise to the new educational conditions. A grave defect, too, was the lack of continuity: the contract was for a two or three year period with rare extensions. And a further difficulty was the arrival time of the shaliah: this was invariably at the end of the academic year in the northern hemisphere in July, in the middle of the South African school year, aggravating the problems of adjustment still more.<sup>1</sup> It is also conceivable that the fact that there was the knowledge of an ever-ready reservoir of contract-teachers to draw from may have contributed, consciously or otherwise, to a lack of purpose in creating a proper local training centre to produce teachers. Furthermore, the method of selection of the teacher-shlikim by some official in a distant office, who was generally hardly qualified to do so and only remotely acquainted with the demands of local schools, did not always produce the type of candidate whom local principals would have chosen by the traditional criteria of personal interviews, written testimonials and personal references. The teacher-shaliah system of the post-war era was therefore not without its distinct disadvantages to Jewish education in this country.

Mr Lamdan urged that the small schools be amalgamated into more viable units which would be more efficient and educationally more advantageous,<sup>2</sup> and added that it was time to unify Weizmann and Herzlia to solve once and for all the

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1. They also left in mid-year on the termination of their contracts; there were often delays of several weeks or even months before the successor arrived.

2. Director's Report, op.cit., pp 20-21.

problem of "fall-off" which was a cause for great concern.<sup>1</sup> Basing himself on the results of a survey he had carried out of 330 children due to leave nursery school at the end of 1973, Mr Lamdan found that most of the parents who did not intend sending their children to a day school came to the decision for practical considerations,<sup>2</sup> and strongly urged that the procedures whereby children were granted remissions of tuition fees should be simplified and that the leadership make concerted efforts to locate such parents and persuade them to send their children to the day schools.

His report referred to the concern felt in the Jewish community about the new christocentric religious instruction syllabus which had been introduced in departmental schools.<sup>3</sup> He urged Jewish parents of children in government schools to exercise their legal right and request that their children be exempted from these lessons. He supported the efforts of the Cape Committee of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies in alerting Jewish parents to this position.

Whilst noting the expansion of the day schools with satisfaction, Mr Lamdan urged an increase in the quantum of time allotted to Hebrew studies, from two hours daily to three.<sup>4</sup> He also proposed that streaming be introduced in Hebrew studies to cater for the pupils who had participated in the Ulpan and Gesher schemes in Israel and had greatly improved their Hebrew during their stay in Israel.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., pp 22-23: in 1972 the "fall-off" was close to 65 per cent of all pupils who passed Standard V at Weizmann in that year.
  2. High costs, inconvenience and transport: *ibid.*, pp 27-28.
  3. *Ibid.*, p 30
  4. Director's Report submitted to the Eighteenth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 9 May 1976, pp 11-13. The number of periods in some classes of the high school was, indeed, reduced a few years later.
  5. *Ibid.*, p 15: such a higher stream was established in Standard VIII in 1976, but was not repeated thereafter.

The enrolment in the afternoon schools had dropped from 802 in 1974 to 787 in 1976 and Mr Lamdan's report contains a vividly pessimistic analysis of what was clearly a rapidly declining institution.

The Afternoon School is a part-time school with part-time teachers (in many cases) which is unable to provide more than a very limited knowledge of Hebrew and Judaism in a few short hours at its disposal.<sup>1</sup>

The pupil in the Afternoon School experiences pressures from many sides: internal and external conflicts between the home and the Afternoon School, between his secular morning school and his afternoon school, between his fellow pupils in the school in the morning and in the afternoon, between what is expected of him as a member of the general society and the demands made on him by Judaism, between what he hears from his teachers in the morning, on the one hand, and what he hears in the Afternoon School and from the Rabbi in Shul, on the other. There is also a conflict of time and space: the two schools are situated in different places and buildings, and there is competition on the time of the pupil between the needs of the Afternoon School and between his play, hobbies and other activities such as sport, music, elocution, ballet, etc.

If we add to the above the factor of the pupil's tiredness when they come to the Afternoon School, as well as the limited number of hours available we can understand the special difficulties experienced in such a school and how important it becomes to decide on the order of priorities in the limited syllabus of such a school.....what is vital and what can be dispensed with....We have placed the emphasis on the Jewish-Hebrew aspects.....reading proficiency, Yiddishkeit,<sup>2</sup> an understanding of main prayers, Laws and Customs, Shabbat and Festivals and the fundamentals of Hebrew writing.<sup>3</sup>

Mr Lamdan had drawn ineluctable conclusions from the drastic decline of the afternoon school. Attenuated in numbers,

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1. Ibid., p 19.

2. Yiddishkeit: Yiddish: lit. Jewishness: here used as a concept synonymous with Jewish feeling and knowledge of Judaism.

3. Citation from the Director's Report to the Eighteenth Biennial Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education op.cit., p 19.

impoverished in quality, the Talmud Torah at the end of the seventies was a pale shadow of its former self when Rivlin had drawn up his syllabus almost two decades earlier. Reality dictated radical changes in the quality and nature of Jewish instruction and it fell to Lamdan's lot to make these as he saw fit. The old era of the Talmud Torah was drawing to a close after a life span of some eighty years, and a new educational instrument had all but superseded it. He saw that the syllabus, with its maximal demands, had been created for other times and was no longer relevant to the changed conditions in the Jewish community which had similarly abandoned its old system of education in favour of the new. He took the first steps to effect the changes.

To reduce some measure of the conflict,<sup>1</sup> Lamdan advocated the inclusion of various extra-mural activities within the framework of the afternoon school in order to attract the child: the school should become a "centre which combines Jewish learning and general activities under one roof".<sup>2</sup> Parents too should be drawn into the activities with the aim of expanding the school into a Jewish Community Centre which would organise joint family activities for parents and children alike, and pupils of the day schools would also be encouraged to participate in such activities in order to bring them into close contact with their peers in the afternoon schools. Much would depend on the Talmud Torah teacher: he would have to be a good and flexible educationalist but also a communal leader with a dynamic personality.<sup>3</sup>

The report also contained a reference to the success of the Religious Instruction Department established by the Cape

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1. See citation p 594

2. Director's Report to Conference, op.cit., p 20.

3. Ibid., p 21.

Committee of the Jewish Board of Deputies in March 1975 to provide instruction to Jewish pupils in government schools who were withdrawn from class during the general scripture lessons.<sup>1</sup> Some 1 200 Jewish pupils were receiving lessons in Judaism, generally twice a week, according to a carefully drawn-up syllabus.<sup>2</sup> The Board had rendered direct assistance in establishing this programme, but the Director was worried lest these lessons might be accepted as a substitute for the Hebrew education given in the Talmud Torahs.<sup>3</sup> He hoped, on the contrary, that they would stimulate interest in Judaism and encourage children not attending afternoon schools to enrol in them.

These developments, from the time of the abortive move aimed at centralisation onwards, had an unfortunate bearing on the relationship between the Board and the Herzlia Schools. For the first time in forty years the Cape Board of Jewish Education ceased to have any contact with the main educational institutions of the city; by the end of the seventies these contained about four-fifths of all the children of the community receiving a Jewish education, including the only Jewish high school. The ambit of its authority was drastically curtailed and extended over ten little schools, only two of which had more than a hundred pupils.

Dr M Herczl, who succeeded Mr Lamdan as Director of the Board in 1977, reported that certain developments in the relationship between the Board and Herzlia School had reached their culmination.<sup>4</sup> Dr Herczl described the break between the Board and the School as a "natural development" and couched

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1. Ibid., pp 24-25.

2. About 60 qualified teachers had undergone refresher courses for this purpose.

3. Ibid., p 25.

4. Director's Report to the Nineteenth Conference of the Cape Board of Jewish Education 18 June 1978, p 1. He was referring to the severance of the links between the two.

it in sentimental terms as the departure of a grown-up child from the family nest.<sup>1</sup> But he omitted to mention the real and serious implications of this parting of the ways for both sides and for Jewish education and for the community, and failed to adduce more than superficial reasons which had led up to it. To dismiss the event as a sad-joyous, yet inevitable and natural development, was a gross lack of understanding of the history of the previous four decades and of the potentially harmful results of this separation for the future of Jewish education at the Cape.

It fell to Dr Herczl to take the steps which his predecessor had adumbrated<sup>2</sup> in regard to the radical modification of the syllabus to meet the changed educational conditions. It required courage as well as logic to terminate a time-hallowed tradition, the principle of Ivrit B'Ivrit. His report to Conference dealt with this crucial step in detail and advanced a rationale based on his experience as a teacher of many years in South African Jewish schools, during the sixties and seventies.<sup>3</sup>

The syllabus based on the Ivrit B'Ivrit system had, maintained Herczl, failed to achieve its aims. As the child grew older, the gap between his developing intellect and his (Hebrew) linguistic level widened accordingly. His uphill struggle to acquire the ability to express himself in Hebrew caused him frustration and unhappiness. All too frequently he identified this experience of his in the afternoon school with his Judaism: it created negative attitudes in him towards his heritage, and even alienation.<sup>4</sup> Herczl pointed out another error of omission: this pursuit of the will-'o-the-wisp of spoken Hebrew has precluded the proper study of the Bible, of Jewish History and of Laws and Customs.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 1.

2. See p 595

3. Director's Report, op.cit., pp 7-16

4. Ibid., pp 10-11

5. Ibid., p 11

The Holy Tongue became a barrier between our pupils and their culture, between our pupils and their roots...."do we not lose out if we are going to attach more importance to the language of the Bible than its content?"<sup>1</sup>

Dr Herczl accordingly redrafted the syllabus for Siddur, which he based on practice as well as on precept. More radical were his new suggestions for the teaching of Tanach. He extended the scope of Bible Study to include the Former Prophets in addition to the Pentateuch, and divided the material into five sections of 30 teaching units each, one section for each of the Standards from I to V. The instruction was to be in English: once the essential message had been learned the pupil would be expected to read the relevant Hebrew verse or verses which would serve the double purpose of summarising the whole lesson and of learning the essential kernel of the Hebrew text.<sup>2</sup> History would also be taught through the vernacular.

This was Dr Herczl's new approach "to answer the needs of the pupils of the afternoon schools".<sup>3</sup> In its way, his detailed syllabus, covering about one hundred pages, constitutes one of the most important educational developments of our period.<sup>4</sup> It reflects the situation of the South African Afternoon Hebrew School at the end of the seventies and is a bold, even if controversial, endeavour to deal honestly with the educational problems posed by the developments of the last generation.

To reinforce the instruction in Judaism Herczl drew up a detailed scheme for practical activities connected with the

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p 14.

3. Ibid., p 15.

4. Especially important and quite revolutionary is the Syllabus and Teachers' Handbook for Teaching Tanach in the Jewish Schools in the Diaspora: Hebrew: (Cape Board of Jewish Education, Cape Town, May 1978: photo-process)

afternoon school, based on his long experience as a teacher and his own pragmatic bent, which he also submitted to the Nineteenth Conference of the Board, the last before he terminated his duties as Director and returned to Israel.<sup>1</sup>

By 1980, the enrolments had dropped to just below 500 in the afternoon schools in the fifteen places between Oudtshoorn and Windhoek under the jurisdiction of the Cape Board of Jewish Education: one school had over 155 pupils and one other 89: the other thirteen had under 40 pupils each, four of them under 10. There was one early morning group and one afternoon group at government schools. Six of the fifteen venues were in the country areas. A mere fraction of the total were at the post-Barmitzvah stage.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Herczl, M: Suggested Activities in the Framework of the Jewish Schools in the Diaspora: (Cape Board of Jewish Education: June 1978: photo-process).
  2. Information supplied by the Cape Board of Jewish Education in a letter, 6 June 1980.

PART NINE

CHAPTER 49: TOWARDS UNITY IN JEWISH EDUCATION:  
THE ASSOCIATION OF HEADMASTERS OF JEWISH SCHOOLS

After the failure of Dr Resnekov's attempts at establishing some sort of unity in Jewish education,<sup>1</sup> the distance between the two Boards of Jewish Education tended to increase with the passage of the years. Except for occasional contacts this position has continued to this day.<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to determine where the blame lies. Geography was certainly a factor; essential differences in the respective natures of the Boards could not but lead to disunity. There may have been contributory reasons, involving personalities in the lay leadership as well as in the rabbinate; or the very name of the South African Board could have conjured up fears of immediate domination in the minds of its Cape counterpart. It was left to the emerging day schools to start breaking down these divisive walls in Jewish education and to inaugurate the process leading to unity.<sup>3</sup>

The growth of the Jewish day school movement during the first two decades of the second half of this century was a spontaneous evolution without prior planning by a central authority.<sup>4</sup> There was no formal contact between the South African Jewish day schools, little co-ordination of effort and even less co-operation.<sup>5</sup>

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1. See pp 430 and 484

2. They co-operated on occasion to bring out visiting lecturers for refresher courses which, however, were held separately in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

3. See pp 528 and 601

4. This, of course, excluded the four day schools of the Board in Johannesburg which were established by this "central authority".

5. There has to this day never been a world gathering of representatives of Jewish day schools. The only contacts were indeed on the pupil level, and had been inaugurated in 1957 with the first visit of a Herzlia contingent to King David, Linksfield. See p 528

The Jewish content of the new school posed the greatest problems: the afternoon part-time Hebrew school differed so widely from the all-day school that it could provide neither precedent nor guide-line; if anything, the day school felt that it should avoid what the Talmud Torah had been doing. There were calls for consultation and co-ordination of efforts, for a careful definition of the Jewish educational aims of the day school and of its body of Jewish studies. There was a need for closer co-operation on practical issues involved in running this new type of school which was unlike any other educational institution. If there were, obviously, only limited possibilities of learning from existing state schools, then the rational thing to do was to learn from one another, to co-ordinate common responses to similar problems and challenges facing them all.<sup>1</sup>

This was the rationale for the first meeting of principals of South African Jewish schools which opened at Herzlia School, Cape Town, on 29 May 1962.<sup>2</sup> In all there were thirteen delegates present representing the eight Jewish schools then in existence<sup>3</sup> and the list of topics that came under discussion reflects the problems and issues confronting the developing network of South African Jewish day schools. The nature and content of Hebrew and its place in the general curriculum was a matter of interest for all schools: there

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1. See, for example, "Hebrew Education Policies need Unity" in The Union and Rhodesia Rosh Hashana Annual (Johannesburg, September, 1960. p 15) by the writer.
  2. Zionist Record and S A Jewish Chronicle 18 May 1962 p 4
  3. Including Messrs Goss and Rivlin, the directors of the two Boards of Jewish Education.

were considerable differences of approach to the whole question of Hebrew, and the Talmud Torahs could provide but little guidance to the new schools. Other topics were pedagogical and organisational issues facing the schools, extra-mural activities, including sport,<sup>1</sup> and the educational value of Jewish festivals and days of note.<sup>2</sup> Another as yet incompletely charted area was that of School-Community relations, which had not crystallised completely at that time. Once again the experience of the Talmud Torah in this regard was certainly nothing to go by: in this one respect as well, there was and had to be a radical and wide difference between the day and the afternoon schools.<sup>3</sup> The place of religion in the day school was discussed at length;<sup>4</sup> other problems dealt with were the supply of teachers and the topic of the interdependence of the Jewish day schools in South Africa. The conference affirmed the principle of the right of every Jewish child to be admitted to a Jewish school, provided that accommodation was available and there was no academic obstacle, especially in respect of Hebrew levels for those enrolling after the first grades.

Conference decided in favour of establishing a federation of teachers of Jewish schools,<sup>5</sup> the introduction of a medical insurance scheme and the formation of a Principals' Association.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Schools' Leagues in many cases arranged their fixtures to be played on Saturdays, the Jewish Sabbath, posing serious problems for participation by Jewish schools.
  2. Minutes of the First Conference of Principals of Jewish Day Schools in South Africa, op.cit., p 4.
  3. Ibid., pp 6-7 : delegates, it is interesting to note, were against admitting lay leaders to this conference.
  4. Ibid., p 10.
  5. The resolution was a dead letter: such a federation has not been brought into existence as yet. The teachers at the Cape did, however, establish their own association in the seventies.
  6. Ibid., p 19.

The association was duly formed but the next conference, due to be held in Johannesburg in 1963, failed to take place. Two years later a memorandum submitted to the Chairman of Herzlia School recorded that no conferences had in fact been convened by the Johannesburg schools since the previous one in 1962.<sup>1</sup> The need for such regular gatherings of educational leaders was again outlined, a need which was particularly felt by the newer schools, especially in the smaller centres, which were eager to establish links with the older schools and profit from their experiences. This obligation to assist the smaller and more isolated day schools rested on the shoulders of the larger day schools.<sup>2</sup>

It was not before August 1970, however, that the next conference of headmasters was to take place, once again in Cape Town.<sup>3</sup> The newer schools had developed and grown in the interim and played a more prominent role in the deliberations. The agenda of the first conference served as a general pattern for this one eight years later. Decisions were by consensus and once again the Jewish content of the curriculum took up much of the time. The venue of the Ulpan produced some contention between the S A Board of Jewish Education and other schools who were unwilling to accept what they regarded as the diktat of the

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1. Memorandum to the Chairman and Executive of Herzlia School 14 July 1964.
  2. There were close on 5 000 pupils in the day schools by the mid-sixties.
  3. Minutes of the Conference of Headmasters of Jewish High Schools: 28-30 August 1970, Cape Town. Only high schools were represented, as requested by King David. Yeshiva College did not attend.

Board.<sup>1</sup> On this occasion the Association of Headmasters was firmly established and a constitution drafted.<sup>2</sup>

The Association was soon to prove its worth in two unexpected developments of considerable importance to Jewish education in this country. In the urgent and last-minute efforts to prevent Hebrew from being relegated to lower status in the curriculum of the new Differentiated System of Education, the Association, through its secretary,<sup>3</sup> made personal representations to the Joint Matriculation Board in Pretoria to reinforce the written memoranda submitted from Cape Town.

The second occasion occurred during the conference held in Johannesburg in 1973 when delegates met the Executive of the S A Zionist Federation and took the opportunity of enlightening this body on some of the problems facing the schools. The Chairman of the Association spoke of the financial worries that were weighing heavily on the lay leadership of the schools; these "had seeped down to the professional leadership", creating a measure of anxiety and uncertainty detrimental to their work.<sup>4</sup> The meeting

1. Mr Louis Sachs, Chairman of the Board, attended at his own request in order to press for the acceptance of the Board's choice of Sde Boker in the Negev as the venue for the S A Ulpan.
2. During subsequent years, conferences were held in Pretoria (1971), Port Elizabeth (1972) and in Johannesburg (1973) on which occasion Yeshiva College also attended. The conferences continued to be held, generally every year, the venues provided by the constituent schools located at the various centres. The 1980 conference again moved to Cape Town. Rabbi I Goss was absent for the first time, having retired earlier in the year.
3. See p 565. Mr W Hess, at the time principal of Carmel School in Pretoria was the secretary of the Association and being on the spot acted on behalf of the Association and indeed of all the Jewish schools in the country. The Association had "justified its creation" (see letter of the writer to Rabbi I Goss, 8 October 1971).
4. Minutes of the Session of the Association of Headmasters of Jewish Schools held at Zion Centre, Johannesburg 19 June 1973.

was to have a direct bearing on the subsequent decision of the Zionist Federation to come to the aid of the schools.

The principals of the Rhodesian Jewish schools also began to attend these conferences which became the most representative gatherings of Jewish schools in the sub-continent.<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that these were the only occasions on which the directors of the two Boards of Jewish Education sat down to join in discussing the problems of Jewish education in this country.

The 1980 conference in Cape Town welcomed the new director of the S A Board of Jewish Education, Mr Shlomo Mayer, who had succeeded Rabbi Goss.<sup>2</sup> Conference considered the changing conditions in the Jewish and general community of the eighties, the existing problems facing the schools and decided to re-examine the precise connotation of the "traditional-national" nature of Jewish education which had constituted the guide-line of the Board's work for many years. The heads of Hebrew departments would meet separately on a later occasion.

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1. The Fifth Conference of the Association, held in Johannesburg in 1976, was attended by 27 delegates, consisting of headmasters as well as heads of Hebrew departments from all schools in the Republic and Rhodesia. See Minutes of the Meeting of the Conference: Johannesburg 11-12 March 1976.
  2. There were no representatives from Zimbabwe, nor were heads of Hebrew departments invited.

CHAPTER 50: A PROFILE OF JEWISH EDUCATION AT THE END OF THE SEVENTIES

The report submitted to the Eighteenth National Education Conference of the South African Board of Jewish Education to mark the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment in 1928 gives a comprehensive picture of Jewish education in South Africa at the present day.<sup>1</sup> All the institutions affiliated to the Board, or maintaining any formal or informal contact with it were represented on the occasion of this historic anniversary in the annals of Jewish education in South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

Mr Misheiker reported that during the period of Mr Greenstein's tenure of office (1972-1978) the Board had "attained status and recognition" as the national body in charge of Jewish education in South Africa.<sup>3</sup> This statement reflected the newly-developed relationship between the Board and the leadership of the Herzlia Schools in Cape Town, in contrast to the long-standing lack of co-operation between the two Boards in the two cities. The changing situation in the country and its consequences on the community as well as the

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1. Report submitted to the Eighteenth National Education (Golden Jubilee) Conference of the S A Board of Jewish Education: Johannesburg, 3-6 August 1978
  2. Cape Town was represented by the United Herzlia Schools which co-operated closely with the Board, though this had not been formalised in any constitutional framework. Absent were the Cape Board of Jewish Education which was the "umbrella" body for about 700 pupils in the Talmud Torahs, and the Cape Town Nursery Schools' Association.
  3. Misheiker, A: "Fifty Years : The S A Board of Jewish Education" - in this Report.

growing problems facing the schools created a strong feeling of the necessity, and even urgency, of close co-operation, of co-ordination of endeavour and of constant mutual consultation amongst all the Jewish schools.

Though Herzlia retained its complete autonomy, it gave de facto recognition to the Board as the representative body of all the Jewish schools in the Republic, authorised to co-ordinate policy and speak on their behalf to other Jewish national bodies, like the Zionist Federation and the Jewish Board of Deputies, as well as the governmental authorities.<sup>1</sup>

The Board relinquished its independent fund-raising in 1974 and transferred its efforts in this field to the United Communal Fund. The Zionist Federation provided another source of assistance to the financially hard-pressed schools and channelled it through the Board of Education as the recognised top administrative body for Jewish education in South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

Representatives of the Board interviewed the Minister of National Education on two occasions when it made representations for a government subvention to Jewish schools.<sup>3</sup>

The request was sympathetically received and in due course the Provincial Authorities announced that such assistance to the tune of R100 per pupil per year would be granted to all private schools from 1 April 1980 to help them meet their escalating costs.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Oral information given to the writer by Mr A Levitt, Chairman of Herzlia, 16 August 1978.

2. Misheiker: op.cit.,

3. Ibid.

4. Die Burger, 13 December 1979, p 3.

Meanwhile the Board was forced to bring its growing financial plight to the attention of the leadership of the Jewish community at a Tripartite Meeting with the S A Zionist Federation and the S A Jewish Board of Deputies in April 1978.<sup>1</sup> The meeting recognised the total communal responsibility for Jewish education and set up a special Commission under Mr Levitt to examine "the short- and long-term needs of the Jewish Day Schools and other constituent bodies of the Board".<sup>2</sup>

The Jubilee Conference of the Board was also a crisis conference for it.<sup>3</sup> Its problems since the previous conference had been drastically aggravated by escalating costs, rising salary scales, a discernible economic recession and a fall in enrolment and, therefore, of income from school fees.

Mr Greenstein warned that unless immediate and drastic steps were taken to provide the finances required by the Board they might witness the complete collapse of "our magnificent educational network, so painstakingly built over the past fifty years".<sup>4</sup>

In his report to conference Mr Sandler noted that between 75 and 85 per cent of the Board's expenditure went on teachers' salaries and in the light of this, the Tripartite Commission of Inquiry had requested him to investigate the possibility of cutting down on staff in order to effect

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1. Misheiker, A: op.cit.

2. Ibid.

3. Sandler, N: "Can the Schools Survive Drastic Financial Pruning?" in this Report.

4. See The Jewish Herald 15 August 1978, p 12 for Mr Greenstein's address to conference. The anticipated deficit for 1978 was R1,3 million: the King David Schools had lost a total of 288 pupils in 1977, constituting about 8% of their enrolment; for the first time there were no waiting lists at the nursery schools, and an additional disquieting fact was that the community was aging, said Mr Greenstein, stating that whilst 13% of the Jewish population was over the age of 60 in 1960, a decade later this age group had risen to 20%.

economies.<sup>1</sup> He had actually reduced the number of teachers by 22, but to his disappointment the saving thus effected was almost entirely wiped out by the losses incurred in the sudden drop in enrolments.<sup>2</sup> Mr Sandler recommended various ways of reducing expenditure, basing his calculations on comparisons with other private and departmental schools. The steps he proposed obviously reflected those areas in which Mr Sandler had found that economies could, and should, be effected, though he warned against "drastic surgery of staff" which might appeal to some as the best means of solving the financial problems of the Board.<sup>3</sup>

Though more nursery schools had been opened since the last conference, the actual number of pupils had decreased somewhat, and Mrs Metz's report identified four reasons for this.<sup>4</sup> Parents who were feeling the financial pinch were sending their children to school for two years only, whilst others in the same position preferred to send their children to non-recognised - and presumably cheaper - play-schools. Emigration was a factor in some schools and a population movement to new areas affected others.<sup>5</sup> There had been a steady drop in the birth-rate throughout the country since 1973 which had its first effect on the 1977 intake into all nursery schools and not only and solely into those under her department. Mrs Metz noted that there were close contacts between the Board's Nursery Schools' Department and the fifteen Nursery Schools of the Cape Hebrew Pre-Primary Schools Association. Teachers' salaries had always been

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1. Sandler: op.cit., p 17.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Metz, S: (Head, Nursery Schools' Department) in this Report op.cit., pp 30-32.

5. Ibid.

paid by the Orange Free State; Natal and the Cape followed suit in 1975 and 1976, respectively, whilst Transvaal schools received only a per capita subsidy.<sup>1</sup>

The drop in enrolment was most noticeable at the King David Primary School at Linksfield.<sup>2</sup> The Bernard Patley Junior School had been closed at the end of 1977 and its 74 pupils transferred to Linksfield. The High School<sup>3</sup> enrolment also fell, and the same pattern was reported from the Primary School at Victory Park, though the High School there could boast of the highest enrolment in its fourteen-year history.<sup>4</sup>

A proportionately more serious decline, from 351 pupils in 1975 to 286 in 1978 was reported by Theodor Herzl in Port Elizabeth and gave cause for the headmaster's anxiety about the viability of the high school with its 104 pupils.<sup>5</sup>

The Rhodesian schools reported a drastic decline in numbers. Carmel School in Bulawayo was integrated by 1978 and its roll of 113 included 78 per cent of all Jewish children of primary school age in the community.<sup>6</sup> The decline in the Jewish community presented the School with serious financial and educational problems.

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1. Ibid: the Board itself had the two largest nursery school complexes in South Africa under its control:- these were the Max Greenstein School at Linksfield with 320 children and the Rose Gordon School at Victory Park with 200: *ibid.*
  2. Rubinowitz, M: "The King David Primary School - Linksfield" in this Report. p 40. (From 1 166 in 1975 to 985 in 1978. *ibid.*)
  3. Wolf, E M: "King David High School - Linksfield" in this Report. p 43.
  4. 413 pupils. *Ibid.*, p 47
  5. Danker, M K: "Theodor Herzl School - Port Elizabeth" in this Report, p 48.
  6. Mendelsohn, C: (Member, Board of Governors) "Carmel School - Bulawayo", in this Report, p 51. Mrs Loder had succeeded Mr Ramsay as principal.

The Sharon School was down to 108 pupils but the report recorded that, though sorely reduced in numbers, the community had accepted the financial burdens of maintaining its institutions. But the future was one of anxiety that the community might have to "consolidate the present machinery which allows for a nursery school, a Talmud Torah and a day school", noted the report euphemistically.<sup>1</sup>

The Yeshiva College, wrote the headmaster in his report, differed from the Hebrew day schools in the extent of its Jewish studies programme.<sup>2</sup> Central to the curriculum were the Limudei Kodesh<sup>3</sup> comprising Gemarah<sup>4</sup> with traditional commentaries, Bible with commentaries, and Jewish Thought. In addition, Hebrew language and literature, Jewish history and current events were also studied.<sup>5</sup> One-and-a-half hours (two on Wednesdays) were devoted daily to Limudei Kodesh and four periods a week were given to Hebrew.<sup>6</sup> Morning and afternoon services formed an integral part of the school day and extra-mural activities of a varied nature were organised.<sup>7</sup>

Hillel in Benoni reported the growth of its enrolment to 254 and the headmaster indicated that the time allotted to Hebrew in the time-table had been increased by thirty per

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1. "Sharon School - Salisbury" - in this Report, p 52
  2. Cohen, M: "The Yeshiva College" in this Report, p 50
  3. Limudei Kodesh: Hebrew - study of sacred texts.
  4. Gemarah: Aramaic: another name for Talmud. See p 28, footnote 6.
  5. Ibid.
  6. Oral information given the writer by Mr M Cohen in Claremont, Cape Town, 19 December 1979.
  7. Cohen, M: Op.cit.

cent in 1978.<sup>1</sup> The school was proud of the fact that one of its pupils had won the South African section of the Bible Quiz for Jewish Youth in 1977 and had represented South Africa in the finals in Israel. The Shabbaton had become a regular feature of the school year, the report noted.<sup>2</sup>

Herzlia also appears in the report for the first time, reflecting the new relationship that had emerged between the School and the Board.<sup>3</sup> The growth of the High School had necessitated the conversion of the hostel into a primary school to house the primary classes which had shared the Highlands premises with the High School since the erection of the Highlands building in 1957.<sup>4</sup> In an endeavour to improve the training of prospective Hebrew teachers, the School had come to an arrangement with the Faculty of Education at the University of Cape Town permitting it to provide enrichment courses to those students of the faculty who had majored in Hebrew and were prepared to teach the subject in Jewish schools.<sup>5</sup>

An important development was the appointment of Rabbi L W Herring to lead the newly-organised Department of Jewish Studies at the Schools to provide an intensive programme in Judaism additional to the existing core of Hebrew studies. The total enrolments of all the constituent schools had risen to 1 804 in 1978.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Feinberg, D: "Hillel School - Benoni" in this Report, p 38.
  2. Shabbaton: services and suitable functions held on a Sabbath (Shabbat : Hebrew : the Sabbath) at a special venue.
  3. Kessel, M D: "Herzlia Schools of Cape Town" in this Report, p 37.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Ibid.
  6. Ibid. : there were three full primary schools, in Highlands, Sea Point and Lower Constantia, respectively; the preparatory school at Milnerton and the High School in the main complex at Highlands.

The enrolment of Carmel School in Pretoria had increased to 420 which represented about 65 per cent of the Jewish school-going population of the city.<sup>1</sup> All the pupils took Hebrew and Jewish Studies, though a concession was made to pupils who enrolled in higher standards: these were given a "diluted" course in the subject and did not have to include it amongst their matriculation subjects.<sup>2</sup> The Jewish Studies programme embraced preparation for the Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah examinations as well as such "practical" activities as learning to officiate at services and the reading of the Torah at the regular Sabbath and festival synagogue services.<sup>3</sup>

The Natal Hebrew Schools' Association reported on the progress of its schools since the previous conference.<sup>4</sup> The headmaster referred to the fine reputation enjoyed by the School in the Natal educational world.<sup>5</sup> Though the pre-primary schools had come under the partial control of the Province in 1975, the Natal Hebrew Schools' Association retained the right to determine the Hebrew content of the schools, to control the employment of the Hebrew staff, and the building.<sup>6</sup> The Ulpan and the Counterpoint Programme<sup>7</sup>

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1. Kahanovitz, I: "Carmel School - Pretoria" in this Report p 36.
  2. Ibid. This group was about 7 per cent of the total.
  3. Ibid.
  4. It controlled 3 Pre-Primary Schools (Ilana, Kadimah, and Sharona) with 215 children: 2 Junior Primary Schools (Akiva and Sharona) with 220 children; the Carmel Primary with 177 pupils and Carmel High with 258 pupils.
  5. See: Gialerakis, A: "Carmel College - Durban" in this Report, p 34.
  6. Ibid.
  7. Counterpoint: an intensive short course of religious study and discussion.

were well-supported and the Jewish extra-mural activities served to reinforce the more formal Hebrew instruction in the classroom. Mr I Fisher, head of the Hebrew Department, had produced several Hebrew text-books for use by the South African Jewish high schools: Rabbi Franklin assisted with the Jewish Studies and Jewish Civics programmes.<sup>1</sup>

Mr M Zimmerman who had been appointed Inspector in 1975 assumed responsibility for the supervision of the country schools and was assisted by Rabbi G Mazabow.<sup>2</sup> The number of Talmud Torahs in all the four provinces was now only 21, with a total of 829 pupils.<sup>3</sup> A revised core syllabus was introduced in 1978 which individual schools could adapt to their requirements. An innovation was the introduction of small reference libraries for pupils of country schools, because the home rarely had books of Jewish interest for the children.<sup>4</sup>

The Jewish population of the country areas was decreasing rapidly and in consequence some communities were becoming too depleted to be able to maintain a minister-teacher: the relieving teachers employed by the Board had helped to meet this situation. Shlihim<sup>5</sup> had been brought out from Israel to serve in country communities in the dual capacity of minister-teachers but, stressed Mr Zimmerman, their main function in the present circumstances was to teach the young and these shlihim therefore had to be qualified teachers.

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1. Ibid.

2. Zimmerman, M: "The Country Schools" in this Report, p 21.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Shlihim: Hebrew - emissaries from Israel.

In his eyes, these minister-teachers in these outlying areas were halutzim<sup>1</sup>, keeping the flame of Judaism alive in these remote centres, and deserving of the respect of the community.<sup>2</sup>

The Ministers' Training College with its Jewish Students' University Programme was transferred in 1977 from the aegis of the Federation of Synagogues to the Board and housed, together with the Rabbi Zlotnik-Avida Hebrew Teachers' Training College, at the new centre at the Arcadia Jewish Orphanage which had placed a building at the disposal of the Board.<sup>3</sup> The Arcadia campus housed some 50 students in 1978<sup>4</sup> who combined degree courses, taken through the University of South Africa, with their extended Hebrew and Jewish studies.<sup>5</sup>

The Jewish Students' University Programme was planned to enable students to combine an intensive course of Jewish learning with general concurrent university studies. The Programme had proved a success and had attracted students "of high calibre who took their studies seriously".<sup>6</sup>

Mr Shlomo Mayer came out from Israel in 1974 to take up the post of Director of the Pedagogic Centre which had since then greatly expanded the scope of its activities. The range of its audio-visual aids widened and was an important partner in the planning and execution of the Religious Studies Programme inaugurated by the Chief Rabbi's Office.<sup>7</sup> Its

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1. Halutzim: Hebrew - pioneers.

2. Ibid.

3. Kurtstag, M A : (Principal) "Rabbi Zlotnik-Avida Seminary" in this Report, p 22.

4. Ibid., 19 of these were in the Teachers' College.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Misheiker, A: op.cit., in this Report, pp 15-16.

library was extended and it produced a wide variety of teaching aids covering the whole area of Jewish education which were used throughout the Republic. The use of the audio-visual material it produced was integrated into the revised syllabus drawn up by the Board for primary schools and Talmud Torahs and forms the basis of Hebrew didactics in these schools.<sup>1</sup>

The Religious Instruction Programme was inaugurated in August 1974 when the first assignments for Jewish pupils in high schools had been drawn up at the Pedagogic Centre. This correspondence course was subsequently taken over by the Chief Rabbi's Department for Religious Instruction in Government Schools. In 1976 a similar programme was started for primary schools. The entire programme was actually carried out in practice by the Centre, which also provided in-service courses in the use of audio-visual aids for teachers and seminary students.<sup>2</sup>

The United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg reported a drop in the enrolments from 1 099 in 1977 to 1 020 in 1978 in the 28 afternoon schools in the United Hebrew Schools, with just over a hundred pupils over the age of thirteen.<sup>3</sup> The report expressed special satisfaction with the early morning classes in government schools and in one school these classes had been extended to Standard V.<sup>4</sup> Emphasis was laid on religious instruction in which the Siddur forms the central part - "it is the co-ordinating link between the Talmud Torah and the synagogue".<sup>5</sup>

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1. Mayer, S: (Director): "The Pedagogic Centre" in this Report, pp 24-25. The Centre had published over 100 booklets, had prepared close on 1 000 maps and placards and 200 transparencies. Over 33 000 of these items had been distributed, reported Mr Mayer. *ibid.*
  2. *Ibid.* Mr Mayer returned to Israel in July 1978.
  3. Katz, R: "The United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg" in this Report, p 26.
  4. *Ibid.* This was considered an achievement.
  5. *Ibid.*

The report referred, albeit indirectly, to the problems of punctuality, irregular attendance, unannounced inspections, improvement of basic organisation and planning, all of which are endemic in the afternoon supplemental school.<sup>1</sup> By 1979 the total enrolment in the 23 Talmud Torahs and early morning classes had fallen to below a thousand children, only 22 of whom were over the age of thirteen.<sup>2</sup>

Mr W Levitt, Chairman of the Tripartite Commission,<sup>3</sup> urged that its proposals be put into effect. The first was the need to reach parents to inform them of the value and aims of the Board's work. Couples should be contacted even prior to their marriage, and on a regular basis thereafter.<sup>4</sup> He further proposed that a permanent Control Committee be set up to check the allocation and use of the subsidies granted by the Zionist Federation to the Board. The third proposal was that a Capital Funds Campaign be held on a national level to help alleviate the Board's financial burden.<sup>5</sup>

Mr N Sandler, Director of Secular Studies, pointed to the lack of interaction between Jewish and secular studies. Matriculation results were so good that more time could be found for the former.<sup>6</sup> Amongst the problems facing the Jewish schools were the dearth of good male teachers, the dire shortage of teachers of science and mathematics, and the serious challenge from the private educational colleges. Ways would have to be found "to prevent

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1. Ibid.

2. Ten of the schools were in fact early morning classes: only eight of the 22 had enrolments of over 50 pupils. *ibid.*

3. See p 608

4. This was a re-affirmation of the truism stressed in the past by Rabbi Zlotnik (see p 372) and Dr Resnekov amongst others.

5. The Jewish Herald, 15 August 1978, p 12.

6. *Ibid.*

children from being lured away": special attention should be given to gifted children and free extra-lessons should be provided.<sup>1</sup>

Mr Sandler also proposed the creation of "Education Shops" where parents could obtain "genuinely interested advice".<sup>2</sup> Too many teachers and administrators still believed that parents should be seen and not heard.<sup>3</sup>

The downward trend in enrolments in some of the King David Schools was arrested by 1980. The roll of the Primary School at Linksfield had risen to 1 120, whilst the numbers in the High School had increased to over 1 100.<sup>4</sup> At Victory Park the High School roll was 508 though the Primary was only 600. The nursery at the two centres had 320 and 170 children, respectively.

The S A Board of Jewish Education reached a milestone in its history with the retirement of Rabbi I Goss at the end of March 1980. He was succeeded by Mr Shlomo Mayer, once Director of the Pedagogic Centre. The seventies ended on the historic announcement that the government had decided to grant subsidies to private schools in the Republic.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid. Mr Sandler was drawing attention to the regrettable phenomenon of the withdrawal of appreciable numbers of children at the end of the third and fourth forms in Johannesburg Jewish Schools, who then transferred to these colleges which held out the certainty of better examination results and better prospects of admission to select university faculties. It was a trend which had been gathering momentum during the previous few years (see p 420) with obvious detrimental consequences to the schools.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Figures supplied by Mr N Sandler, Director of Secular Studies of the S A Board of Jewish Education, to the writer in a letter; 31 March 1980.
  5. See p 607 Footnote 4.

CHAPTER 51: ON THE PERIPHERY OF JEWISH EDUCATION : THE  
YIDDISH FOLKSCHOOLS IN JOHANNESBURG AND CAPE TOWN

Yiddish was the home language of the immigrants from Eastern Europe who began to arrive in Southern Africa from the seventies of the last century, though all had a knowledge of Hebrew of course, varying from reading ability required for prayers to a profound familiarity with the language as well as with Biblical, Rabbinic and Mediaeval literatures.<sup>1</sup> There were the maskilim among them who were acquainted with the literature of the modern Hebrew renaissance and even spoke the language.

Yiddish was the medium used in Heder, Talmud Torah and Yeshiva for translation and academic discussion.<sup>2</sup> Yiddish was easy to learn, it used the Hebrew alphabet and its spelling was almost totally phonetic. Yiddish literature goes back to the fifteenth century, but its period of efflorescence began in Russia during the second-half of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The Yiddishists of the larger towns and cities in the Pale were largely opposed to Zionism and in place of Hebrew regarded Yiddish as the national language. Yiddish schools were established at the beginning of the century in many centres in Poland the the Pale; the atmosphere in them was generally non-traditional and in some extreme cases even anti-religious.

The difference between Yiddish and other Jewish educational institutions is (the fact) that no specific religious subjects are taught.<sup>4</sup>

The small Yiddish Schools in Johannesburg and Cape Town are curiosa of Jewish education in this country, a strange little

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1. Girls were not frequently taught Hebrew, but most received tuition in Yiddish to enable them to read devotional pieces and the Pentateuch in translation.
  2. Feldman, L: "The Yiddish Folkschool": Jewish Affairs, October 1957.
  3. Vallentine's Jewish Encyclopaedia: op.cit., pp 679-682
  4. 20 Yohr Yiddish Folkschul 1937-1957: Yiddish: (20th Anniversary of the Yiddish Folkschul). Magazine published by the Yiddish Folkschul, Johannesburg, August 1957, p 80.

rivulet which separated itself from the mainstream that constitutes the history of traditional Jewish education in this country.

Some of the immigrants hailing from the larger centres of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, where they had either themselves attended such schools or were personally acquainted with such institutions, decided to open a Yiddish school in South Africa after the First World War.

The first attempt to open a Yiddish supplementary school took place in 1929 in Johannesburg, but it closed after some twenty months. It was reopened in Doornfontein in September 1937, on the initiative of the Yiddish writer I Charlash.<sup>1</sup>

The early and middle thirties saw a sharpening of differences between Zionists and protagonists of Biro-Bidjan, the supposedly autonomous Jewish region established by the U S S R on its Mongolian border.<sup>2</sup> The anti-Zionists and pro-communists espoused Yiddish as the "national" language. Echoes of the conflict were heard in faraway South Africa of the thirties.

Adumbrating the philosophy of the Yiddish school, the magazine<sup>3</sup> wrote that Yiddish was, and is, a great binding force of the Jewish people and even if the school was secular, the "lofty ideas of our great prophets" were to be taught, and due respect was to be paid to the religious feelings of those children hailing from religious homes.<sup>4</sup> The Yiddish school aimed to instil

human values.....rights of the individual....  
responsibility towards society, aspirations

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1. Ibid.

2. Vallentinés Encyclopaedia: op.cit., pp 102-103.

3. 20 Yohr Yiddish Folkschul: op.cit., p 80

4. Ibid.

for justice for all....tolerance and  
decency.....<sup>1</sup>

Another school was opened in Orange Grove in 1950, as were two Yiddish nursery schools with some 120 children which obtained recognition from the Transvaal Education Department.<sup>2</sup> The Yiddish Folkschool was not recognised by the S A Board of Jewish Education which declined to participate in the School's fifth anniversary celebrations, though it did send a message on the occasion of the present (twentieth) one.<sup>3</sup> In 1949 the Board of Deputies sent two representatives to examine the Yiddish Folkschool and they reported that  
our school system is a justifiable part among  
the diverse educational trends adopted by Jews.<sup>4</sup>

The School had 65 pupils in 1948; the number had doubled by 1957. The curriculum consisted of Yiddish conversation, reading and writing: Jewish history and introduction to Yiddish literature: recitations and drama. Hebrew was also taught from the second year, because "we have two national languages".<sup>5</sup>

The school derived its revenue from fees, from the United Communal Fund, from subscribers, special projects and government subsidies for nursery classes. In 1957 it faced grave problems of staff shortage: the teachers had qualified in Europe and the leadership was anxiously wondering where new teachers and workers would come from.<sup>6</sup>

The function of the Yiddish school was to be a bridge between immigrant parent and local born child, the instrument whereby the child could be led to understand the outlook and cultural values of the parent, and forge bonds between parents and

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p 80.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Feldman, L: in Jewish Affairs, op.cit., p 9

6. 20 Yohr Yiddish Folkshul: op.cit., p 31

children.<sup>1</sup>

If it did have a role to play, the Yiddish school then belonged to the transitional stage between immigrant and first generation, and the question could be asked, then, once this situation no longer held, once the immigrant Yiddish-speaking home was no more, what raison d'être there might be for the Yiddish Folkschul.

The School faced the problems inseparable from the system of Jewish supplementary education. There were two weekly lessons, each lasting two hours. The emphasis was on what they regarded as the old life as reflected in classical Yiddish literature with some selections from modern writers.<sup>2</sup> It was an achievement if the pupil stayed on for five or six years and attended regularly.<sup>3</sup> But if

like a meteor (he) disappears and appears on the horizon now and again.....it was a broche levatole (a good waste of time and effort).<sup>4</sup>

Few got to senior class.

The aims of the School were stated as being to educate the children to be able to read and understand a Yiddish book; to acquaint themselves with the masters of Yiddish literature; to be able to appreciate, respect and love Yiddish culture. The pupil should not be blind to events in the history of his people; he should know about Jewish life and take part in the struggle for a better future.<sup>5</sup>

Parents were criticised for their indifference to, and lack of understanding of, the problems facing the School. It was a source of great regret that the number of pupils in

1. Fanaroff, I: "Looking at the Folkschool"., *ibid.*, p 78.

2. *Ibid.*, p 18.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

the final class was so small.<sup>1</sup> In 1956 the School enrolment at Doornfontein consisted of 69 girls and 32 boys between the ages of five-and-a-half and fourteen/fifteen. The average length of attendance at the Yiddish Folkschool was four years, though some stayed for five or six years.<sup>2</sup> There were 40 children at Orange Grove. The number of pupils from Yiddish-speaking homes was gradually decreasing.

So the Yiddish Folkschool faced problems similar to those of its Hebrew counterparts - problems of attendance and shortage of staff; suitable texts and lack of reading material; late age of entry and all too early age of withdrawal; lack of interest on the part of parents.

The Thirtieth Anniversary issue contains a number of interesting articles on the problems of the Yiddish Folkschool and Yiddish education.<sup>3</sup> Hava Schreero saw the union of forces between Yiddish and Hebrew to strengthen Jewish national feeling and ensure continuity. In the post-Holocaust period, erstwhile language conflicts have long disappeared.<sup>4</sup> Yiddish writers in Israel and elsewhere had the duty of exerting whatever influence they could muster to introduce Yiddish in Hebrew schools and she called on them to become teachers of Yiddish literature themselves.<sup>5</sup> M. Shiff advocated Jewish bilingualism which would serve to establish bonds between Israel and the Diaspora.<sup>6</sup> D. Klatchko drew attention to the fact that whereas thirty years previously Yiddish was the home language of the children, this was no longer the case. Yiddish was a foreign language and made

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1. Ibid., p 11.

2. Ibid., p 5.

3. 30 Yohr Yubilei Ausgabe: Die Yiddishche Folkschul un Kindergarten in Johannesburg: (Yiddish) (30th Anniversary Issue of the Yiddish Folkschool and Nursery School in Johannesburg) (107, Ninth Avenue, Sydenham, Johannesburg. 1967).

4. Ibid., p 5.

5. Ibid., p 6.

6. Ibid.

the work of instruction - difficult already because it had to be given in the afternoons - all the more difficult.<sup>1</sup>

I Lipshitz issued a call for a Yiddish day school; the problem was that the local-born parents did not regard the knowledge of Yiddish as important.<sup>2</sup>

These and other writers wrote nostalgically of Yiddish in the old home and, expressing their deep and sentimental attachment to the language and its literature, looked with scarcely concealed anxiety at the small school and the ever-decreasing circle of Yiddish-speaking homes, yearning for a day school and dreaming ever of a Yiddish-medium school and all the time puzzled why Yiddish was dying out in South Africa when it was very much alive in Latin America and in North America.<sup>3</sup>

A new building was erected on the Sydenham site in 1962 and two years later the Doornfontein school was closed; its pupils were bussed to Sydenham.<sup>4</sup>

There are about 220 Jewish families connected with the Yiddish Folkschool at present,<sup>5</sup> consisting of a nursery school and an afternoon school. There are 112 children at the nursery school which is conducted in English, but Yiddish and Hebrew are used in the curriculum. The afternoon school is open on four days a week, from 3.00 to 5.00p.m. Most of the children, numbering over 60, are between the ages of seven and twelve, though there is a group of thirteen to fifteen year olds.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 13.

2. Ibid., p 14.

3. Ibid., pp 17, 25-26.

4. 40 Yohr Yiddishe Folkshul un Kindergarten Feierung (Yiddish and English) (40th Anniversary Celebration of the Yiddish Folkschool and Nursery School) Souvenir publication 10 September 1977, p 3.

5. Written information supplied by the Secretary of the Yiddish Folkschool, Johannesburg, to the writer in a letter dated 22 January 1980.

6. Ibid.

The work is divided into two periods, one for Yiddish and the other for Hebrew. The Yiddish texts are from New York whilst the Hebrew books are the same as those used at the King David Primary School. Jewish festivals are properly celebrated and acquaint pupils with other Jewish centres in Israel and elsewhere in the world. The School concerts are popular in Johannesburg.<sup>1</sup>

A Yiddish Folkschool was opened in Cape Town in 1947 by a group of Yiddishists under Mr S Junowitz who desired to transmit the knowledge of the language and its culture to their children.<sup>2</sup> There were about a dozen children in the class which met in a room of a house off Roeland Street on Sunday mornings. The curriculum consisted of reading, writing, singing of folk songs, recitations and dancing. It moved to Vredehoek a few years later, where it remained for over four years. Here the enrolment grew to over 20; the teacher, Mr N M Averbuch, organised the little school into proper classes and fostered an interest in Yiddish amongst his pupils.<sup>3</sup> Classes were also held on two weekday afternoons and Sunday mornings.<sup>4</sup>

More advanced pupils studied suitable Yiddish literary texts and Jewish history: songs and festivals were an integral part of the work. Children were encouraged to recite poems or give readings at meetings of the Yiddish Cultural Federation to which their parents belonged. Other extra-murals were

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1. Ibid.

2. Information supplied to the writer by Mr A Rubinstein, one of the founders of the School, of Long Street, Cape Town, in a memorandum dated 11 January 1980.

3. Written information by Mrs L Raichman (nee Taibel), a pupil at the time, in a memorandum dated 11 March 1980.

4. Ibid. : this clashed with the Talmud Torah and limited the number of possible pupils, restricting them to those who attended Herzlia or did not go to Hebrew schools at all. Mrs Raichman and her siblings were pupils of Herzlia at that time.

the annual summer camps which the pupils of the sister school in Johannesburg also attended and which were conducted mainly in Yiddish, and plays staged by the Federation in which the children were given parts.<sup>1</sup>

After Mr Averbuch left for Israel around 1953, the teachers were Dr I Kaplinski and Mrs Junowitz, but interest began to decline, and with falling support it was decided to close the school at the end of 1956, temporarily it was thought at first, but it was never to reopen again.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps Yiddish should have a place within the framework of Jewish education at school, or at the tertiary stage. Hebrew no longer has to fear it as a rival for Yiddish was crushed under the Nazi jackboot, together with its millions of speakers. It is one of the great cultural creations of the Jewish people and its place in Jewish education should be re-examined.

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1. Ibid.

2. Information supplied by Mr A Rubinstein, op.cit.

CHAPTER 52: JEWISH RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

In the Cape

The Cape Education Ordinance of 1956 laid down the general lines for Religious Instruction in undenominational schools.<sup>1</sup> It stipulated that parents had the right to request the withdrawal of their children from such religion classes if they had any conscientious objection to its being given to their children, such a request to be made in writing.<sup>2</sup> The Ordinance confirmed the right of denominational schools to determine the nature of the religious instruction each would choose but at the same time reiterated the right of parents to have their children withdrawn if they wished to do so.<sup>3</sup>

No special inspectors of Religious Instruction were appointed. The ordinary school inspector was required to inquire, when inspecting a departmental school, whether the provisions of the Ordinance were being carried out. In practice, Jewish children were excused from attending religious classes even without formal written application and teachers on the staff supervised them and gave them religious instruction along acceptable lines, generally readings from the Old Testament. In some schools, Jewish ministers or teachers came in to take such groups. The Cape Board of Jewish Education

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1. Cited in The Syllabus for Religious Instruction for Primary and Secondary Standards: (The Department of Education; The Province of the Cape of Good Hope: E312) pp 3-4
  2. Ibid., p 3; Section 188 (4a): The Ordinance also affirmed the right of any teacher to request to be absolved from giving such instruction if he had a conscientious objection to doing so (see 4b, *ibid*).
  3. Ibid., Section 189, pp 3-4.

indeed had for years been permitted to organise such visits to some schools to provide instruction in Judaism and Bible to Jewish pupils excused from attending classes in Old and New Testament which constituted the content-matter of the Religious Instruction given to children.<sup>1</sup>

The content and spirit of Religious Instruction were radically changed by the National Education Policy Act of 1967 which, inter alia, laid down a policy that Christian National Education was to be introduced into all state schools.<sup>2</sup> "Education shall have a Christian character" the Act stated, though it affirmed that the religious convictions of the parents and the pupils shall be respected in regard to religious instruction and religious ceremonies.<sup>3</sup> The principle now was that education in general should be Christian in character and not merely religious instruction, as was the case heretofore.

Pursuant to the Act, the Cape Province published a new syllabus and regulations for religious instruction in its schools to come into operation in 1971.<sup>4</sup> The Scripture teaching was to be Christocentric and its aim was "to prepare the pupil to accept Jesus Christ as his personal saviour".<sup>5</sup>

This very much more intensive and detailed syllabus for religious instruction was a cause for considerable concern in the Jewish community and there was particular anxiety about the strong Christian approach to the Old Testament from the

1. See p
2. Act 39 of 1967: 2 (1)(a).
3. Ibid.; this part of the Act was elaborated further in a statement of policy by the Minister of National Education in November 1971.
4. "Regulations Relating to Religious Instruction in Schools" in The Official Gazette 31 October 1969 (Provincial Notice 810/1969): cited in the Syllabus for Religious Instruction for Primary and Secondary Standards op.cit., pp 4-5
5. Ibid., p 5: see "Aims (1b and 2a)"

earliest standards.<sup>1</sup> The Cape Committee of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies alerted parents to the new situation in an effort to persuade them to exercise their right to withdraw their children from religious instruction classes.<sup>2</sup>

Parents in the Cape were circularised urging them to withdraw their children from religious instruction classes in the departmental schools<sup>3</sup> and the Cape Committee then discussed whether - and what - alternative instruction should be given to such Jewish children most of whom were not attending the classes, with or without the formal notice of withdrawal.<sup>4</sup> Here and there alternative courses of some sort were started. The principal of a primary school in Sea Point approached the Cape Board of Jewish Education for assistance and instruction was organised for Jewish pupils

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1. Sherman, D: "Christo-Centric Religious Instruction in the Schools" in The Temple Newsletter (Cape Town Jewish Reform Congregation: 11 June 1974). The article gives a typical Jewish reaction to the new syllabus. See also "syllabus for Substandards A and B and Standard I" in The Syllabus for Religious Instruction for Primary and Secondary Standards: op.cit., pp 6-12.
  2. What was an additional cause for anxiety was the omission in the new syllabus of the directive to principals to arrange alternative instruction of withdrawn pupils. See "Religious Instruction at Schools - and You" in Board's-Eye View (Bulletin of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies) September 1970, p 1., and *ibid.*, February 1971, p 1 : "Board Takes Initiative on Religious Instruction Issue".
  3. See Circular Letter from the Cape Committee of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies, 8 December 1970. The Board's appeals, however, were to little effect. (Information in a letter from G Kleinman, Chairman of the Cape Committee in 1974-5, to the writer 6 June 1980).
  4. Kessler, S M; Memorandum on Religious Instruction in Government Schools: submitted to the Cape Committee of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies, undated, but probably in 1972 (roneod) p 9.

of the school.<sup>1</sup> In other schools Jewish teachers on the staff took Jewish children in separate classes. In some high schools madrichim<sup>2</sup> of the Zionist Youth Movements were granted permission to take groups of Jewish pupils whom they instructed according to their own syllabus.<sup>3</sup> This programme was implemented in six high schools. Lessons were informal, discussion was encouraged and films were used frequently.<sup>4</sup>

The Cape Committee finally decided to co-ordinate and expand the Jewish religious instruction in state schools. It was felt that for many children such tuition would actually be the only Jewish education they would obtain and for these in particular it was doubly important not to be exposed to the intensive christological instruction laid down by the new syllabus. A co-ordinating committee was formed, with the participation of the Cape Board of Jewish Education, the Zionist Youth Council and the Progressive Jewish Education

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1. Ibid. : The Director of the Board drew up a syllabus and three teachers were engaged to give three lessons weekly to about 50 pupils. The Board was ambivalent in its approach to such instruction, fearing that it would undermine the afternoon Hebrew schools. Parents, it feared, would regard such Jewish religious instruction in departmental schools as sufficient Jewish education and would not enrol children in, or even withdraw them from, Talmud Torahs. See, however, the letter of the Director of the Cape Board of Jewish Education to the Cape Committee of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies of 17 July 1972 in which he states that only about 30% of Jewish pupils in secular schools attend afternoon Hebrew schools; he accordingly fully supported the Religious Instruction classes in the government schools. It was continued for about a year and a half and then terminated through lack of funds.
  2. Madrich: Hebrew: guide, youth instructor.
  3. Kessler, S M: op.cit., p 8: see also Report on School Programme (Cape Zionist Youth Executive, Cape Town, June 1972) p 1.
  4. Programme for Religious Instruction Classes and for Hebrew Culture Societies (Cape Zionist Youth Executive, Cape Town, August 1972) photostat.

Council, to organise these classes, draw up syllabuses and engage suitable instructors.<sup>1</sup>

Little progress was made towards establishing such a properly functioning alternative programme until 1974, when Mr G Kleinman persuaded the Cape Committee to take this course of action.<sup>2</sup> In October of that year the Cape Committee accepted the proposal of Mrs M Silbert for such a structured alternative programme in religious instruction for Jewish children in general schools.<sup>3</sup>

A pilot scheme was introduced in the Camps Bay Primary School with the principal's approval at the beginning of 1975. Twelve mothers who were qualified teachers were located and suitable lectures were arranged for them in order to equip them for their new tasks as teachers of Jewish religious instruction.<sup>4</sup>

Mrs Silbert was convinced that the success of the project depended on the commitment of the teachers, their adequate preparation and the proper teaching methods. The informal instruction by the madrachim and the ministers would have to be replaced by lessons prepared and conducted in a professional manner and the subject matter too would have to be carefully demarcated to suit the various age groups.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Kessler, S M: op.cit., p 10: see also Minutes of the Meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee for Religious Instruction of 13 June 1972, 3 August 1972 and 9 October 1972.
  2. Information in a letter from Mr G Kleinman 6 June 1980, op.cit.
  3. Written information supplied by Mrs Marlene Silbert in a memorandum to the writer dated 5 June 1980. She served at the time as a member of the Public Relations Committee of the Board and had been deputed to investigate the possibility of implementing such a programme. Mrs Silbert is a qualified teacher.
  4. Ibid., Booklets were prepared for the teachers and worksheets for the pupils.
  5. Ibid.

The pilot scheme proved a success and when reports of this filtered through to the community requests came from parents for similar lessons in other primary schools. In March 1975 the Cape Committee of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies decided to establish its Religious Instruction Department with Mrs Silbert as Director.<sup>1</sup>

The Department set about recruiting teachers, organising intensive teacher training courses, compiling and disseminating learning and teaching material and formulating syllabuses. Principals of schools were interviewed and programmes gradually introduced in town and country schools. Contacts were even established with centres in other provinces.<sup>2</sup> In time principals who had previously been uninterested actually requested that this programme be introduced into their schools.<sup>3</sup>

Before the end of 1975 the Department could report considerable progress. Of the 165 volunteer teachers, about 100 were qualified teachers and most of the others were ladies with other academic qualifications. They had received regular lectures in Bible, Jewish Laws and Customs, Jewish Ethics and Teachings in Human Relationships.<sup>4</sup> When principals were approached to grant permission to the Department to implement the Jewish Religious Instruction Programme efforts were made to persuade them that the scheme would benefit not only the Jewish children, whose spiritual well-being was of concern, but ultimately the school itself, as it would reflect an attitude of tolerance and an awareness of the problem.<sup>5</sup>

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1. There was opposition at first from the rabbinate to the use of this name, on the grounds that lay teachers could not assume the role of religious teachers, hence it was first called The Department of Jewish Culture. In time, however, it assumed its present name.
  2. Silbert, M: The Department of Jewish Culture: Report issued in October 1975 (Cape Committee, S A Jewish Board of Deputies, Cape Town: photocopied) p 3.
  3. Information in a letter from Mr G Kleinman, op.cit.
  4. Silbert, M: The Department of Jewish Culture, op.cit., p 4
  5. Ibid.

The syllabus was divided into Bible, Festivals, Jewish Laws and Customs and Important Historical Events. Teachers for the high school were more difficult to find, but the report indicated that it was hoped to introduce the programme into that area as well in time. By the end of 1975 there were Jewish Religious Instruction programmes in operation in five Peninsula primary schools, in Somerset West and Paarl.<sup>1</sup>

In 1976 Mrs Silbert was invited to visit Bloemfontein, Oudtshoorn and East London on a number of occasions to lecture to teacher-mothers and to assist in establishing the Religious Instruction programmes in those areas.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 5.

2. Silbert, M: Memorandum to writer: op.cit., p 6.  
By 1976 the total number of Jewish pupils receiving Religious Instruction was 963 in 12 Peninsula primary schools, 3 country schools and 5 Peninsula high schools.

JEWISH PUPILS IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN  
PROVINCE RECEIVING JEWISH RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION (1976-1980)  
(Figures in Brackets denote number in Talmud Torahs)<sup>1</sup>

SCHOOLS	1976	1978	1980
Peninsula Primary Schools	638 12 schools	735 (449) 13 schools	486 (308) 14 schools
Country Primary Schools	43 3 schools	71 (50) 5 schools	59 (38) 5 schools
Peninsula High Schools	282 5 schools	321 (vir- tually none) 5 schools	416 (-) 6 schools
Country High Schools	--	9 (-) 1 school	16 (-) 1 school
TOTALS	963	1 136	Training College 25 Cerebral Palsy <u>27</u> 1 029 in 168 weekly classes

Regions operating autonomously but assisted by the Cape  
Town Department:

Bloemfontein      73 children in 3 Primary Schools;  
East London        58 primary school pupils and 31 high  
school pupils in 4 schools.

1. Statistical Survey of the Department of Jewish Religious  
Instruction (Cape Committee of the S A Jewish Board of  
Deputies) for 1976-1980.

The drop in numbers between 1978 and 1980 should be seen against the rise in the enrolments at Herzlia during these years.<sup>1</sup> Noteworthy also is the relatively small number of high schools in which the programme operates and the fact that no high school pupils receive any sort of organised Jewish education.

The draft syllabus for the primary standards was submitted to the Cape Education Department and the Director of Education expressed satisfaction with the organisation of the programme in general and with the syllabus, and also displayed considerable interest in the material.<sup>2</sup> Whilst the Education Department could obviously not issue a directive to principals to admit teachers of Jewish religious instruction into the schools it was not opposed to the Board's programme. The decision to permit Jewish religious instruction was left to the individual schools, and the approach could best be made through the Parent-Teachers' Associations.

The high school area presented special problems to the Board's Department. Here the levels of the pupils' Jewish knowledge were far below those of their other subjects and the problem was how to present the Jewish subject in a manner which would be appropriate to the pupils' intellectual and emotional developments.<sup>3</sup> In addition, interest in Jewish religious instruction would expectedly be lower than in examination subjects and it was doubly important to make its presentation more attractive and more interesting to the

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1. See pp. 569-571

2. Report of interview granted by the Director of the Cape Education Department to a delegation from the Cape Committee of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies: 13 April 1976.

3. In most cases those pupils who had received a Jewish education till the Barmitzvah stage in the afternoon school had forgotten what they had managed to learn before they left the Talmud Torah. In the meantime the gap between their general and Jewish education had widened all the more.

pupils.<sup>1</sup>

The aim of the programme was to

translate the values of the Tanach into contemporary terms and to make the student aware of the connection between Torah and life,<sup>2</sup>

so that the adolescent who is becoming increasingly aware of the world round him would obtain the understanding and guidance to help him develop as a "responsible moral individual in a multi-racial society".<sup>3</sup>

By 1980 the Board's programme had been introduced for Jewish students in the religious instruction courses in the Faculty of Education at the University of Cape Town and in the Barkly House Training College for Pre-Primary and Lower Primary Teachers.<sup>4</sup>

### In the Transvaal

In the Transvaal too the new syllabus for Religious Instruction for departmental schools caused concern in the Jewish community.<sup>5</sup> Chief Rabbi B M Casper pointed out at the time that whilst the new approach to religious instruction was perfectly understandable from the point of view of the Christian community, it would have serious implications as far as the Jewish pupils were concerned.<sup>6</sup> Children exposed

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1. See the Preamble to the Syllabus for Jewish Religious Instruction in the Cape High Schools (Religious Instruction Department, Cape Committee of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies, Cape Town: November 1978: photocopy) p 1.
  2. Ibid., Tanach: Acronym from the Hebrew words Torah, Prophets and Writings, viz. The Bible.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Information in a letter from Mr G Kleinman, Chairman of the Religious Instruction Sub-Committee of the Cape Committee of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies, op.cit.
  5. "Board's Concern over Christian Education" The Zionist Record and S A Jewish Chronicle 26 May 1972, p 7.
  6. Casper, B M: "Religious Instruction in Government Schools - How a Threat was turned into a Positive Achievement" in S A Jewish Times (Rosh Hashana Issue) September 1977, pp 9-10

to lessons in Christian doctrine several times a week throughout their school careers could not fail to be indoctrinated, and the prospect deeply alarmed the Chief Rabbi.<sup>1</sup> He rejected the arguments advanced by some people that "knowledge of the other side" would lead to a spirit of open-mindedness and tolerance in the Jewish children: they were obviously too young and too lacking in Jewish knowledge to be exposed to such an exercise in open-mindedness.<sup>2</sup>

The authorities, in fact, appreciated the problem facing the Jewish community and the Director of Education had written to the Chief Rabbi that "pupils of non-Christian parents are not expected to take part in the lessons devoted to Religious Instruction".<sup>3</sup> The Ordinance indeed made provision for Jewish pupils to be withdrawn from such classes if parents requested this in writing.<sup>4</sup>

The Chief Rabbi requested religious leaders to urge parents to withdraw their children from Religious Instruction classes and later went with representatives of the S A Jewish Board of Deputies in a deputation to the Minister of National Education, Senator J P van der Spuy, to make representations on behalf of the Jewish community.<sup>5</sup> In due course the Minister reaffirmed the right of Jewish parents to request the withdrawal of their children from Religious Instruction classes, and gave the assurance that such exemption would always be granted.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Cited in this article.

4. Transvaal Education Department: Syllabus for Religious Instruction (297) : Standards 8-10 (1975) p 1

5. The Zionist Record and S A Jewish Chronicle 9 November 1973, p 7.

6. S A Jewish Times 11 January 1974, p 7

It became clear that the Board's - and the Chief Rabbi's - appeals to the community to have their children exempted were of little avail. Children, and parents, were reluctant to be different and to rationalise their lack of will parents once more trotted out the usual reasons that children should learn to be open-minded and would gain by knowing the other side.

It was not until the end of 1974 that a new development occurred.<sup>1</sup> A group of Jewish pupils in one of the high schools in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg themselves decided to withdraw from Religious Instruction and persuaded their parents to serve written notice as required. This action was quickly followed in other schools; within a few months there were several hundred Jewish pupils who had opted out of these classes.<sup>2</sup>

This presented a new problem to the Chief Rabbi - what was to be done with these pupils? How were they to be occupied or taught? The law laid down that no outside ministers or teachers were permitted to come into the schools to give instruction to any pupils.<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Louis Herring assisted in contacting a number of principals in the Sydenham area and it was finally agreed that written assignments should be prepared in the office of the Chief Rabbi which these pupils could do during the time they were out of Religious Instruction classes. This was the beginning of the Department of

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1. Casper, B M: op.cit., p 10: he called it a "break-through".

2. Ibid.

3. Transvaal Education Department: Syllabus for Religious Instruction for Standards 5-7 (No 294 : 1975) p 1

Religious Instruction in Schools which Chief Rabbi Casper set up as part of his office in 1975.

The work of the Department grew in scope and by the end of 1977 the printed assignments were being issued on two levels monthly to over 2 000 pupils in twelve high schools.<sup>1</sup> The system had proved to be workable and had good potential and the response had been gratifying on the whole.<sup>2</sup> Assignments had also been supplied by post to pupils in smaller schools in and around Johannesburg as well as to schools in Durban, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein and several towns on the Reef.<sup>3</sup>

Rabbi Shein, Director of the Department, established personal contact with leaders of the Student Jewish Associations at the various schools, published a newsletter, provided additional educational material for pupils to take home, and planned a summer holiday programme in an effort to forge personal links which the assignment system itself precluded.<sup>4</sup>

The programme was extended to Primary Schools in 1977, for which purpose the Department produced Teachers' Guides at regular intervals to provide the teachers deputed to supervise the Jewish children with source material for reading to the children. Activity sheets and other material was also produced for the children themselves.<sup>5</sup> In this manner the Department expanded its activities to establish

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1. Shein, H M: Report of the Activities of the Department of Religious Education (Office of the Chief Rabbi of the Federation of Synagogues of South Africa, Johannesburg) for the year ending 31 December 1977, pp 1-2.
  2. Ibid., p 1.
  3. The syllabus comprised eight main topics from Jewish history and for the higher forms there were selections from the Bible and the Oral Law presented at a more advanced level. See also the Zionist Record and S A Jewish Chronicle 28 October 1977, p 13.
  4. Shein, H M: op.cit. p 13.
  5. On Festivals and Bible Stories.

contact with some 3 500 children.<sup>1</sup>

The Pedagogic Centre of the S A Board of Jewish Education had co-operated in producing the growing volume of printed material and several institutions had provided funds to finance the expanding programme. From small, hesitant and difficult beginnings, wrote the Chief Rabbi, they had developed a new educational instrument which was by then showing excellent results and giving promise of even greater possibilities.<sup>2</sup>

A new development took place in July 1978 when the Pedagogic Centre of the S A Board of Jewish Education and the Religious Education Department of the Office of the Chief Rabbi were amalgamated under Rabbi Shein as Director of the combined organisation.<sup>3</sup> The work of the new centre was extended and intensified and by 1980 it was producing five Religious Instruction assignments a month for approximately 2 500 pupils in fourteen high schools in the Transvaal and five in three other centres.<sup>4</sup> In addition, it was printing Teachers' Guides for three primary schools, posters, and booklets on festivals.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 4.

2. Casper: op.cit., p 10.

3. Report of the Pedagogic Centre for the Period ending June 1980 (S A Board of Jewish Education, Johannesburg) p 39. The Centre continued to operate from its previous premises in the former Hebrew High School in Wolmarans Street, but with its rapid expansion as a resource centre for a number of institutions it was planned to move it into the Bernard Patley complex in Yeoville from 1981.

4. Ibid., pp 37-39.

5. The five-year syllabus consists of eight topics from Jewish History, nine on Jewish Festivals, seven on Jewish Symbols and Concepts, eight on Israel and eight on Jewish Thought, Past and Present. See *ibid.*, pp 39-40.

The operational procedure of the Centre has been established as follows: the Centre delivers the assignments, parcelled out for each form, to each school and these are handed out by the teacher deputed by the headmaster to take charge of the scheme to the groups of Jewish pupils withdrawn from from the general religious instruction classes, during the two weekly periods allotted to the subject. Each assignment is designed to last four weeks and may be a booklet of soem thirty pages. The contact teacher collects the completed assignments which are returned to the Centre when the next assignments are delivered to the school.<sup>1</sup>

The director of the Centre visits school principals at least once a term. On occasion the Jewish pupils are assembled and suitably addressed. The programme, reported Rabbi Shein, has become part and parcel of these schools.<sup>2</sup>

Whilst the Centre relies on the ten Teachers' Guides it has compiled for use in the primary schools, it has begun an experiment to supply written material as the first stage of a programme similar to that in operation in the high schools.<sup>3</sup>

The syllabus of the Religious Education Programme has been considerably extended and enriched, though the number of schools involved has remained more or less static since 1977; the work in the primary schools is still at the initial stage. The report draws attention to a number of schools in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Springs and Klerksdorp which are not as yet included in the programme either because the principals were not co-operative or the Jewish contacts had become ineffective.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., pp 40-41.

2. Ibid., p 41. Efforts have also been made to work out a follow-up programme with personal contacts outside the classroom, and functions are being planned for this purpose.

3. Ibid., p 42.

4. Ibid., p 31.

The Jewish Religious Instruction programmes in the Cape and Transvaal developed from the mid-seventies along separate lines, evolved quite different structures and finally came to be controlled by two different bodies. The one programme is predominantly concerned with the high school whereas the other devotes most of its attention to the primary sector. Both programmes are still at a stage of consolidation but it is not clear whether they have the resources for further expansion.

At present they constitute the only two vehicles for the transmission of any sort of Jewish knowledge to the Jewish high school pupils not enrolled in the Jewish secondary schools. The 3 000 adolescents participating in these programmes would otherwise have no contact whatsoever with any sort of Jewish education during their high school career. No South African Talmud Torah of this generation has succeeded in retaining even a handful of post-Barmitzvah or Batmitzvah pupils and the fact that some 3 000 adolescents have been exposed to these programmes, fragmentary as they are, during these last five years is a development in Jewish education in this country which is as unexpected as it is potentially valuable. There must be hundreds more in other centres at present left untouched by these schemes, and these, too, could and should be drawn into these projects.<sup>1</sup> Every effort should be made to enhance the Jewish educational value of this two-period-a-week exposure to Jewish culture and civilisation. The Jewish adolescent pupil in state schools was for so long the cause for anxiety and despair to Jewish

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1. There are thirteen primary and eleven high schools in the Cape Peninsula in which the Jewish Religious Instruction programmes of the Board have not been introduced as yet. No recent figures for the number of Jewish pupils in these schools are available. Information supplied in a letter from Mrs D Wingerin, Secretary of the Religious Instruction Department, Cape Council, S A Jewish Board of Deputies, Cape Town, 4 June 1980.

educationists and communal leadership alike, and suddenly, by an unexpected and unforeseen twist of circumstance, the community has been given the opportunity to give them some measure of Jewish instruction. For the thousands of adolescents in this category and for the hundreds of Jewish primary school children similarly deprived of their heritage - and for the Jewish community - the National Education Act of 1967 may be a blessing in disguise.

These programmes are still evolving and many hundreds, possibly thousands, of Jewish children in government schools are still outside their network. Their inherent limitations are only too obvious - the very limited time at their disposal, the lack of examination-discipline, the questionable efficacy of a correspondence course for school pupils and particularly for a non-examination subject, the problem of obtaining the most effective teaching personnel. But all these notwithstanding, the Jewish Religious Education Programmes present the community and its religious and educational leadership with valuable, even exciting, possibilities of reaching thousands hitherto inaccessible to any Jewish educational endeavours. It would be unforgivable if the two programmes continue their separate ways without co-ordination and co-operation. The immediate tasks are urgent extension of the programmes in terms of schools and pupils, the introduction of a system of evaluation of results, united planning and on-going collaboration between Johannesburg and Cape Town to discover the most effective ways of deriving the most benefit for Jewish education from this important development.

CHAPTER 53: THE ZIONIST YOUTH MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICABeginnings

From the outset the Zionist Movement espoused as its twin aims the political and cultural renaissance of the Jewish people. Whilst the Zionist adherents could render material assistance to those who had begun the process of rebuilding the Jewish homeland in Palestine, they realised that the other aim had to be directly attained by themselves, hence their immediate concern with Jewish education.<sup>1</sup>

In South Africa too the earliest Zionist groups and, later, the Zionist Federation, directed their attention to education, to little effect, however.<sup>2</sup> In vain Chief Rabbi Dr J L Landau appealed at every one of the early conferences for something concrete to be done; Mr A M Abrahams, President of the Federation, warned that "in South Africa there is a danger that in consequence of the lack of Jewish education the next generation will be not merely anti-Zionist but non-Jewish".<sup>3</sup>

It soon occurred to Zionists of that day that even though they could achieve little for formal Jewish education, Zionism itself would become an important instrument for the transmission of Jewish knowledge and a number of societies formed children's groups which they supervised and in which some sort of instruction was provided.<sup>4</sup> In Cape Town such a group was called Pirhe Zion (Flowers of Zion) which later became the Junior Zionist Society.<sup>5</sup> Such groups sprang up in a number of centres, created for the

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1. Cited in Gitlin: op.cit., p 166.

2. See pp 216 et seq and 319 et seq.

3. Cited in Gitlin: op.cit., p 166

4. Ibid. : The first children's society, according to this source, was established at Krugersdorp in 1903.

5. Ibid.

most part by children of the Eastern European immigrants, and the Zionist Federation later appointed "juvenile commissioners" to guide and assist them.<sup>1</sup>

These juvenile societies "struggled along as best they could...they were formed, they went out of existence, they bravely came to life again".<sup>2</sup> By 1920, there were 33 Young Israel societies, as they were known then, affiliated to the Zionist Federation, some of whom made efforts to educate their members.<sup>3</sup> By 1927 the S A Young Israel Federation was brought into being in Cape Town, but only a minority of Jewish youth were involved in the organised Zionist movement and "others drifted in and out of it with the casualness of railway passengers".<sup>4</sup>

The prime function of the Movement was the education of the youth in Zionism and Judaism, for South African Jewish youth was sadly deficient in the knowledge of both. By contrast, Zionism in Eastern Europe was a strong political and social force, an ideal towards which various ideological streams were impelled by a deep and intensive Jewish education no less than by the pressure of their milieu. At the end of the twenties immigrant youth brought these strong sentiments with them to South Africa and introduced their ideologies into the Zionist Youth Movement. By 1932 the new "uniformed" movements had displaced the Young Israel Federation, formed a Zionist Youth Council as a department of the Zionist Federation, were placing their cultural and educational

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1. The Second S A Zionist Conference in 1906 urged "affiliated societies to form juvenile societies in their towns" : *ibid.*

2. *Ibid.*, p 167.

3. In 1915, the Cape Town Junior Zionist Society produced a quarterly magazine called Judaea.

4. *Ibid.*, p 268.

activities on a properly organised basis and publishing their monthly The Menorah.<sup>1</sup> Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe had been stopped by the Quota Act<sup>2</sup> and the waves of anti-semitism that began to flow over continental Europe lapped the shores of faraway South Africa.<sup>3</sup> The South African Jewish community was confronted by inimical forces - covert and overt - and in the resulting atmosphere of heightened Jewish consciousness and concern Jewish youth naturally turned inwards, towards its heritage and its past, for added strength: it was a time for order and organisation. The senior youth organised for defence, the younger quite readily enrolled in the youth movements.

Over the years the Zionist Youth Movements have evolved quite elaborate educational programmes for their various age-groups, utilising methods most suited to their particular type of informal education and gearing their characteristic activities towards the transmission of their educational objectives.

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1. In existence today are:

Betar (Acronym of Brit Yosef Trumpeldor - the Union of Joseph Trumpeldor). Founded in Riga, Latvia, by Jewish students in 1923 and named after the Zionist hero who died in the defence of the new Jewish homeland in 1920. It was associated with the Zionist Revisionist Organisation of Zeev Jabotinsky. There were groups in Johannesburg and Cape Town by about 1930.

Habonim (Hebrew: The Builders): Zionist Scout Movement founded in England in 1929 and introduced into South Africa in 1931 by Norman Lourie.

Bnei 'Akiva (Sons of 'Akiva.): religious-Zionist Youth Movement established in Johannesburg in 1936.

The youngest and smallest are the Maginim (Shields) associated with the Progressive Jewish (Reform) Movement, established in the late sixties.

2. See p 256

3. The S A National-Socialist ("Greyshirt") Movement came into being in 1933.

Basically, the educational aims of all the youth movements were expressed by Norman Lourie, founder of Habonim in South Africa; they desired

to stimulate Jewish boys and girls to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the heritage of the Jewish past, leading to a vision of the new Palestine as the spiritual pivot of our hopes.<sup>1</sup>

On this foundation, each movement built its particular ideology, its programme of activities, its structures and its educational work. The central concept in all this is the concept of internal hadracha<sup>2</sup> and the central figure in their educative work is the madrich<sup>3</sup>, around whom all the activities revolve.

The youth movements are independent and find their momentum in their own membership. The leadership is constantly watchful in its endeavours to develop the abilities and commitment of members and foster their leadership qualities which will qualify for hadracha. The fledgling madrich himself undergoes quite intensive education and training at specially organised hadracha seminars,<sup>4</sup> in which senior madrachim transmit their own knowledge and expertise to their younger colleagues. The teaching cadre is therefore created by a system akin to ordination; it generates its own momentum and assures the movement of a continuing leadership barring external disruptions. Essentially the madrich remains a learner-cum-teacher throughout his career in the movement.<sup>5</sup>

The hadracha seminars, the main ones generally organised at the beginning of the year, are the key to the success of activities

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1. Cited in Shimoni, G: "Habonim - An Historical Perspective" in Ichud Habonim of South Africa : Golden Jubilee Magazine (Johannesburg, 1980) p 16.

2. Hadracha: Hebrew: guidance, instruction

3. Madrich: Hebrew: guide, youth instructor.

4. These may be up to ten days' duration: sometimes called mini-camps.

5. Written information supplied in a memorandum submitted to the writer by Mr H Mizrahi, Shaliah (Hebrew: emissary-instructor) of the Betar Youth Movement in Cape Town, 11 June 1980.

during the whole year. Here the madrich is taught what and how to teach to his hanichim<sup>1</sup>, enlightened as to madrich-hanich relationships, given the educational content that will constitute his year's work, trained in special methods, singing, folk dancing and games. What they have learned they will in due course convert into the education of their hanichim.<sup>2</sup>

### The S A Zionist Youth Movements: Structure and Numbers<sup>3</sup>

Members range in age between eight and about twenty-three, most of the leadership being composed of the older age group. Membership is voluntary and all four movements report a considerable percentage of floating members who attend irregularly; numbers therefore include active as well as inactive members.

TABLE OF MEMBERSHIP OF SOUTH AFRICAN  
YOUTH MOVEMENTS - 1980<sup>4</sup>

Movement	Transvaal	Cape	Natal	O F S	Zimbabwe	Total
BETAR	950	600 (C.T) 180 (P.E)	-	-	80	1 810
BNEI 'AKIVA	925	450	200	-	-	1 575
HABONIM	1 000	1 100	250	100	80	2 530
MAGINIM	500	150	100	-	-	750

1. Hanich (plural: Hanichim) Hebrew: pupil, educand.
2. Mizrahi, H: op.cit.
3. Information supplied in a memorandum submitted by Miss M Shochat, Secretary of the Cape Zionist Youth Council, Leeusig House, Leeuwen Street, Cape Town: 23 June 1980.
4. Ibid: See Appendix for detailed breakdown of the structure of the movements.

Seminars for members and/or madrachim are held in the main centres two or three times a year over week-ends, or as long as a week, or ten days, during school vacations.<sup>1</sup> An intensive hadracha programme is drawn up and implemented and careful thought is given to the creation of an esprit which will serve to strengthen links binding members to the movement and the fostering of personal rapport between madrachim and hanichim. Hanichim from all groups - frequently also from other centres in the Republic - come together at Seminar where they can live, learn and play together in a totally Jewish atmosphere. Seminar provides the opportunity of dealing with wider themes than is possible at the weekly meetings, and in greater depth. Formal education is supplemented by activities of a social and personal nature, of great benefit to personality development and growth of the ability to socialise.<sup>2</sup>

The high point of the year's work in all movements is the annual camp lasting some three weeks which may attract from two hundred (Maginim) to over a thousand (Habonim) members from all parts of the sub-continent. It is organised entirely by the leadership of the movement and is a test of the ability and the commitment of the senior and junior madrachim, their commendable motivation and considerable logistical enterprise in moving over two thousand young people by rail and road and keeping them supplied for three weeks. Campers sleep in tents and are controlled by their madrachim who have accepted responsibility for their charges. A full range of cultural activities and suitable entertainments forms part of the camp experience which in its totality is a

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1. The location is generally a holiday resort or hotel in the country, a section of which the movement rents and uses for dormitories and lecture rooms. It establishes and runs its own kitchen according to Kashrut rules: the organisation and running of such a complex venture is in itself an exercise in independent activity and initiative. (Kashrut - ritually fit to eat).

2. Information supplied in a memorandum to the writer, submitted by the Cape Town Bnei 'Akiva, 25 June 1980, p 2.

powerful educational factor in the lives of all who participate in them.<sup>1</sup>

Characteristic of the S A Zionist Youth Movements are their strong sense of independence, their spirit of commitment, their considerable motivation, the esprit and expertise of the leadership.

The king-pin in the educational work of the movements is the madrich. It is a system which has obvious virtues as well as equally obvious shortcomings. The involvement of the madrich or madricha<sup>2</sup> will generally act as a strong educative motive for himself or herself. The education of madrichim is an on-going process; he may be the teacher of a younger group but he is also simultaneously a hanich in his peer group learning from an older madrich. Lacking the authoritarianism inherent in the classroom situation the voluntary didactic situation of the youth movement will encourage the hanich to establish rapport with his madrich more easily and freely. Instead of the traditional formalised structure within which the learning material is transmitted in the classroom, the stress in the youth movement didactic situation is on the siha, the essentially informal presentation; on the prominence of games and self-activity. Structured school-work with its written exercises, homework, frontal instruction, stress on outward order and class discipline are all absent in the educational situation in the youth movements, with their free madrich-hanich relationships. All movements stress the affective elements in their educational aims in addition to the cognitive at all stages of their educational work.

The madrich is at one and the same time indispensable and suitable, and the youth movements have made a virtue out of

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1. Mizrahi, H: op.cit., : see also Shochat, op.cit., pp 3-4.

2. Madricha: Hebrew: feminine form of madrich.

a necessity. Where else would teachers and instructors have been found to do this educational work? And at the same time the system has led to the intensification of the education which the madrich himself has undergone: it has in fact sorted out those who are the potential leaders with greatest motivation and exposed them to an education aiming at turning out leaders-teachers for the movement. In effect, therefore, much of the education in the Jewish Youth Movement, perhaps unconsciously, is constantly engaged in turning out a leadership-elite; being a "wasting" elite, the process is never-ending.

But the seminar training is brief and spasmodic and the shortcomings of the young madrich as a teacher are only to be expected. The madrich, generally a senior pupil or a young student, has his own priorities which may all too frequently interrupt his regular instructional work.<sup>1</sup>

The educational programmes of the Movements are in essence selective fragments which each movement chooses to highlight, stressing those areas and topics which it believes are in consonance with its ideology and objectives.<sup>2</sup>

Youth programmes obviously lack the orderliness, ambience and depth which only the school can make possible. It may be - and probably is - superior in its affective quality to the formal and objective school instruction, but it is, however, limited in time to the two-hour weekly meeting during nine or ten months of the year and is subject to absenteeism, depending as it does on the voluntary co-operation

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1. Military service and examinations create serious problems in the madrich-teacher system.
  2. Habonim will give attention to Kibbutz and Socialist thought; Bnei 'Akiva will emphasise tradition and religion; Betar will highlight the struggle of the Zionist National Revival Movement for the political and cultural renaissance of the Jewish people.

of hanich - and parent - and on the reliability of the young madrach.

As a source of supplementary Jewish education, or as a reinforcement of the education they may receive in the Jewish school, the Youth Movements play an important and valuable role. But its education touches only a section of the youth and its nature being what it is, it cannot be a substitute for the school.<sup>1</sup> But for those children who do not receive any formal Jewish instruction, or whose Jewish education is at best merely fragmentary, what the movements teach is of great, and of even abiding importance. If what they teach could be integrated into what the Jewish schools teach, the results would be of mutual benefit. Such co-ordination has, however, in the past been sporadic at best and valuable opportunities have been lost.

The Zionist Youth Council runs two hadracha courses annually in Israel for madrachim and active members of the Youth Movements who receive instruction in history, current problems, movement ideology, methodology and hadracha techniques. Madrachim work for part of the time on kibbutzim or settlements and undertake to serve actively in their respective movements on their return to South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

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1. See Adar, Z: Jewish Education in South Africa: op.cit., Chapter 37.

2. Shochat, M: op.cit.

APPENDIX I      A SUMMARY OF THE SYLLABUS OF HEBREW STUDIES  
FOR THE DAY AND AFTERNOON SCHOOLS : (HEBREW)<sup>1</sup>  
BY A E RIVLIN, DIRECTOR OF THE CAPE BOARD  
OF JEWISH EDUCATION

The six components of the syllabus are:

Prayers and Benedictions

Laws and Customs

Bible and Aggadah<sup>2</sup>

Hebrew Language (including literary texts,  
writing, reading and grammar)

Jewish History

Songs and Plays<sup>3</sup>.

These were interlocked - with Hebrew as the medium of instruction serving as the instrument of integration and consolidation.<sup>4</sup> This was, in brief, a definition of the Ivrit B'Ivrit principle of instruction.

No less valuable and equally new was Rivlin's detailed enunciation of the objectives of Jewish education in general as well as for each of the constituent subjects.<sup>5</sup> No similar exposition of the aims and objectives have appeared since then.

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1. Rivlin, A E: HaTochnit shel HaLimudim Ha'Ivriim LeVatei HaSefer HaYomiim u-Levatei HaSefer shel Aharei HaTzohorayim: (Cyclostyled: Cape Board of Jewish Education, Cape Town 1961-1962) 157 pp foolscap.
  2. Aggada: Hebrew: Legend: homiletical literature of a folkloristic nature.
  3. Introduction to the Syllabus of the Cape Board of Education: "The Structure of the Syllabus" p 3. (cyclostyled: English).
  4. Ibid.
  5. Rivlin: HaTochnit (The Syllabus) op.cit., pp 3-7: see also Introduction to the Syllabus, op.cit.

The syllabus was based on the following six basic objectives:<sup>1</sup>

1. The transmission (teaching) of the main values of Jewish culture and the basic concepts of Judaism and its literature.
2. Transmission of the knowledge and practices of Torah and Judaism throughout the year.
3. Acquisition of basic knowledge of the Bible and sections of the Oral Law.
4. Deepening of the love for the Jewish people and the realisation of the mutual responsibility of all sections to one another.
5. Fostering of the bonds with the Land of Israel and of personal identification at various levels.
6. As an important objective in itself and as the main instrument for the attainment of the other aims is the teaching of Hebrew as a living spoken language and as the language of our original literature.

The syllabus included the following basic requirements:

- a) Delimitation of the material designated for every class and every subject
- b) Division of the material into sections and educational levels.
- c) An assessment of the time required for teaching specific sections
- d) Evaluation of the required achievements at the conclusion of every educational step.<sup>2</sup>

The specific aims of each of the four main subjects were also clearly enunciated.

The first two of the seven aims of Bible Teaching were typical:

1. To implant in the heart of the child faith in God, the Creator of the Universe and Giver of the Torah, the Book of Laws and of Life to the Jewish People.

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1. Ibid., p 3 (my translation)

2. Ibid. (my translation)

2. To transmit the realisation to the child that the Book of Books is the basis of Judaism and of Jewish Culture, that it contains the History of the Jewish People as it was wonderfully expressed in the good acts of our Patriarchs, Prophets, Heroes and other spiritual leaders; that it contained the fundamental values of Judaism as expressed in the Laws of Moses and the Prophets who aspired to divine justice and morality in their vision for Humanity and their People.<sup>1</sup>

And for Prayers, Laws and Customs (of Judaism) the syllabus set the following aims:

To foster in the child good habits and good conduct, to implant in him the concept of morality, love of truth and of justice, devotion to and love of fellow human beings and readiness to give of oneself in accordance with the age-old philosophy of Judaism.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 4 (my translation)

2. Ibid., p 6 (my translation).

APPENDIX II: HEBREW IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES:  
JEWISH STUDIES AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL

Since the appointment of the Rev Mr A P Bender to the Chair of Hebrew at the South African College in 1897<sup>1</sup>, Hebrew studies have been introduced into most South African universities, either as an independent discipline or as a component of a department of Semitic languages. A study of the syllabuses in Hebrew in the various universities reveal diverse approaches to the study of the language, reflecting the particular aims of the university concerned and the needs of the particular student-body.

The approaches range from the one extreme of the study of Hebrew strictly as a classical "dead" language to the opposite one of Hebrew as a modern spoken language, with emphasis on neo-Hebrew literature, as well as Bible and post-Biblical studies, through the medium of Hebrew. Between these two extremes, there may be universities which include varying areas of post-Biblical Hebrew studies in their curricula; in others classical Hebrew is taught for the one purpose of Bible study and may form part of the wider comparative study of Semitic languages.<sup>2</sup> Depending on the curriculum of and approach to Hebrew, South African universities fall into three main categories. The first consists of those institutions where Hebrew is studied purely as a classical language, the classics in this case being, of course, selected portions of the Old Testament, generally as part of the students' theological training.

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1. See p 68.

2. Aramaic, Syriac, Ugaritic and Arabic.

HEBREW DEPARTMENTS AT SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

University	Number of Students	Medium of Instruction
University of Durban-Westville	20 (1979-1980) Judaism Section 280	English
Rhodes University	5 (1980)	English
University of Port Elizabeth	28 (1980)	Afrikaans
Potchefstroom se Universiteit vir Christelike Hcër Onderwys	128 (1980)	Afrikaans (except if Modern Hebrew is offered)
University of Pretoria	312 (1980)	Afrikaans
University of Natal	43 (1979)	a) Introductory Hebrew: partially in Hebrew b) Courses I II III and Post-graduate wholly in Hebrew
Rand Afrikaans University	94 (1980)	Afrikaans (Hebrew in Modern Hebrew)
University of the Witwatersrand	82 (1980)	a) Hebrew is medium of instruction used. About 3/4 lectures in Hebrew. b) English used in History and Bible Essays.
University of Cape Town	43 (1979)	About half the teaching is conducted in Hebrew
University of South Africa	not available	a) English in Classical Course and Judaica. b) Hebrew only in Modern Hebrew
University of Stellenbosch	178 (1980)	Afrikaans

The Departments of Classical Hebrew in South African Universities

The University of Durban-Westville offers courses in Classical Hebrew in its Faculty of Theology, for those students engaged in training for the ministry and as an ancillary to Arabic.<sup>1</sup> The syllabus embraces grammar, translation and philological study of selected chapters of the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> Aramaic, Ugaritic or Syriac also form part of the third-year course. Jewish history of the inter-Temple period is studied in the vernacular.<sup>3</sup> Hebrew is not used as a medium of instruction.

Rhodes University offers three undergraduate courses in Biblical Hebrew in the Department of Divinity: the material includes grammar and selected Biblical chapters starting from Genesis and proceeding into the philological and exegetical study of selections from the Later Prophets, poetical sections of the Old Testament and the Wisdom Literature as well as Aramaic and advanced translation.<sup>4</sup>

Most of the students taking Hebrew at the University of Port Elizabeth do so to gain admission to the theological faculties of the Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>5</sup> The emphasis is therefore on Bible Study, and includes during the first two years, the Books of Jonah and Ruth and some forty chapters selected from various books of the Bible. The Introduction states the aims of the course:

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1. Written information supplied in a letter from Dr N A C Heuer, Division of Classical Hebrew, University of Durban-Westville, 3 March 1980.
  2. In addition, Chapters from the Book of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus), Mishna and early post-Biblical literature are prescribed in the third year.
  3. Ibid.: a course in Judaism is given in the Department of the Science of Religion by a visiting Rabbi: it forms part of the introduction to religions of the world.
  4. Information supplied in a letter from Dr R Wakeley of the Department of Divinity, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 20 February 1980. A credit course in Jewish Studies had been pioneered at Rhodes by Dr M B Steinberg in 1970: it was however discontinued in 1979.
  5. Information supplied in a letter from Prof J B van Zijl, Professor of Semitics at the University of Port Elizabeth, 21 April 1980.

is to place the student in a position so that with the aid of a dictionary and grammar book he will be able to read simpler passages from the historical<sup>1</sup> and prophetic literature of the Testaments.

Aramaic and more comprehensive grammar are laid down in the third year, in addition to sections from the more difficult books of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> The Comparative Philology of Semitic Languages and Biblical Hebrew based on some thirty chapters from the Hagiographa, fifty Psalms, Mishna, Aramaic texts and a third Semitic language (Ugaritic) as well as Cultural History of Ancient Israel form the syllabus of the B A Honours course.<sup>3</sup>

The Hebrew syllabus of the Department of Semitic Languages of the Potchefstroom University for Higher Christian Education is similar to that of the University of Port Elizabeth.<sup>4</sup>

At this University too the undergraduate work is intended to prepare students to proceed to a degree in theology after completing their first degree with at least two courses in Hebrew and Greek.<sup>5</sup>

Whilst the Hebrew syllabus in the Department of Semitic Languages at Pretoria University is virtually identical to these, there is a greater emphasis in the Department on the Bible, comprising the geography of Palestine, Biblical Archaeology and the History of Ancient Israel.<sup>6</sup> Post-Biblical Hebrew Literature<sup>7</sup> as well as Modern Hebrew are prescribed

1. Ibid.

2. Prescribed texts are: five chapters from each of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and some from Lamentations and II Chronicles and the Aramaic section of Ezra.

3. Ibid.

4. Information in a letter from Dr H F van Rooy, Head of the Department of Semitic Languages: 21 February 1980: an interesting aspect is that the Manual of Discipline from Qumran is prescribed for the third-year course.

5. Ibid. There is provision for specialisation in Modern Hebrew at the post-graduate level.

6. Information supplied by Prof W C van Wyk, Head of the Department of Semitic Languages at the University of Pretoria, 12 May 1980.

7. A Tractate from the Mishna, a Qumran text and Ecclesiasticus.

for the Honours Degree in Semitic Languages, in addition to Old Testament selections, Aramaic and Ugaritic or Akkadian.<sup>1</sup>

The syllabus of the University of Stellenbosch conforms in general to those already described, though the Department of Semitic Studies offers a fairly wide range of Semitic languages from Akkadian to Phoenician.<sup>2</sup> Here, too, the emphasis is on Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic, the object being to equip students for admission to the Theological Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church. Archaeology of the Holy Land, the history of the Near East and the Introduction to the Literatures of the Ancient Near East are included in the syllabus.<sup>3</sup> In post-graduate courses there is a more intensive study of the other Semitic languages, more advanced Bible studies and Post-Biblical literature up to 'Ivrit (Modern Hebrew).<sup>4</sup>

At none of these universities is Hebrew used as a medium of instruction.

#### Modern Hebrew

To the second category belong the Universities of the Witwatersrand and Natal where Modern Hebrew forms the core of the curriculum of studies in the Hebrew Department. At Witwatersrand the syllabus is composed of Modern Hebrew Literature, language and grammar, Bible Studies, and Post Biblical Literature, generally taught through the medium of Hebrew.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Information in a letter from Prof F C Fensham, Professor of Semitic Languages, University of Stellenbosch, 25 February 1980.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Information supplied in a letter from Prof L Bronner, of the Department of Hebrew Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, 26 March 1980.

Oral expression in Hebrew is part of the course, which also includes Jewish History. Aramaic and Comparative Semitic Philology are added in the Honours course. About three-quarters of the lectures are in Hebrew.<sup>1</sup>

The University of Natal offers four courses in Hebrew<sup>2</sup> and two in Jewish Studies on the undergraduate level and post-graduate courses in both fields.<sup>3</sup> The constituent components of each course are Bible, Rabbinic Literature, Modern Hebrew Language and Literature and Jewish Civilisation.<sup>4</sup> All sections of the work are studied and examined in Hebrew. Rabbinic Literature embraces Mishna selections, introduction to the Talmud and Rabbinic Commentaries, notably Rashi: all are studied in Hebrew. Mediaeval Hebrew Literature is introduced in the third course, whilst Jewish Thought, Ethics and Mysticism are added to history as components of the Jewish Civilisation syllabus. Modern Hebrew prose, poetry and drama constitute the main field of study in all three years. Oral expression and written composition are stressed throughout.

Jewish History, Jewish Philosophy, Bible and Hebrew Literature are the main fields of study offered for the Honours Degree: Biblical Aramaic is introduced at this level.<sup>5</sup> The syllabus in Jewish studies comprises Jewish Biblical Studies, a Survey of Classical Jewish Literature, Jewish Laws and Customs, Principles of the Jewish Faith, Judaism and its Daughter Religions, Varieties of Jewish Religious Experience. The language used is English, though a knowledge of Hebrew is a requirement for the Honours Degree.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ibid. : English may be used in essays in History and Bible.

2. There is an Introductory Course for students who did not take Hebrew in the Matriculation Examination: students must obtain a First Class pass in this subject before they are permitted to proceed to Course I.

3. Information supplied by Mr I Fisher, Head of the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of Natal in a letter 25 February 1980.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. : the student is required to choose one main topic for specialisation and takes in addition two others as minors.

6. Ibid.

The third category is represented by the Hebrew Department of the University of Cape Town which occupies what is roughly a middle position between the Classical Hebrew departments in the first category and the Modern Hebrew of the second.<sup>1</sup> Here, too, there is an Introductory Course designed to give the non-matriculated Hebrew student a basic grounding in Biblical and Modern Hebrew grammar and language.<sup>2</sup> The syllabus for the first course is composed of selected short stories from the early classics of Modern Hebrew Literature; the History of the Hebrew Language; translation; the phonology, morphology and basic syntax of Biblical Hebrew and their relation to Modern Hebrew; introduction to Hebrew and the Semitic Languages; selections from the Pentateuch, Prophets and Hagiographa.<sup>3</sup> In addition, there is a study of historical and cultural issues connected with the texts read in class, Biblical texts and versions.<sup>4</sup> Essays are set in English and Hebrew. About half the teaching is conducted in Hebrew.<sup>5</sup>

The syllabus for the second course includes a text from early modern prose, a survey of the fundamentals of Hebrew phonology, morphology and syntax; translation; conversation; a short story of Agnon;<sup>6</sup> Biblical texts with Rashi Commentary; the Book of Jonah and introduction to Biblical Aramaic. The

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1. Information material supplied by Prof S Hopkins, Head of the Department of Hebrew Studies, University of Cape Town, 19 February 1980.
  2. This is called the Intensive Course.
  3. Syllabus for 1980: Department of Hebrew, University of Cape Town, 19 February 1980.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Information in a letter from Prof Hopkins, 19 February 1980.
  6. Modern Hebrew novelist and prose author.

historical background of the texts is also dealt with.

Hebrew phonology, morphology and syntax, problems of Biblical Hebrew and translation are continued in the third course; conversation and a story of Agnon are also prescribed. Two Psalms are studied with Targum<sup>1</sup>, Rashi, Ibn Ezra<sup>2</sup> and Kimhi<sup>3</sup> Commentaries, as also selected portions of Judah Halevi's<sup>4</sup> Kuzari<sup>5</sup> and selected extracts of Jewish Aramaic. The course will also include the historical and cultural background of the Kuzari as well as an introduction to the Talmud based on selected readings and Biblical exegesis.<sup>6</sup>

The Honours Course comprises Critical Studies in the Hebrew Bible; studies in Mishna and Talmud; Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry and Prose; Hebrew Palaeography and Epigraphy; Advanced Readings in Jewish Aramaic; Reading Traditions of the Hebrew Language; Bibliography and History of Hebrew Studies in the West; Development of Modern Hebrew Literature; Hebrew and Semitic Philology.<sup>7</sup> A reading knowledge of German is required for the Honours and Master's Degrees.

The University of South Africa offers Classical and Modern Hebrew as separate fields of study, plus a course in Judaica.<sup>8</sup>

The first-named focuses on the study of the principles of grammar, Hebrew vocabulary and includes some forty-five selected chapters from the Hebrew Bible. Surveys of the

- 
1. Targum (lit: Translation) Aramaic translation of the Bible.
  2. Abraham Ibn Ezra: Mediaeval Spanish-Jewish scholar and commentator (1093-1167 AD)
  3. David Kimhi (1160-1235) French-Jewish grammarian and commentator.
  4. Judah Halevi: Mediaeval Spanish-Jewish poet and philosopher (c1085-c1142)
  5. Kuzari: Main philosophical work of Judah Halevi in vindication of the Jewish religion.
  6. Syllabus for Course III for 1980: Department of Hebrew, op.cit.
  7. Prospectus of the Faculty of Arts: University of Cape Town, 1980, p 176.
  8. Syllabuses in the Handbook of the University of South Africa (Pretoria 1980) pp 310-315.

historical background and of the geography of the Biblical lands are included. The second course prescribes some selections from Hebrew texts of the inter-testamental and New Testament periods.<sup>1</sup> In the last course, in addition to the more advanced books of the Bible, there are selections from Ben-Sira (Ecclesiasticus), the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Mishna, as well as an introduction to North-West Semitic.

A wide spectrum of Comparative Semitic philology is laid down for the Honours Degree, as well as the history, religion and culture of Ancient Israel, further texts in Classical Hebrew and the study of another Semitic language and its culture.

The syllabus for Modern Hebrew includes Hebrew grammar, composition and comprehension and the study of selections from Hebrew prose, poetry and drama, which are examined in Hebrew only. Critical appreciation is included in Course III.<sup>2</sup> The medium used is Hebrew. The Honours Course provides for a choice between Modern Hebrew Literature - including the mediaeval, neo-classical, pre-state and modern writers - and the Development of the Hebrew Language which places the emphasis on the linguistic development of Hebrew from Biblical times to Haskala, taking in Aramaic as well as the Talmudic and Mediaeval Periods.

The two courses in Judaica<sup>3</sup> comprise the history of the Jewish people from 2000BC to modern times; a survey of Jewish Literature till the Gaonic Period<sup>4</sup>; Commentaries and Codes; Mysticism; Jewish Philosophy and a range of special topics in Jewish Thought and Literature.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., p 310.

2. Ibid., pp313-314.

3. Ibid., pp 311-313

4. Till the end of the 6th century A D.

5. One of the topics is the history of South African Jewry.

The syllabus for the Honours Bachelor Degree lays down more advanced studies in these fields with the addition of Yiddish literature, a survey of Modern Hebrew literature and a detailed study of major Jewish philosophers or writers. The medium used in the Judaic course is English or Afrikaans.

With its Classical, Modern Hebrew and Judaica courses the University of South Africa offers the widest opportunities for the study of the language and Jewish culture of all similar departments at other South African universities.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Classical and Modern Hebrew may not be studied together at the undergraduate level.

APPENDIX III: THE ACADEMIC RESULTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN  
JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS: A COMPARATIVE REVIEW  
OF THE RESULTS OBTAINED BY JEWISH AND  
DEPARTMENTAL SCHOOLS IN THE RESPECTIVE  
MATRICULATION EXAMINATIONS IN THE CAPE AND  
THE TRANSVAAL AND A DISCUSSION OF THE  
IMPLICATIONS INVOLVED

If results in the matriculation examination are to be taken as a criterion of academic achievement, the S A Jewish schools have a record of success which is at once consistent and even striking, as a comparison with the averages for the provinces will show.<sup>1</sup> No claim can be made, of course, that such a comparison is scientific or that it could be considered as a valid and reliable criterion of comparative achievements: no properly controlled experiment was carried out for this purpose. The two sets of results are reviewed in this chapter for the interest their comparison provides: and they may serve as an indication of the considerable divergence of the results obtained by pupils in the Jewish schools from the norms for the province. Some explanation for this phenomenon may be suggested, but it should be stressed that it is largely speculative and certainly not based on any verifiable reasons.

The Jewish schools in the two provinces have quite obviously scored very much better than averages for the departmental schools. Whilst conventional wisdom would very likely ascribe this phenomenon to the innate intellectual superiority of Jewish children - in itself a somewhat dubious assumption - such an explanation is too simplistic to be too readily acceptable. There must be other, and more complex, factors involved.

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1. Katz, M E: Jewish Education at the Cape 1841-Present Day:  
op.cit., pp 145-154

The homes of most pupils of Jewish schools may be more consistently education-oriented and Jewish parents may be, on the whole, more motivated - even more ambitious - in regard to educational achievement than the general average. Perhaps, too, the home atmosphere itself is more culture-conscious: the presence and practices of Judaism in themselves constitute an additional cultural quantum and serve to heighten the cultural tension. To the Jew education is not merely part of his ethnic heritage, its value unquestioned and unquestionable: it is also the road he must traverse to attain a measure of socio-economic security to serve as some sort of bulwark against ill winds, social or political.

The writer is far from convinced, however, that the reasons for the obviously better academic performance of the Jewish schools is to be found in either the Jewish ethos, in Jewish history or in the Jews' position in his social milieu. If there are influences of this nature in existence, they are probably peripheral. The answer lies probably in the schools themselves, and may possibly be discovered in that area of education common to all, namely in the Jewish education they provide. This makes additional educational demands on the child from his nursery school onwards. Jewish schools teach longer hours than do departmental ones, and Jewish studies make extra intellectual demands on the child both at school and at home. Hebrew consists of a number of subjects introduced from the second year in most schools which are an extra task for the child, displacing no other subject in the curriculum, though the teaching time allocated to general studies may be accelerated to produce a saving required for Jewish studies. In the high school it becomes one of the requisite six subjects, but the time allocated to it, and its cognate subjects, is at least double the norm and may constitute as much as a quarter of the total teaching time.

The answer may lie precisely in this extra intellectual and academic burden for the child, though challenge would be more apposite a word. Right from the sub-standards the child becomes accustomed to making the extra effort expected by the school and the home in his bi-cultural education. Most homes are motivated - some very strongly so - towards the acquisition of this Jewish education which is the basis for the existence of the school and the main reason that brought the child to the school, and this parental attitude undoubtedly influences the child, leading him to accept the challenge of coping with the extra load of academic work, involving him in the process in the expenditure of considerable effort and time. Parents, and children, lacking this motivation insofar as Jewish education is concerned - or, what is not unlikely, children themselves deciding for their parents in this regard - may even be unwilling, unable or unconcerned about challenges to their children in the field of general studies.<sup>1</sup>

Here may lie the main reason for the better academic achievements of Jewish day schools. These, it should be noted, do not practise selectivity of admission, nor is there that inbuilt social selectivity operating in practice in schools whose enrolment is drawn from a more socially and culturally advantaged and homogeneous community.<sup>2</sup> The Jewish community is probably not as socially homogeneous as the residents in a number of upper middle-class or affluent suburbs in our cities whose children attend the schools in those particular areas. The homogeneity may lie in the ethnic and religious heritage more than in the socio-economic fabric.<sup>3</sup>

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1. If innate ethnic intellectual qualities were responsible for the better academic performance of children in Jewish schools, it could be proved or disproved by a comparison with the results obtained by Jewish children in general schools.
  2. It is interesting to note that Herzlia High School has a Practical Course for the intellectually under-endowed children, as provided for in the Differential System of Education. There are 56 children in these classes in 1980.
  3. It is a fact though that the community has moved up the socio-economic ladder since the war.

It is the writer's contention that, paradoxical as it may sound, the main factor for the better than average academic achievement of the day school pupils is precisely this very extra "burden" of Hebrew studies, a "burden" which should logically have been expected to depress academic results. The facts are proof to the contrary.

If the Differentiated System of Education does adjust the curriculum to the abilities, interests and needs of the pupil, should it not ask how it is that so large a group of pupils not only manages to carry an extra educational load, in the form of Hebraic studies, without detrimental effects on the general educational work, but actually performs better in the latter field. If the higher levels are achieved in spite of increasing the quantum of the educational effort by the child, why not apply this fact to other children who are not in the Jewish day schools. The present two-layer structure of most subjects in the Differentiated System might be augmented by a third - the highest grade - to suit, and stimulate, those pupils who have the potential to attain higher goals. And from the experience of the Jewish schools it would appear that even the average pupil has an area of latent ability which remains untapped.

In addition to such vertical movement - a higher level for subjects above the present higher grade - attention might also be directed to the possibility of horizontal extension for those pupils capable and desirous of making the sustained effort of widening the ambit of their studies by including extra subjects instead of taking the highest grades in those comprising the quota of six laid down by the syllabus. A seventh subject in the high school would not be beyond the capabilities of many pupils, and even eight for some. The problem would remain one of motivation on the one hand, and, on the other, of integrating such divergences into the present system without causing dislocation.

Nor need the primary school be overlooked in such a review. Whilst there are no criteria for the purpose of comparing academic results, there is no evidence that the extra Hebrew studies impair attainments in general subjects, except in the case of the weakest groups who find it difficult to cope with the basic subjects of the general curriculum. If it is correct then to deduce from these consistent examination results of Jewish schools over these last twenty-five years that pupils may be taught more than our schools demand of them at present, and with resulting benefits all-round, then more differentiation is necessary to identify those pupils suited and ready to accept such extra demands.

Several distinguishing facets of education in the Jewish schools may be relevant in a discussion of this nature. There is an almost universal limitation on the size of classes in these schools; this is rarely much above thirty, and in the high school is probably near the twenty-five mark, or even less.

A second factor is the attention given to the special didactics of the Jewish subjects, and the use of audio-visual materials which has been fully integrated into the syllabuses, especially in the primary school.<sup>1</sup>

The third aspect characteristic of the Jewish school is the phenomenon of the almost total involvement of the home and parents in the life and work of the school. Parents are generally highly motivated: indeed, they established the schools for the express purpose of attaining certain educational objectives, entrusted their children to them, accepted the duty and challenge of maintaining and leading them<sup>2</sup>, have been integrated into many of its activities, and

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1. Both Boards of Jewish Education have Pedagogic Centres which produce a wide variety of educational aids for the teaching of Hebrew and cognate subjects and several schools have developed their own quite sophisticated resources.
  2. All Jewish schools, together with other private schools in the Republic, will receive a subsidy of R100 per pupil per annum as from this year. For schools in the Cape Province, see Die Burger, 13 December 1979, p 3.

generally play their proper role in underpinning and strengthening the educative work of the school.

It is difficult to pin-point precisely how important these factors are in endeavouring to account for the above-average examination results of Jewish schools and their success in managing to impart the increased quantum of educational content.<sup>1</sup> They may be peculiar to the Jewish school and therefore impossible to transfer to the situation of the state school. Much of the argumentation in this appendix must therefore remain speculative: but the facts of the situation are too obvious to be ignored, and their implications too important and even tantalising to be summarily dismissed.

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1. In terms of time this might range from twenty to thirty per cent of the child's stay at school, plus extra time for work at home.

RESULTS OBTAINED BY JEWISH SCHOOLS IN THE TRANSVAAL FORM V  
EXAMINATIONS 1956 - 1979 IN PERCENTAGES<sup>1</sup>

(Percentages for schools, with percentages of Provincial  
Schools in brackets)<sup>2</sup>

Year	First Class	Second Class	Failures and Supplementaries
1956	37,5 (17,4)	62,5 (64)	- (18,6)
1957	40 (17,7)	60 (62,5)	- (19,75)
1958	75 (17,2)	25 (63,3)	- (19,5)
1959	42,1 (16,9)	57,9 (62,7)	- (20,4)
1960	49,2 (17,9)	45 (60,1)	5,6 (22)
1961	35,8 (17,2)	62,3 (71,1)	1,8 (11,6)
1962	38,2 (18,75)	59,8 (70,8)	2 (11,0)
1963	32,1 (18,8)	67,8 (72)	- (9,2)
1964	46,2 (18,3)	53,8 (72,1)	- (9,6)
1965	50,4 (N A)	47,7 (N A)	1,0 (N A)
1966	54,1 (N A)	44,8 (N A)	1,0 (N A)
1967	49,1 (19,0)	44,9 (72,1)	3,5 (10,1)
1968*	42,5 (20,0)	56,2 (72,9)	1,3 (7,1)
1969	42,5 (19,8)	54,8 (71,7)	2,7 (8,4)
1970	39,4 (N A)	55,6 (N A)	5,0 (N A)
1971**	41,6 (19,8)	53,1 (71,0)	5,3 (9,3)
1972	43,2 (21,9)	55 (71,6)	1,8 (7,5)
1973	44,5 (22,0)	49,7 (70,5)	5,7 (7,9)
1974	43,3 (N A)	53,7 (N A)	2,9 (N A)

After the introduction of the Differentiated System of Education the Comparative Failure Percentages were as follows:

Year	No of Candidates	Failures (Percentages)
1975	271	0,4 (7,2)
1976	248	- (7,4)
1977	248	0,4 (6,6)
1978	218	0,9 (N A)
1979	224	0,4 (N A)

\* King David, Victory Park and Carmel, Pretoria included for the first time.

\*\* Hillel, Benoni, included for the first time.

1. Statistics for Transvaal Jewish schools supplied by Mr N Sandler, Director of Secular Studies, S A Board of Jewish Education.
2. Annual Reports of the Transvaal Education Department for the years 1956-1977 (1965 and 1966 omitted) (The Government Printer, Pretoria)

RESULTS OBTAINED BY JEWISH SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE PROVINCE  
IN THE SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS OF THE  
CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

(Percentages for Schools, with percentage for whole Province  
in brackets)<sup>1</sup>

Year	First Class	Pass	Failures	Total
1957*	21,4 (22,2)	71,4 (64,6)	7,1(13,2)	14
1958	23,5 (24,2)	76,5 (63)	- (12,8)	17
1959	47,3 (21,5)	47,3 (63,2)	5,2 (15,3)	19
1960	44,7 (25,4)	44,7 (60,1)	10,5 (14,5)	38
1961	41,8 (21,4)	58,1 (63,8)	- (14,8)	43
1962	30,5 (20,7)	65,2 (62,6)	4,3 (16,7)	47
1963	38,3 (20,9)	61,7 (64)	- (15,1)	47
1964	52,4 (19,3)	42,9 (63,1)	4,8 (17,6)	42
1965	41,9 (20,8)	51,2 (60)	6,9 (19,1)	43
1966	44,0 (N A)	56 (N A)	- (N a)	50
1967	38,2 (N A)	52,9 (N A)	8,8 (N A)	68
1968	39,7 (N A)	58,8 (N A)	1,5 (N A)	68
1969	48,4 (N A)	50 (N A)	1,6 (N A)	64
1970**	31,2 (20,3)	67,8 (68)	1,0 (11,6)	93
1971	46,1 (N A)	53,9 (N A)	- (N A)	78
1972	34,1 (N A)	65,9 (N A)	- (N A)	85
1973	47,2 (25,0)	50,0 (63,0)	2,8 (11,0)	72
1974	47,9 (N A)	50,7 (N A)	1,4 (N A)	73
1975	66,2 (24,5)	32,4 (60,8)	1,4 (14,7)	68

After the introduction of the Differentiated System of Education the results were as follows:<sup>2</sup>

Year	"A" Average	Passes	Failures	Total
1976	14,9 (2,2)	100 (91,8)	- (8,2)	74
1977	9,0 (2,4)	97,8 (92,8)	2,2 (7,2)	89
1978	20,6 (2,6)	100 (93,6)	- (6,3)	92
1979	8,2 (3,75)	100 (94,7)	- (5,3)	82

\* Herzlia only.

\*\* Theodor Herzl, Port Elizabeth, included.

1. Reports of the Superintendent-General of Education:  
 (Department of Education, Cape of Good Hope) 1957-1968.  
 The name of the post was changed in 1969 to that of Director  
 of Education; reports from that date to 1976 are called  
 Reports of the Director of Education.

2. Data for 1977 to 1979 were supplied in a letter from the  
 Department. 12 March 1980.

APPENDIX IV: THE STRUCTURE AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES  
OF THE FOUR MAIN ZIONIST YOUTH MOVEMENTS

1. BETAR<sup>1</sup>

AIM OF BETAR

is the Redemption of the Jewish Nation,  
the Revival of its State and Civilisation,  
whose language shall be

Hebrew,

Its Soul the Bible

its Order

Freedom and Social Justice.

These objectives are to be secured

by the creation

of a Jewish State in Eretz Israel

on both sides of the Jordan.

The Mission of the Betar

is to produce a type of Jew

which the nation needs

in order the better and faster

to build up the Jewish State.<sup>2</sup>

Age groups: i) Shimshonim<sup>3</sup>: 8-10 years

Games are used and the general approach is simple: Madrichim are in the 14-15 age group (Standards VII-VIII) and meet twice weekly to programme their activities. Madrich and hanich establish personal bonds; he regularly sends circulars to them, and telephones when necessary. The success or failure of his work depends on the personal relationships. Boys and girls are in separate sections.

ii) Hashmonaim<sup>4</sup>: 10-12 years

Here too the presentation is important. The meeting lasts about one to one-and-a-half hours and consists of a talk/story, games, handwork in clay, drawings, etc. The madrichim are about 16 years old (Standard VIII): boys and girls are separate.

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1. Mizrahi, H: op.cit.

2. Hadracha Booklet: Mahleket Hadracha of Betar: 1979 (rear-cover) ed. J Abramowitz.

3. Shimshonim: Hebrew: plural of Shimshon - Samson

4. Hashmonaim: Hebrew: Hasmoneans

iii) Kanaim<sup>1</sup>: 12-13 years

The group is co-educational (Standards IV and V): here the madrach endeavours to construct the siha on an educational basis. The material is prepared by the Hadracha Department under the guidance of the Shaliah.

iv) Biluim<sup>2</sup>: 13-14 years

These children are in the first year of high school: the madrachim are students who have had the experience of hadracha work. The group provides the opportunity for hanichim to demonstrate leadership ability and the discussions promote self-education and assist in self-expression. Potential leaders can now be discerned. The meeting lasts about two hours, a third of which is devoted to the theoretical subject and the rest to games, songs, handicraft and folk dancing.

v) Bnei Etzel<sup>3</sup>: 15-16 years

Consists of younger madrachim (Standards VIII-IX) who take junior groups, and other hanichim of their age group. The madrach gains knowledge of methods and content for teaching his own group. The hanich is given the opportunity to gain self-confidence, learns to express himself and think creatively. The meeting is divided as for the previous group.

vi) Shavei Zion<sup>4</sup>: 16-17 years

Most are madrachim and old members (Standards IX and X). The madrach must prepare in depth for the discussions and be up-to-date for reviewing current events. Here, too, the personal bond between madrach and hanichim is very important.

vii) The Students

Led by the shaliah and heads of the movement. Outside speakers are regularly invited to the monthly meetings. Discussions are encouraged and range freely over a wide variety of subjects. Singing and folk dancing are also included.

1- Kanaim: Hebrew: Zealots: the reference is to the sect that led the rebellion against Rome in 66AD.

2. Biluim: See p 13 footnote 1.

3. Bnei Etzel: Hebrew: Sons of Etzel: Etzel is acronym for Irgun Zvai Leumi: The National Military Organisation, the Zionist Underground Liberation Movement.

4. Hebrew: Returners to Zion.

The names of the groups have an historical significance for the hanichim.

### The Syllabus<sup>1</sup>

Zionist History: Jewish History: Festivals and National Days: Historical personalities: Current problems for the more advanced groups. Games, Singing, Folk Dancing, Handcraft.

In general, the hanich does not learn about these topics in his Hebrew school and certainly not in a government school.

The task of the shaliah is to act as a full-time link-man between the movement and outside organisations, to assist in and oversee the drawing-up of the programmes of hadracha and to initiate its implementation. The real leaders are the students who devote much time and thought to the running of the movement; they are the voluntary educators of the Diaspora and worthy examples to their hanichim. The budget is covered by the S A Zionist Federation.

The main problem of the Zionist Youth Movements is the apathy of the majority of the youth and no less of their parents who are frequently actively negative in their attitude. Contact with parents is therefore also important and the shaliah and madrachim visit homes several times a year to talk to parents and endeavour to break down barriers of apathy and ignorance.<sup>2</sup>

The tochnit handbook contains carefully organised material for the various age groups: the programmes are clearly demarcated and prepared for the madrachim with a pertinent and interesting introduction on the function of the madrach and specific details of the methods to be used for every topic at every level.<sup>3</sup> Topics may be dealt with at several

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1. Mizrahi, H: op.cit.

2. Ibid.

3. See Sanders, R: Betar Tochnit (Hebrew: Betar Syllabus/ Handbook) (Mahleket-Hadracha, Cape Town) photocopied, nd.: didactically, a compilation of high order.

meetings and the handbook takes the madrich through every stage in building up his lesson. Games, handwork and songs form part of the meetings. Hebrew games are also included.

Each meeting is reported on by the madrich to his superior. The material for the younger groups includes knowledge of the Movement and its aims; Bible stories; Festivals; Great Personalities. Games, songs, projects, folk-dancing and basic Hebrew are integrated into the programme. Quizzes, handwork and outdoor activities form part of the method.<sup>1</sup>

The programme for the Kanaim is prefaced by psychological guide-lines on the problem of the adolescent and comprises historical and contemporary material on Israel and the Jewish people, Jewish traditions, movement aims, and personalities at a more advanced level. Much attention is again given to methodology and ancillary activities. The handbook continues to deal with the programmes for the other age-groups: topics are carefully chosen for the weekly meetings from the same general areas.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid.: "Tochnit for Shimshonim/Hashmonaim".

2. See also: Sanders, R and Mizrahi, H: Betar '80: A Handbook for Seminar: (Mahleket Hadracha, Cape Town) June 1980: (photocopied), and Abramowitz, J and Mizrahi, H: Hadracha Booklet for Betar National Seminar (Mahleket Hadracha, Cape Town) July 1979.

2 THE HABONIMThe Ideology<sup>1</sup>

The 1959 National Mo'atzah (conference) of Habonim....affirmed the "independence" and "educational autonomy" of Habonim as the "right of every member to his own spiritual (i.e. religious) and political convictions" but also stated categorically that it regarded chalutz aliyah<sup>2</sup> as the highest challenge facing its members.

Age Groups

<u>Garinim</u>	8-10
<u>Shtilim</u>	10-12
<u>Bonim</u>	12-13
<u>Amelim</u>	13-14
<u>Sollelim</u>	14-15
<u>Sayarim</u>	15-16
<u>Shomrim Tzeirim</u>	16-17 <sup>3</sup>
<u>Shomrim Bogrim</u>	17-18+

Tochnit<sup>4</sup> for the various groups was drawn up by the Mo'atza Hinuchit<sup>5</sup> of the Movement and consists of a number of main topics ("blocks") suited to the particular age levels. The Garinim Tochnit includes such topics as Israel Awareness, Judaism and Social Awareness comprising Ethics and Morals, People Around Us and Technology. The subjects under these main headings include Jerusalem, festivals, Kibbutz, religious symbols, desirable character traits, family, handicapped persons, Blacks, pollution and over-population.

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1. Shimoni, G: "Habonim - an historical perspective" in Ihud Habonim (S A) Golden Jubilee: op.cit., p 18.
  2. Chalutz : Hebrew : pioneer - here in the sense of pioneer worker on the land. Aliyah ; Hebrew : immigration (to Israel).
  3. Hebrew equivalents of group names: Garinim - seeds: Shtilim - saplings: Bonim - builders: Amelim - workers; Sollelim - road-pavers: Sayarim - patrollers: Shomrim - guards: Tzeirim - young: Bogrim - adult.
  4. Hebrew: syllabus, programme.
  5. Educational Council (Hebrew): Brochure issued by S A Habonim Johannesburg 1979 (photostat).

The Tochnit for Bonim and Shomrim is divided into five or six "blocks" for the year. The main Bonim topics comprise Jewish History, Modern Israel, Festivals and the World Around Us, each subdivided into weekly or fortnightly sihot<sup>1</sup> or meetings.<sup>2</sup>

The tochnit grows in complexity for older age groups and gradually assumes the specific colouring and nuances of the mild socialism which forms part of the Habonim ideology as well as a growing awareness of the S A milieu and its problems.<sup>3</sup> The movement lays stress on closeness to nature as an introduction to the teachings of the early Zionist-socialist philosopher Aaron David Gordon at the turn of the century. There is also increasing attention to elementary sociology; discrimination is a subject leading to anti-Semitism and social structure is discussed as the preliminary to building a better society such as the kibbutz.

The Holocaust and assimilation constitute the main Jewish topics for the Sayarim group,<sup>4</sup> whilst the outline for the Shomrim deals mostly with the problems of contemporary society, Israel, introduction to socialism, group dynamics, the kibbutz, Jewishness, Labour Zionism, Aliyah and current social and political problems.<sup>5</sup>

The annual camp is claimed to be the largest youth camp of its kind in the world.<sup>6</sup> Seminars are "frameworks for highly intensive education" and top madrichim may be sent from one centre to another to run seminars.<sup>7</sup>

- 
1. Hebrew: plural of sihah - a talk
  2. Some Bonim Blocks are: Children in Israel and South Africa (5 meetings): Our Foundations Pre-1948 (3): Jewish State Builders (4): Relating to Jewishness (4): Contemporary Israel and the Movement (7): Chagim (Festivals) (as they occur): The World Around Us (4) e.g. Prejudice, Pollution, Delinquency, etc. : See Bulletin of Mo'atza Hinuchit, op.cit.
  3. See Tochnit for Amelim (Block V), Sollelim (Phase 3), *ibid.*
  4. *Ibid.*
  5. *Ibid.*
  6. Zionist Record and S A Jewish Chronicle 23 May 1980, p 5
  7. Pincus: op.cit.

3. BNEI 'AKIVA<sup>1</sup>Ideology of Bnei 'Akiva

Bnei 'Akiva accepts that the two commandments "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" and "Six days shalt thou labour" are, according to the Talmud, of equal status: As it is a mitzvah to rest on Shabbat, so it is a mitzvah to work the other six days of the week.

Our labourism as well as our Zionism, stems directly from our religious beliefs. That is, we believe that Torah and labour is an organic whole, around which revolves the full, genuine, and undiluted Jewish life.

Our Zionism does not stop at immigration to Israel. Its aim is the restoration of Israel as the Jewish State, in its physical sense, and above all in its profound Torah meaning.<sup>2</sup>

Age Groups:

	Boys	Girls
<u>Gurim</u> Standards	3;4	2;3
<u>Ro'im</u>	5;6	4;5
<u>'Etzionim</u>	7;8	6;7
<u>Etgarim</u>	9;10	8;9
<u>Bachad Aleph</u>	University	3 <sup>10+</sup>
<u>Bachad Beth</u>	Senior	

- 
1. Rabbi 'Akiva ben Joseph (c60-135AD) great religious leader in Palestine and one of the foremost sages of the Mishna period: martyred during the Bar Kochba revolt.
  2. Bnei 'Akiva: The Youth Movement: Memorandum issued by Bnei 'Akiva, Cape Town, 1980 (photostat).
  3. Hebrew: Gurim - cubs: Ro'im - shepherds: 'Etzionim - from Kfar Etzion which was a Bnei 'Akiva settlement destroyed in the War of Liberation, 1948: Etgarim - challenges: Bachad - acronym for Religious Pioneering Youth. See Schochat, M: op.cit., pp 2-3.

Its motto is Torah Va'Avodah<sup>1</sup> and in the early years drew to its ranks both immigrant and South African-born religious youth. Until 1952 it was known as Hashomer HaHati, when it assumed its present name in line with the overseas movement.<sup>2</sup>

The educational material transmitted to the Bnei 'Akiva hanichim reflects the twin pillars of its religion and kibbutz orientation. Aliyah<sup>3</sup> is a mitzvah.<sup>4</sup> The important figures are the founders and ideologists of the Religious Movement (Mizrahi)<sup>5</sup>, its ideology is based on Torah, in the widest connotation of the word, as the warp and woof of the Jewish renaissance movement and on 'Avodah, the concept of work and halutziut<sup>6</sup> as the instrument for the redemption of the soil of the ancient homeland.<sup>7</sup>

The menahel (Hebrew : the leader) is in charge of the whole age group and is responsible for drawing up the tochnit. Stress is placed on methodology and the role of the madrich

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1. Hebrew: Torah and Work (Worship): the aims of the Bnei 'Akiva were (religious) study and traditional observance for the individual combined with the pioneering upbuilding of the Land of Israel. A quotation from the Ethics of the Fathers I. 2 in the Mishna.
  2. Green, J: "Before the Beginning" in S A Bnei 'Akiva 1936-1956, p 14. (Bnei 'Akiva S A., Johannesburg, August 1956)
  3. Aliyah: Hebrew: immigration to the Land of Israel.
  4. Mitzvah: Hebrew: religious commandment.
  5. Mizrahi: Hebrew: from Mizrah. Religious Zionist Movement founded in 1901 in Vilna, Russia, by Rabbi I Reines (1840-1915) aimed at harmonising Zionism with traditional Judaism.
  6. Hebrew: pioneering activity.
  7. See Torah Va'Avodah: The Way of Bnei 'Akiva: op.cit. Part A, pp 1-19, and "Ideology and Kibbutzim" ibid., Parts C and D

as a religious exemplar to his hanichim.<sup>1</sup> Emphasis is again laid on activity methods and audio-visual aids. "The siha is dead" proclaims one hadracha handbook which provides the psychological foundation of the madrich's work, suggests specific methods for various groups and deals with the education of the madrich as leader.<sup>2</sup>

Strict religious observance is the rule at all seminars and camp when members live in tents and must attend to most of their own needs.<sup>3</sup> Members receive regular bulletins, usually every week, and these contain not only notices of activities and reports but also articles of educational value and there are compilations for festivals and historical days. Members officiate at the movement synagogue and religious study groups are in existence.<sup>4</sup>

The governing body is the Mazkirut<sup>5</sup> which consists of the chairman, vice-chairman and treasurer as well as the menahelim<sup>6</sup> of each age group.

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1. See Gurim Tochnit 1980, ed R Singer (cyclostyled : Cape Town Bnei 'Akiva, 1980) containing "How to Plan a Meeting" pp 2-3; and "How to Tell a Story" p 4. The aim is to introduce the Gurim to one mitzvah a week. Ibid., p 5.
  2. Everything you Always Wanted to Know about Hadracha: cyclostyled: (Bnei 'Akiva, Johannesburg).
  3. Memorandum submitted to the writer by the Cape Town Bnei 'Akiva, 25 June 1980.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Hebrew: Secretariate.
  6. Menahelim: plural of Menahel: leader.

MAGINIMOur Beliefs

Love, Knowledge, Identification and Implementation, in our daily life, of Judaism, Zionism and Communal Service.....  
The Magen says "I believe therefore I do. I am the Shield of Progressive Judaism, Zionism and Communal Service"<sup>1</sup>

The Maginim Movement was established in 1966 when the youth sections of the United Progressive Jewish Congregations were merged into a "more Hebrew and Zionist orientated movement".<sup>2</sup>  
During the seventies the Movement was accepted into the Zionist Youth Council; the first camp was held in December 1977. There are branches in five urban centres. The organisation is similar to that of the other Zionist youth movements.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Information supplied in a memorandum drawn up by Mr L Helman, Chairman of the Cape Town Maginim, 24 July 1980.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.

APPENDIX V: SYLLABUS FOR JEWISH RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION  
IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL : SUB A TO STANDARD V  
ISSUED BY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT  
SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES  
CAPE TOWN

SUB STANDARD A

- SECTION A: INTRODUCTION  
 SECTION B: BIBLE  
 SECTION C: FESTIVALS  
 SECTION D: LAWS AND CUSTOMS

SECTION A : INTRODUCTION

1. LET'S TALK ABOUT GOD

- a) Nothing before God
- b) One God
- c) God made the world
- d) God is everywhere although we cannot see him
- e) Things God gives us
- f) God helps us
- g) God tells us what to do
- h) How we talk to God
- i) God is different from people

Bibliography: "Let's talk about God" by Dorothy Kripke

SECTION B : BIBLE

1. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WORLD

- a) Creation : Genesis 1: 1-15
  - b) Sabbath : Genesis 11 :1-3
  - c) The Garden of Eden : Genesis 11: 4-25
  - d) Adam and Eve were disobedient and they were punished : Genesis 111
  - e) Cain and Abel (Jealousy) : Genesis 1V
- 2
- a) The Story of Noah : Genesis VII: 11-23 and 29
  - b) The Flood : Genesis VI: 9
  - c) The Rainbow (a sign of promise) : Genesis IX : 9-17
  - d) The Tower of Babel : Genesis XI :1-9

SECTION C : FESTIVALS AND HOLY DAYS

1. Tu Bishvat
2. Purim - The Festival of lots
3. Pesach - Passover
4. Yom Ha'atzmaut
5. Shavuoth
6. Rosh Hashanah
7. Yom Kippur
8. Succoth
9. Simchat Torah
10. Channukah

Bibliography: Religious Instruction Department Booklets

SECTION D : LAWS AND CUSTOMS1. THE SABBATH

- a) "Remember the Sabbath Day" Exodus XX : 8
- b) Day of Rest
- c) Laws and Customs
  - i) Candles
  - ii) Kiddush
  - iii) Blessings
  - iv) Challot

Bibliography: Jewish Holidays and Festivals, by  
Ben M Edidin - Hebrew Publishing Co.

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SUB STANDARD B

SECTION A: REVISION

SECTION B: BIBLE

SECTION C: FESTIVALS

SECTION D: LAWS AND CUSTOMS

SECTION A : REVISION

Thus far, the Bible has told us about the beginnings of the world and civilisation; and it has described the coming of evil into the world, and how it grew.

Briefly review work learnt in Sub A : i.e. First eleven Chapters of Genesis.

SECTION B : BIBLE1. The origins of the Jewish people - our founders -  
"The Patriarchs".

- a) Introduction: (10 Generations from Noah to Abraham - people were very wicked and worshipped idols)
- b) Abram, the little boy proclaims God.
- c) Abram, Terach and the Idols. (Ginsberg's Legends)
- d) The call of Abram, Sarah and Lot. Genesis XII-XV
- e) Abram becomes Abraham. Genesis XVII
- f) Abraham and the Angels. Genesis XVIII
- g) The binding of Isaac
- h) Eliezer is sent to find a wife for Isaac - Rebecca at the well. Genesis XXIV

Bibliography: Ginsberg's Legends of the Bible.

SECTION C : FESTIVALS

- a) Tu Bishvat
- b) Purim
- c) Pesach (Seder, Afikoman, Matzah)
- d) Yom Ha'atzmaut
- e) Shavuoth
- f) Rosh Hashanah
- g) Yom Kippur
- h) Succoth
- i) Simchat Torah
- j) Channukah

SECTION D : LAWS AND CUSTOMS

## Revise the Sabbath

- i) Candles
- ii) Kiddush
- iii) Blessings
- iv) Challot

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STANDARD I

SECTION A : REVISION

SECTION B : BIBLE

SECTION C : FESTIVALS

SECTION D : LAWS AND CUSTOMS

SECTION A : REVISION

The Patriarchs

SECTION B : BIBLE1. ESAU AND JACOB

- a) Esau and Jacob. Genesis XXV
- b) The Blessing. Genesis XXVII
- c) Jacob leaves home - the dream. Genesis XXVIII
- d) Laban, Leah, Rachel and flocks. Genesis XXIX-XXX
- e) Jacob flees from Laban. Genesis XXXI
- f) Jacob returns home. Genesis XXXI-XXXIII

2. JOSEPH

- a) Jacob's sons - Jacob's partiality
- b) Joseph the dreamer. Genesis XXXVII : 1,2,3,11  
And his brothers' jealousy.
- c) The brothers' treachery
- d) Joseph sold into slavery. Genesis XXXVII :12-34
- e) Joseph, Potiphar and Potiphar's wife. Genesis XXXIX
- f) Joseph in prison. Genesis XL. The Butler and the Baker.
- g) Pharaoh's dream. Genesis XLI
- h) Joseph is honoured. Genesis XLI : 38-54
- i) Famine (Genesis XLI) and the arrival of Joseph's brothers. Genesis XLII
- j) The brothers return to Canaan. Genesis XLIII
- k) Jacob sends Benjamin. Genesis XLIII

- l) The silver drinking cup. Genesis XLIV
- m) Judah pleads for Benjamin. Genesis XLV
- n) The family united. Genesis XLVI

### 3. MOSES

- a) A new regime - Israel is oppressed by Pharaoh. Exodus I : 6-12, 22.
- b) Pharaoh's Edict.
- c) The birth of Moses. Exodus I-II
- d) Pharaoh's daughter finds Moses. Exodus II
- e) Moses grows up as an Egyptian Prince. The three acts of justice. Exodus II
- f) God speaks to Moses. Exodus III-IV
- g) Moses and Aaron go back to Egypt. Exodus IV
- h) The cruel Pharaoh (Exodus V). God renews his promise. Exodus VI, the magic rods. Exodus VII
- i) The Ten Plagues. Exodus VII-XI
- j) The Exodus. Exodus XII: XXX-XL
- k) The crossing of the Red Sea. Exodus XIII-XIV
- l) Miriam's song.

### SECTION C : FESTIVALS

- a) Tu Bishvat
- b) Purim
- c) Pesach (Shankbone (Zeroah); Roast egg (Baytzah); Bitter herbs (Maror); Greens (karpas); Apples, nuts and wine mixture (Charoset)
- d) Yom Ha'atzmaut
- e) Lag B'Omer
- f) Shavuoth
- g) Rosh Hashanah
- h) Yom Kippur
- i) Succoth
- j) Simchat Torah
- k) Channukah

SECTION D : LAWS AND CUSTOMS1. THE SYNAGOGUE

- a) The place
- b) The Ark : Exodus XXVI
- c) The Scroll : Exodus XXV
- d) The Prayer Book
- e) The Eternal Light
- f) The Bimah

N.B.

Section D should be taught after Joseph but before Moses, unless a festival occurs which will separate these two sections.

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STANDARD 2

- SECTION A : REVISION
- SECTION B : BIBLE
- SECTION C : FESTIVALS
- SECTION D : LAWS AND CUSTOMS

SECTION A : REVISION

- 1 a) The Patriarchs
- b) The story of Joseph
- c) Early life of Moses
- d) Exodus from Egypt

SECTION B : BIBLE1. THE WANDERINGS IN THE WILDERNESS

- a) The bitter and sweet waters. Exodus XV
- b) The people find manna. Exodus XVI
- c) Jethro and Moses. Exodus XVIII
- d) Moses on Mount Sinai. Exodus XIX
- e) The Golden Calf. Exodus XXXII
- f) The Ten Commandments. Exodus XX

- g) The Twelve Spies. Numbers XIII. Joshua and Caleb. Numbers XIV
- h) Balak and Balaam. Numbers XXII-XXIV
- i) Death of Aaron. Numbers XXII-XXIV
- j) Death of Moses. Deuteronomy XXXIV

### SECTION C : FESTIVALS

(Less time is now spent on Festivals)

- a) Tu Bishvat
- b) Purim
- c) Pesach
- d) Yom Ha'atzmaut
- e) Lag B'Omer
- f) Shavuoth
- g) Rosh Hashanah
- h) Yom Kippur
- i) Succoth
- j) Simchat Torah
- k) Channukah

### SECTION D : LAWS AND CUSTOMS

- a) Revision of Synagogue (before Temple days: First Temple, beginnings of Synagogue)

#### PLUS

- i) General discussion about the Synagogue today.
  - ii) Synagogue services (Shacharit; Mincha; Mariv)
  - iii) Order of calling men to the Torah in Synagogue.
    - Cohanim - Exodus XXVIII : 1
    - Levites - Numbers I
    - Israelites - 12 Tribes - Numbers I.
  - b) Brit. Genesis XVII: 2.
- Bibliography: "Jewish Customs and Ceremonies" by Ben M Eddin.

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STANDARD 3

- SECTION A : REVISION
- SECTION B : GENERAL DISCUSSION
- SECTION C : BIBLE
- SECTION D : FESTIVALS
- SECTION E : LAWS AND CUSTOMS

SECTION A : REVISION

This section must be handled before the death of Joshua when the life history of the Jewish people is reviewed. (Patriarchs, Joseph, Moses and the wanderings in the wilderness)

SECTION B : DISCUSSION

- 1 a) Let's Talk about God
  - b) Let's talk about right and wrong.
- Bibliography: Dorothy Kripke.

SECTION C : BIBLE2. JOSHUA

- a) Introduction and appointment of Joshua to lead Hebrew people into land. Joshua I
- b) Rahab and the two spies. Joshua II : 1-24
- c) The parting of the waters of the Jordan. Joshua III
- d) The walls of Jericho. Joshua IV
- e) The capture of Ai. Joshua XIII
- f) The day the sun stood still. Joshua X

3. JUDGES

- a) Introduction
- b) Debora. Judges IV
- c) Gideon. Judges VI. The Three Hundred Men. Judges VII-VIII
- d) Samson. Judges XIII-XV. Samson and Delilah. Judges XVI

4. SAMUEL

- a) Introduction. Hannah and the birth of Samuel. I Samuel I
- b) God calls Samuel. I Samuel III
- c) War with the Philistines - the Ark is captured - Death of Eli.

- d) Samuel judges Israel - the People demand a king. Samuel's warning. I Samuel IV-VIII
- e) Conclusion. Were they right? Who was in fact the King of Israel? Samuel listened to the people, and a king was chosen.

#### SECTION D : FESTIVALS

- a) Tu Bishvat
- b) Purim
- c) Pesach
- d) Yom Ha'atzmaut
- e) Lag B'Omer
- f) Shavuoth (Book of Ruth - set in times of Judges)
- g) Tisha B'Av
- h) Rosh Hashanah
- i) Yom Kippur
- j) Succoth
- k) Simchat Torah
- l) Channukah

#### SECTION E : LAWS AND CUSTOMS

- a) Revision of synagoue.
- b) Synagogue today.
- c) Synagogue appearance and objects.
  - i) Holy Ark (Aron Kodesh)
  - ii) Scroll (Sefer Torah)
  - iii) Shield or breastplate
  - iv) Pointer (Yad)
  - v) Bells
  - vi) Torah Binder
  - vii) Eternal Light (Ner Tamid)
  - viii) Reading desk (Almemar)
  - ix) Pulpit (Bimah)

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STANDARD 4

- SECTION A : REVISION  
 SECTION B : BIBLE  
 SECTION C : FESTIVALS  
 SECTION D : LAWS AND CUSTOMS

SECTION A : REVISION

Joshua  
 Judges  
 Samuel

SECTION B : BIBLEKINGS1. SAUL

- a) Saul and the donkeys. I Samuel IX. Samuel appoints Saul. I Samuel X.
- b) Saul, the King. I Samuel X-XIII
- c) David the shepherd. I Samuel XIV-XVI. David and Goliath. I Samuel XVII
- d) Jonathan and David. I Samuel XVIII
- e) Saul's jealousy. I Samuel XVIII. Saul's death. I Samuel XXXI. David's Lament

2. DAVID

- a) David king over Judea. II Samuel II
- b) Introduction of Book of Psalms. Psalm 23 or 121

3. SOLOMON

- a) Solomon the king. I Kings I. Solomon's prayer for wisdom granted. I Kings III :5-15.
- b) Solomon's judgement. I Kings III :16-28
- c) Solomon's Temple. I Kings VI-VII. Dedication of Temple. I Kings VIII : 27-30.
- d) Queen of Sheba. I Kings X
- e) Solomon's death - 930 B.C.E. I Kings XI : 43

SECTION C : FESTIVALS

- a) Purim (Ta-anit Esther - megilat Esther)
- b) Pesach
- c) Yom Ha'atzmaut
- d) Lag B'Omer
- e) (Megilat Ruth)
- f) Tisha B'Av
- g) Rosh Hashanah
- h) Days of Awe
- i) Yom Kippur
- j) Succoth
- k) Simchat Torah
- l) Channukah

SECTION D : LAWS AND CUSTOMS1. THE JEWISH HOME.

- a) Relationship between children and parents.
- b) Sabbath symbols: Menorah, Havdalah spice box; challah cover; kiddush goblet.
- c) Kashrut

2. JEWISH SYMBOLS

- a) Mezuzah
- b) Tallit
- c) Tefillin

Bibliography: "Jewish Customs and Ceremonies" by Ben M Eddin.

3. THE JEWISH CALENDAR

- a) a) Lunar - solar system
- b) Rosh Chodesh

4. PRAYERS AND PRAYER BOOK

- a) Arrangement of Prayer Book
- b) 5 Essential Brachot (Blessings)
  - i) Bread
  - ii) Wine
  - iii) Washing Hands
  - iv) Shehecheyanu
  - v) Candles
- c) Modeh Ani
- d) Shema

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STANDARD 5

- SECTION A : REVISION  
 SECTION B : BIBLE  
 SECTION C : POST EXILIC  
 SECTION D : FESTIVALS AND FASTS  
 SECTION E : ORAL LAW AND THE PERIOD OF THE RABBIS

SECTION A : REVISION

1. The meaning pattern in the Torah

SECTION B : BIBLE

1. Solomon's decline and the Division of the Kingdom  
 I Kings XII
2. The Northern Kingdom - Israel
- a) Ahab and Jezebel. I Kings XVI
  - b) Elijah. I Kings XVI-XIX; XXI
    - i) Naboth's Vineyard. I Kings XXI
    - ii) Elijah and the ravens. I Kings XVII
    - iii) The widow's son. I Kings XV
    - iv) Elijah meets Obadiah. I Kings XVIII
    - v) Elijah on Mount Carmel. I Kings XVIII
    - vi) A still small voice. I Kings XIX
    - vii) The Chariot of fire. II Kings II
  - c) Elisha. II Kings IV-VII
    - i) The widow and the oil. II Kings IV  
 A breath of life. II Kings IV.
  - d) End of the Kingdom of Israel - 722 B.C.E.  
 II Kings VII. The Ten lost tribes.
3. Prophets and commentary on Kings.  
 Jeremiah; Amos; Isaiah (These 3 are to be handled briefly)
4. The Southern Kingdom - Judah.
- a) Hezekiah and Isaiah. II Kings XVIII-XV
  - b) Josiah. II Kings XXII-XXIII
  - c)
    - i) Zedekiah. II Kings XXIV: 18 - XXV
    - ii) Jeremiah (in relation to Zedekiah and exile)

- d) Downfall of Judean Kingdom. II Kings XV.  
Destruction of Temple 586 B.C.E. II Kings XX: 18
- 5. Exile. 586 B.C.E.
  - a) The tragic story of the exile.
  - b) Gedaliah
  - c) Ezekiel

### SECTION C : POST EXILIC

The Biblical section should be handled briefly in order to provide the historical background to the post exilic Festivals.

#### 1. IN EXILE

- a) The Scribes
- b) King Cyrus and the return. Ezra I-VI

#### 2. THE RETURN (530 B.C.E.)

- a) The Temple rebuilt
- b) Ezra
- c) Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the Wall
- d) Under Greek Rule
  - i) Alexander the Great
  - ii) Antiochus
  - iii) Hannah and her 7 sons
  - iv) The Maccabees (165 B.C.E.) and Hasmonean rulers.
- e) Under Roman Rule (70 C.E.)
  - i) Herod
  - ii) Procurators
  - iii) The Revolt (Vespasian and Titus)
  - iv) The Destruction of the Second Temple. 70 C.E.
  - v) Bar Kochba (132-135 C.E)

### SECTION D : FESTIVALS, FASTS AND IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENTS

- a) Purim (Megilat Esther - Ta-anit Esther)
- b) Pesach (Ta-anit Bechorot - 14th Nissan)
- c) Yom Hashoah
- d) Yom Hazikaron

- e) Yom Ha'atzmaut
- f) Lag B'Omer
- g) Shavuoth (Megilat Ruth - "Love thy Neighbour"  
Leviticus IX : 18)
- h) Tisha B'av
- i) Rosh Hashanah
- j) Yom Kippur (Book of Jonah)
- k) Succoth (Ecclesiastes)
- l) Simchat Torah
- m) Channukah
- n) The Minor Fasts (listed in the order in which they occur  
in the calednar)
  - Nissan : 14th : Fast of the Firstborn
  - Tammuz : 17th : Breach of Walls of Jerusalem (70 C.E.)
  - Av : 9th : Destruction of both Temples (586 B.C.E.  
and 70 C.E.)
  - Tishrei : 3rd : Fast of Gedaliah
  - Tevet : 10th : Siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar
  - Adar : 13th ; Fast of Esther

SECTION E : THE ORAL LAW AND THE PERIOD OF THE RABBIS

- a) Hillel
- b) Jochanan Ben Zakkai (Yavneh)
- c) Rabbi Akiba
- d) Simeon Bar Kochba

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APPENDIX VI: SYLLABUS FOR JEWISH RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION  
IN GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOLS: RELIGIOUS  
INSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT: SOUTH AFRICAN  
JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES, CAPE TOWN

STANDARD 6

The Standard 6 Syllabus is based on the syllabus set down by both the Transvaal Education Department and the Cape Educational Department.\* A large section of this Syllabus deals with the Old Testament and has been incorporated into our Syllabus.

\* Religious Instruction as a  
Formative Subject

Std VI

R C Codrington  
4th Imp. 1976

Cape Syllabus: Scripture

Section A:           Geography of Bible lands  
                           Religious life in Bible lands  
                           Social life in Bible lands  
                           Archaeological Excavations

Section B:           Festivals

Section C:           Laws and Customs

Section D:           Structure of the Bible  
                           The Jewish Library  
                           Shabbat

SECTION A:

Geography of the Bible Lands - ref Martin Gilbert

Religious Life in Bible Lands

- i) Sacred Places in Old Testament times.
- ii) Places of Sacrifice and Worship. Pg 560 Hertz.
- iii) Measurements of Old Testament days based on parts of the human body.
- iv) Role of people engaged in religious activities in Jewish community in Old Testament
- v) Sacred ceremonies associated with Temple
- vi) Compare role of Synagogue today.  
Ceremonial objects in Synagogue.

Social Life in Bible Days

Importance of Father in patriarchal society

polygamy monogamy

Selected passages and incidents to illustrate the character of the patriarchs

Role of women

Children - birthright

Servants

Dwelling places, walled cities.

Food of people of Israel - dietary laws

Dress, beards, hair (wigs) ornaments, jewellery

Places of sacrifice

Discuss the alternative to what Abraham was offering

LIFE AND WORK

Agriculture, pastoral work

Crafts: Bezalel

Professions medicine, scribe, musicians

Archaeological Excavations

Mounts of Tells

Cuneiform

Hammurabis Code

Jerusalem work done by Catherine Kenyon

SECTION B:

Festivals. See High School guides.

Where possible relate to lessons done in other sections.

SECTION C:

Laws and Customs

Motzi

Prayer for lighting candles

Kiddush

SECTION D

Structure of the Bible

The Jewish Library (notes in guide)

Shabbat - In Genesis

In Exodus XX

Include reading list: Ages 12-14

STANDARD 7

In the Std 7 Syllabus relevant sections from the Std 7 and 8 Syllabus set down by the Transvaal Education Department and Cape Educational Department have been included.

SECTION A:

Cycle of Jewish Life

SECTION B:

Cycle of Jewish Year

SECTION C:

Laws and Customs

The development of the Synagogue

The establishment of the Golah

Prayer

Geography of the prayer book (See notes given by Rabbi Herring)

SECTION D:

Great Jewish personalities

NOTE:

There is some repetition of Std 6 work in the Std 7 Syllabus. This is because in some schools we do not teach the Std 6 pupils as the headmasters rightly feel that this year should be used to integrate the pupils into one unit.

SECTION A:Cycle of Jewish Life

Birth, brit, pidyan haben, bar/bat mitzvah  
 Marriage (modern and bible times), family life, death.  
 All customs associated with each stage.

SECTION B:Cycle of Jewish Year

Months of year, lunar month and leap year.  
 All festivals. (See High School guides)

SECTION C:

The development of Synagogue  
 The importance of Golah - compare today  
 Psalms  
 The Siddur in Prayer  
 Details of Shema page 769 Hertz  
     Shemone Esray  
     Modeh Ani

SECTION D:

Three great Jewish personalities can be studied in detail e.g. Maimonides, Moses Mendelsohn, Herzl, Bialik, Freud, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Ben Gurion, Begin, Golda Meir, etc.

STANDARD 8SECTION A:Suggested reference books:

Epstein I	Step by Step in the Jewish Religion	Soncino Press 1971
Hecht M	Have you ever asked yourself these questions?	Sheingold N Y 1971

SECTION B:

Comparative history through the Ages, e.g. Greece, Rome, Middle Ages, Golden Age Spain, Renaissance, Haskala, Modern State.

Suggested reference books:

Roth Cecil	A History of the Jews	Schocken Books N Y 1961 paperback edition
Margolis Marx	A History of the Jewish People	Atheneum N Y 1972

SECTION C:

The Bible Psalms

The Megillot

Prophets

Select two prophets for study

Life of the prophet, his message and historical background

SECTION D:

Festivals

STANDARD 9Section A:

The rise of Christianity

The Jewish world: Pharisees Saducees, Essenes

A comparison of Christianity and Judaism

Section B:

Jewish Survival

Anti-Semitism Prejudice

Jewish Identity

The Shtetl

Assimilation and intermarriage

Love thy neighbour as thyself:Hertz 563

The Holocaust

REFERENCE:

Zborowski & Herzog Elizabeth: Life is with people

Schocken  
Books Ktav  
1965

Roskies Diane K and David G The Shtetl

Pub.House.  
Inc. Ktav  
1975

Wouk H

This is my God

Section C:

Prayer

Shabbat in greater detail e.g. detail of creative work.

Shamor vezachor

Section D:

Leviticus Chapter 19

Proverbs

Pirkei Avot

Section E:

Festivals

STANDARD 10Section A:Leadership

In the Bible

Post Biblical leaders

Leadership in the community

Group dynamics

Responsibility

Local Jewish Institutions

The State of Israel

Section B:Reference

Jacobs L      What does Judaism say about....?

Ktav  
Jerusalem  
1973Section C:Freedom and slavery, human rights, morality.      Jews in Russia  
and Arab lands.

Charity

Reward and Punishment

Marriage - Jewish home, intermarriage, divorce, role of women  
in Jewish life.

Ten Commandments

Prayers.

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 Committee of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation  
 School Committee of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation  
 Committee of the Johannesburg Hebrew Congregation  
 Committee of the Theodor Herzl School of Port Elizabeth  
 Committee of the United Hebrew Schools, Cape Town  
 The Education Sub-Committee of the United Hebrew Schools  
 of Cape Town  
 Minutes of the Annual General Meetings of the United Hebrew  
 Schools of Cape Town  
 Combined Education Sub-Committees of the United Hebrew Schools  
 and the Hyman Liberman High School

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 Helman, L: Chairman, Maginim  
 Heuer, N A C: University of Durban-Westville  
 Hopkins, S: University of Cape Town  
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 Education

van Rooy, H F: Potchefstroom University for Higher Christian  
Education

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van Zijl, J B: University of Port Elizabeth

Wakeley, R: Rhodes University

Wingerin, D: Religious Instruction Department, Cape Committee  
S A Jewish Board of Deputies

Secretary, Yiddish Folkschool, Johannesburg

b) Verbal Communications

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Harte, J, Newlands, Cape Town

Herrman, L, Newlands, Cape Town

Hoberman, S, Sea Point, Cape Town

Katz, W, Claremont, Cape Town

Levitt, A, Camps Bay, Cape Town

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