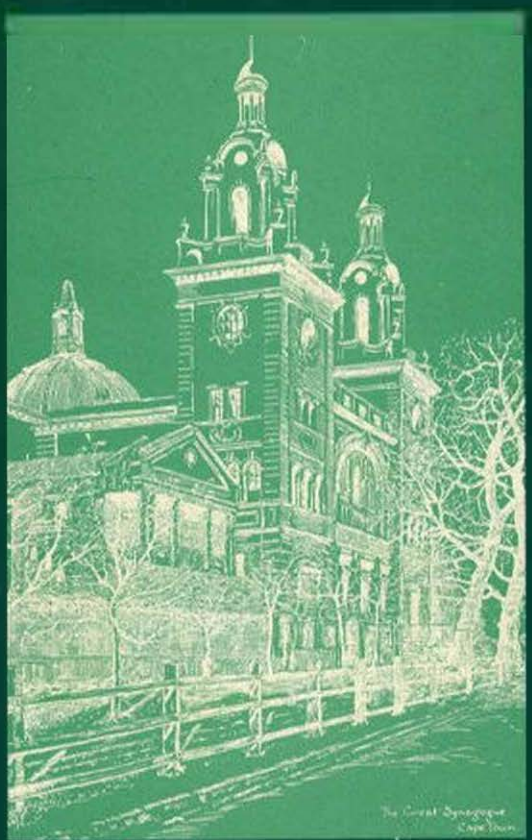
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MILTON SHAIN

HISTORICAL PUBLICATION SOCIETY

JEWRY
AND
CAPE SOCIETY

THE ORIGINS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES FOR THE CAPE COLONY

by

MILTON SHAIN



Historical Publication Society

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To my Mother

Foreword

Having been closely associated with the Cape Council of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies for over thirty-five years, and having also been founder of the Historical Publication Society, I am happy to write the foreword to this book. On the one hand Mr Shain has enlightened me, in depth, about the origins of an organization in which I have long had a great interest. On the other, his book is one of those which has justified my belief that a society such as the Historical Publications Society is necessary to publish scholarly items of local history which would otherwise find it difficult to attract a commercial publisher because of their limited readership.

The study of an ethnic group such as the Jews, in a multi-racial society such as that found in the old Cape Colony, can be approached from various angles. In the past, Jewish historiography in South Africa was directed mainly at 'the contribution of Jews to their own and the broader society', as Milton Shain points out in this study of Jewry and Cape Society in its formative years. The 'interaction between Jew and Gentile and the implications of such interaction', have in fact been largely treated as merely peripheral. Mr Shain is one of the historians who in recent years have rightly been giving more attention to the study of the South African Jewish community in relation to its position in the wider society.*

In researching the origins and activities of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony the author has directed his attention to the xenophobia which he calls 'anti-alienism', of which anti-semitism is the largest single component.

By using previously ignored sources such as *The Owl* and the *South African Review*, both Cape Town weeklies, as well as unused sources housed in the Cape Archives, Mr Shain has made an in-depth study evaluating objectively the role played by various individuals in the formation of the community and its major communal institution, the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony. Previous histories, admirable as they are, have not gone much beyond the very active role played by Morris Alexander. This book gives proper weight to the roles played by other individuals such as L. L. Goldsmid, through his editorship of the important opinion-maker, *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, and David Goldblatt the 'Yiddishist'.

By examining the general xenophobia of the times rather than concentrating solely on its largest component, anti-semitism, Milton Shain shows how true is the axiom that prejudice, like freedom, is indivisible. This is one of the lessons of the book. Although Jews as the largest group of white aliens incurred the greatest hostility, Greeks, Italians, Portuguese and others were the victims of this anti-alienism also.

* For the 'new' historiography see Bradlow, E. 'Immigration in the Union 1910–1948: Policies and Attitudes' unpublished Ph.D. thesis UCT, 1978; Shimoni, G. *Jews and Zionism. The South African Experience 1910–1967*, OUP, 1980.

This study shows how a negative factor such as anti-semitism can force a new community to unite in order to defend itself. The negative 'push-factor' from outside the community is, in fact, as important as the positive internal 'pull-factor' such as the desire to preserve the community's heritage and tradition.

This book, I believe, will be of interest not only to members of the Jewish community but also to those who wish to study the workings of race prejudice in this very diverse community.

FRANK R BRADLOW

Preface

Jewry and Cape Society is an adaptation of a dissertation accepted for a masters degree in history. I first discussed the project with Gus Saron, to whom I am most grateful. Besides his own contributions to South African Jewish historiography, without which this task would have been all the more onerous, he has always been willing to share his expertise and wide-ranging knowledge. I also wish to thank Professor S. B. Spies for his academic guidance during the course of my research. For financial assistance I am grateful to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and Human Sciences Research Council. However, had it not been for Dr Frank Bradlow, acting on behalf of the Historical Publications Society, it is unlikely that my endeavours would have proceeded beyond manuscript form. I sincerely thank the Historical Publications Society for having accepted my manuscript, as I do the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research, and Mr Mendel Kaplan for providing assistance towards the costs of publication.

Revising a dissertation is no easy task and I am particularly indebted to Richard Mendelsohn for his genuine interest, valuable criticism and constructive advice in the process of revision. I also wish to thank Millie Pimstone and Leone Witkin for their patience during the course of editing the manuscript. Needless to say, literary shortcomings, as indeed opinions expressed and conclusions reached, are those of the author alone.

I am grateful to the Cape Town Jewish Museum and the South African Library for the use of photographs and cartoons. To the staff of those two institutions as well as the library of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, the Jagger Library, the Gitlin Library and the Cape Archives Depot I extend my sincere appreciation.

MILTON SHAIN

Cape Town 1982

Contents

	Page
FOREWORD	vii
PREFACE	ix
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	xiii
ABBREVIATIONS	xiv
INTRODUCTION	xv

Chapter One

THE EMERGENCE OF A JEWISH COMMUNAL IDENTITY IN THE CAPE COLONY

The Genesis of a Community	1
The Undesirables	3
Towards a Secular Identity	8

Chapter Two

THE IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT OF 1902

Response	15
Restrictions	21
Repercussions	27

Chapter Three

ANTI-ALIENISM

Finding a Scapegoat—The Nature of Anti-Alienism	45
Anti-Alien Agitation after 1902	51

Chapter Four

THE FORMATION OF THE JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES FOR THE CAPE COLONY

Communal Division	57
The Gregory Report	64

Chapter Five

THE JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES FOR THE CAPE COLONY, 1904–1912

Consolidation	74
Naturalization and Opposition	77
Vigilance and the Jewish Lobby	86
Dissension and Decline	99
The Final Years	104

Page

NOTES AND REFERENCES 111

APPENDICES 125

I Extracts from a Commission of Inquiry into Labour in the Cape Colony, 1893 127

II Yiddish: Is it a European Language? 130

III Tables included in the Gregory Report 133

IV Ye Goldbug Dirge *and* The Jews Lament 134

SOURCES 137

INDEX 141

List of Illustrations

	Page
Rev. A. P. Bender	16
M. Alexander	16
D. Goldblatt	17
L. L. Goldsmid	17
The Swarming of the Gold Bugs	33
The Sultan and the Zionists	34
De Beers & South Africa	35
A Change of Traps	36
A South African Corporation	37
Pauper 'Peruvians' or the Whitening of South Africa	38
The New 'British' Colonists	39
The Coming of the Scum	40
The Evil of the Hour	41
Racial Re-Jew-venation	42
'Joey' at Jewberg	43
Milner, Moses & Mongols	44
Deputation to the Attorney-General	61

Abbreviations

A.G.	Archives of the Attorney-General, Cape Colony
C.O.	Archives of the Colonial Secretary, Cape Colony
D.S.A.B.	*Dictionary of South African Biography*
G.H.	Archives of the Governor, Cape Colony
J.P.	Justice of the Peace
M.L.A.	Member of the Legislative Assembly
M.L.C.	Member of the Legislative Council
P.M.O.	Archives of the Prime Minister's Office, Cape Colony
S.E.S.A.	*Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa*
Z.P.	Microfilm, ZP1/1/403, Cape of Good Hope, Original Correspondence, Despatches 1904

Introduction

The history of the Jewish community at the Cape Colony is in many respects a study in the politics of ethnic survival. The robust and institutionalized ethnicity of this community tends to be taken for granted. Probably the major reason for such an attitude is the remarkable durability Jewry has evinced over four thousand years. Explanations for this survival, debated amongst historians both secular and religious,[1] have ranged from the hand of providence guiding Jewish destiny to the Marxist view that the Jews have historically constituted 'a social group with a specific economic function'.[2] It is hoped that this study will provide, albeit indirectly, a small but substantive contribution to this debate.

During the rule of the Dutch East India Company (1652–1795) non-Protestants were denied the right to settle at the Cape. This practice was abrogated under the enlightened Batavian administration of Janssens and De Mist (1803–1806) and maintained thereafter by their administrative heirs, the British, in 1806. Nevertheless, even prior to the abolition of religious restriction, Jews had been associated with the Cape of Good Hope. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that Jews were among the early explorers who circumnavigated the Cape of Storms.[3]

Although formally allowed to profess their faith from 1804, the Jews' survival as a community was tenuous due to the powerful forces of assimilation moulding, at that very time, the hybrid Afrikaner. Manifestations of ethnicity in themselves do not explain the dynamics of the maintenance of group awareness in the face of the relentless forces of integration at the southern tip of Africa. That the Jews did perceive themselves, and were in turn perceived, as a distinct group within the white community is evident from the mid-nineteenth century.

The maintenance of this group consciousness is more noteworthy when considered against the background of nineteenth-century Jewish history. In 1789, the French Revolution pierced the feudal structure that had housed the Jewish ghetto in Europe since medieval times. It heralded an age subsequently identified in Jewish historiography as the Age of Emancipation. This was an age in which the Jew prodded and groped his way into the mainstream of European society; an age in which the Jew sought to show his appreciation, by patriotic devotion, to the country bestowing civil liberty upon him. In such an atmosphere the opportunities to assimilate were infinite. Integration was often achieved with immense success and among many Jews a formal assimilationist philosophy emerged. In this way an end to the medieval 'Jewish problem' was envisaged.[4]

Presumably it was with this sort of philosophical baggage that many of the early Jewish settlers, mainly English, German and Dutch, disembarked at the Cape. This is not to suggest that all Jewish immigrants had discarded, or were in the process of discarding, their spiritual belongings. On the contrary, the behaviour manifested by some of the pioneers suggests that

sufficient Jews came quite prepared to transplant their faith to Cape soil. One must, however, also take cognizance of the fact that the challenge of assimilation would also have existed for these settlers had they remained in Europe. At the tip of Africa the struggle was no less fraught with obstacles.

Historians of Cape Jewry have tended to concentrate on the contribution of Jews to their own and to the broader society, failing to examine in any depth the interaction between Jew and Gentile and the implications of such interaction. In this study of the evolution and activities of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony, an attempt is made to examine this relationship, which was an important determining factor in the changing organizational structure of Cape Jewry.

Numbering about 3 000 in 1891, the Jewish community, augmented by waves of East European immigration, increased to 19 537 in 1904.[5] The influx had both political and social ramifications. Together with Asiatics, Polish and Russian immigrants became the targets of legislation and opprobrium. Anti-alien agitation, a component of which was blatant anti-semitism, soured what was, by and large, a record of tolerance and harmony between Jew and Gentile. Manifestations of such hostility will be stressed throughout this work, but the veracity of these accusations, although germane to the study of anti-semitism, will not be assessed. Rather, it is the reaction to, and effects of, aspersions cast upon the Jewish community, that form the leitmotiv of this study.

Aspirant 'leaders' responded to the challenges posed by anti-alienism and anti-semitism by establishing the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony, an organization unacceptable to certain sections of the community. The history of this Board has hitherto been treated as incidental to the history of Jewry in South Africa.[6] This study investigates the activities of the Board and its role as an integral component in the development of Jewry at the Cape.

CHAPTER ONE

The Emergence of a Jewish Communal Identity in the Cape Colony

The Genesis of a Community

The sixty Jewish families in the Cape Colony by 1858[1] were predominantly of British, Dutch and German origin.[2] Although tolerated as Jews since 1804 when the Batavian rulers extended equal legal protection to all religious bodies acknowledging a supreme being,[3] the challenge, if these Jewish pioneers wished to perpetuate their heritage, was indeed enormous. Lack of documentation makes it impossible to ascertain the rate of assimilation or religio-communal sentiments of these inhabitants. With their limited numbers, a preponderance of males and the forces of assimilation acting upon the white population in general, it is reasonable to suggest that the existence of the Jewish community would have been precarious indeed, if not for the considerable influx of East European Jews after 1890, and the foresight and determination of a few individuals.

The first recorded manifestation of Jewish awareness in the Cape Colony was in 1841 when 17 males attended a meeting and religious service on the eve of the Day of Atonement at the house of Benjamin Norden in Cape Town.[4] One week later 'The Society of the Jewish Community of Cape Town' forerunner of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, was founded.[5]

Cape Town Jewry conceived of itself in religious terms, the synagogue being the fulcrum of its identity. While in all other respects the Jews belonged, at least theoretically, to the community at large, in reality Judaism represented a minority culture and the Jews a conspicuous subgroup. This ethnic and communal identity was maintained while Cape Jewry was contributing to the mainstream of Colonial life.[6] It is reflected in the response made by the community to a request for funds to build a synagogue in 1848,[7] as well as Norden's welcome, on behalf of the Jewish community, to Sir Harry Smith, Governor of the Cape Colony, on his return to Cape Town after the Battle of Boomplaats in 1848.[8] The exchange of pleasantries at the ceremony suggested a cordial relationship between the Jewish and general population. Norden, besides praising the Governor, took the opportunity of referring to him as 'the friend of liberal measures and religious toleration'. Sir Harry Smith was particularly pleased with the liberal sentiments ascribed to him and stated that he was moved 'by the unexpected expression of opinion from so respectable and influential a portion of the community'.[9]

This amicable relationship received a blow in 1849 when Norden broke a merchants' pledge not to supply the convict ship, *Neptune*, with provisions while she lay in Simonstown.[10] At his own expense Norden had furnished the ship with supplies to the value of £400,[11] evoking the wrath of a portion

of the Cape Town community. The behaviour of Norden, an identifiable Jew, was used to stigmatize the entire Jewish community. S. Rodolf, President of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation and himself a subscriber to the Anti-Convict Indemnity Fund,[12] deemed it his duty to state:

> 'that no member of the Jewish persuasion with the exception of those already known, have acted against the wishes of the people of this Colony, nor have been implicated in any way whatsoever to thwart any steps taken against the introduction of Convicts. Though some malignant persona, out of men [sic] malice, are exciting the public mind to condemn a whole community for the unworthy act of one or two, for conclusion I beg to say on behalf of the Jewish community, that they are grateful to their Christian brethren for the benevolence shown towards them in contributing so liberally in their cause.'[13]

On the same page as Rodolf's letter an advertisement appeared for public prayers to be read in the synagogue for the removal of convicts. It is probable that Rodolf was correct in his contention that general Jewish opinion dissociated itself from Norden's actions, but it would be wrong to assume that the Jewish community was monolithic in its attitude.

In response to the incident the synagogue was placed under police protection during the High Festivals of 1849. Norden was ostracized and boycotted by Cape Town merchants. In addition he became the victim of riotous behaviour when he was stoned on the Heerengracht, Cape Town, by angry mobs.[14] Despite this turbulence, no evidence exists that a vigilant body to protect Jewish rights and property was considered. Sir Harry Smith issued a proclamation condemning the riotous and unruly behaviour and prohibiting large meetings.[15] It can be reasonably assumed that the tarnishing of relations was little more than perfunctory and shortlived. Nevertheless, the incident disturbed the harmony which had existed between Jew and Gentile before the arrival of the *Neptune*.

The manner in which Rodolf responded to attacks on the Jewish community revealed a marked sensitivity on the part of Jewish leadership, as well as a vigilance against any negative sentiments. His letter also reveals the community's eagerness to show its appreciation for the lack of such sentiments at the Cape Colony. This active response to anti-Jewish hostility became a feature of Jewish communal behaviour with the cudgels being taken up either by communal leaders or concerned individuals.

The first spiritual leader to take up an appointment with the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation was the Reverend Isaac Pulver who arrived at the Colony in August 1849. Pulver had previously been minister of the Cheltenham Hebrew Congregation in England,[16] and his appointment symbolized the firm religious roots established by the Jewish community in the Cape Colony. The incumbent of this position became the accepted spokesman for Jewry as well as the liaison between government and Jewry.[17]

International affiliations and identification with his co-religionists abroad helped to consolidate and to remind the Jew of his distinctiveness.[18] Funds were collected for diverse causes such as the distressed Jews of Morocco and the Syrian Relief Fund in 1860 as well as the Jewish soup kitchen in

London.[19] A milestone of communal identity was the formation of 'The Philanthropic Society of the Community of the Cape of Good Hope' in 1859.[20] Manifestations of communal identity were not restricted to Cape Town, and in the hinterland, the synagogue soon became an indication of permanent Jewish domicile.[21] The mother congregation in Cape Town assumed an unofficial authority over the sparsely populated country community. The notion of a secular institution to safeguard the community had yet to be conceived, probably attributable to the relative paucity of Jews[22] and the cordial relationship with the rest of the community.

This tolerance and acceptance of the Jewish population was consolidated by the absence of discrimination in the constitutions granting Representative Government to the Cape Colony in 1853[23] and Responsible Government in 1872.[24]

The Undesirables

Mineral discoveries in South Africa and the deteriorating situation of East European Jewry[25] had vast ramifications for the development, composition and organization of Cape Jewry. In 1869 the discovery of diamonds heralded a population influx including a significant number of Jewish fortune-seekers, while twelve years later pogroms, following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, sparked a mass exodus of Jews from Eastern Europe.[26] Many of the emigrants came to South Africa, its attaction further enhanced by the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886.

The first wave of immigration to the diamond fields augmented the Jewish population in the Cape Colony without affecting the essentially Anglo-German nature of the community. The arrival of East European Jews altered the entire demographic composition, transforming a relatively homogeneous community into a motley combination of cultures bound by a common religious heritage. It was on the diamond fields that the Jew, because of his identifiability and dominance in certain commercial pursuits,[27] first assumed an unflattering stereotype.

It is noteworthy that in 1876 a branch of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle* was founded on the fields.[28] This society which had been established in Paris in 1860 worked for the moral progress and emancipation of the Jews who were persecuted in backward countries.[29] While it is extremely unlikely that the formation of the *Alliance* was a response to Jewish insecurity, the secular nature of this association is an indication that Jews were no longer looking to the synagogue alone for communal support. A similar organization in Britain, the Anglo-Jewish Association, established a branch in Cape Town during the Rev. Mr Ornstien's ministry between 1882 and 1894.[30] No records of these organizations in the Cape Colony are extant and, if they were founded in response to anti-Jewish hostility, the fact that they never became viable is indicative of a social tolerance at the Colony. Indeed, a number of Jewish pioneers praised the liberal spirit in South Africa[31]—a resident in Kimberley, for example, reporting that 'generally Jews are much respected by the other inhabitants'.[32] Although these observations might

well have been made by people who had experienced a life of degradation under Tsarist oppression, it would, in fact, appear that relations between Jew and Gentile were characterized by mutual respect and tolerance.

Boer and Jew enjoyed a more intimate relationship than Englishman and Jew. While the Afrikaner entertained the Jew on his farm,[33] contact with the English took place mainly in the more formal milieu of the city. Numerous examples of Boer goodwill are recorded[34] and a general harmony is suggested by Gentile contributions to the building of the first Port Elizabeth Synagogue in 1875.[35] There is evidence that officialdom also looked kindly upon the Jews, as illustrated by the laudatory comments of the Cape Governor, Sir Henry Barkly, when he laid the foundation stone of the Kimberley Synagogue in 1875:

> 'None I am well aware more thoroughly and sincerely participate in the feeling of wholehearted loyalty which is characteristic of the British nation than Her Majesty's subjects of Jewish lineage and faith. I have had opportunities of becoming acquainted with them in many colonies and I have ever found them as a body obedient to the law, ready to take their part on all occasions as good citizens and to co-operate in works of benevolence and mercy. In Griqualand West, especially it has happened, from the first, that some of the most energetic and enterprising members of society have been Jewish.'[36]

The Jew was not, however, perceived by all as an acquisition to society. In fact the anti-Jewish stereotype was rapidly emerging and is evident in a *Uitenhage Times* editorial following a complaint by 'Afrikander' to the *Tarka Herald* after the imprisonment of an English clergyman Rev. B. B. Keet for a debt owed to the Kimberley auctioneers, Rothschild Brothers:

> 'We don't know the Rev. Keet, nor have we the least idea who "Afrikander" may be, but we have met many Shylocks in our time of the tribe of Benjamin, and we can fully sympathise with the English clergyman and [sic] his Afrikander defended. These are the kind of Afrikanders we want in the Colony, if we had more like the Tarkastad 'Afrikander' and few [sic] Hebrews of the Rothschild type, the Colony would be better off than it is. It is a fact which few will be found to state publicly—but none the less true for that—that the Jewish race has been one of the greatest curses to South Africa. Of course we know that there are Jews and Jews, and that some of the Yeddin are honest and straightforward, [sic] and far more generous than most Christians, but they are the very infinitessimal [sic] minority. The majority of Hebrews in South Africa are well, we can afford to waste our abusive vocabulary on them; ask anyone who has lived among them on the fields what they are. If a few of those slightly bloodthirsty peasants could be imported with a full cargo of prosecution from South Russia, they would have gay times in Kimberley and the neighbouring villages—and the Jews wouldn't. All Houndsditch, Petticoat Lane—Pilomet as the people called it—and Seven Dials rolled into one could not produce such an aggregate of knavery and vice as the Hebrew fraternity of the Fields exhibit. The Afrikander Bond should, as the old Kimberley song has it—"Bar the Jews".'[37]

These sentiments are echoed in a letter written by Sir Lewis Michell, General Manager of the Standard Bank,[38] to a colleague:

'The departure of hordes of hook-nosed Polish and Lithuanian Jews whose evil countenances now peer from every little shanty and cigar divan would be a distinct gain to the community. Under cover of keeping a "winkel" they at present flock to Kimberley from afar, like as vogels to a dead ox, and their villainous faces enable one easily to understand the depth of hatred borne to them in Russia and elsewhere.'[39]

Turrel in his study of early Kimberley also confirms the prevalence of a negative Jewish stereotype. 'If Africans were labelled diamond thieves by mineowners, "Cape boys" and Jews were most commonly associated with illicit dealing.'[40]

Despite this image Jew and Gentile continued to coexist peacefully. Rev. Mr Ornstien, in his Jewish New Year's address of 1883, could express that

'in this country [Jews] have freedom to make an honest livelihood, undisturbed by the persecutions to which their race was exposed in some other parts of the world'.[41]

However tranquil things might have appeared, the influx of Polish and Russian Jews was to erode an equilibrium that had characterized relations for most of the century. Antipathy towards these immigrants was at first articulated in the rural areas.

Objections had been raised as early as 1875 when *The Era* of Richmond suggested that 'Israelitish *boereverneukers*' tried to persuade the farmers not to improve their properties but simply to confine themselves to sheep rearing.[42] J. Mosenthal, one of three brothers involved in the mohair and ostrich feather industry of the Eastern Cape,[43] wondered why 'the Israelitish *boereverneuker*' should be a greater enemy of progress than his Christian brother. Why, Mosenthal asked rhetorically, should the Jew with his proverbial enterprise of race not be glad if the farmers improved their wool and by doing so improved trade as well.[44] Accusations that English and Jewish shopkeepers influenced elections in favour of English candidates through their hold on country commerce were also made.[45]

In 1882 prospective immigrants intending to farm aroused considerable parliamentary disapproval.[46] In these debates one can discern the origins of a rural xenophobia which was increasingly articulated during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The focus of resentment was the East European pedlar or *smous*. These petty traders became a feature of the South African rural landscape. Venturing far into the interior they 'brought to the isolated farmer . . . the material goods and also some of the cultural wares of civilization'.[47] Unfortunately this was not always appreciated and the *smous* was often ridiculed and scorned for his competitive manner, persistent methods and supposedly dishonest dealings.[48] He would soon assume a new appellation—the undesirable.

That the strange, heavily accented foreigner was becoming conspicuous is evident from contemporary press reports. Writing from Cape Town in 1891, a correspondent to *The Jewish Chronicle* (London) referred to the increasing presence of Russian Jews. These unfortunate people, he wrote, never

troubled the community and rapidly became absorbed into the population. The local press, the writer correctly pointed out, had shown a sympathetic attitude towards the Russo-Jewish question, but when South Africa was recommended as a land of refuge for the persecuted, all the high-flown expressions of abstract sympathy were hushed.[49]

These observations were confirmed by N. D. Hoffman in the same year when he recorded press opposition to East European immigration:

> 'My heart contorts with pain as I often see that the English newspapers published in Cape Town and particularly the "Cape Times" and the German newspaper "Sued [sic] Afrikanische Zeitung" constantly caution our brethren who are about to immigrate to South Africa, not to dare come here, since the country is not suitable for them; and they will not prosper here. . . .'[50]

It was not their religion which disturbed the *Zud Afrikanische Zeitung* but their inability to benefit a country which did not 'want tradesmen, brokers and canteen owners'. The newspaper hoped that people would stop thinking of South Africa as an El Dorado for aimless Russian Jews. While they welcomed educated and middle-class Jews, as they did any educated person, they wished that the dirty proletariat from the Polish Russian borders would 'avoid our land' where Asian problems were sufficiently serious without the addition of other people.[51]

Acceptance of the middle-class Anglo-German Jew and antipathy towards his poorer East European co-religionist was a persistent theme in the rhetoric of anti-alienism. By comparison with the Yiddish-speaking Polish and Russian Jews, the acculturated Anglo-German was integrated into the social fabric of Cape society. In Cape Town, for example, they enjoyed an eminently bourgeois lifestyle:

> 'There are three sections—so to speak—amongst us, the highest are the big shopkeepers, the second are the small shopkeepers, and the lowest—well we have no lowest. The conditions of life are eminently comfortable and existence is not a very big problem with the majority.'[52]

The new arrivals, unlike their wealthier Anglo-German predecessors, eked out a humble and often precarious existence. Congregating conspicuously in the older 'inner city' areas of Cape Town,[53] by the late 1890s, they were often the recipients of abuse. But it was in the rural areas where they first attracted attention as indicated by the report of an 1893 Commission of Inquiry into Labour frequently expressing concern about the 'set in' or influx of Polish and Russian Jews. It appears that cognizance had been taken, and that, with his predilection for commerce rather than manual labour, the alien Jew was, certainly in some circles, unwelcome.[54] A decidedly anti-Jewish tone characterized some of the evidence and is noteworthy since this was an enquiry into labour and not into the desirability of East European Jews. That the latter evoked resentment and suspicion is palpable. Whether such resentment was the result of hatred for the Jew or concern about diminishing economic prospects is difficult to establish, the boundary between the forces of anti-alienism and anti-semitism being extremely blurred.

Whatever the source of antipathy, hostility towards the alien must be seen in the context of the severe economic and social dislocation, suffered in particular by the rural farmer. Rapid industrialization and its by-product urbanization was, at that very time, contributing to the poor white problem, a subject regularly debated after 1890.[55] The penetration of the Jewish 'middleman' into the agrarian and urban economy enabled him to serve as a convenient explanation for the plight of the uprooted. With such a high proportion of Jewish immigrants to the Cape Colony,[56] the reasons for the complicated relationship between anti-alienism and anti-semitism become obvious.

Most anti-alienists went to great lengths to disavow anti-Jewish motivation. Their response, it was argued, was essentially conceived in the fear of eroding living standards and diminishing opportunities. However, their rhetoric often belied their declared motivation and was in some cases blatantly informed by hatred for the Jew.

Some measure of insight into the xenophobic reaction to immigration can be gained when one considers that, despite John X. Merriman's[57] claim that immigration was advantageous to the black–white ratio, the Bondsman, A. S. le Roux remained opposed, this in a social climate complicated in addition by the shortage of white labour.[58] He was probably afraid that immigration would aggravate an already burgeoning poor white problem.[59]

In 1893 J. T. Molteno[60] moved a resolution that government attention be directed to the increased and increasing immigration of Russians, Poles and Asians, with a view to devising a scheme to check such undesirable immigration. Molteno referred to the displacement of many able-bodied Englishmen by paupers from the Continent, who were able to exist where others could not.[61] His motion, which was carried, appears to have been once again motivated by a belief that the rural areas would be threatened by a preponderance of competitive aliens. He repeated his concern one year later when he asked whether the government intended doing anything about his previous resolution.[62]

The immigration problem was compounded by the influx of Asiatic traders who followed in the wake of those Asiatics who had been indentured on the sugar plantations of Natal in the 1860s.[63] These 'free passenger Indians' rapidly entered into competition with white traders, but any thought of restrictive legislation was complicated by their British citizenship.[64] J. G. Sprigg, who had served as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, emerged as the champion of the destitute in a debate introduced in 1894 by the Bondsman, M. M. Venter. The latter enquired whether the government was aware of the large number of weekly steamers with Polish, Russian and other immigrants who in many cases were believed to be refugees who were guilty of political offences. He wanted to know if any steps were being taken to check this 'importation'. With masterful eloquence and vigour Sprigg defended white immigration and expressed the hope that the Colony's renown as a home for refugees and the politically persecuted would be maintained.[65]

The Afrikaner Bond members D. J. A. van Zyl and A. S. le Roux contended, in a poorly disguised attack on East European immigration, that it was more important to attend to the Colony's poor white problem instead of dealing with those of other countries. Molteno repeated his warning that if the government failed to pay attention to the question of undesirables, they would end up by 'closing the door after the horse was stolen'.[66] Again in May 1895 he asked Cecil J. Rhodes, Prime Minister of the Colony, whether the government intended introducing legislation in accordance with his resolution of 1893. Rhodes alluded to negotiations for an intended conference with Natal on the subject of undesirable immigration.[67]

In reaction to the steady growth of anti-semitism, the Jewish community appears to have shared the fears of excessive economic competition displayed by some members of the Legislative Assembly. The Rev. Joel Rabinowitz, who had terminated his spiritual leadership of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation in 1882, wrote of the great privations endured by many in South Africa. He warned, in no uncertain terms, of the dangers of sending young men to the Colony. It was, he averred, 'like sending a very sick person to a malaria fever stricken country'.[68] The Jewish Philanthropic Society also warned that many immigrants were under the mistaken impression that the Cape would help consumptive people.[69]

Presumably these letters to *The Jewish Chronicle* were honest warnings to those intending settling in South Africa. It is, however, possible that these cautions were also motivated by the emergent anti-Jewish sentiment which increased with the influx of East Europeans. Because the Anglo-German Jew treated his Polish and Russian co-religionist as his responsibility, he feared that antipathy towards the East European would develop into dislike of the Jew in general.

Towards a Secular Identity

The abortive coup under Dr L. S. Jameson at the end of 1895 had implications other than those commonly attributed to this Raid. For the Jew-baiter, the Raid was the work of the cosmopolitan financier, personified in the Jewish Randlord. The possibility of the 'shrewd Jew' being implicated with Rhodes in the New Year blunder would not be ignored, and indeed several prominent Jews did play a significant role in the episode. Hirshfield has argued that in England this 'confirmed in radical circles the existence of a crucial nexus joining Jewish finance with British imperialism'.[70] Accusations of Jewish involvement[71] served to exacerbate the emergent anti-alien and anti-semitic sentiment in the Colony. From the time of the Jameson Raid till the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, articulation against undesirable immigration became more widespread and vociferous. In addition, a brand of anti-semitic journalese appeared.

With increasing frequency parliamentarians representing rural constituencies voiced the need to counter the stream of poor Jews whom they accused of spoiling true trade and posing a danger to the country. By not engaging in 'honest labour' the alien, it was argued, was doing incalculable

harm to the country. While some citizens who started with 'packs on their backs' were defended in parliament, the role of the middleman in serving the scattered rural population was not always appreciated. Instead, the plethora of Jews in commerce and their supposed predilection for exploiting the population was a source of grave concern.[72]

The unreserved nature of some parliamentary discussions served to shake the Jewish community's complacency. The man to speak on behalf of the community, albeit very diplomatically, was the Rev. Mr Bender, spiritual leader of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation since 1895.[73] In response to anti-Jewish diatribes in the Assembly he used the pulpit one Friday night to appeal for tolerance towards the aliens.[74]

Bender had assumed the traditional role, inherited by the minister of the mother congregation, as spokesman and leader of Cape Jewry. He was to guard this privilege jealously during the ensuing years. On that Sabbath his tone was moderate and diplomatic, a characteristic feature in which he displayed a sense of reliance on British justice to placate any hostile elements. This optimistic attitude was to be challenged a few years later by other leading members of the community.[75]

Despite Bender's appeal, anti-alien sentiment recurred, the regularity and intensity gaining momentum. Debates on undesirable immigration became a regular occurrence in the Legislative Assembly, and a petition signed by the inhabitants of Philipstown to prevent immigrants not possessing £200 from disembarking, suggests that the notion of restrictive legislation was gaining ground.[76]

A Jewish member of the Afrikaner Bond, C. Sonnenberg, defended the Russian and Jewish immigrants, opposing a suggestion by Molteno to apply immigration restrictions similar to those in the United States and in New Zealand. Contending that the Cape Colony's situation was not comparable, Sonnenberg believed it better to accept one hundred immigrants, some of whom might be objectionable rather than to reject one man who might benefit the country. Sprigg affirmed that the issue would be discussed at the Colonial Customs Conference, but he stressed his repugnance at prohibiting a man on account of his religion. He did, however, acknowledge the presence of some undesirables, and assured the members of the Assembly that the government would take steps to prevent men who had been released from gaol in other countries and who had found their home 'too warm for residence'. The government, Sprigg declared, did not wish to be flooded with that class of people and would proceed along lines which would make a motion to restrict Russian and Polish immigration unnecessary.[77]

Certain sections of the general press assumed a hostile attitude towards aliens, with some articles being plainly anti-semitic. *The Cape Times*, for example, was accused of unjustifiably slandering Jews when involved in civil or criminal cases.[78] But it was *The Owl*, a Cape Town weekly, which rapidly became the chief exponent of the anti-Jewish/capitalist press.[79] Its readers were provided with vicious satire and scurrilous caricatures of Semitic financiers controlling South African society. The apparent abundance of

identifiable Jewish names in the gold and diamond corporations gave a semblance of credibility to those wanting to exploit this crude form of stereotyping.[80] In the Cape Colony the spotlight was focused on De Beers Consolidated Mines,[81] both the anti-semite and the Afrikaner Bond using that corporation's financial and political power as a target for opprobrium.[82]

When not personifying the opulent financier, the Jew was portrayed in *The Owl* as the avaricious, filthy immigrant.[83] Typical of its denigrating journalese was the following diatribe on the scene at the Cape Town Parade:

> 'Saturday by Saturday the "Grand"—Heaven save the word—Parade gets worse. The rotten trash that is put upon the sales there would be a disgrace to Petticoat Lane. Not only this, but the trade is now largely carried out by Polish Jews, who import—no doubt from other Polish Jews in London—the commonest off-scourings of Houndsditch goods. Then these greasy frowzy gentry stand around and sum up the things until whoever purchases is sure to be heartlessly swindled. . . .'

Printed below the foregoing article was the following:

> 'The fact is Cape Town at the present time is full of those Polish Jew hawkers, who live in dirtier style than Kafirs [sic], and existing on about half a crown a week each, rob the tradesman of his due. They don't pay rent, rates or taxes, yet they are allowed to sell goods just the same as if they kept a store. Respectable Europeans should order these people from their doors. That is the only way to put them down. Let these people do manual work.'[84]

In the battle to restrict alien immigration, anti-Jewish sentiment flourished. At the Afrikaner Bond Congress of 1897 a proposal to request the government to introduce the necessary legislation to limit immigration was passed.[85] It was alleged that if foreigners made inroads into the country, they would take the farmers' property and outvote the 'Afrikander' at the poll.[86] It would seem that the alien Jew was a convenient explanation for the deteriorating conditions of the rural Afrikaner.

Although debates in the Legislative Assembly focused more on the Asiatic than on the East European influx, the latter were, as candidly expressed by some speakers, often on the minds of those wishing to pass restrictive legislation. When asked if the government intended doing something effective to limit undesirable immigration, Sprigg enunciated the complexities of such legislation. He stated his opposition once again to the introduction of a religious test.[87]

At regular intervals during the parliamentary session of 1898 the government, when questioned on its intentions, expressed hopes that a conference including the two maritime colonies and Free State would agree on uniform legislation regarding immigration.[88]

Although a sense of urgency had entered into parliamentary debates, campaigners for the Legislative Assembly and Council during 1898 failed to incorporate the issue in their rhetoric.[89] It was in these elections that political divisions exacerbated by the Jameson Raid were consolidated and the issue of British relations with the South African Republic became prominent in Cape politics.[90]

In addition to anti-alien sentiment in the Legislative Assembly and sections of the general press, an unprovoked attack on the Jews by the Dean of Cape Town, during his Good Friday sermon of 1899, served to remind the Jew of his vulnerability.[91] Possibly in response to this a branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association was re-established in Cape Town. The executive was comprised mostly of members of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation which makes it likely that Bender identified fully with the revival[92] of this institution in Cape Town. Bender probably envisaged the Anglo-Jewish Association as a satisfactory organization to counter the recent unsavoury manifestations. Diplomacy was the cornerstone of the Association's *modus operandi*, and Bender foresaw no problem so great that it could not be solved by personal discussion—either with the Imperial authorities or the Cape government itself.

It was this approach, as opposed to the legal and constitutional entrenchment of rights, that was to cause a fundamental split in communal leadership as Cape Jewry underwent a metamorphosis during the next few years. The establishment of the Anglo-Jewish Association in Cape Town, despite its transience,[93] was a harbinger of a secular organization to represent the interests of Cape Jewry. The efficacy of the synagogue alone representing Jewish interests was increasingly questioned, particularly as the Jews were categorized not merely as a religious unit, but as a group apart. They were certainly perceived in this manner by Merriman who referred to them as 'a race apart who do not, with few exceptions merge in the population of the land they dwell in'.[94] A secular body, to safeguard and represent such a corporate identity, was necessary.

On the eve of the Anglo-Boer war, leadership of the approximately 6 000 Jews in the Cape Colony[95] remained in the hands of the minister of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, despite the large congregations at Kimberley, Port Elizabeth and Oudtshoorn. Certainly the Colonial authorities treated Bender as the official spokesman for Cape Jewry. Bender himself was keen to see the creation of a South African Federation of Jewish Congregations and saw himself as being eminently suitable to fulfil the leadership of such a federation which would take 'action in matters of religion, philanthropy and other worthy objects . . .'.[96]

The community was clearly divided into two distinct language and cultural groups, the Anglo-German Jews on the one hand and the Yiddish-speaking East European Jews on the other. The well established Anglo-German community, despite adherence to its Jewish heritage, had become associated with British culture and way of life. East European Jews displayed a foreign lifestyle, which proved an embarrassment to their acculturated co-religionists. Differences in religious practice and ritual forged a split in the Cape Town community as early as 1888[97] and gave rise, in 1900, to the East Europeans establishing the New Hebrew Congregation or Roeland Street Synagogue.[98]

Attitudes towards the incipient Zionist movement widened the rift between the two groups. For the 'greener' as the East Europeans were

sometimes labelled, the first World Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897 was a momentous event, perceived as an answer to the Jewish plight, a misery which many of them had personally experienced. Movements advocating a return to the 'promised land' had emerged out of the darkness of Russia during the 1880s, and waves of Zionist pioneers went to the underdeveloped wastelands of the moribund Ottoman Empire. It was this Zionistic spirit that was embodied in the East European Jew, whose attraction towards Zion was far deeper than that of the Anglo-Jew who rarely evinced an interest until a much later date.[99]

Perhaps the most notable expression of Jewish consciousness at the Cape Colony was the rapid growth of the Zionist ideal, transplanted from the *shtetels*[100] of Lithuania to the southern tip of Britain's African Empire.[101] But without the Zionist ideal, a strong sense of ethnicity was still maintained. In no small way the arrival of the East European served to buttress any erosion of Jewish consciousness. The simple increase in numbers, despite diversity and divisions, strengthened Jewish awareness. In addition, emergent anti-alienism and the first hints of anti-semitism undoubtedly reminded the Jew of his vulnerability whilst serving to consolidate his identity.

With the outbreak of war the Jewish population of Cape Town increased from approximately five or six to ten thousand, the numbers compounded mostly by refugee paupers from the Transvaal.[102] Anti-alien agitation paled into insignificance against the vicissitudes of war, although, indirectly the arrival of refugees added fuel to the lobby, a result of inevitable overcrowding and insanitary living conditions. Health authorities were alerted to the Jewish influx at a time when the community was acutely sensitive to the dangers of plague and slum conditions.[103]

The capacity of Cape Town Jewry to assist these Jewish refugees was tested to the extreme. Despite selfless benevolence by Jewish individuals and institutions, these refugees remained conspicuous in a city already conscious of the alien danger. Lady Cecil, later Lady Milner, commented as follows:

> '. . . the worst of these were the Jews who had come to South Africa from the ghettos of Eastern Europe (they were known as Peruvians),[104] had taken British nationality and proposed to live on this and on their wits. They remained a heavy burden for as long as the war lasted, a curious people, in rags, with their belongings in untidy bundles, and yet it was often found that they were quite well off, and the possessors of valuables.'[105]

As Van Heyningen has indicated, her remarks 'contain all the blend of dislike, resentment, prejudice and ignorance which the Jewish refugees generally aroused'.[106]

The Anglo-Boer War provided an added opportunity for those wishing to castigate the capitalist/Jewish financier, set upon manipulating a clash between the British Empire and the Boer Republics.[107] The Unionists in England, it was alleged, were 'the tools of financiers, mainly Jewish, who would pour out British blood to advance the selfish ends of high profits and low wages'.[108] There is evidence to suggest that such ideas penetrated the

Cape Colony[109] and it is significant that the doyen of conspiracy theorists, J. A. Hobson, was quoted with approval in the *South African News*.[110]

Jews intending to immigrate were warned in the Jewish press that there was only place for those qualified to practise a profession or with sufficient means to 'keep afloat'.[111] The warnings probably sprang from genuine fear of economic hardship, but at the same time there must have existed the fear of a more generalized anti-semitic backlash, the kind of antipathy expressed by 'Truth' in the *Cape Times*:

> 'I noticed on my trip to these other parts that the Jewish traders exercise a great deal of influence and have squatters in Bushmanland altogether in their power. Not a day passes but [sic] there is either a Jew with his cart or wagon coming to the squatter's tent or hut, and making himself at home there for several days, eating the food without paying for it, or doing or giving anything in return, and as they as a rule, give unlimited "tick" to the Dutch and half-caste squatters, they thus have them altogether in their power, and the latter are bound to them, as their stock is nearly if not all mortgaged to the Jewish smous.'[112]

The potential of this sort of acrimony for arousing race hatred was not lost on a Jewish officer visiting South Africa:

> '. . . While everyone in this country at the present moment should endeavour to appease any racial differences that might exist, your correspondent . . . is kindling, perhaps unwittingly, a new fire, the worst of all antipathies, viz. racial hatred'.[113]

Fears were also expressed in a Yiddish journal, the *Jewish Telegraph*, which warned against 'the anti-Semitic microbes' penetrating South Africa and the consequent destruction of hope envisaged by the Jew in South Africa. The writer concluded: 'We are still being looked upon with hatred, mockery and disdain.'[114] Another observer had warned of anti-semitism 'making rapid headway and extending its baneful influence throughout the length and breadth of South Africa'.[115] Although somewhat alarmist, these observations are significant, but, on the whole, anti-Jewish hostility in the Cape Colony remained innocuous, especially when compared to the race hatred in Europe. Indeed Cape Jewry appreciated British tolerance and threw its weight behind the Imperial war effort, contributing substantially at both the group and individual level. One correspondent in the Eastern Cape noted that

> 'Whatever regiment, district corps or Town guard one comes across, one always meets with a goodly sprinkling of Jewish faces amongst it. In fact I do not think there is even one of the many military branches, especially under the Colonial Defence Force, towards which Jews have not liberally contributed in person.'[116]

It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of Jews involved in the war, but it would appear that their participation was not less than that of the general population.[117] Milner appreciated Jewish loyalty, but despite the cordial exchange of pleasantries between him and Bender,[118] the intermittent anti-Jewish manifestations of the war years would not be forgotten by the Jewish community. Some voices would advocate the need for an institution

to counter invective directed towards the Jews.[119] Herein lies the notion of a secular institution to cater for, and safeguard, the interests of the Jewish community.

In the meantime Bender was still acknowledged as the leading representative of Cape Jewry. While visiting London, he warned of the prevailing economic distress, but, he ignored or did not regard as serious, the growth of anti-semitism at the Cape Colony.[120] Other Jews, however, would grieve that their loyalty to the flag during the war was not appreciated by all. It was this element that responded to the challenge of anti-semitism during the post-war period.

CHAPTER TWO

The Immigration Restriction Act of 1902

Response

'The need for a Jewish paper in South Africa—a paper dealing mainly, if not exclusively, with Jewish topics and matters vitally interesting and affecting Jews—in which Jews may express their views and find free vent for their ideas, has long been felt. For at least six years the Jews in South Africa have been a sufficiently strong body, both from a numerical as well as from a social and commercial standpoint, to be entitled to an organ of their own. An organ which shall reflect their opinions as a body, convey to the Christian world their views and above all safeguard their communal interests.'[1]

Such was the *raison d'être* for the inauguration, in February 1902, of the first English language Jewish newspaper, expressed by its editor, Lionel L. Goldsmid. Goldsmid, an English Jew, had come to South Africa via Australia in 1893, having completed a BA degree at Sydney University. Before launching *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, hereafter referred to as the *Chronicle*, he had published newspapers in Mafeking, Vryburg and Bulawayo.[2] Apart from a sense of exclusiveness in Goldsmid's introductory editorial, one can discern a new forthrightness to the challenge of anti-semitism described in the foregoing chapter. A sense of fellowship shared by Jewry throughout South Africa is also evident, although the notion of an inter-state response to the challenge of anti-semitism was not envisaged.

The *Chronicle* was well received and the sale of 5 000 copies of the first edition, including 2 000 in the Cape Colony,[3] vindicated the editor's rationale for the inception of this newspaper.

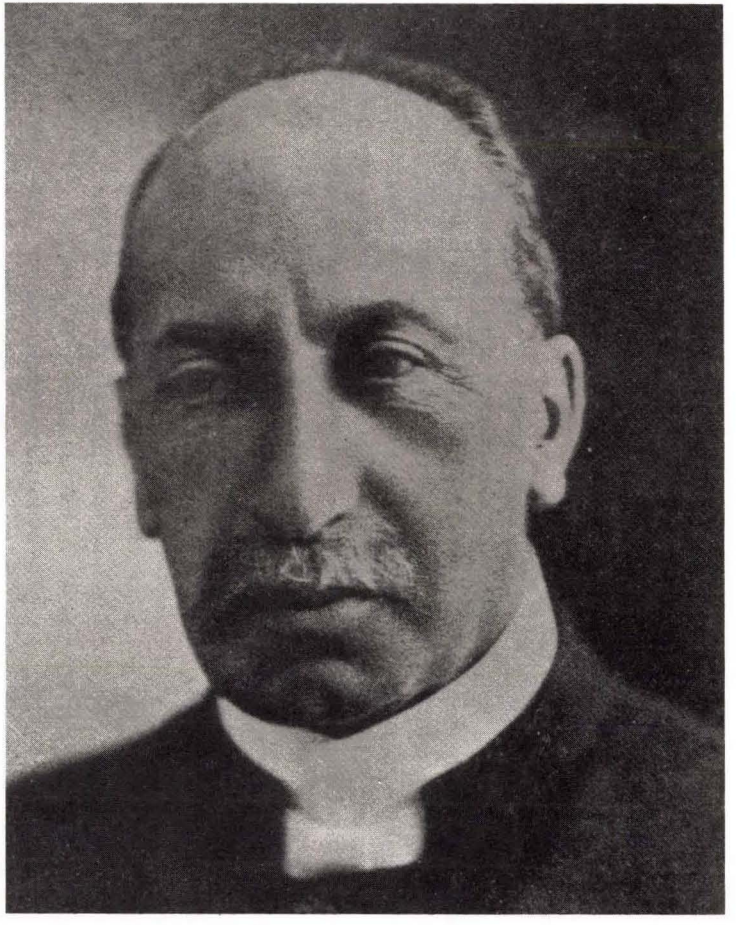
The Jewish community had matured since the days of Rev. Mr Pulver and Benjamin Norden and yet, in essence, the change so far as communal institutions were concerned, was only quantitative. The community remained fixed around a central pivot—the mother Cape Town Hebrew Congregation. No institution existed to counter defamatory charges, nor to cater for or co-ordinate the needs of an increasingly complex Jewish community. Bender still maintained his unofficial leadership.

Anti-Jewish agitation and restrictive legislation during the post-war years of economic privation challenged communal leadership in the Colony. The response was not unified, and the varying approaches to the threat split the community at a time when it could ill afford the luxury of diversity.

The *Chronicle* encouraged the need for change in communal structure and leadership and at the same time reflected the desire and necessity for such change. Its influence in directing communal debate in response to anti-alien and anti-semitic agitation was a significant force in the development of communal organization. Articles on European anti-semitism and numerous reports on the Dreyfus Affair[4] and Kishinev[5] pogroms[6] subtly reminded the reader of his precarious status within society.



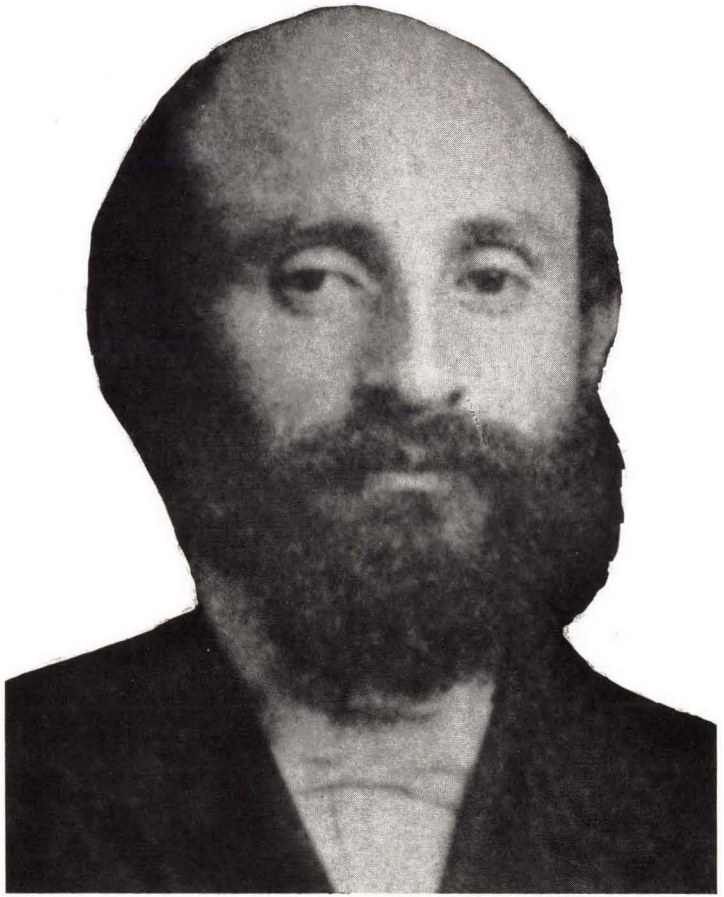
M. Alexander



Rev. A. P. Bender



L. L. Goldsmid



D. Goldblatt

It is impossible to assess how successfully the *Chronicle* gauged Jewish sentiments and reactions to the anti-alien and anti-semitic forces. Nevertheless, periodic letters to the editor indicated an indisputable concern about the social climate at the Cape Colony. Correspondents were particularly irritated and anxious about the inflammatory articles *The Owl* continued to publish.[7] But this weekly did not have a monopoly of anti-alien journalese. *The South African Review*[8] revealed a similar proclivity while the *Cape Times* also chose on occasion to deprecate the East European or pauper element. Perhaps its most vicious outburst was against the Yiddish-speaking East European fish merchants of Kalk Bay:

> 'A disreputable-looking coterie of the parasites of the social fabric, standing a little apart, conversing in a gibberish of mid-Europe, bare-legged, frowzy headed, shifty eyed, and nervously sharp, ready to pounce upon the rough handed sons of the sea as they come to land . . . The keen-witted specimen of the lower species of the immigrant Hebrew race in unvarnished guise and unreserved demeanour . . . Rapacious foreign Hebrew who never risks his own life or safety . . . indignantly asks in pig-English, "Call that a fish? Vy, I will haf to give it away" . . . The Peruvian soon pockets his profit, and so he prospers from day to day.'[9]

Without an official institution to counter such invective, and Bender's occasional response, so diplomatic as to be unheard, the *Chronicle* took upon itself the role of communal guardian. It stigmatized anti-semitism as a disease:

> 'But diseases must be strenuously combated however slight they may be. Anti-Semitism may be merely of an academic nature in the countries in which it obtains, but it is for Jews themselves to see that it does not become endemic.'[10]

Goldsmid amplified the vulgarity of anti-semitism by reflecting on well-known Continental anti-semitic journals such as E. Drumont's[11] *Libre Parole*.[12]

In response to continued denigration of the Jewish community in the columns of *The Owl*, A. Berlyn suggested that

> 'the Rev. Bender should . . . with the lay heads of our community personally wait upon the editorial staff of the Owl and protest against the uncalled for and gratuitous insult, and then failing redress that you should call a meeting of our people to calmly and dispassionately discuss the matter with a view to the Jewish Community taking some concerted action, not only to crush that Hydra-headed monster anti-Semiticism [sic] once and for all, but also, in no uncertain manner, bring this section of the gutter-press to a due sense of its responsibilities and its own self respect, if it have [sic] any . . .'.[13]

The *Chronicle* believed that to send a deputation would be detrimental to the Jewish cause, one drawback being an opportunity for *The Owl* to make journalistic capital.[14] The sort of response in the foregoing letter, monitored, nurtured and channelled by the *Chronicle*, forms the background to the concept of a Jewish secular institution to safeguard the Jewish community. The wish to establish such a corporate body was soon to become a recurrent theme in the columns of the *Chronicle*.

Perhaps it was Bender's phlegmatic optimism which spurred Goldsmid on to greater efforts regarding his newspaper's self-appointed role as communal guardian. Not that Bender was entirely silent. On one occasion he added his voice to the critics of the *Cape Times* thus, at least superficially, consolidating his position as Jewish leader.[15] A challenge to his leadership, however, was gradually emerging in the person of Morris Alexander, a man destined to play a formative role in Jewish communal politics, as well as leaving a significant imprint on South African politics after 1910.

Born in Znin, Poland, in 1877, he came to Cape Town at the age of three. After sharing the vicissitudes of his family's struggle to earn a livelihood in Cape Town, Oudtshoorn and Johannesburg, he studied at the University of the Cape of Good Hope before proceeding on a scholarship to study law at Cambridge. After gaining academic distinction he was called to the Cape Bar at the age of 23.[16] A religious man and staunch Zionist, Alexander identified himself with the New Hebrew Congregation[17] where he became the semi-official lay preacher, gradually challenging Bender's supremacy through his oral and written admonishments of those who chose to revile the Jew in general and the East European aliens in particular.

Alexander contributed a brilliant series of articles on Judaism in *The Owl*, an opportunity for this weekly to counter its critics' charges of being anti-semitic. In these articles Alexander exploded popular myths, for example, that all Jews were rich; that they did not fight for the country of their adoption and that they were rapacious middlemen.[18] Goldsmid disagreed with the young barrister's approach to countering hostility, suggesting that the arguments adduced by Alexander, while being beautifully expressed from the literary viewpoint, were stale and had been stated before in the columns of the *Chronicle* and also by Bender. In what appears to be a contradiction of his initial vigilance, Goldsmid contended that *The Owl's* anti-Jewish journalese would correct itself.[19] This strange *volte face* may have been the product of an internal struggle for secular leadership between Alexander and Goldsmid, but if so, the conflict was short-lived, as later evidence suggests that a cordiality and common purpose existed between the barrister and the editor of the *Chronicle*.

Despite the large number of aliens disembarking regularly in Table Bay,[20] the Jewish community still had many friends. When W. Thorne was re-elected Mayor of Cape Town in 1902 the *Chronicle* declared that Jewish votes had played an important part in his success, and it was maintained that seldom had 'a Chief Citizen of Cape Town' shown a 'kinder and more liberal spirit towards our people'.[21] The generous response from all sections of the white community to the Roumanian Relief Fund for persecuted Jews led Morris Alexander, Chairman of the fund committee, to express his gratitude to contributors, as well as to the Imperial Government in its actions regarding Roumanian Jews.[22]

While viciously anti-semitic outbursts were confined to a few extremists, an undertone of dissatisfaction at the preponderance of Polish and Russian Jewish immigrants was prevalent. The post-war economic recession was not

the ideal social climate to eradicate antagonism and the increasing alien influx undoubtedly aggravated the tension. Anti-alienism, which will be discussed in chapter three, was becoming more vociferous and widespread. Cape Jewry, aware of the anti-semitic dimension to the agitation, made it quite clear to their co-religionists abroad, that the Colony was not a land of 'milk and honey', particularly not for the indigent and unskilled. As a Yiddish journalist wrote:

> 'I behold thousands of people milling through the streets of Cape Town, their faces dark with sorrow. The cost of living is unbelievably high and woe betide the man who cannot earn his bread . . . any Sunday . . . you shall behold what you would have never imagined possible in the "Golden Land". You will see people who but recently arrived, plead and beg that they should be returned to their homeland . . . Therefore my brethren, hearken unto my words and stay put in your homes. . . .'[23]

A warning to discourage immigration was sent by the Cape Town Jewish Philanthropic Society to the Board of Deputies for British Jews[24] who dealt with the problems and redirection of the multitudes of emigrants from Eastern Europe. An article which appeared in the *Cape Times* describing the difficult conditions for immigrants was included together with the warning.[25]

In such an atmosphere, anti-semitic outbursts became a serious possibility. The controversy over the importation of Chinese labour for the Transvaal[26] exacerbated the tensions, particularly as the mining magnates were stereotyped as Jews and caricatured in *The Owl* as fat and unpatriotic aliens of semitic origin—personified in the well-known Hoggenheimer.[27]

The Owl wondered whether the sparse white population of South Africa could afford the risk of being swamped by the immigration of the destitute of Continental Europe.[28] 'Afrikanus' expressed the sort of antipathy which existed. After describing the awkward red tape he had had to confront before returning to his business in Karootown at the end of the war, the irate Englishman concluded:

> 'After all our struggles, after months and years of anxiety, after nights spent in open trenches, in all sorts of weather, to keep our late enemies from entering our town we up country British shopkeepers find we have been helping the British Government to make room for foreign Jews and the scum of Europe to invade our country and ruin it with their unfair competition.'[29]

Goldsmid believed the *Cape Times* to be anti-semitic[30] and when a Jewish member of the community, M. Rabinowitz,[31] questioned accusations concerning that paper's bias,[32] the *Chronicle* responded with the reprinting of a series of anti-semitic letters and articles which had appeared over a period of time in the *Cape Times*:

> 'It may be news to the editor of the *Cape Times* to learn that out of the four thousand Jews, who have during the present war risked their lives for the British Empire, over three thousand are Russian and Austrian by birth—that is to say they belong to that very class whom our journalistic friend so contemptuously terms "Peruvians". These Jews, many of whom have never seen England, and

have only heard of the Empire's kindness to their co-religionists, a kindness which the editor of the *Cape Times* does not desire to see perpetuated, have been actuated solely by a desire to assist the fortunes of the country which has ever been kind to their brethren . . . and the *Cape Times* says "the rapacious foreign Hebrew who never risks his own life or safety . . .".'[33]

The *Chronicle* went on to explain that its role was to nip any anti-semitism in the bud.[34] Perhaps by its very nature this weekly was especially sensitive to anti-Jewish manifestations. It was, however, not alone in condemning other newspapers for expressing such sentiment. The *Peninsula Herald* also criticised the press (excluding the *Cape Argus*) for what it called 'easy generalisation':

'If we may be pardoned for saying so, we think that the Press of this country—not as a matter of deliberate intention—is primarily responsible for the abuse which is heaped upon these people . . . the Press, especially in Cape Town, has seldom referred to a Jew, as such, except as a means of expressing veiled or open contempt.'[35]

Restrictions

While the alien controversy was debated in the general press, the government too had been grappling with the problem of restrictive legislation. It was the Asiatic who evoked the gravest fear,[36] but certain individuals undoubtedly placed East European Jews in the undesirable category.

Before the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War a Bill to restrict immigration had been prepared under the supervision of the Prime Minister, W. P. Schreiner.[37] Presumably the years of turmoil and martial law (which placed financial qualifications on entry into the Colony) shelved further discussion. In May of 1902 some members of the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce suggested character and nationality rather than financial means as criteria for immigration.[38] Although the motion was not carried, the idea of nationality as a criterion for acceptability reflected the serious light in which the East European infiltration was regarded.

During the post-war debate on assisted immigration, Dr J. M. Hoffman,[39] one-time Deputy Chairman of the Afrikaner Bond central committee, commented on the low-class immigrant. He believed that on the *Tintagel Castle*, which had arrived in Cape Town towards the end of September 1902 from London, a great deal of clothing had to be burned on account of being infested with vermin. Because most of the immigrants had no trade or occupation, Hoffman feared a reaction would be forthcoming. P. G. Kuhn, another Bondsman, spoke of the 'scores' of people who had objected to the importation of assisted immigrants.[40] With such antipathy towards assisted immigration it is understandable why the 'unassisted' alien was so despised, particularly with the oversupply of labour,[41] resulting partly from soldiers returning to civilian life.

In the closing stages of the parliamentary session of 1902 Sir Pieter Faure, the Colonial Secretary, introduced a Bill to place restrictions on immigration.[42] During the second reading criticism was levelled at the rushed

introduction of such an important Bill, but this was not a problem, according to E. H. Walton, as the main provisions had been before the country for four or five years.[43] The Legislative Council was also angered at the haste in which the Bill was passed.[44] Notwithstanding these outcries, the Immigration Restriction Act, 1902, was gazetted on 30 January 1903.[45] A clause in the Act prevented the entry of anyone unable to sign his name in European characters which meant the Yiddish-speaking East European Jew fell within the description of 'prohibited immigrant'.

While the primary purpose of the Act was to control the Asiatic influx, the curtailment of East European immigration was also intended.[46] Indeed, for some time both the Imperial and Cape Governments had indicated displeasure at the number of aliens immigrating to the Cape Colony.[47] In December 1901 the Secretary of State for Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, asked Sprigg whether persons without definite employment should 'for the present' be refused permits to enter the Colony. He wanted the cabinet's opinion on the matter as it was necessary to publish a notice pertaining to the subject in Britain.[48] The cabinet did not wish to exclude white British artisans, or anyone else with a trade or profession, from coming in to earn a living in the Colony, 'but they strongly objected to Polish Jews and Asiatics . . .'.[49]

It is evident from a reply to the Governor, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, that Chamberlain had been notified of the Cape Government's concern about the influx of Asiatics and Polish Jews:

> 'it does not appear to be possible to differentiate against nationality or colour under the permit regulations but that their views have been communicated to the India Office who have been requested to acquaint the Government of India that it is desirable that due circumspection should be exercised in furnishing permits to Indians about whose means of maintaining themselves any doubt may exist as their presence in Cape Colony in existing circumstances is deprecated by the authorities there. His Majesty's Council, Riga, has been communicated with in similar sense with regard to Polish Jews in view of your telegram of 6th December No 1.'[50]

In March 1902 Sprigg informed the Governor that the Martial Law regulations, under which persons were not allowed to land at any Cape port without permits, operated adversely to the interests of the Colony in so far as an applicant for a permit was required to produce a certificate that he was in possession of at least £100 or in a position to maintain himself in South Africa. He continued:

> 'Now while such certificate can easily be furnished by Polish Jews or other persons of doubtful sympathies with the British cause in South Africa[51] it has transpired that many British workmen, Clerks and Shop hand [sic] are unable to certify that they are in possession of £100, though they would certainly be able to earn their living upon their arrival in the Colony, for people in that class are in great demand and they are as a rule of a thoroughly loyal character . . .'[52]

In a despatch to the High Commissioner, Milner, Chamberlain made his feelings about foreign immigration after the war quite clear:

'It appears from information received from the Foreign Office, that very considerable numbers of Foreigners, [sic] especially Polish Jews, are applying for permit [sic] to proceed to South Africa. In view of the necessity of repatriating the Prisoners of War as well as the 15 000, or more refugees, still outstanding, do you consider that it is of importance to stop such foreign immigration and that existing circumstances in South Africa would afford sufficient justification to H M's Government, if they decide to adopt that policy for a time, at all events?'[53]

Milner was adamant

'that any such immigration should be stopped and that present circumstances quite justified our doing so'.[54]

In the context of Milner's post-war anglicization policy[55] and his friendly sentiments expressed from time to time towards Jews,[56] his reply appears a somewhat strange contradiction. However, it is understandable when one considers that Milner did not anticipate political support from the 'other whites' (foreigners) in this post-war programme for the Transvaal.[57] Besides, the East European was an urban dweller, while Milner desired that British rural influence be augmented in his reconstruction plans.[58] Even in his permit system regarding admittance to the Transvaal, Milner differentiated between the British and foreign applicant.[59]

Thus Milner approved of Chamberlain's notification that he would instruct Consuls to apply the permit instructions with the utmost stringency, and report immediately any large increase in demand rather than issue absolute prohibition

'which in circumstances as now known, seems uncalled for and will probably occasion protest Foreign Governments and Foreign firms [sic] Johannesburg desiring to bring out additional employees'.[60]

In June 1902 the British Government requested an explanation from the Vice-Consul in Libau as to why so many permits continued to be issued. They were informed that the emigrants were mostly Russian Jewish artisans with relatives in South Africa, who could maintain them and present letters of recommendation. Some were women with children going to join their husbands. A large movement of Jews from the provinces desiring to better themselves were determined to take advantage of immigration to South Africa since hostilities in the Transvaal had ended.[61]

Chamberlain suggested to the Foreign Office that the Vice-Consul at Libau be sent confidential instructions that permits should be issued more sparingly. He suggested the Vice-Consul be told that under the existing circumstances in South Africa it was impossible to support a large influx of immigrants and this policy should be continued, despite the cessation of hostilities, for some months. Applicants, he proposed, should be subject to the most searching scrutiny and when the slightest doubt existed they should be refused permission to come to the Cape. Similar warnings should be sent to the Consul at Hamburg and any other ports from which that class of immigrant was likely to embark.[62]

Perhaps the Colonial authorities were alerted by a report from Sir Henry H. Settle, General Officer Commanding Cape Town, to the High Commissioner:

> 'I have the honour to forward a report[63] relating to the issue of permits at Libau to indigent Russian subjects and to state that indigent foreigners are beginning to arrive in large numbers. As these persons have permits they must be permitted to land but it would appear most desirable to prohibit the issue of permits to foreigners until all prisoners of war have been repatriated. If you concur, I would suggest that representations be made to the Imperial Government on the subject.'[64]

The Secretary of State for War suggested to Chamberlain that the Consular Officers charged with the issue of permits should insist on all employment in South Africa being certified as genuine by a Justice of the Peace or Minister of Religion at the place in which the prospective employee resided.[65] The British Consul at Libau was given instructions to exercise strict care in the further issuing of any permits, while holders of permits from consuls abroad were warned that they would not be allowed to land if the statements in the permits were found to be false.[66]

The Imperial Government's reaction towards Polish Jews or other aliens was more a reflection of its post-war reconstruction plans than of its anti-semitic proclivities. Jews, as such, were not the source of concern (certainly not overtly). It was rather a particular group of Jews, the Polish Jews, which worried the British authorities. The British government had, of course, begun to experience its own alien problem at the time[67] and they possibly foresaw similar problems in South Africa.

Sprigg was requested to discuss with his ministers Chamberlain's intention to exclude politically dangerous persons as well as those socially undesirable including many of the semi-criminal classes deported from South Africa by the military authorities.[68] After consultation Sprigg informed the Governor

> 'that legislation having for its object the exclusion from the Colony of undesirable persons in the political sense is upon principle entirely opposed to the ideas and the practice hitherto prevailing wherever representative Government exists throughout the British Empire.
>
> Looking at the question from a practical point of view Ministers fail to see how it would be possible to define the class of persons referred to by statute unless the names of the individuals be given and no such list has as yet been furnished.'

Sprigg believed the common law to be sufficient to deal with sedition while the British Government could prevent people, who intended intriguing against British authority, from departing. He advised the Governor that it was the intention of the Ministers to frame a Bill upon the lines of the Natal Act, especially as regards the immigration of Indians who were not British subjects.[69]

In framing this Bill the Prime Minister and those concerned would surely have been aware of the Imperial attitude towards post-war alien immigration as expressed in the foregoing pages. Cognizance would also have been

taken of the 1893 resolution to restrict immigration and the intermittent pleas to restrict the entry of East Europeans emanating mainly from the Afrikaner Bond.[70] Bond antagonism towards these immigrants seems to have been motivated by the alien Jews' penetration of the agrarian economy. Their warnings were gradually reinforced by vocal sectors of the press.[71]

It is against this background that the Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, in his opening address to parliament, informed the members that a Bill was to be introduced prohibiting the introduction into the Cape Colony of Asiatics who were not British subjects, of paupers and persons suffering from 'loathsome disease'.[72]

The Medical Officer of Health for Cape Colony, Dr A. J. Gregory, regarded as being responsible for, and well acquainted with matters of immigration, was requested to examine the Immigration Bill while it was being drafted. After doing so he described it to the Colonial Secretary as 'unnecessarily long and unworkable' and that the clauses, if carried out, 'would only allow for upper class [sic] to immigrate with workers being practically excluded'. The onus on the shipping companies before accepting passengers was impractical, he explained:

> 'When all is said and done what is really aimed at? Neither more nor less than the exclusion of Asiatics and, perhaps, Russian Jews. . . .'[73]

The Colonial Secretary suggested that Dr Gregory meet M. O. Evans, legal adviser to the Attorney-General, to 'discuss the various points and come to an understanding for a draft Bill as an outcome of the deliberations'.[74] After meeting Evans, Dr Gregory advised the Colonial Secretary that in his view the Bill 'was a dead letter or if worked at all entail [sic] such great friction and difficulties and necessitate such an expenditure as would create insuperable opposition. In other words the Bill is unworkable'. Gregory adumbrated how the Bill should be framed:

> 'It appears to me that the Bill should be treated from a reverse stand point to that by which it is approached in the present Draft. That is to say, it should not provide for the absolute exclusion of certain prohibited immigrants, but it should give power to the Governor to prevent when he deems necessary the entrance into the Colony of undesirable persons, or class or race of persons,[75] either by reason of their becoming a pecuniary charge or being a danger to the health, morality or property of the community . . .'.[76]

When the Bill was eventually framed and, as mentioned earlier, passed during a hasty debate at the end of the parliamentary session, the 'educational test' clause of the Act prevented those unable to sign their names in a European language from entering the Colony.[77] Asiatics and East European Jews were seriously hampered by this measure. As indicated above, Saron, in his discussion of the Act, implies that the restrictions on Jews were inadvertent, arising out of hasty legislation[78] to control the Asiatic influx:

> 'the Cape Immigration Restriction Act (Act No 47 of 1902), which for a while created a major crisis for Jewish immigrants, although the result was probably not foreseen.'[79]

He also states that it can only be surmised as to whether the 'falling-off in the number of Jewish immigrants was one of the intended effects of the new Cape law, or whether it was due to the economic depression . . .'[80]

While the Act did not necessarily intend to prevent Jews *qua* Jews entering the Colony, it would in fact appear that the Act, besides being aimed at the Asiatic influx, was also deliberately intended to curtail the 'pauper' or East European (mostly Jewish) invasion. The results of the Act were not only foreseen—they were intended. The Jewish reactions to the repercussions of the Act were not.[81] Before discussing these reactions, it is necessary to continue with a brief analysis of Saron's interpretation of the Act.

In discussing the passage of the Immigration Bill through parliament, the primary purpose being the curtailment of Asiatics, Saron had overlooked the original Bill and therefore misinterpreted the intentions of the 'European language' clause. He writes:

> 'The third reading was taken the next day, when there was a significant discussion about the education test. Members pointed out that, as drafted, an undesirable immigrant might be able to pass the test by filling in the application form in some Indian or Chinese language. Faure[82] replied that he was directed to move an amendment, the effect of which was to require that the form be written out in some European language.'[83]

Saron implies that only *after* the 'significant discussion about the education test' an amendment made it necessary for the form to be written in a European language, a means to prevent from immigrating those applicants who could fill in the application form in some Indian or Chinese language. Examination, however, of the Bill's definition of a prohibited immigrant *before* the amendment referred to above, reveals why there was a discussion on the education clause. A prohibited immigrant was defined, *inter alia*, as:

> 'Any person, who when asked to do so by any duly authorised officer, shall be unable through deficient education to write out and sign in the characters of any European language *or of any language commonly spoken or written in any part of His Majesty's Dominions*, an application to the Minister in the form set forth in the schedule to the Act marked B.'[84]

It was the *italicized* words to which objections were raised. Their implications were so wide that Asiatics could hardly have been excluded from the Colony under its provisions. This was pointed out by J. L. Sauer, MLA for Aliwal North, during the second reading. He had not quite gathered from the Colonial Secretary what the intentions of the government were with regard to Asiatics who were British subjects, but it seemed to him that if it was proposed to deal with the Asiatics who were not British subjects[85] there would be no advantage in the Bill at all. There were, he asserted, 240 million in India and there were Chinamen who were British subjects who would come into 'this country to an extent which would practically swamp it'.[86]

It was this loophole in the prohibited clause which was amended by Faure. He *removed* the words:

> 'or any language commonly spoken or written in any part of His Majesty's Dominions. . . .'

from the clause. He did not, as Saron implies, *add* an education test to curtail the influx of Asiatics:

> 'Faure replied that he was directed to move an amendment, the effect of which was to require that the form be written out in some European language.'[87]

The amended clause defined a prohibited immigrant as follows:

> '(a) Any person who, when asked to do so by an authorised officer, shall be unable through deficient education to himself write out and sign in the characters of any European language, an application to the satisfaction of the Minister.'[88]

It may be asked, if it were the intention of the Bill to curtail the Polish and Russian influx, why then did the debate on the Bill focus solely on the Asiatic? One must bear in mind that from the Resolution of 1893, the feelings vented during many years on the 'undesirable' issue in the Assembly, and from the Governor's opening address of the session,[89] it was known that it was the government's intention to curtail East European immigration. That the debate focused on Asiatics only, was probably the result of the Assembly unquestioningly accepting the anti-East European implications of the Bill, but doubting the efficacy of the pre-amended clause so far as Asiatics *per se* were concerned.

Repercussions

Intentional or inadvertent, the restrictive implications of the Act for Yiddish-speaking immigrants brought pressure to bear on the government from both the Jewish community (in the Cape Colony and England) and the shipping companies.

In December 1902 Prime Minister Sprigg requested that the Secretary of State for Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, be informed by cable that the Bill passed by the Cape Parliament in its recent session had been assented to, and that it was intended to promulgate the Act in the *Government Gazette* on 30 January 1903.[90] This was duly done[91] and great confusion followed the implementation of the Act.

When speculation that passengers would be turned back came to the attention of the British shipping companies, they expressed a reluctance to carry Russian and Polish immigrants, except on the guarantee of a return passage and other onerous conditions.

Continental lines, however, were willing to risk passengers being refused entry at the Cape Colony. English shipping companies therefore faced an enormous reduction in passengers at a time when transmigration was a vital source of revenue for the shipping lines. Even those prospective immigrants who qualified for admission chose the continental lines to avoid all possible risk.[92]

Shipping companies assailed the Secretary of State for Colonies complaining that they had not been given ample notification of the Immigration Restriction Act, and that they had consequently allowed a number of persons who fell within the scope of 'prohibited immigrants', according to the Act, to embark. The Cape Government was notified of this outcry and the letters of complaint of six shipping companies[93] were forwarded to the Cape Colony.[94] Pressure was also exerted by the British India Company and the Indian Government with regard to the steamer *Bancoora*. The Viceroy of India requested that the Act be enforced only from 1 February, meaning that those who had embarked before that date would be allowed entry.[95]

Sprigg was prepared to enforce the provisions of the Act as leniently as was practicable, in order to impose as little hardship on individuals as possible so that passengers who could secure employment for a period of six months with employers of repute would be allowed to land.[96] The Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, also accepted a request for leniency with regard to Indian and Chinese passengers aboard the *Herzog*.[97]

Despite Sprigg's belief that the shipping agents had been given ample opportunity to convey the scope of the Immigration Act to their principals, it was decided to relax temporarily the provisions of the Act.[98] *The Times* of London published the following telegram, dated 10 February, from Cape Town:

> 'The Immigration of Aliens Act is not being strictly enforced at present, the government being desirous of giving the shipping companies and all others concerned ample warning of its operations. No immigrants have as yet been actually excluded and about 200 are temporarily detained pending their voluntary indenturing. The Act prescribes 5*s*. a day for six months as the minimum terms of indenture. The Russian and Polish Jews who form the majority of undesirables are evading the regulations respecting means of subsistence by borrowing from the local Jews, who subscribed £6 000[99] for this purpose within a few hours.'[100]

According to T. E. Fuller, Agent-General for the Cape Colony, he had been told to give publicity to the Act despite his not having had a copy. When a copy did come into his possession it was too late to prevent the inconveniences. Nevertheless, he had been under the impression that the shipping companies knew of the Act as it was the duty of their agents to keep them informed. According to Fuller, several companies denied that they had heard of the legislation, although the Union Castle Company thought, on hearing of the Act, that it would not be put into operation as had happened with the Natal Immigration Act.[101]

Besides the shipping companies, British Jewish agencies and prominent Cape Jews exerted pressure on behalf of their co-religionists.[102] The Jewish Association[103] gave guarantees of employment for the aliens and immigrants could thereby enter the Colony.[104]

The Jewish Chronicle reacted immediately to the issue:

> 'We trust that an organised Jewish Society, either in London or at the Cape, or at both places, is watching the question of Jewish emigration [sic] to South Africa . . . If as we fear emigrants have been turned back because they could only write Judisch, no time should be lost, by our benevolent co-religionists at the Cape, in taking a test case to the Highest Court of the Cape, from which there is an appeal to the Privy Council in England, as to the true meaning of this provision. Judisch, the language which these people speak is certainly a European tongue. . . .'

The article went on to explain why Yiddish was a European language, concluding that if immigrants had been turned back because they could write Yiddish only in Hebrew characters

> 'no effort should be spared to obtain an authoritative decision that this language . . . is one of those recognised by the true meaning of the Act as written in the characters of a European language'.[105]

At a meeting of the Board of Deputies for British Jews it was suggested that the Board add its weight and influence to the representations concerning aliens that had already been made. At that stage a telegram had been sent to T. L. Graham, the Attorney-General at the Cape, requesting him to consent to Yiddish being considered a European language. Graham stated that the matter was being considered but the Board, hoping to get the matter settled without undue delay, advocated some assistance being given to the Attorney-General to help him arrive at a prompt decision. It was agreed that the best method would be direct discussions between the Chairman of the British Jewish Board of Deputies, D. L. Alexander, and the Agent-General for the Cape Colony.[106]

At the meeting Alexander explained his views to Fuller concerning the Immigration Act. Fuller requested that the Board's views be drafted in a letter which he could forward to the authorities at the Cape.[107] It is possible that Fuller, who had been General Manager of the Union Steamship Company from 1875 to 1898 and a Director of De Beers for four years after this,[108] was pressurised by shipping colleagues as well as by prominent Jewish colleagues at De Beers. Alexander certainly suspected, from what had transpired at the interview, that Fuller's covering letter would be sympathetic as indicated by the Agent-General's suggestion that a copy of his letter be forwarded to the Rev. Mr Bender as well.[109] The letter concerned the 'Prohibited Immigrant' clause of the Immigration Act and outlined an argument why Yiddish should be accepted as a European language. In addition, it explained why the prohibition of these immigrants would be a political mistake.

The British Board of Deputies was not the only Anglo-Jewish agency concerned about the plight of the destitute aliens. The Anglo-Jewish Association in London also raised the issue at a meeting of this organization.[110] In addition, the Emigration Committee of the London Board of Guardians also considered taking action[111] although no records of any subsequent action are extant.

Frenetic activity geared towards the relaxation of the Act was also evident in Cape Town. When several Jews were refused permission to disembark from the *Harlech Castle*,[112] the *Galeka*,[113] and the *Norman*,[114] local members of the community headed by Bender raised the funds necessary to enable the newcomers to go ashore.[115] At that stage Bender did not anticipate any further large-scale arrivals to fall within the prohibition and the Minister expressed satisfaction with the liberal spirit in which the immigrants had been dealt with:

> 'The Government seemed to realise that these people were not altogether to blame for the unfortunate position on which they plead, and on satisfactory assurances being given that they would not become a charge on the country, allowed them to land. Employers had been found for the immigrants at various places in the peninsula.'[116]

Bender, then, entitling himself as 'Head of the Jewish Community', informed the Chief Rabbi of England, Dr N. M. Adler, that the apparent apprehensions of the London Philanthropic Associations were no longer necessary. He assured the Chief Rabbi that subsequent to the representations from the shipping companies, he had spoken to the Colonial Secretary, P. H. Faure, and the Attorney-General, T. L. Graham, about the 'Yiddish issue'. He was confident that the liberal British would look after the interests of the Jews as they had always done. Graham, Bender wrote, had expressed his willingness to accept Yiddish as a European language and the government also promised to engage an official, conversant with Yiddish and German, to give full justice to those passengers unable to speak English. He pointed out that according to the provisions of the new Act, every man who had visible means of subsistence, a duly certified contract of employment, and was competent to write his name, address and occupation in any European language, would be entitled to land.[117]

Bender's confidence in British goodwill and justice appeared to have been vindicated and, together with the government of the Cape Colony, he was praised in an editorial of *The Jewish Chronicle*. Gratitude was also expressed to the British Jewish Board of Deputies for exerting its judicious influence:

> 'The whole incident, we believe, does so much credit to what we may call the cooperative humanity of the Jewish race as to the sense of justice of the Cape Government. We great [sic] regret that any Immigration Act should have been passed at all, but once such legislation was added to the statute book it was as well that anything equivalent to discrimination against Jews should be removed.'[118]

Goldsmid warned that despite *The Jewish Chronicle*'s conclusion that all was well, the generosity of the Attorney-General, Graham, was simply an interpretation placed upon the law by the present ministry

> 'and it is by no means certain that their successors in office will be prepared to adopt an equally condescending attitude towards our people. It may be that to the future ministry the Rev. Bender may not occupy so important a position, nor be able to bring his persuasive eloquence to bear with as satisfactory result. We

would therefore urge the desirability of our parliamentary representative bringing forward such amendments, or if too late for amendment, some short bill which would make our people independent of the whims of the ministry of the particular moment . . . For it may not always be that those in power or even future ministries will look with favour upon the introduction of aliens. . . .'

Goldsmid obviously did not share Bender's tolerant optimism in British benevolence. His argument coincided more with the legislative viewpoints of Morris Alexander and the Yiddish-speaking journalist David Goldblatt with whom he had no doubt been in contact. Goldsmid expressed satisfaction that a gradual movement for the formation of a Board of Deputies in the Cape Colony was gaining ground, particularly in the country districts. Many synagogues had come out strongly in support of the movement and were willing to appoint delegates as well as to subscribe generously towards the necessary funds. Goldsmid then went on to comment on Bender's leadership of the community:

'The Jewish population in South Africa is growing so rapidly that their concerns are far too important a matter to be relegated to the energy of one individual; nor is it fair to that gentleman in question that he should be forced to take up the cudgels of the entire and immense population. It must be remembered that the efforts on behalf of the poor Jewish immigrants in this country were taken up by the London Board of Deputies and not by the Chief Rabbi, and we ourselves are inclined to the belief that secular matters of material moment are better attended to by business men than by ecclesiastics. The material welfare and political status, in this country is an important matter and one, in the promoting of which the best and ablest intellects of our communal [sic] leaders may be well and satisfactorily employed. These interests should not be allowed to clash with the spiritual needs of the Jewish community and we are inclined to the belief that both the material prosperity and the spiritual earnings are best provided for when they are kept as far apart as opportunity permits. . . .'[119]

This rather sudden antipathy towards Bender's leadership only three months after his much vaunted intervention in the immigration crisis was explained by the *Chronicle*:

'From information which has since come to us and for the correctness of which we can entirely vouch, we learn that no representations whatever were made to the Government by Mr. Bender. It would appear that as a result of the arguments adduced by the gentlemen who interested themselves in the matter, notably the Hon. J. Garlick, MLC, Messrs. Alexander, Goldblatt, and L. Lionel Goldsmid[120] the Government came to the conclusion that it was advisable to accept Yiddish as a European language and the Attorney-General sent for Mr. Bender in order to make a statement to him to that effect, and at the same time requested him to inform the community of their views. . . .'[121]

It was apparent that a rift within the community was imminent. Bender, in taking the plaudits for intervening on behalf of the aliens without formally acknowledging the work done by others, had overstated his role and in doing so had evoked the ire of certain persons. The report revealed quite blatantly that the *Chronicle* had joined the anti-Bender group headed by

Alexander and Goldblatt. In fact, the *Chronicle* saw Bender's 'false and erroneous' letter to the Chief Rabbi in England as the sort of action which made the establishment of a Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony all the more vital:

> 'Mr. Graham was under the impression that Mr. Bender would have notified the local community and then forwarded the communication to the London authorities. Instead of this we find that our minister not only ignores the local medium for Jewish thought, but also all those gentleman [sic] who had striven so urgently in the matter, and that, instead of writing to the London Board of Deputies, he communicated with the Chief Rabbi and gives the erroneous impression that the attitude of the Government was due to his own representations.'

The *Chronicle* believed the only means to prevent this sort of impasse was the appointment of a Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony, which would have the necessary authority to approach the government upon 'any vexed question of the day'.[122]

The Jewish weekly now embarked on a course designed to establish a representative, secular Jewish body at the Colony. Reference to a Board of Deputies revealed that the British Jewish Board of Deputies was to act as a model for the institution envisaged for the Cape Colony. But it was in the Transvaal that a precedent for the Cape Colony was in the formative stages and its establishment would goad the *Chronicle* to greater urgency.

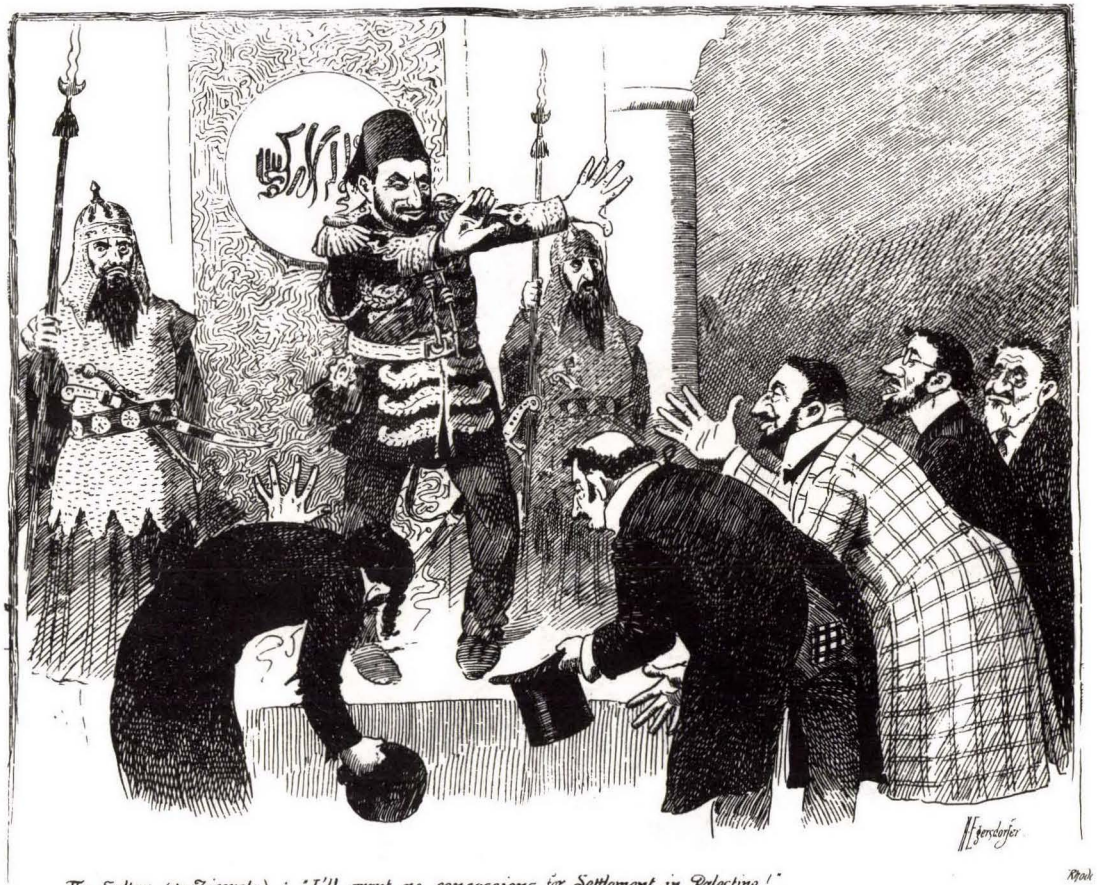
During April 1903 a meeting was held in Johannesburg with a view to establishing a branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association in the Transvaal. Instead, a motion was proposed to form a Board of Deputies on the lines of the British model. The Rev. Dr J. Hertz, who had returned to Johannesburg at the end of the war, contended that considering that the Anglo-Jewish Association confined itself to assisting persecuted Jews in Europe and eastern countries, the establishment of a branch in the Transvaal would be a severe 'slap in the face' for the British Government. He believed a Board of Deputies would be far more appropriate.[123] The *Chronicle* favoured the idea, believing that such a Board, if properly constituted, could be of immense advantage to South African Jewry.

New conditions such as an increased population, possible restrictions and emergent anti-semitism required a modification of communal structure. The precedent of the British and envisaged Transvaal Board was the sort of model lay leaders were seeking. The integration of the spiritual and secular in communal affairs was seen as anachronistic. Indeed, Cape Jewry was undergoing serious growing pains.

While the *Chronicle* nurtured the notion of secular leadership at every opportunity, its arguments were provided with additional force by the rapid increase in anti-alien sentiment after the Anglo-Boer War. It is necessary at this stage to examine and trace these manifestations and in so doing gain some appreciation of the importance of anti-alienism as a contributory factor in the formation of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony.



No. 1 *The Owl*, 26 September 1902



The Sultan (to Zionists) : "I'll grant no concessions for Settlement in Palestine!"
Chorus of Zionists : "We want Jerusalem — or Johannesburg — in our time, O! Sultan."

No. 2 *The Owl*, 22 August 1902



The dividends paid amounted to £1,800,000
De Beers Report

No. 3 *The Owl*, 1 December 1905

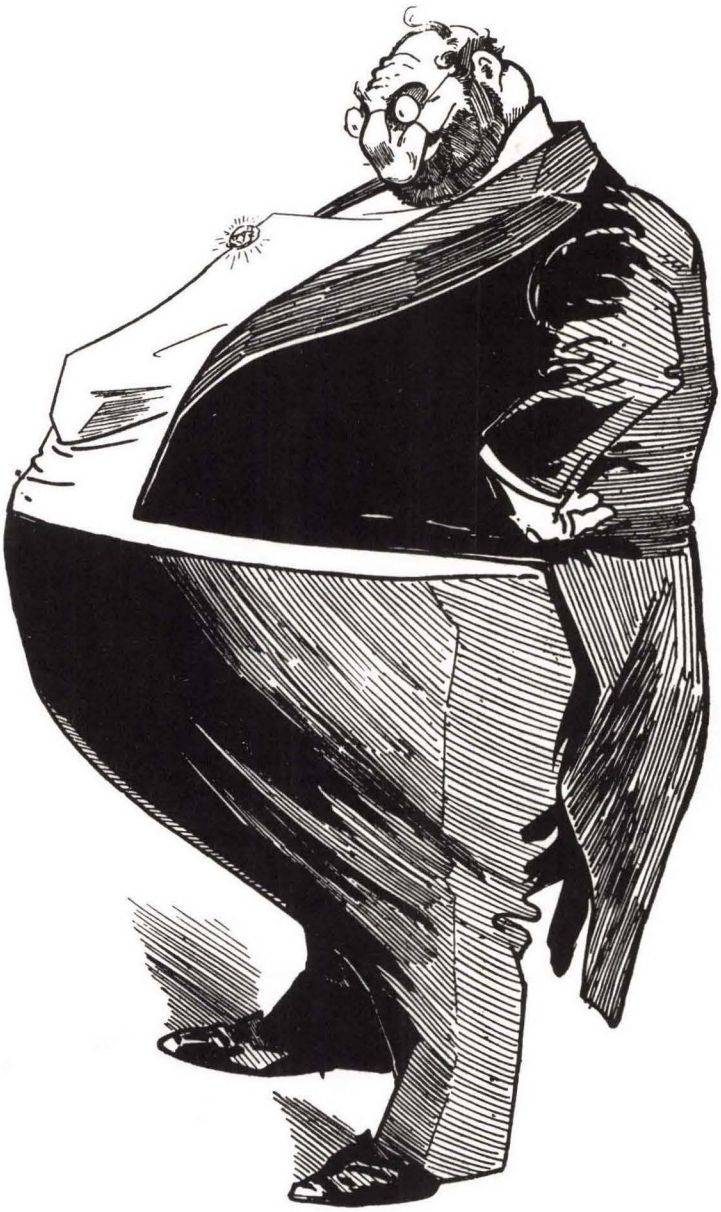
A CHANGE OF TRAPS.



DE BEERS HAVE TRAPPED SO MANY PEOPLE, THAT IT IS TIME THE PEOPLE TRAPPED THEM

No. 4 *The Owl*, 31 January 1902

A SOUTH AFRICAN CORPORATION.



ITS LIMIT.

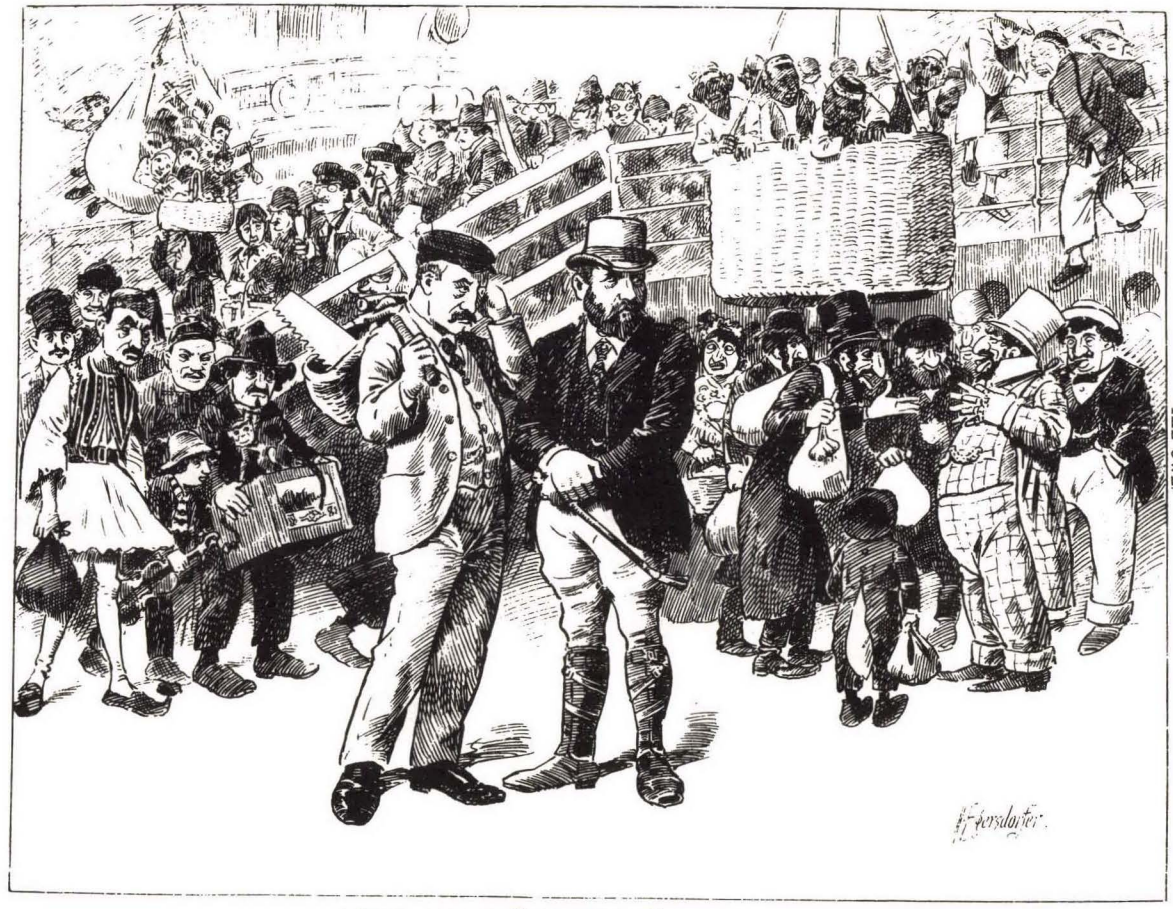
(WITH APOLOGIES TO "HOP.")

"I am of opinion that when the war . . . is over, and South Africa is . . . . there will be no limit to the size of these corporations.'—*John Morley.*

No. 5 *The Owl*, 20 December 1901



No. 6 *The Owl*, 13 February 1903



THE NEW "BRITISH" COLONISTS.

No. 7 *The Owl*, 12 December 1902



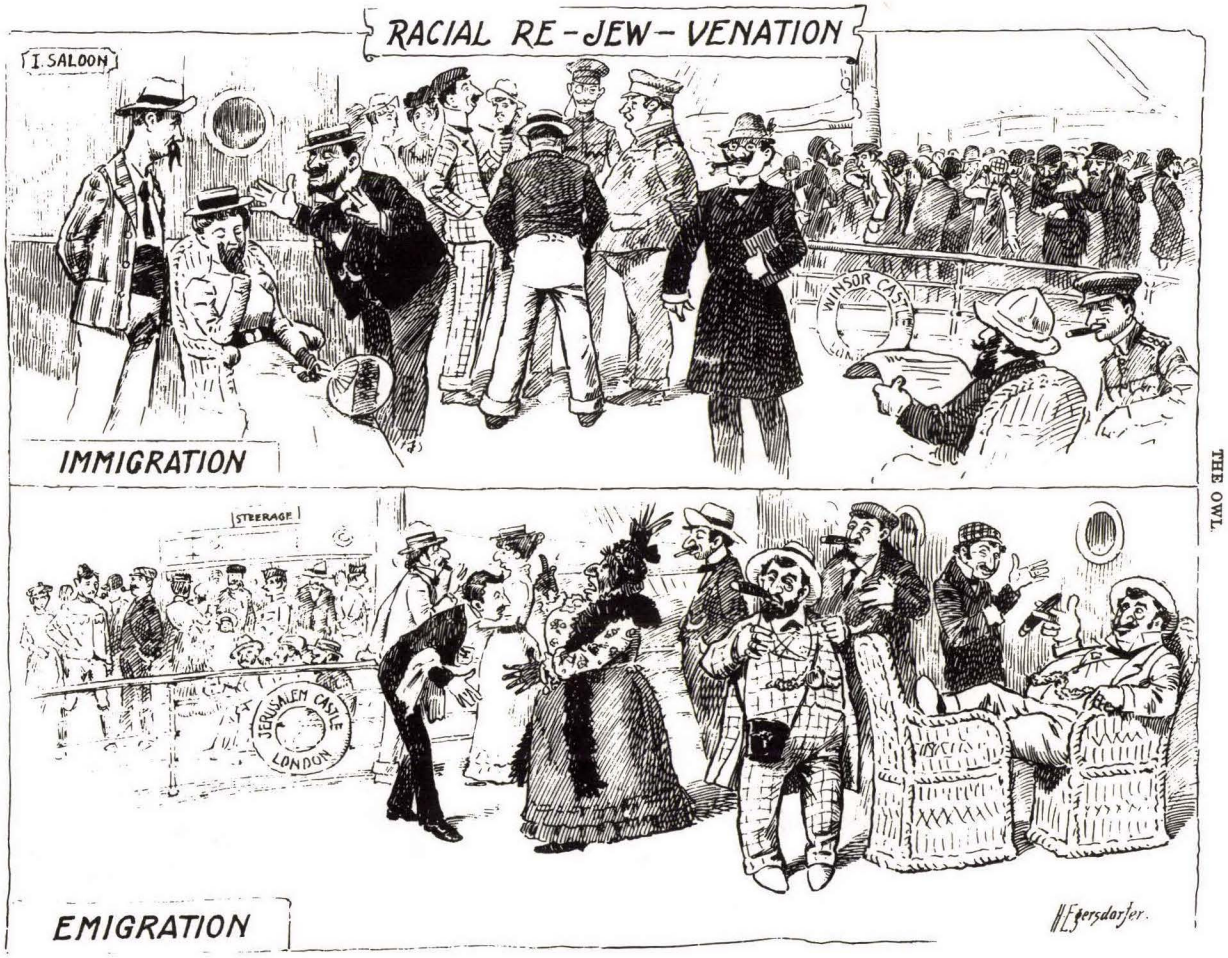
Dr. Gregory "Twenty three per cent of immigrants into the Cape were aliens."
The Owl "At this rate you'd better print me in Yiddish."

No. 8 *The Owl*, 6 May 1904



THE EVIL OF THE HOUR.

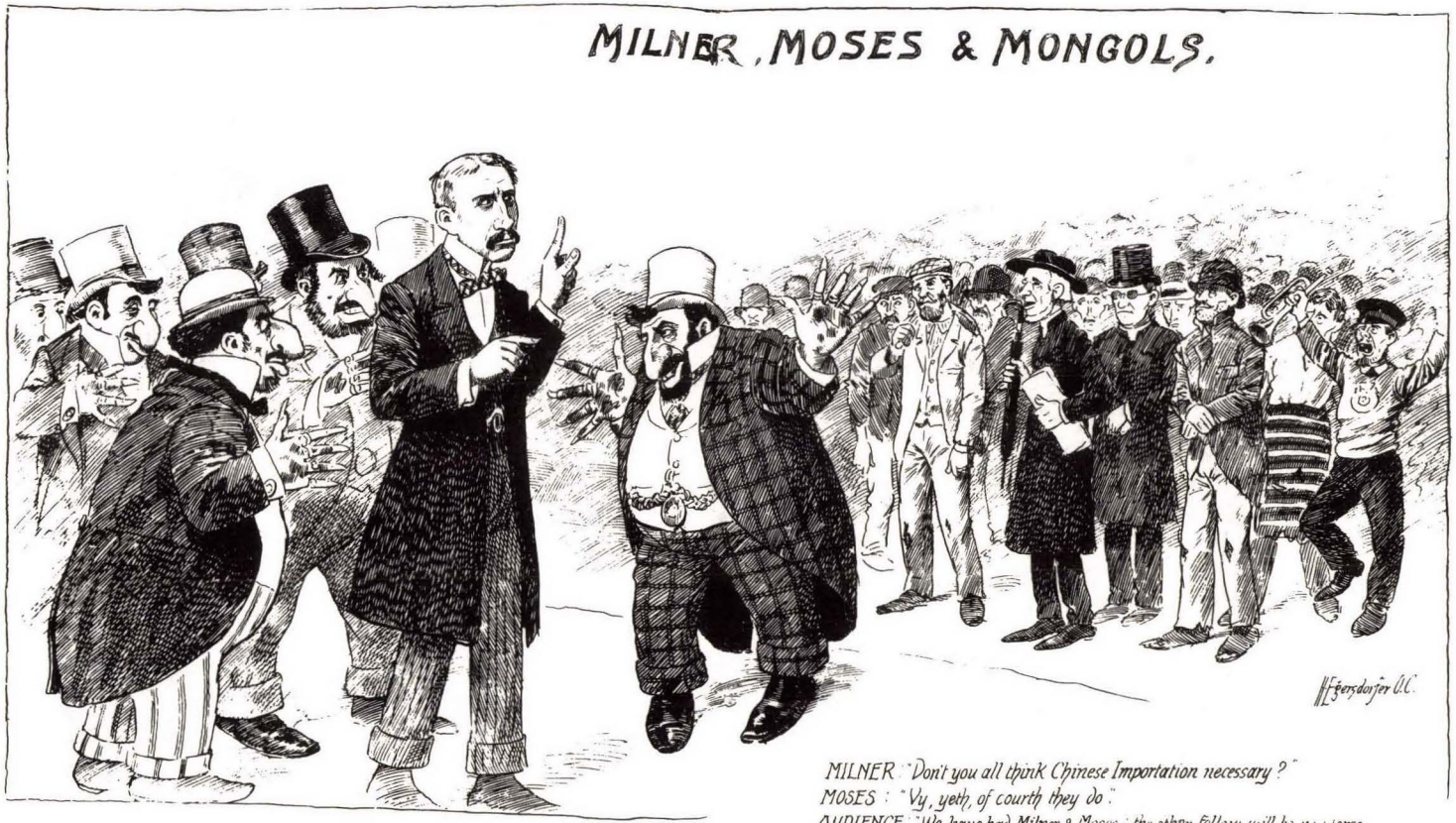
No. 9 *The Owl*, 1 November 1901



No. 10 *The Owl*, 20 March 1903



No. 11 *The Owl*, 14 November 1902



STARVED INTO SUBMISSION.

No. 12 *The Owl*, 18 March 1904

CHAPTER THREE

Anti-Alienism

Finding a Scapegoat—The Nature of Anti-Alienism

Anti-alienism was characterized by clearly defined patterns presented in a manner capable of arousing hostility across all sectors of the community. The alien was the economic exploiter, the socially corrupt perverter of morality, the conveyor of filth, the unpatriotic parasite and the disloyal guest of the British Empire. His cosmopolitanism evoked xenophobic fears and conveniently linked him to the other foreign threat—the 'Yellow Peril'. In short, the alien became a handy scapegoat for the ills of Cape society.

Antagonism arose from the alien being identified as responsible for depriving the British-born colonist of employment and exploiting the population by his immoral business dealings and shrewd financial acumen. Once the alien had elevated himself from the level of hawker, he soon matured into the manipulative, cigar-puffing financier—the 'Goldbug'—motivated only by profit and working to the detriment of both rural and urban inhabitants.

The negative stereotyping of the mining magnate flourished after the Jameson Raid. The Randlord assumed a Semitic appearance and became the victim of the talented pens of the cartoonists, H. Egersdorfer and D. C. Boonzaier. Identifiable Jewish names amongst the mining financiers, albeit a minority,[1] led to the opulent and often gross portrayal of a Semitic 'Goldbug', personified from 1903 in the Hoggenheimer caricature.[2]

Condemnation of the manipulative cosmopolitan Jew became increasingly manifest during the post-war period when the Randlords campaigned for the introduction of Chinese labour on the mines. A typically contemptuous comment below one of the 'Goldbug' cartoons read:

> 'A thumbnail sketch of a well-known Rand magnate who believes in Chinese labour, in forcing the black man to work in the mines, in no taxation of mineral products, in the IDB Act and in fact in all things but truth, justice, charity and God.'[3]

To the Jewish reader, the abuse by the cartoonist of the Hebrew prophet Micah's cornerstone to an ethical life—truth, justice and charity—must have been particularly galling.

Transvaal mining magnates were regularly denigrated by sections of the Cape Town press,[4] and in the Cape Colony it was the De Beers Corporation that epitomized big capital.[5] Of course, it was not the opulent financier only who was discredited by such lampooning. By inference all Jews were labelled, a fact recognized by *The Owl*:

> 'In South Africa unfortunately the majority of Jews of the 'goldbug' type seem to be deaf and blind to all considerations but that of heaping up wealth upon

wealth, and if the race as a whole receives thereby a condemnation it may not all together deserve, theirs is the fault and theirs alone.'[6]

While 'Hoggenheimer' was believed to be the *eminence grise* of political machinations in South Africa, the 'Pauper Peruvian' appeared as a tangible menace:

'We must be careful not to allow this Colony which is also a British possession, to be flooded with undesirable aliens, who would take away the substance from the hand and mouth of British citizens in this Colony.'[7]

'Disgusted Englishman' expressed the sort of hostility evoked by the availability of cheap alien labour competing on a very limited market

'How is it that week after week so many alien paupers are allowed to land in our colony? Russians, Poles, Greeks, Italians and men of almost every nationality under the sun, who will work for starvation wages, come here without any means and with no employment.'[8]

Another correspondent, Mark Tapley, shared these sentiments:

'Well may he be disgusted when hundreds of those foreign Jews and other aliens—for the most part paupers—are allowed to flow into this country every week, bringing with them their attendant evils. Can one wonder that there are so many British workmen unemployed in this town when these Jews, who by their mode of living, or rather existence, are able to compete with them at lower wages.'[9]

Correspondents to the press often went to great effors to offer explanations for the shortcomings of the aliens, but, in doing so, nevertheless indicted them as an unnecessary evil. W. Field, for example, maintained that because of the intellectual freedom in countries from which the Frenchman or German came, these people have a 'sense of duty' and would 'refuse to work for anything below a living wage', but the Portuguese, Italians or Russian Jews, emanating from oppressive countries, were prepared to work below the standard rate:

'Our flag-wagging patriots did not hesitate to use the willingness of these men . . . as a means of ousting the British workmen from happiness in blood-bought Africa. And the result has been that these black-legs have supplanted and starved out many Britishers—coloured and white, they have crowded under most unwholesome conditions, perhaps permanently reducing the standard of comfort and unless strenuous efforts are made to check the demoralizing consequences, Britishers may as well say good-bye to South Africa.'[10]

The 'exploiting' *smous* was another subject for opprobrium, particularly in the eyes of those who identified him as responsible for the poor white problem; perhaps the dominant social issue at the Cape during the last decade of the nineteenth century. 'A Farmer Pure and Simple' directed his animus specifically at the Russian Jew whom he argued used unfair means to rise from pauperism to opulence. He exploited the farmer, trading on charity until he eventually planned 'the expropriation of his poorer Dutch

neighbours and customers'. Dutch girls, he warned, were not to intermarry with the 'Semitic Strain'.[11] His remarks, though unusually flagrant and provocative, were not unique.[12]

Besides being an economic curse to the country and a threat to 'British' employment, the alien was often portrayed as socially undesirable, being filthy, insanitary and given to vice and crime. 'The lowest class of Russian, Polish and German Jews, filthy and evil-smelling, pass in succession through the Dock gates', wrote H. S. Smith to the *Cape Times*.[13]

The criminal stereotype appears well entrenched in popular perceptions of the Jew. Illicit diamond buying, for example, was frequently described in fiction as a 'Jewish crime',[14] while cartoons regularly depicted the Jew as a thief in control of vice dens and gambling houses.[15] He was exceptionally cunning and his very means of entering the Cape Colony was described as underhand, the work of Jewish blackmailers who helped the alien evade the immigration restrictions.[16] His business dealings were particularly dishonest as 'English Trader' indicated when advocating 'a stringent insolvency act, leaving no loophole for those dishonest gentry to wriggle through'. He also desired stricter enforcement of the Immigration Act to keep the 'foreigner out and let the British in'. Business, he believed, would then be conducted on a solid basis.[17]

To reconcile antagonism towards both the poor pauper, a victim of Cossack carnage, and the latter-day successful mining magnate, skilful rationalization was required. The contradiction was explained by believing the wealth to be criminally obtained or pauper mendicancy to be feigned.[18] If not a criminal, the alien was charged with unpatriotic, parasitic exploitation, with reaping the benefits of the British Empire, yet not sharing the responsibilities.[19] Arising out of this the cosmopolitan Jew evoked a xenophobic reaction which portrayed him responsible for, and working hand in hand with, the other foreign threat—the Chinaman.[20] Naturally, identification of the Jew with mining interests soldered this link. A satire in *The Owl*, amusingly described the city of Johannesburg as being controlled by these two foreign groups.[21] Similarly, two poems, 'Ye Goldbug Dirge' and 'The Jews Lament' focused on this relationship.[22]

As early as 1898 the charge of cosmopolitanism, albeit without malice, was levelled at Jewry by John X. Merriman. The occasion was a banquet given in honour of Jan Hofmeyr, where reference was made to a supposedly Jewish minister at Okiep[23] sneering at the Afrikaner Bond members for their nationalistic 'onze land' attitude. Merriman explained that he was not surprised at such comments coming from such a man because the Jewish race, with all its marvellous gifts, never had a country, and being a cosmopolitan people could not empathise with national pride.[24]

Linked with cosmopolitanism were allegations of cowardice and disloyalty towards the Empire and country as noted in the *South African News* and reported by a correspondent to *The Jewish Chronicle*:

> 'The local weekly in question had been pleased to observe that if an Uitlander corps were formed to act in conjunction with the Imperial forces, the Jews would

take good care to have no part in it, fighting not at all being their line—all they want is skekels [sic]. . . .'[25]

Similarly, J. W. Kelly, an outspoken anti-capitalist and anti-alienist commented:

'Where were these people (the Jews) to be found in case of emergency? Whenever England was engaged with the enemy in battle, were the [sic] people found on the side of England? No, they were always on the side of the enemy and then they came in and reaped the harvest, for which Britain's sons had shed their blood.'[26]

Reflecting on Jews, H. S. Smith, a regular correspondent to the *Cape Times* wrote, 'Patriotism they have none, they have come over here with nothing, to prey on the unfortunate residents of the country'. Before the war, Smith asserted, they had been anxious to become Dutch subjects but now they desired English letters of naturalization.[27]

The parochial East European Jew contrasted sharply with the Anglo-Saxon and Calvinist character of Cape society, making him a scapegoat in times of economic hardship. Such conditions contributed to the successful Jewish capitalist becoming, for the frustrated, a symbol of oppression and, for the wretched, an explanation for their plight. It is no coincidence that the Hoggenheimer symbol arose in 1903.

The anti-semitic component of anti-alienism aroused serious concern in Jewish circles and the *Chronicle* challenged the *Cape Times* by publishing the numerous articles in which that paper had depicted the Jew in an odious light.[28] This exercise had in fact been undertaken once before.[29] On another occasion, the *Chronicle* termed a satirical *Cape Times* funeral advertisement directed at the Jewish community 'unmistakenly libellous . . . calculated to hold up the entire Jewish community to derision.'[30] It was *The Owl*, however, that was most vituperative against the Jews, although it denied such charges claiming that it 'loathes unfriendliness to Jews, abominates bigotry in any form and believes in nothing if not fair treatment for all'. It maintained that it gibed at all groups such as Irishmen, Yankees, Dutchmen and so forth, and did not caricature the Jewish community more than the English people. Why, *The Owl* enquired, should the Jewish people escape?[31] While there is some truth in the assertion that other groups were gibed at, *The Owl* certainly concentrated mostly on the Jews.

The highly sensitive *Chronicle*, forever ready to pounce on what it considered to be anti-semitism, took exception to Flora Davis, a Jewish actress, being refused permission by the Opera House authorities to take part in a concert in aid of the victims of the Kishinev atrocities. Flora Davis was, at the time, performing at the Opera House, but, being on leave during the week of the charity concert, had been willing to take part:

'This is not the first instance in which the authorities of the Opera House have shown in an unmistakable manner their attitude towards the Jews of South Africa as a community. On one occasion they informed a representative of this journal that it was no use his coming to them as they did not desire Jewish patronage, and would be rather pleased to do without Jewish audiences . . . it was because it

was for a specific Jewish object that these gentlemen refrained from according it that assistance that we as a community have every reason to expect.'[32]

Despite published expressions of anti-Jewish sentiment, incidents such as the atrocities at Kishinev served to reveal a widespread tolerance, indeed sympathy, for the difficulties of East European Jews. Although not immune to, nor necessarily consenting to the alien influx, the silent majority did not identify with these vitriolic outbursts. *The South African News* scorned Russia's inhumanity and 'brutal mismanagement'[33] and in fact, supported the arrival in South Africa of these destitute people. Mass meetings throughout the Colony, attended by Jew and Gentile, condemned the outrages.[34] At one such meeting in Stellenbosch, Merriman expressed sympathy for the 'co-religionists of, and sufferers from the dastardly outrages'. He went on to praise the Jewish community:

'Wherever Jews were allowed to stay they became law abiding citizens. . . . In this country there had been a feeling against the influx of Russian Jews. It was not the fault of these men, however, that they were poor and down-trodden and it was not their fault that they had not enjoyed the privileges of British government. But he would say they would never find these men begging, drunkards or criminals. They were all hardworking men, and he looked forward to the second generation becoming good citizens in the near future.'[35]

At the inauguration of a Relief Fund for the victims, Dr Smartt recorded his sympathy adding

'In the British Empire they were proud to welcome the Jew as a citizen, and in this Colony . . . . He numbered amongst his personal friends many distinguished Jews.'[36]

A resolution deploring the Russian atrocities was carried in the Cape Legislative Council, despite some misgivings from P. W. Michau and M. J. Pretorius, both representatives for the North Eastern Province. The former questioned whether there was not perhaps a reason for the atrocities, while Pretorius expressed the danger of reading only one side of the story in the local press.[37]

At a mass meeting in the Good Hope Hall in Cape Town, attended by the Dean of Cape Town, the Cape Town Jewish Territorial Association[38] denounced the outrages in Russia. Perhaps the finest tribute paid to Jewry was a letter read at the meeting by Cronwright-Schreiner, from his wife, the famed authoress, Olive Schreiner, that concluded with the words:

'Therefore I say that I would welcome the exiled Russian Jew to South Africa not merely with pity, but with a feeling of pride. . . . The study of the history of Europe during the past centuries teaches us one uniform lesson, that the nations which have received and in any way dealt fairly and mercifully with the Jew have prospered, and that the nations that have tortured and oppressed him have written out their own curse.'[39]

The compassion evident at these mass meetings indicates a residual sympathy for the East European Jew.

Another barometer in the Jewish-Gentile dialogue is to be found in the relationship between Church and Synagogue, apparently cordial although not without blemish. During his Easter sermon of 1899, the Dean of Cape Town, the Very Rev. William Barnet-Clarke, made an extraordinary attack on the Jewish community. Referring to their fellow citizens and colonists, the Jews, at the time observing the Passover, the Dean warned that they were reviling the Christians and even in their Hebrew prayers were castigating them for they would not

> 'countervail the truth that their forefathers crucified Christ on that day. Much as they might admire them as fellow citizens and public spirited men, they could not forget that it was Caiaphas and his false friends who accepted bribes and bribed, as at election times, earning their money on the Jewish system of "shent per shent".'[40]

The reported speech caused alarm in Jewish circles and, after meeting with the Rev. Mr Bender, the Dean made a lengthy apology on Easter Monday retracting his comments. His apology was read by Bender from the synagogue pulpit.[41]

The Dutch Reformed Church, in accordance with doctrinal beliefs, worked for Jewish conversion. At the 1903 Synod in Worcester, delegates stressed the necessity for the conversion of Jews to counteract their increasing numbers. A motion was carried that a General Mission Committee be formed with Rietman, an apostate Jew, being best suited to organize the committee.[42]

C. F. J. Muller, Professor of Theology at the Theological Seminary, Stellenbosch, became the centre of controversy after he was reported to have stated that the Jews were a curse to the country.[43] Reverberations of his pronouncements were felt as far away as Kimberley where Arend Brink, on behalf of the Synod, claimed that the Professor was not vested with any authority in the Synod and did not voice the general opinion of the Assembly.[44] Apparently Muller had been misunderstood. As he explained:

> 'What I did say was that Israel was destined by God to be a blessing to the nations of the world and that such blessing could only come through Israel's acceptance of Christ. The acceptance or rejection of Christ is therefore of supreme importance in Israel's case. It would mean either a blessing to the world or a curse to the nations of the earth.'[45]

The *Chronicle* believed that the Muller affair had been blown up by the *Cape Argus* for electioneering purposes,[46] 'in order, we presume, to point out to our co-religionists as a body, the fact that the Dutch are opposed to them'.[47] Bender, in a sermon, explained that the report had been devoid of foundation. He declared that even if such an isolated remark had been made, it would not have been interpreted as reflecting general Dutch feeling

> 'for those of them who had lived and travelled widely in the country had always received the kindest and most hospitable treatment from the Dutch as well as their English fellow citizens'.[48]

Sound relations between the Synagogue and the Catholic Church were appreciated in an article appearing in the *Chronicle* on the death of Pope Leo XIII in 1903:

> 'Perhaps in no country has there been that friendship between Jew and Catholic that there is today, has always been and we trust will always be in South Africa.'[49]

Having described the nature of anti-alienism, its anti-Jewish component and the Christian-Jewish dialogue, what conclusions may be drawn as to the extent of anti-Jewish prejudice in the Cape Colony? Perhaps the *Chronicle*'s assessment in August 1905 is a fair reflection. Despite caricatures in *The Owl* and the occasional bias in the *Cape Times*, the *Chronicle* contended that there was no actual anti-semitic propagation in South Africa:

> 'How far that fact is due to the commercial importance of the Jews and the necessity of maintaining their advertisements we would not like to say, but the fact remains that whether or not the newspapers love or admire us there is a feeling amongst the general public of this sub-continent, carefully fostered in certain quarters, and gradually growing stronger, that the importance and the ubiquity of the Jew is out of all proportion to his value.'[50]

Hindsight accords the luxury of knowing that whatever the extent of anti-Jewish feeling at the time of the foregoing critique, it had reached its zenith and thereafter it began to wane until it was revived during the 1920s and 1930s. Had there been no Asiatic or Chinese problem, the intensity and volume of anti-Jewish prejudice might have reached far greater proportions, perhaps even becoming institutionalized, as it was at that time in England.[51] But the Jew was identified as, and he identified with, the dominant white caste. As such his group security was never imperilled and his contributions, certainly at an official level, were always recognized.

Anti-Alien Agitation after 1902

The austere post-war years,[52] characterized by economic recession, unemployment and soldiers returning to civilian life, provided the inhabitants of the Cape Colony, particularly the working classes of Cape Town and its environs, with an acute awareness of the growing number of Polish and Russian immigrants. Sensitivity and tensions were exacerbated by the possible 'Yellow invasion' caused by the demands of the mining magnates in the reconstruction of a war-torn Transvaal. As we have seen, the dividing line between anti-semitism and anti-alienism was often blurred in the frustrations and disillusionment of economic deprivation. Although sympathy for the alien was shown by both Jew and Gentile, the need for a secular organization to represent the interests of Cape Jewry was increasingly articulated. This was in no small way the result of consistent hostility and agitation against East European Jews. These sentiments manifested themselves mostly at public meetings, in the general press, in parliament[53] and to a lesser extent, during election campaigns.

Working-class anxiety was championed by Thomas Harris, a town councillor of Cape Town, who at the time of the debate on the Immigration Act, penned a letter to the *Cape Times* stating that protection should be given to British manufacturers and productions as well as to the British. He believed that not only Asiatics but other aliens should be restricted by legislation from usurping the Colonial labour market, while encouragement and assistance should be given to 'our kith and kin'.[54] 'Oxonian' added to the working class chorus protesting against the number of aliens, including Russian Jews, affecting the labour problem.[55] George Woolends, an irate socialist, addressed gatherings of the unemployed at the Van Riebeeck fountain, Cape Town, on Sunday mornings. Subjects such as the merits of British as opposed to foreign labour were discussed, while the Chinese question, which was becoming the dominant political issue, received a regular airing.[56]

Besides *The Owl* which disapproved of Yiddish being accepted as a European language,[57] the *South African Review*, motivated by party political considerations to discredit the Afrikaner Bond or South African Party administration,[58] became a staunch critic of the alien influx. It complained of the infiltration of the most undesirable specimens of Continental life, Christian and Jew, but pointed out that the majority were Jews. Blame for the scarcity of British workmen and the generally unsatisfactory position was placed on the Afrikaner Bond and its inefficient Labour Bureau which did not encourage British immigration.[59] After apologizing for his continuous 'harping' on the 'invasion of objectionable whites', the editor went on to explain that this was 'perhaps the most important question before the country':

> 'If these people were from Scandinavia or Germany, or even from France, the objection would not be nearly so great, but it is evident that the influx is almost entirely from Russia and the South [sic] of Europe. To the Jew as a Jew I have no objection;[60] but the Russian Jew, small blame to him, has been debased by centuries of tyranny to such an extent that it will take generations to work off the brand of slave.'

The Russian Jew, asserted the writer, with his 'hang dog face', 'bowed shoulders' and 'shambling walk' was too demoralized to be a man.[61]

In an open letter to Joseph Chamberlain, who was visiting South Africa, the *South African Review* expressed concern about immigrants who had no sympathy with the British Empire and would not uphold British rule.[62]

In October 1903 the *South African News* investigated the labour problem and the estimated 5 000 indigent Continental immigrants arriving per month. The newspaper found that the immigration laws were being avoided by immigrants furnishing bogus assurances of employment. Friends embarked on ships and informed officials that they would provide employment. Once the immigrant and friend got ashore they escaped the supervision of the authorities for ever.

The investigation revealed that distress was limited to Cape Town (no reports of extensive distress were reported in other centres) where many

good workmen were being forced to eke out a scanty livelihood. The report concluded:

> 'In these circumstances it is clear that further immigration is undesirable. But our readers have seen that immigrants are coming in at the rate of 1 200 a week, and as it may be assured that the vast majority of these have only a few pounds in their pockets, it will be perceived that any further influx can neither benefit the Colony nor the immigrants themselves. . . .'[63]

Despite such calls to restrict immigration, the matter received little prominence in the elections for the Legislative Council in October 1903. One of the few occasions on which the issue was mentioned was during a speech by Dr A. H. Petersen, the successful independent candidate for the Western Circle. He criticized the Progressive Party's state-aided immigration scheme in an obvious attempt to capitalize on working-class dissatisfaction. Petersen maintained that the immigrants would not help the country's agricultural resources as they usually moved to the towns forming an 'unemployed army'. Already, he argued, there were signs of people 'flocking in' above the numbers that could be absorbed.[64]

An exchange between Sir Henry Juta and Professor H. E. S. Fremantle during the campaign revealed the sensitive nature of raising matters Jewish—a sensitivity out of which some believed electioneering capital could be gained. The incident arose after Juta suggested that anyone accusing the Progressives of inviting Asiatics to 'this land' was nothing but a 'political product of Ananias and Saphira [sic]'.[65] Fremantle retorted that Juta himself was a blood relation to Ananias and Sapphira, 'and a descendant of Abraham as well'.[66]

Besides Juta denying that he was Jewish,[67] the *South African Review* commented on Fremantle's 'inaptitude' which would aid the Progressives:

> 'A good deal of help has also been afforded by Fremantle's scurrilous attack on Sir Henry Juta. The Jewish element smile at the ex-Professor's shuffling excuses and perfectly understand that this abuse was dictated by anything but a feeling of admiration for the Hebrew race in general. It was cowardly in the extreme and the proverb "Qui s'excuse s'accuse" came in very forcibly!'[68]

After these elections Cape Town's increasingly resentful workers began to react to their conditions. The Town Council convened a meeting on unemployment[69] and a Citizens' Relief Committee, in which the Rev. Mr Bender was prominent, was formed.[70] Numerous meetings of unemployed citizens expressed the need to control immigration.[71]

In response to an extensively signed requisition from the ratepayers of Woodstock, the Mayor, Mr W. Hare, convened a public meeting to protest against Chinese, capitalists and aliens. The remarks of one of the speakers, J. W. Kelly, was indicative of the tone of the meeting:

> 'While we should be prepared to do whatever we could to help the Transvaal to keep out the Chinese, we must be careful not to allow this colony, which is also a British possession, to be flooded with undesirable aliens, who would take away the substance from the hands and the mouths of the British citizens of this colony.

(Cheers). They would find throughout this Colony that it was infested from right to left with undesirable aliens.'

Kelly believed pressure had to be brought on parliament to increase the stringency of the immigration laws. The immigrants did not come to make homes in the Colony, but to make whatever they could and then returned to their own country.

Another speaker, J. Carver, blamed prevailing conditions on the capitalists. The Chinese movement, he added, was the work of men bearing such names as Wernher, Beit, Solomon, Eckstein, Moses and so forth. Aliens, he said, were parasites and from parasites they became usurers and then capitalists. Carver read a short poem, apparently from the *London Speaker*, which was reproduced in *De Suid Afrikaan*:[72]

'Peyser, Abrahamson en Beit
Hadden voor vechten wijselijk geen tyd
Eerste toen 't uit was met die pret
En gebroken leden weer gezet
Na dien Imperialien Strijd
Zijn Joseph, Jacobson en Jozes
Britsch door afkomste toch van Mozes
Thans de bazen wijd en zijd.'[73]

David Goldblatt responded to the report of the Woodstock meeting, and knowing that pressure to introduce Chinese labour was exerted not only by Jewish mining magnates but also by prominent non-Jewish magnates as well, asked in a letter to the *Cape Times* which 'Moses' had been behind the motion introduced in the Transvaal Legislative Council which accepted the introduction of Chinese into the Transvaal:

'Now sir, if anti-Semitism is going to be agitated under the Yellow blanket although I am personally opposed to the importation of Chinese labour, I would sever my connection with such bodies, and advise my friends to do the same in order to avoid the discrimination of Kishineff [sic] elements of British birth.'

Piqued by Kelly's inferences of Jewish disloyalty, Goldblatt pointed out that numerous Jews had fought for the Crown while many Transvaal Jews had come to the Cape Colony to avoid being commandeered by the Boers.[74] Carver responded to Goldblatt's charges, denying any intentions of smearing Jews and asserting that he had been against the anti-Chinese resolution being included with the anti-alien one. He claimed it was done at the insistence of leading Progressives:

'I have reason to fear that the capitalist or Progressive Party are trotting out the alien question with two objects viz. (1) to draw the public mind off the Chinese question, (2) to supply an offset against the South African party [sic] by opposing the contemplated introduction of Swiss and Italian labourers.'[75]

Carver's denial led to a series of exchanges in the press,[76] which revealed less about the charges than about the danger of involving oneself, from a political platform, in the alien controversy.

While the alien issue had been conspicuously low-keyed in the Legislative Council elections, some five months later contenders for the Legislative Assembly did raise the matter, albeit somewhat obliquely. The overriding consideration during those elections was the Yellow Peril.[77] Perhaps the reticence of politicians to involve themselves wholeheartedly in the alien controversy can be explained by the sort of repercussions that followed Carver's Woodstock speech. When aliens were discussed, campaigners were especially cautious not to mention specifically Jewish immigration—a caution which letter writers to the press seldom exercised.[78] Instead synonyms, subtle inferences and innuendos were used. When broached it was usually something of a political pawn, used by the Progressives (till they got into power in February 1904) to undermine the South African Party.

From the time the *South African News*, the English language mouthpiece of the South African Party, advocated the importation of cheap Continental labour for the Cape Colony,[79] the Progressives had a sledgehammer with which to pound its opponents against the politically convenient background of anti-alienism. What was essentially an anti-Russian and anti-Polish sentiment, was conveniently categorized by the Progressives together with an anti-Continental labour sentiment, on the assumption that the electorate would perceive the two as synonymous.

Progressive candidates made it appear that the South African Party favoured foreign labour, inferring that that party was pleased with the Russian and Polish influx. One particular speech in East London by Smartt was extensively reported in the *Cape Times* under the title 'Facts for Woodstock'.[80] It was agreed that the South African Party was quite happy to issue sub-contracts to alien railway workers and that the *South African News* favoured continental immigration because, to quote the newspaper, 'they will assimilate with the people of this country'.[81] Smartt's manipulative oratory was skilfully geared towards the anti-alien sentiment which perceived the aliens as unassimilable and as a labour threat. Probably as a sop to the 'Jewish vote',[82] the *Cape Times* commented:

> 'We have no desire to associate ourselves with a single word offensive to those foreign immigrants—not the smallest blame attaches to them in the matter: but we may fairly ask that a British Colony should be administered in a way most likely to give the British Colonist his opportunity.'[83]

Progressive, independent and labour candidates in Cape Town made it clear that, if voted into power, they would limit the entry and influence of undesirable foreigners.[84] However, this was not their key focus and their rhetoric generally steered entirely clear of the issue.

The Cape Town anti-Bond press availed itself of the anti-alien agitation to gain political capital. The *South African Review*, for instance, made its stance quite clear in explaining what a vote for the 'Bond' meant:

> 'Putting every obstacle in the way of increasing the British population of the Colony, and flooding the land with the lowest type of Continental, anybody in short who is not British.'[85]

The influence of the alien issue in the Progressive election victory in February 1904 was in all likelihood minimal and if at all significant must surely have been confined to the Cape Peninsula seats with matters of great import affecting the results of the rest of the Colony.[86] Their advent to power under L. S. Jameson did not solve the immigration problem or curtail the alien influx.

The 1904 census revealed that the Jewish population in the Cape Colony had increased from 3 009 in 1891, or 0,8 per cent of the white population, to 19 537 or 3,37 per cent of the white population. Cape Town itself had a Jewish population of 8 114 and its suburbs 2 568.[87] With 10 682 Jews in the Cape Peninsula, a large proportion being identifiable as Russian or Polish, the *South African Review*, ignoring its pre-election tact, mentioned that while people were complaining about Chinese aliens

> 'without a word of protest, without even a murmur of disapprobation alien immigrants are permitted to pour into our seaport towns, and swell the already frightful number of poor people already in the country.'

The diminution of British-born small shopkeepers worried the *South African Review* as did the entry of 'thousands of the scum of Europe'. The editor asked every reader to consider seriously the danger to future prosperity 'so long as there is not the sternest repression of pauper and alien immigration'.[88]

Three weeks later under the title 'The Alien Immigration Curse' the same weekly complained that nothing was being done about the influx and went on to quote from the annual report of the Agent-General:

> 'Although I have done my utmost to make the present state of the Labour market publicly known, it seems impossible to stop a certain class of persons from proceeding to the Colony. I cannot help thinking that the facility with which Foreign Consuls attest letters in which foreigners resident in Cape Town invite their relatives to come here and promise them employment coupled with the decision that Yiddish is to be considered a European language, has contributed to the present congested state of the labour market. The influx of a number of impoverished aliens, who, to judge by their appearance, can scarcely prove an acquisition to the Colony, must necessarily have displaced a corresponding number of older residents, and augmented that of persons vainly seeking employment.'[89]

The Owl also joined the chorus of dissatisfaction. Anyone, it commented, working in the vicinity of the docks would realise the undesirability of the aliens. 'They are mainly composed of the exiles from Russia, Poland and Germany, the Semitic scum of these countries.'[90]

However difficult it may be to assess the extent of anti-alien or anti-semitic sentiment during the years following the Anglo-Boer War, the agitation undoubtedly encouraged aspirant leaders towards communal action. It was the Immigration Act of 1902, in particular, that brought such leaders to the fore.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Formation of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony

Communal Division

It will be remembered that following the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1902, the *Chronicle* had reported the important role played by Bender in assuaging its immediate effects by gaining governmental approval of Yiddish as a European language. Shortly thereafter, however, the same newspaper had expressed doubts about Bender's role during these events.[1] This reappraisal received further credence, some four years later, in an account by J. Solomon, presumably a resident of Cape Town at the time of the February crisis.

Solomon had read an interview with S. Goldreich, Chairman of the Zionist Federation in South Africa, in *The Jewish Chronicle*,[2] commenting on the role Alexander had played in obtaining recognition for Yiddish as a European language in the Cape Colony. He contradicted this account, claiming that it had been David Goldblatt who first detected the danger of the 'European language' clause in the Immigration Act. Goldblatt, according to Solomon, had visited the Attorney-General who had told him Yiddish would be accepted as a European language by the officials administering the Act. Goldblatt had then communicated with J. Garlick, Progressive MLC for the Western Province, who actually did all the work in this connection. It was only then that a 'prominent Jewish gentleman' of Cape Town went to the Attorney-General and told him that Goldblatt held no mandate to approach the government on this question. Goldblatt decided to contradict this statement and to visit all congregations and societies in the Colony, with a view to obtaining delegates to form a deputation to the government, requesting Yiddish to be regarded as a European language. As this was too great an undertaking for one person he had approached Alexander for assistance.[3]

The veracity of this account can only be speculated upon,[4] but whatever the real facts, Alexander and Goldblatt were certainly at the helm of the secular or anti-Bender faction. Goldblatt had been intermittently involved in Yiddish publications since coming to Cape Town in 1896. Born at Radom, Poland, in 1866, his early years were spent working at various trades and devoting his evenings to study. At the age of 23, newly wed, he emigrated with his wife, Fanny, to London, where they opened a book-shop. While she attended to the business he studied at the British Museum where he imbibed the current socialist and revolutionary philosophies.[5] Not far away, in Cambridge, the young Alexander was embarking on his legal training which was to stand him in such good stead during his later career. These two natives of Eastern Europe merged in 1903 to form a bond based on a

common belief that constitutional amendments to the Immigration Act were essential. Both agreed with the *Chronicle* in not wishing to rely solely on the goodwill of the Attorney-General as the day would come 'when there arises a Pharaoh who knows not Joseph'.[6] Despite the unclear chronology of events in February, it does seem certain that it was their intention that a formal deputation should visit the Attorney-General and request that the Immigration Act be amended. It is probable that they envisaged the deputation as the first step in the establishment of a Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony.

After the *Cape Times* had reported that a representative Jewish organization for Cape Town was under consideration,[7] L. Jacobi, the Secretary of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation (Bender's congregation), sent letters to the *Cape Times* and *South African News* expressing surprise that the executive of his congregation was not made aware of the movement. They assumed that, as parent congregation, they should have been informed of developments.[8] The rift within the community was now public knowledge. Alexander and Goldblatt immediately replied that the 'executive' was hopelessly out of touch with the rest of the community, and that the Board was not merely being considered but was

> 'actually in the process of formation and will be thoroughly representative of the Jews at the Cape Colony. We have already met with the enthusiastic support of a large number of congregations and organisations in Cape Town and suburbs and in the country districts. . . . It has long been felt desirable both by the Government and by the Jewish public to have a body of representative Jewish gentlemen who can speak on any important question affecting the interests of the Jewish community at large with the undoubted authority of the Jewish population of the Cape Colony.'

Those who required further information were referred to the editions of the *Chronicle* of 15 and 22 May.[9]

The Cape Town Hebrew Congregation had received details of the organizers' intentions but for reasons which seem to reflect Bender's handiwork, the Executive sent the following reply to the organizers:

> 'While the Executive have the fullest sympathy with the object you have in view, they are desirous, before recommending your suggestions to the members of the Congregations, that you should satisfy them, for they in taking such action, would not be injuring the cause, which you and they have at heart, especially in view of the liberal spirit in which the Government have interpreted the Immigration Act.'[10]

Bender must have perceived Alexander and Goldblatt's plans as a challenge to his leadership, with the two upstarts not sharing his confidence in British generosity.

The two organizers informed the Executive that their work had already received the approval of the government, both political parties and the Cape Town press.[11] The *South African News* referred to the movement as excellent[12] and the Attorney-General was also in favour, believing that the movement

would facilitate the work of the government by having an important and recognized organization to deal with Jewish affairs. He felt the numerical and commercial importance of Cape Jewry warranted the formation of a body to watch their interests and look after their welfare.[13] Despite the organizers' assurances that the executive's anxieties were unfounded, the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation did not support the initiative and failed to reply. Instead, they attempted, with some success, to obstruct the process towards a representative organization of Cape Jewry.

Campaigning for a deputation to visit the Attorney-General began in earnest with Alexander and Goldblatt visiting various congregations and canvassing support for a representative Jewish organization. Goldblatt addressed a general meeting of the Paarl Jewish community,[14] and a letter was sent to all congregations and societies, requesting that they hold meetings whereby a pre-drafted resolution, included with the letter, could be passed. The resolution stated:

> '(1) That this special meeting heartily endorses the proposal that a deputation consisting of representatives of the various Jewish Congregations and organisations throughout the Cape Colony should visit upon the Cape Government and while thanking them for their liberal interpretation of the Immigration Act, should urge them to amend the Act as to render it impossible for any future Government to exclude any Jews from this Colony under the heading of "prohibited immigrants" merely on the grounds that they may know no other language than Yiddish.
>
> (2) That this meeting agrees to appoint one delegate to serve as its representative on the deputation.'[15]

Despite a generally favourable reaction,[16] the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation succeeded, by contacting the various communities, in causing considerable confusion. One can appreciate the bewilderment caused by a contradictory letter despatched from the mother congregation when considering correspondence sent from the President of the Paarl Hebrew Congregation to Alexander and Goldblatt:

> 'The members wish to bring unto your notice that they have been misled by the meeting as it was represented to them, that a deputation was to be formed to approach the Government upon the Alien Immigration Act, instead of which we now learn that your intentions are to form a Board of Deputies.'[17]

The Paarl and Robertson Jewish communities cancelled their representation on the deputation while the Port Elizabeth community appears to have followed the mother congregation from the start.[18] Despite the efforts of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, the deputation did materialize and, led by Morris Alexander, the delegates on 28 May 1903 waited upon the Attorney-General. Thirteen Congregations and nine organizations were represented.[19] Alexander read the resolution that had been passed by each organization and then went on to advocate Yiddish as a European language. Appreciation was extended to the government for its sympathetic attitude and its provision of a Jewish officer with a knowledge of Yiddish to meet

new arrivals. But the delegates wished to go further and requested that the government express a commitment that no future ministry would alter its liberal interpretation.

Graham contended that it was never the intention of the government to exclude Yiddish-speaking Jews, but he could not guarantee that a future government would entertain the same liberal interpretation of the Act. He assured the deputation that the government would introduce an amendment, which he believed would be carried, at the first opportunity. Such an amendment could in future be altered only by Parliament.[20]

The deputation was hailed as an historical triumph by a jubilant Goldsmid. His editorial justified the anxiety expressed by the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation that the deputation was in actual fact a manoeuvre to establish a Board of Deputies. The meeting, the *Chronicle* exclaimed

> 'demonstrated clearly and conclusively the many advantages which co-operation confers upon the co-operators. . . . The Jews of the Cape Colony can no longer be looked upon as a number of heterogeneous units but must be dealt with as one concrete whole. The success which has attended the efforts of these delegates—success which has been gained amid the plaudits and congratulation of the entire newspaper press—should demonstrate to the organisers and organisations which they represented on that now historical occasion, clearly and concisely, the advantages which would be gained by the formation of a Board of Deputies.'

The *Chronicle* expressed its commitment to press for the inception of such a body 'until a Board of Deputies of His Majesty's Colony of the Cape of Good Hope is *ien* [sic] *fait accompli*'.[21] Goldsmid was using all his influence to create a Jewish Board which could 'speak on behalf of their constituents upon the different subjects which from time to time arise to trouble the mind of the Jewish body politic'.[22]

Meanwhile the first steps to form a Board of Deputies for the Transvaal had been taken on 5 April 1903.[23] Two weeks after this meeting the Durban Hebrew Congregation and Durban Zionist Association joined the Transvaal group. The name was altered to the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal.[24] Differences of opinion as to the extent of representation and how the Zionist movement was to be represented led to the first office-bearers being elected only on 13 June 1903. On 28 July of that year a gala inaugural meeting of the Board of Deputies of the Transvaal and Natal took place in the Wanderers Hall, Johannesburg.[25]

A special supplement covering the inauguration was published by the *Chronicle*.[26] Tendentious comment, coloured by a notable belligerence and forthrightness, accompanied the report. The *Chronicle* urged that the proposed Cape Board should not entrust its interests to the newly formed Transvaal organization, since the inhabitants of that Colony did not have the franchise and the institution as such had the power only to 'request' as opposed to Cape Jewry's right to 'demand'.[27]

The Jewish community in the Cape Colony had certainly gained confidence since its humble beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century. This



DEPUTATION TO THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

(Back row, left to right) M. Kahn P. Agranat O. Basson A. M. Solomon B. Marks
(Middle row, left to right) M. Shoolman D. Israelson I. Schwartz L. L. Goldsmid H. Kraftchipk L. Kottler S. Schwalbe
(Front row, left to right) M. Levenburg D. Goldblatt M. Alexander Rev. J. Glushak L. Jacobs

growing confidence promised a direct confrontation with the expanding forces of anti-alienism and anti-semitism.

The *Chronicle* was concerned about *The Owl*'s anti-semitic proclivities, its cruel humour at the expense of the impecunious aliens, its disagreement with the decision to include Yiddish as a European language[28] and its message that the Jew in South Africa 'is a worry, a nuisance, and a curse'.[29] The Jewish community was warned not to stick their heads in ostrich-like fashion into the sand, but to look to themselves to deal with such manifestations. Of course, the prevailing sentiment provided an ideal atmosphere in which to further propagate the idea of a unified, secular Jewish institution. The *Chronicle* availed itself of the support such an institution was gaining. The district communities throughout the Colony were realizing the potential of a representative body and the *Chronicle* looked forward to a future day when all the different Boards throughout South Africa would combine:

> 'then will the real power of South African Jewry be realised, and we shall be in a position of being able to demand our rights instead of, as we have frequently had to do in the past, plead for consideration. . . .'

Only in this way, the *Chronicle* contended, would the Jews be able to contain the 'onslaughts of our enemies' and gain the recognition due to 'their numbers, abilities and possessions'.[30]

Goldsmid's reference to 'onslaughts of our enemies' indicates the serious light in which the anti-alien agitation was viewed. The *Chronicle*'s emotive language and its forthright remedy to the problems, suggested that the proposed Cape Board of Deputies would be a political association. If the Transvaal and British models were to serve as precedents for the Cape institution, then the editor's political inclinations were misleading. As Max Langermann, President of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal, stated at the inauguration:

> 'if anyone can be found ingenious enough to extract from the clauses as I have read them to you that this board is to be a political association, I feel positive that such a misrepresentation—must be done for purposes or with a motive.'

Lord Milner, High Commissioner and guest of honour at the inaugural function, agreed with Langermann. He likened the Board of Deputies to a Caledonian or an industrial association. It was not, he stated, an attempt by the Jews to form themselves into a separate political party within the state.[31] Those moulding the community's future at the Cape Colony would be careful to follow a similar policy.

Momentum towards a representative body was maintained. Morris Alexander informed all Jewish congregations and organizations of the need for a Board of Deputies in the Colony. Reference was made to the way in which the deputation to the Attorney-General had achieved its desired objective.

These organizations, if the Somerset Strand community can be regarded as an example, held meetings to consider the benefits of such representation, and concluded that a decision would be taken as to the advisability of sending a delegate to the proposed board.[32]

The campaign did nothing to heal the schism within the Jewish community and a clash between Goldblatt and Hyman Liberman, President of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, widened the rift, probably ending any chance of a reconciliation. The clash arose out of the candidature of Liberman, a close ally of Bender, for the Town Council of Cape Town. Liberman had, according to Goldblatt, opposed the deputation to the Attorney-General and had disregarded the constitutional rights of the congregants and committee in that he had failed to consult them. The fiery Goldblatt made it clear that a man who could not work in the interests of the Jewish community could not be entrusted with the office of Town Councillor.[33] Despite an attempt by the Treasurer of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, M. Eilenberg,[34] to defend his President, the damage wrought by Goldblatt's accusations rendered the split irreparable.

Those in favour of the Board would have to campaign without the assistance of the mother congregation or the influential Bender. The campaigners did, however, have the advantage of the *Chronicle*'s relentless propaganda.[35] Nevertheless, at a time when unity was needed, bickering and factional rhetoric characterized communal affairs.

Indicative of the importance of the alien issue was a request by the Agent-General, T. E. Fuller, to the British Jewish Board of Deputies to assist him in his task of issuing certificates whereby, according to subsection 3(g), Section 3 of the Immigration Act,[36] exemption was granted. Many 'low class' and 'offensively dirty' people, few of whom spoke English, had made Fuller's task difficult and, he believed, the help of a 'trustworthy official' would give some assurance as to the antecedents and respectability of these people.[37] Six months later, Fuller sent the British Board a copy of a cablegram he had received from the Prime Minister, J. G. Sprigg:

> 'Condition of skilled labour market here is now such that Government strongly appealed to for relief works for unemployed. Yet fresh arrivals still coming there-fore please again issue warnings in most public manner possible.'

Commenting to the British Board of Deputies on the foregoing telegram Fuller said:

> 'I rely upon you assisting me to prevent impecunious persons and especially co-religionists of yours from flocking to the Cape as they now appear to be doing, in consequence of the receipt of letters thence, promising them employment which there is reason to fear they may not obtain on arrival there.'[38]

A meeting between the Agent-General and the British Jewish Board of Deputies resolved that a more efficacious way to prevent immigration to the Cape Colony was to warn prospective immigrants at the place of departure. It was agreed that warnings would be placed in Russian newspapers.[39]

Although acknowledging the poor economic conditions and the need to control the influx of aliens, Bender either ignored or did not regard as serious the creeping anti-semitic sentiment at the Cape Colony.[40] In an address on the occasion of the opening of the Paarl Synagogue, he referred to the 'broad and enlightened spirit' which existed in the Colony:

'members of the Jewish community had come to this delightsome land from far off countries where the light was as darkness and where they had been exposed to all kinds of tyrannical persecution. In this country they had found a refuge from the heat of prejudice and bigotry. . . .'[41]

Only a week after Bender's eloquent words had been uttered, *The Owl* expressed what may be the earliest evidence of classical racist thinking in South Africa. Investigating the Semitic civilization of 'Jewburg'[42] the writer revealed an awareness and knowledge of classical racist doctrines expounded by such writers as H. S. Chamberlain and J. A. de Gobineau:[43]

'Never forget the Jew is not a white man. He is the Semite, the Asiatic. He is brown of skin, black of hair, dark of eye. Herbert[44] when he painted the greatest picture of Moses receiving the tablets of the law at Mount Sinai depicted the Jew as brown as the sunburned Sinaitic rocks. His skull is different. A physiologist could no more confound the skull with a Celtic or Teutonic than he could the Darmstadt skull with Cuviers. The importation of Chinese[45] is Jewish thought not Aryan.'[46]

It is not surprising that in 1904 David Goldblatt started a Yiddish newspaper, the *Jewish Advocate*, to defend the Jewish community from any infringement of its rights.[47] Spurred by an anti-semitic letter published in the *Cape Times*,[48] the *Chronicle* issued an unreserved attack on the sinister forces making inroads at the Cape Colony. Referring to Jewish bondage in Egypt, the *Chronicle* continued:

'we at the present moment are in danger of a persecution which is both as systematic and as cruel, as well conceived and conducted with all the refined cruelties which twentieth century civilisation has brought in its train . . . it would seem as if the Jew was to be looked upon in much the same light as the bubonic plague or per chance as a milder form of small-pox. We are told that he saps the vitality of the country, that he preys upon the farmers, and that, in their minds he is little else than a pestilential curse.'[49]

Even the prolific letter writer, M. Rabinowitz, who had always defended the *Cape Times* against accusations of being anti-semitic, took umbrage at the offensive letters it published.[50] He believed a formal remonstrance to this newspaper from representatives of Cape Town's two Hebrew Congregations was necessary

'setting forth the great injury to the public interest involved in the unrestricted dissemination of opinion, the plain object of which is to incite one portion of the inhabitants of this city against another . . .'.[51]

The *Chronicle* agreed with Rabinowitz and was forced to the conclusion that 'some action even if it necessitates some slight forgetfulness of dignity to which we are entitled must be taken'.[52] Indeed, the *Chronicle* was so concerned about anti-semitism in the Colony that it sent a notice to 68 journals in which it offered, to certain influential gentlemen outside the Jewish community, free copies of the *Chronicle* in order to disseminate more thoroughly a true knowledge of Jews and their character and 'in order to

encourage a better understanding between them and their fellow-citizens.[53] But *The Owl*, joined by the *South African Review*, continued with its vituperative and inflammatory invective. The former weekly was dedicated to preventing the influx 'of exiles from Russia, Poland, Germany, the Semitic scum of these countries'.[54]

Despite the progress made by Alexander and Goldblatt in the movement towards establishing a Jewish Board of Deputies, there was as yet no institution to counter the slander and opprobrium directed at the aliens and the Jews. With Bender apparently turning a blind eye to such manifestations it was left to individuals to vent their rage. As 'Israel' wrote to *The Owl*:

> 'To say that there are roughs and rogues among them is only to say that they are men, but it is neither fair nor true to nature, each time you wish to depict a rascal to furnish him with the physiognomy of a Hebrew. However innocent these caricatures may be intended to be, the effect is and must be to encourage Jew baiting in Cape Town. . . .'[55]

The Gregory Report

If it had been only the fringes of Cape society that concerned itself with the alien influx, the formation of a representative Jewish body may not have been perceived as so urgent. However, the unabated influx of East European Jews (unhampered by the language clause in the Immigration Act of 1902) was carefully monitored at governmental level. This was to culminate in an official report—the Gregory Report of May 1904—which proved to be the turning point on the difficult road travelled by Alexander and Goldblatt in their quest to establish a representative Jewish organization.

When in March 1903, Dr Gregory was approached on the question of Jewish immigrants and the number of Europeans prohibited from landing, he stated he was unable to ascertain the number of Jewish arrivals as the Immigration Act made no distinction with regard to race or religion. It was, however, contemplated that future documents, in terms of the Act, would furnish the nationality of the immigrant. No European immigrants had been prohibited from landing—a result of the government's relaxing its provisions following the protests that reasonable notice of the coming into force of the Act had not been given. Persons who left the port of embarkation prior to 1 February and who had certain contractual engagements were permitted to land:

> 'Under these increased facilities all prohibited immigrants were landed with the assistance of Mr Bender[56] and other members of the Jewish community in Cape Town. As a matter of fact at the present moment, practically no prohibited European immigrants are arriving, as the shipping lines are taking care not to book them.'[57]

It seems that the Under Colonial Secretary, Noel Janisch, and H. W. B. Robinson, Private Secretary to Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, had discussed the question of how many Jewish immigrants were arriving at the Colony and that Janisch had asked Dr Gregory for an answer to this question. The

Under Colonial Secretary forwarded Gregory's reply, adding a personal note and postscript to Robinson:

> 'In neither the Immigration Act nor the Aliens Naturalisation Act are we authorised to make enquiries in respect of the religious persuasion of the person . . . [illegible] with. In the case of Jews the names of course afford a pretty fair index as to the class we are treating but where such people give as their birth-places towns situated in Russian or German Poland and not Palestine we can after all only surmise. I am sorry therefore that we are not in a position to furnish the Return [sic] referred to at our interview.'[58]

Questions concerning immigration were frequently posed in the Legislative Assembly and Council and even in the Cape Town Town Council where J. Bartlett questioned the issue of permits for the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies. He understood that a number of people arriving from overseas were refused permits to go 'up country' and he wondered how, if there was proper supervision, these people were able to leave the ship. He also wished to know what became of such people after being refused to enter the Orange River or Transvaal Colony. The Mayor, W. Thorne, informed Bartlett that aliens, so long as they were able to write Yiddish or English, were allowed to land—provided they had a small sum of money in their possession or were indentured. The issue of permits, he said, was a matter in which the Cape Government could not interfere.[59]

In August 1903, the South African Party MLC, J. N. P. de Villiers, asked the Attorney-General what action the government had taken in carrying out the Immigration Act and whether any undesirable immigrants had been prohibited from entering, or removed from, the Colony. Sir P. Faure, replying on behalf of the Attorney-General, read a report by Dr Gregory that the Act had come into force at the beginning of February 1903, but that on 4 February the Governor proclaimed the regulations for preventing immigration to the Colony which were in violation of the provisions of the Act. Faure explained how large numbers of undesirable Europeans and Asiatics were allowed to enter the Colony following the temporary relaxations in the provisions of the Act to prevent hardships to those who were at sea before becoming aware of the Act:

> 'But as the stringency of the Act became generally known greater stringency was observed in its workings and a number of prohibited immigrants were compulsorily returned to their ports of embarkation . . . . The result now is that the influx of undesirable immigrants, both Asiatics and European is steadily decreasing, so that at the present time, the number of prohibited immigrants arriving at Colonial ports is inconsiderable, especially as regards Asiatics. The effect of the Act in this direction has been most marked.'[60]

A few days later De Villiers moved that a return showing the number of undesirables (distinguishing the number of each nationality as far as possible) allowed to land under the circumstances described by Faure, together with the result of their contractual engagements to serve employers of repute, be tabled.

Faure asserted that with time he could prepare the report requested in the motion but he would be unable to indicate every nationality separately. Most of the Asiatics, he said, were British subjects, while the majority of European aliens were Russian Jews. Regarding naturalization, Faure said it was being considered, in view of the large influx of immigrants, to extend the present twelve-month residence period to two or three years:

> 'For perhaps some eight months, the vicious propensities of Asiatics may not show themselves and for that reason, it was felt that it would be better to extend the period.'

De Villiers' motion was carried, indicating that the Legislative Council shared his concern.[61] Clearly, the anxiety caused by the influx of foreigners to the Colony had not abated after the Immigration Act.

Further questions and discussions in Parliament belied Faure's confidence that undesirable immigration was steadily decreasing. They indicated a concern about immigration which extended beyond the general press and its irate correspondents. In March 1904 Amos Bailey moved that a series of details about alien immigration from the time of the Immigration Act's promulgation and the 12 months prior to that be given.[62] W. G. Sieberhagen asked the Colonial Secretary whether any effective steps were being taken to prevent the importation of undesirables. Colonel Crewe, who had succeeded Faure as Colonial Secretary, expressed satisfaction with the measures adopted.[63] It seems that the Jameson ministry was determined not to bow to anti-alien pressure, especially as far as Russian and Polish Jews were concerned. According to the *Chronicle*, Jameson had made a pre-election promise to Jewish leaders that they would maintain Yiddish as a European language in the administration of the Immigration Act.[64]

T. L. Graham seems to have expressed Progressive policy during a debate on cheap Continental labour:

> 'the folds of the Union Jack were wide enough to include within their embrace every person under the sun, so long as they became law abiding citizens of Britain. . . . What the Cape wanted was a flood of European immigration, and we should not be too zealous to inquire to what nationality the immigrant belonged.'

However, the Secretary for Agriculture, A. J. Fuller, did not share Graham's generosity and warned of the importance of watching what class of immigrant entered the Colony. They were, he said, getting a very undesirable element which was not going to benefit the country as these people 'were not prepared to work the land but lived by their wits'.[65]

The Progressive administration was certainly under pressure from the anti-alien lobby. Having introduced an Additional Parliamentary Representation Bill almost immediately after gaining power,[66] they knew that they would soon be contesting key seats in Cape Town where the agitation was most prominent. The Bill, by giving increased influence to urban areas, was in some ways a measure to prevent the Afrikaner Bond, most powerful in the rural areas, from being returned at a future general election. The

Progressives knew that the disfranchised Afrikaner rebels,[67] who had indirectly aided them significantly in coming to power, would be able to vote at the next general election. Loss of influence, therefore, in an additional representation election would have been a severe setback.

The administration had to note the sensitivity towards aliens, that was most apparent when a number of undesirables were deported from the Transvaal following an outbreak of plague on the Rand. Debate on the issue was particularly heated.[68]

Afrikaner Bond members came out strongly in favour of further restrictive measures, with J. A. C. Graaff arguing that many of the immigrants were parasites and had been ejected from their own countries. Some Progressive speakers shared Graaff's sentiments[69] and his motion that the government introduce more effective legislation to restrict undesirables was carried.[70] By expressing sympathy with its opponents the government could stall for a time without giving the impression, in view of the forthcoming contest for additional seats, that it would not tackle the issue at its root cause—the Yiddish language loophole.

The Progressive administration had to contend with pressure from interested parties asking for legislation to ameliorate the unemployment problems. At the end of May 1904, the Secretary of the Cape Town and District Social and Democratic Federation,[71] J. E. Erasmus, informed the Colonial Secretary that his Society had instructed him to bring to the government's notice the suffering caused by undesirables competing on the labour market at below starvation wages. He asked that the government enforce all existing restrictions on immigration and make such enforcements widely known.[72] The government had extensively advertised immigration regulations in the Colony and abroad.[73]

It is against this background that the *Report on the Working of the Immigration Act 1902*, or Gregory Report, was published.[74] The Report dealt with immigration statistics during the eleven months after the passing of the Act, from February to the end of December 1903 and was compiled by Dr A. J. Gregory, the Medical Officer of Health for the Cape Colony, in whose hands the general administration of the Act had been placed.

The report explained how the Act, owing to the delay of its notification, had been in effective existence only from the start of April 1903. Unnotified passengers had been allowed entry provided that employment had been found for them under a reasonable contractual engagement entered into at the time of their landing:

> 'Under these arrangements a large number of Immigrants, chiefly of Russian nationality, who would otherwise have been excluded,[75] were permitted to land. Although many leading members of the Jewish community in Cape Town came forward and generously assisted in obtaining for these persons suitable contractual engagements, a very large number had to be admitted on exceedingly slender qualifications. As a matter of fact, the Act can hardly be said to have come into operation until April of 1903, instead of on the first of February and even then it could not be thoroughly enforced.'

Statistical tables with Russian and Jewish subdivisions[76] indicated the number of new immigrants entering the Colony. About 45 per cent of the aliens were Russian and Jewish. The Report described the general condition of the immigrants:

> 'ill-provided, indifferently educated, unable to speak or understand any language but Yiddish, of inferior physique, often dirty in their habits, persons and clothing and most unreliable in their statements. . . . That a limited number of such immigrants may be of advantage to the Colony is possible, but it would seem that the number actually being admitted constitutes a surfeit in a country, in which the spirit of speculation is already out of proportion to the capacity for production.'

The Report went on to comment on the bogus contracts and evasive techniques of the aliens. It concluded that if Yiddish were not classed as a European language in the administration of the Act, the worst and least desirable immigrants would be excluded.

How reflective the Report was of government thinking is difficult to assess, particularly bearing in mind the supposed promise to Jewish leaders that the privilege of Yiddish being accepted as a European language would not be tampered with.[77] The timing of the Report, however, with its hard-hitting recommendations suited the forthcoming Progressive campaign for the additional seats. With the government seemingly intent on doing something about the alien influx, Progressive candidates could, by and large, avoid the topic at the hustings.[78] The call for restrictive legislation was left to labour candidates,[79] who, despite the obvious concern about the aliens, failed to make political inroads. The Gregory Report had been a clear indication that the Progressive Government recognized the magnitude of the problem. In fact, its mouthpiece, the *Cape Times*, praises the Report, agreeing with Dr Gregory that there were loopholes:

> 'if an immigrant's ability to sign his name in Yiddish has in practice proved to accompany undesirability rather than desirability, the law must be framed accordingly if it is worth framing at all.'[80]

To exonerate itself from charges of being anti-semitic the article continued:

> 'To the Jew, as a Jew, no sensible Colonies will take exception. . . . But as it happens, a large proportion of the undesirable immigrants who are coming to these shores belong to the Jewish faith. We should object just as strongly to a German or Frenchman. . . . The question is not whether the Jew is undesirable. Of course he is not. It is whether a particular class of undesirables are made any more desirable by their ability to scrawl a few words in Yiddish.'

The *Cape Times* went on to express its trust that the very important questions raised by Dr Gregory would engage the early attention of the Attorney-General and that if it were impossible to make provision by regulation, an early amending Act would be introduced.[81] It was indeed probable that the gains of the deputation to the Attorney-General in May 1903 would be lost.

Predictably, Jews were alarmed by the Gregory Report. The most intense response came from the *Chronicle* which availed itself of the opportunity to increase its efforts for the establishment of a Board of Deputies. It perceived the Report as a deliberate attack upon the Jewish people, compiled fully in accordance with the wishes of the Colonial Secretary, Colonel C. P. Crewe.[82] This, the *Chronicle* asserted, meant his ministerial leader, Dr L. S. Jameson, could not be absolved from sharing its sentiments:

> 'We should not be surprised to learn that both Dr Jameson and Sir Lewis Michell state that they never made any promise as to the question of the acceptance of Yiddish as a European language within the meaning of the Act. But . . . there is proof positive of their having agreed last session that, in the event of the late Attorney-General (the Hon T L C Graham) introducing a short measure dealing with the subject and placing the question of Yiddish upon an unequivocal basis they would not oppose the matter. . . . There are in possession of members of the now memorable deputation letters from Dr Jameson and the other promising their support to a measure which Mr Graham was to introduce and which was to have for its object the welfare of our community.'[83]

The foregoing partly explains why, amidst the anti-alien clamour at the general and legislative level, the Jameson ministry did not carry out the simplest recommendation of the Gregory Report—the abrogation of the arrangement agreed to in May 1903, whereby Yiddish was accepted as a European language for the purposes of the Act.

According to the *Chronicle*, it was only because of the presence in the Assembly of the Jewish Progressive MLA, Colonel David Harris,[84] that Crewe postponed his actions

> 'until he had sufficiently inflamed public opinion against our community. For the present, in the words of the Hon the Colonial Secretary to the Hon the Prime Minister in the Assembly Chamber of the Hon the members of the Lower House, "they will have to let those d....d Jews come".'

The *Chronicle* did not indicate where it had obtained its information. Perhaps it was simply an example of tendentious reporting geared towards galvanizing the community to united action. In the context, however, of government records concerning the alien issue, the comment does not appear entirely incongruous. The *Chronicle* went on to urge the community to sink their differences in order to protect themselves and suggested that the Jews use their votes or political muscle, albeit not present in all parts of the Colony, and make Jameson's Progressive Party pledge that it would not act to the detriment of the Jewish inhabitants. It was explained how combined Jewish action, by leading members of the community only a short time before the Report, had led to a Bill detrimental to the Jewish community being withdrawn:[85]

> 'How far the combined efforts of the leaders of the community, coupled with the outspoken remarks of this journal, have been responsible from the change in our prospects of those today from those of last Friday, we cannot say, nor if we could would it be expedient. Suffice it therefore to remark that this incident has again

proved the advantage of union, and we would urge upon the committees throughout South Africa the necessity for combination.'[86]

The London *Jewish Chronicle* saw the Gregory Report as echoing the evidence elicited at the Aliens Commission in England[87] and in Johannesburg, Langermann denounced the Report in an article printed in *The Star*.[88] He was assured that the authorities would not act on the Report.[89]

At the official level, Jewish–Gentile relations were unharmed. Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, Governor of the Cape Colony, showered the community with praise when he laid the foundation stone of the New Gardens Synagogue in Cape Town. He concluded:

'I know that there are no more loyal subjects and more law abiding subjects of the King than the Jewish community.'[90]

Such acclaim would not have satisfied Alexander and Goldblatt, who intensified their struggle to create a representative Jewish body. In August 1904 the Acting Colonial Secretary, Sir Lewis Michell, made an appointment with Alexander and Bender to consider the issue of Jewish applications for naturalization.[91] The government wished to obtain assistance in its investigations concerning Jewish Letters of Naturalization. Bender refused to attend and the meeting did not take place.[92] It is likely that Bender refused to be involved in any initiative that included Alexander. The latter presumably did not wish to lose the advantage of the government's request for assistance and was satisfied that enough spadework had been carried out by himself and Goldblatt to take the initiative and formally constitute a Board of Deputies. Recognition by the Colonial Government enhanced the chances that the Board would gradually gain the adherence of other congregations and societies in the future. Presumably with this in mind Alexander formally constituted a group of congregations and societies to represent the Jewish community of the Cape Colony.

At a meeting in Cape Town on 4 September 1904 attended by M. Alexander representing the Oudtshoorn Hebrew Congregation and the Israelitish Congregation Oudtshoorn, L. Jacobs (Uniondale Hebrew Congregational), L. Kottler (Wynberg Hebrew Congregation), J. Dorfan (Somerset Strand Hebrew Congregation), S. A. Edelman (Malmesbury Hebrew Congregation), J. Kossick (Grand Order of Israel, Cape Town) and D. Goldblatt (Parade Dealers' Association, Cape Town) the following resolutions were unanimously passed:

'That the delegates here assembled together with the delegates representing the Ahavath Zion Association Maitland, hereby constituted themselves in a Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony, with power to add to their number, the names of those who may be duly elected hereafter to represent the remaining Jewish Congregations and Organisations throughout the Cape Colony.

also

That a copy of the above resolution, together with a letter sent to the Acting Prime Minister asking him to lay the same before the other Ministerial Heads of Departments.'

Morris Alexander was elected President.[93] At last, the aims, if not entirely sufficiently supported, had been realized by the anti-Bender faction, headed by Alexander and Goldblatt. A new secular identity had materialized in the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony which represented[94] a population till then guided and represented by the spiritual leader of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation.

The new institution was essentially a body founded to cater for the needs and challenges of the time. Neither the institution itself nor its function was unique. As admitted by Alexander in an interview on the origins of the Cape Board of Deputies, the fundamental precedent was the British Jewish Board of Deputies.[95] The Transvaal and Natal Board also served as a model, although the move towards a secular body to safeguard Jewish rights and interests in the Cape Colony predated the Johannesburg body.

It was the Immigration Restriction Act of 1902 and its repercussions which contributed most to galvanizing the Jewish community to establishing a representative body. The absence of such an institution was most conspicuous at a time when urgent strategy was needed to cope with the implications and ramifications precipitated by the restrictive clauses. Alexander had for a long time felt the necessity for a representative organization in the Cape Colony to do for Cape Jewry what the London Jewish Board of Deputies had done for British Jewry for over 140 years. When it came to organizing a deputation to visit the Attorney-General with regard to recognizing Yiddish as a European language the need for such an institution was brought home more forcibly.[96] This deputation and its success served as a convenient departure point for a Board of Deputies.

From a purely functional viewpoint it is disputable whether Bender, despite his considerable leadership and organizational ability, was capable of single-handedly guiding the fortunes of the Jewish population of the Colony. What had been taken for granted during the early days, when relatively few Jewish families were scattered throughout the Colony and Cape Town itself had less than 1 000 Jewish inhabitants, was now, following the influx during the 1890s, subject to doubt. The establishment of new congregations, societies and organizations,[97] rendered the old structure anachronistic. With the growth of the diamond industry it could even be argued that the centre of Jewish communal life in the Cape Colony had moved to Kimberley.[98] Indeed, the notion that the spiritual head of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation could speak on behalf of the entire community was maintained only by the charisma and personal charm of Bender. He was undoubtedly highly respected for his erudition and oratorical gifts by Anglo-German Jewry and the Gentile population of the Colony. On the other hand, the newly arrived East European Jews did not readily accept the urbane English prelate's authority.

The population influx during the war gave impetus to the forces of change in the communal crucible. These were times in which ascending young leaders could generate an enthusiasm to initiate answers to the challenge of destitute refugees and hostile invective. Secular committees, such as the

Roumanian Relief Fund Committee, headed by Morris Alexander,[99] increased the confidence of these young men, in addition to serving as a valuable training ground in the art of organization and leadership. The friendships and trust forged during these years would be harnessed in the challenge of the future.

At the end of the war, communal integrity was threatened by the excesses of anti-alien and anti-semitic agitation, nourished by the economic depression, unemployment and shiploads of new arrivals.

Lionel Goldsmid responded and through the *Chronicle* played a considerable and important role in monitoring and directing Jewish thought and initiative. As the only English-language Jewish newspaper in the country, and indeed the only regular Jewish newspaper (Yiddish newspapers being shortlived and irregular), the editor played a vital role in highlighting Jewish vulnerability through his reports on European anti-semitism and his comments on its infiltration into the Cape. When the *Chronicle* parted ways with Bender over the manner in which he had 'reported' the events of February 1903 to the Chief Rabbi in Britain,[100] the unreserved support of this powerful medium was allied to Alexander and Goldblatt. Its articulate arguments and sensitivity clearly elucidated the need for a secular organization to safeguard the Jewish community.

Goldblatt and Alexander, neither of whom shared Bender's optimism regarding the tolerance and benevolence of British goodwill, exploited the increasing opprobrium directed against alien Jews. Alexander's influence as a lay preacher in the New Hebrew Congregation was particularly powerful. His and Goldblatt's inexhaustible efforts were rewarded, and although they would have undoubtedly appreciated more grassroots support, the government's request for assistance with Jewish naturalizations could not be ignored. Presented with such an opportunity of official recognition, the request was affirmatively answered.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony, 1904–1912

Consolidation

The first task facing the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony,[1] hereafter referred to as the Board, was to establish and consolidate its status as the official institution representing the approximately 20 000 Jewish inhabitants of the Colony. The geographical distribution in 1904[2] (with the exception of Rondebosch, only places with a hundred or more souls are included) was as follows:

Beaconsfield	103
Cape Town	8 114
Suburbs of Cape Town	
Claremont	251
Green and Sea Point	382
Maitland	225
Mowbray	144
Rondebosch	26
Woodstock	797
Wynberg	743
East London	372
Grahamstown	167
Kimberley	661
King William's Town	170
Malmesbury	114
Middelburg	112
Oudtshoorn	623
Paarl	404
Port Elizabeth	760

The Board's battle for official status depended essentially on the support of Cape Town Jewry, which comprised over half the Jewish population in the Colony. The community had, for over six decades, been under the influence of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation. Bender had consolidated the primacy of the mother institution and his esteemed personal status, particularly in the eyes of the Gentile population, posed an ever present threat to the viability of the Board. His congregants, residing mostly in the Gardens, Tamboerskloof and Oranjezicht areas of the city, included some of the most influential people of Cape Town society. None the less, by the time of the Board's inauguration, Bender's pre-eminence within the Jewish community, had, as we have seen, been steadily undermined.

The establishment of the New Hebrew Congregation in 1900 and the *Beth Hamedrash Hachodosh* (the new House of Study) in Constitution Street in 1902

reflected deep divisions within the Jewish community. Although aided by the Anglo-Jewish community, the East Europeans viewed their acculturated predecessors with some disdain. In matters of religion, ritual and *weltanschauung* there were substantive differences as succinctly described by Herrman:

> 'The Russian Jew looked upon the English as heathenish and ignorant, considered part of the Jewish ritual important that the others considered trivial, and trivial what others thought weighty. The two pronounced Hebrew with a different accent. There were trifling differences in custom. The one used Yiddish and believed it to be the Jewish language and the other despised it as a debased jargon.'[3]

The support of Cape Town's East European Jews, comprising over half the Jewish population, was a *sine qua non* for the viability of the Board as a representative institution. But, in the first instance, it was necessary to be recognized by the Colonial Government as well as by those organizations in London and Johannesburg upon which the Board modelled itself. The Board acted immediately; its urgency probably reflected the realization that the struggle to be the authentic Jewish voice was fraught with obstacles, and that there would be competition from the Rev. Mr Bender and the influential Cape Town Hebrew Congregation.

Dr T. W. Smartt, the Acting Prime Minister, was notified of the resolution passed at the inauguration of the Board and the intention of this body 'to watch and take action with reference to all matters affecting the welfare of the Jews of the Cape Colony. . .'.[4] The Board was informed that their communication would be circulated amongst the Ministers of the Crown.[5]

The Colonial Government provided the Board with the opportunity of striking the first blow in the battle to represent the Jewish community. In reply to a request of Colonel Crewe, the Colonial Secretary, about the possibility of the Board assisting the government in the naturalization of Jewish persons, Alexander stated that the Board would 'gladly undertake the work referred to by you, and I am calling a special meeting of delegates for Sunday next, when a formal resolution of approval will be passed'.[6] At the meeting it was resolved that the Board would 'heartily' accept the offer from the Colonial Secretary and that it was prepared to report upon all Jewish applications for naturalization submitted to it by the government. In addition, it was willing to assist the government in all matters affecting the interests of the Jewish population of the Colony. The courtesy and kindness extended to the Board by the government and especially by the Colonial Secretary was formally noted at the meeting. Details regarding working arrangements with the government were left in the hands of Morris Alexander.[7]

One can discern at this early stage the confidence in, and the power entrusted to the President of the Board, Morris Alexander. His speech a week earlier to the Oudtshoorn Jewish community on the establishment of the Board, apart from being a public relations exercise, was in effect a policy speech. He indicated that the Board had been formed for the purpose of

safeguarding Jewish interests in the Colony. It was his desire that every Jewish congregation or organization in the Colony should be represented on the Board and should elect a vigilance committee to work in conjunction with their delegation. In this way Alexander believed Jewish interests would be amply safeguarded. During the speech he had read several communications between himself and the government on matters affecting Jews in the Colony, such as alien immigration, the withdrawal by the government of a clause in the proposed Naturalization Bill (which, according to Alexander would have hampered if not entirely prevented the naturalization of Jews in the Colony)[8] and the naturalization of Jewish aliens. Alexander had announced the government's offer to submit all Jewish applications for naturalization to the Board for investigation and report.[9]

On 28 September 1904, the Board informed the mother institution in London of its formation and the intentions to follow in its footsteps, watching over the interests of the Jews, as a community, in the Cape Colony and taking action whenever necessary. They were willing to assist their London counterpart and hoped it would reciprocate. The London body was thanked for sending a copy of its constitution and the proposed revisions thereof, as well as the Annual Report of 1902–1903.[10] It was the Board's intention to use this constitution as a basis for its own, altering it where necessary to suit local conditions. The London body was also informed of the government's offer to refer all Jewish applications for naturalization to it for investigation and report. Finally, the Board requested that the London organization forward, in the future, its Annual Report and other printed matter. They undertook to do the same.[11]

Clearly, the letter was intended, *inter alia*, to consolidate the Board as the *de jure* voice of Cape Jewry. A similar letter, expressing the desire for co-operation was sent to the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal.[12] Contact between the Cape Board and its northern counterpart was maintained throughout its existence. In November 1905 the Board informed Johannesburg of its future intentions and past work[13] and during 1906 Alexander communicated with them about Jewish immigrants being refused permission to enter the Transvaal.[14]

In its attempt to widen the membership base the Board notified various Hebrew congregations by letter of its formation and of its envisaged role. Included in the correspondence was a draft resolution of approval and willingness to have a delegate representing that congregation or organization on the Board. The congregation was requested to propose that resolution at a general meeting.[15]

Certainly, the initial two months were busy and by the end of October the Board could inform the government that applications for naturalization were being investigated according to the terms suggested. Moreover, the government was informed that since the Board's inception votes of confidence in this body had been passed at meetings in Oudtshoorn, Somerset Strand, Somerset West, Worcester and Cape Town. The Somerset West and Worcester Hebrew Congregations, as well as the Dublin Hebrew Mutual Benefit

Association of Cape Town, were now represented,[16] and, in December 1904, the Simonstown Hebrew Congregation joined the Board.[17] Membership fees were proportionate to the number of members in the congregation.[18]

In January 1905 several persons describing themselves as 'licensed auctioneers and Stand holders on the Grand Parade Cape Town' claimed that there was no Parade Association of Auctioneers[19] in existence and that Goldblatt had never had authority to represent them. Solomon Alexander, Morris Alexander's brother and Secretary of the Board, asked R. Gromer, Secretary of the Parade Dealers' Association, to clarify the matter.[20] Evidently, Goldblatt was not authorized to represent them and this body was subsequently removed from the list of organizations represented on the Board.[21] Despite the removal of this organization from its ranks, the Board could justifiably be satisfied with the first four months of its existence. Recognition by the Cape Government and by London and Johannesburg was undoubtedly a valuable asset in the struggle to be the representative voice of Cape Jewry. The influential Rev. Mr Bender however, and his congregation, as well as other major Jewish congregations in the Colony, remained unconverted. The struggle continued.

Naturalization and Opposition

Four months after its establishment the Board still needed recognition from some of the larger congregations such as Port Elizabeth, Paarl and Kimberley if claims to be the legitimate representative of Cape Jewry were to be justified. From predictable quarters, opposition to such claims mounted. The other major task facing the Board was the organization of applications for naturalization, which continued till 1906. This process was decentralized, each community dealing with applications pertaining to its own district. Special naturalization circulars were published in Yiddish by David Goldblatt under the auspices of the Board.[22]

Morris Alexander remained in close communication with the Under Colonial Secretary, Noel Janisch. Writing on 19 February 1905, he referred to a previous letter and conversation whereby he (Alexander) understood that aliens who had previously obtained certificates of naturalization elsewhere within the Empire would in future receive letters under section 5 of Act 2 of 1883 by making an application in terms of that section.[23] They were to be in the same position as aliens whose names had been investigated and found satisfactory and their papers were to be immediately laid before the Executive Council. Alexander also understood that the government would, in future, adopt the principle of regarding the reports of the Board as final and would not as a general rule subject these cases to the police for further investigation except if the Colonial Secretary decided that further action was necessary. Alexander realized there were practical difficulties in carrying out his suggestion regarding minor children of an alien (*vide* section 8 subsection 2 of Act 2 of 1883) and he believed that their names ought to have appeared on the certificate. He urged that this be done as soon as 'practicable' for two reasons:

'to safeguard the rights of such children who in view of the facts that no record is kept at the Colonial Secretary's office of their names, ages, etc; and that no endorsement thereof is made on the certificate, would find it extremely difficult in after years to prove their claims . . . to prevent fraud on the part of those not entitled, whose assertions, that they are included under some certificate granted several years previously, it would for the above reasons be extremely difficult to disprove.'[24]

By February 1905, the Board had investigated and returned 351 applications for naturalization while 399 were still under investigation. Of those 750 cases, 399 were from Cape Town itself, 117 from the suburbs of that city, 34 from Port Elizabeth, 29 from Oudtshoorn and the remaining 171 from numerous country communities.[25] The figures reflect broadly the extent of the Board's influence in particular centres as well as the geographical distribution of Cape Jewry. One notes, for example, that neither the relatively large Kimberley–Beaconsfield nor Paarl communities, unaffiliated to the Board, returned many applications. Of course these returns also reflect the numbers, or lack thereof, of Anglo-Jews who were already British subjects.

Having undertaken its task with great enthusiasm, the struggle for authentic leadership nevertheless depended upon the support of the East European community. In this struggle Alexander was at a distinct advantage. As a lay preacher in the New Hebrew Congregation, he made a marked impression on the new arrivals. They were impressed with this young man who 'would mount the pulpit, dressed in a university gown with a mortar-board on his head, and was prepared to identify himself with them'.[26]

It was difficult for Bender to attract the support of the intensely religious Jews, residing in an area described as a 'Lithuanian townlet'.[27] Life, for these people, was far removed from the aristocratic comforts enjoyed by the upper echelons of Bender's congregants. For the new arrivals the synagogue was the central focus:

'The Shul was open the whole forenoon when services followed each other in rapid succession. In the evenings, between *Minchah*[28] and *Maariv*,[29] the Synagogue presented a scene of animated activity. The hard struggling Jew, be he shopkeeper, pedlar, "trier" or artisan, would foregather at the conclusion of the day in the *Beth Hamedrash*[30] and between services he would "sit" at one of the "*Shiurim*"[31] or lectures delivered at long tables with benches all around.'[32]

With the changing composition of the community, Bender's status and the pre-eminence of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation were rapidly eroded. Government recognition of the Board further widened the rift between Bender's congregation and the followers of Alexander.

In February 1905 Colonel David Harris, then the Progressive MLA for Barkly West, informed Colonel Crewe that:

'Liberman and Bender are annoyed that Alexander organised a society named the Jewish Board of Deputies, without the slightest reference to them. Mr [sic]

> Bender told me that the society is not in any way an influential one, having very few members, but the Cape Town Executive[33] magnify everything to their own glorification, what vexes Mr Bender more than anything is that this small body has the ear of the Government. Mr Bender seems to be much annoyed with Sir L M[34] in not having kept a promise made him when Sir Lewis was acting for you during your absence. The best course for you to adopt, is to discuss the whole matter with Mr Bender. I am sure he would be only too glad to call on you, he is immensely powerful with his people and is a real good man with very great ability, and I feel sure with your usual tact you will set matters straight. . . .'[35]

Harris was attempting to narrow the rift in the Jewish community. He apparently appreciated the Board's potential and indeed he acted as its parliamentary spokesman on a number of occasions,[36] but he was aware also of Bender's power and realized the necessity of the Reverend being coaxed into accepting the institution.

Bender, however, was not prepared to recognize the Board and considered that its very existence constituted a serious danger to the Jewish community. He informed Alexander that he was satisfied that Cape Jewry had not the slightest reason to fear 'any civil or religious disabilities' and not believing the Jews of the Colony to have any 'specific interests to conserve' beyond the synagogue, their schools and charitable associations, he failed to see the necessity of a Board to protect their interests. He found the idea of Vigilance Committees for the defence of Jews in a 'free country' preposterous. Bender argued that without the support of some of the senior Jewish congregations and organizations, the Board could not claim to speak on behalf of Cape Jewry. He had indicated to Sir Lewis Michell, when he was Acting Colonial Secretary, that if he wished to nominate a Committee that would give reliable information about applicants for letters of naturalization, he ought, for the purpose, to select the five Jewish Justices of the Peace for the Cape Colony.[37] Such a committee, Bender believed, would be regarded by the government and country at large as a representative and responsible body, 'since those comprising it had derived their commissions from the Government itself', and would naturally maintain high standards of judgement. Bender concluded that he did not wish to question the judgement of the Colonial Secretary in submitting applications to the Board, but he certainly protested 'against the Board being regarded by the Government as the authorised official mouthpiece of the Jewish community of the Colony. . .'.[38]

In an attempt to rectify shortcomings expressed by Bender, the Board attempted to gain the support of some of the larger congregations. They began by focusing on the Port Elizabeth community, the largest outside of Cape Town. Port Elizabeth Jewry resembled to some extent the Cape Town community, in so far as it exhibited divisions between established Anglo-Jews and the 'greeners'.[39] The affiliation of Port Elizabeth Jewry to the Board would have been a major coup in its struggle for legitimacy. The Port Elizabeth Hebrew Congregation had displayed an interest in the intentions of the Board[40] and had been told that before the adoption of a constitution

the various congregations would be consulted. The importance of their affiliation was stressed

> '. . . in the interests of the Community of Cape Colony, it is urgently necessary that a Congregation such as yours should be represented, and I might point out that the name of your congregation and the fact that you were not represented on the Board was used as an argument to the Government against us by certain persons who wished to hamper the work of the Board, and if possible to destroy it altogether'.[41]

Meanwhile the Board was continuing with its work of examining applications for letters of naturalization. Of the approximately 900 cases submitted, 500 had been reported on, besides the 50 cases sent directly by the Board to the government. Delays occurred in the issuing of reports owing to the large number of cases submitted, the fact that Colonel Crewe had always insisted (correctly in Alexander's opinion) upon a very strict investigation and the considerable proportion of applicants who had changed their addresses. To obviate delays, Alexander suggested that the government send applicants directly to the Board. Apart from relieving the Department of extra work this would assist the Board in issuing reports by ascertaining the present whereabouts of those applicants. Regarding the complaints of inefficiency, Alexander informed the government that

> 'in view of the fact that few enquirers come to the Board to complain and from information given to me from time to time—I am of opinion that applicants are being whipped up by persons desirous of discrediting the work of the Board, & being asked to complain to the Government'.[42]

Interviewed in *The Jewish Chronicle*, Alexander shed further light on the rift between his Board and the Rev. Mr Bender. After commenting on the collapse of the proposed meeting of August 1904 with the Acting Colonial Secretary owing to Bender's refusal to attend,[43] Alexander pointed out that he had more recently offered

> 'in order that there might be not even a semblance of a division in the community, to recommend to the Board that all applications for naturalisation should be dealt with by a special committee, to which the Board would nominate a certain number of delegates, and the old Cape Town congregation an equal number. Considering that we represent a large number of country communities as well as local ones, this offer was a very fair one but it was also rejected. . . .'

Alexander went on to explain how considerate the government was in taking up the suggestions made by the Board. As an example, he cited how a President of a Cape Town suburban congregation, who had been naturalized in South Australia, found that the registering officers wished to remove his name from the voters' roll on the grounds that he was an alien. This was because a section of the Naturalization Act of 1883, which made it easy for a person naturalized in any part of the British Empire to exchange citizenship in other parts, had been disregarded for about twenty years. Had the applicant gone through the normal channels he would not have been registered in time to remain on the voters' roll. As President of the Board,

Alexander had made representations to the government resulting in all persons, of whatever race, who had been naturalized in other parts of the British Empire being able to exchange their certificates for a Cape certificate on landing at the Cape Colony.[44]

The interview is particularly interesting in that Alexander's recommendations that a committee deal with naturalizations did not differ markedly from Bender's suggestion that five Jewish Justices of the Peace form a naturalization committee.[45] Alexander, however, wished to nominate representatives of the Board to such a committee. That Alexander and Bender failed to achieve a compromise indicates a personal rivalry between the two figures for leadership of the community. Bender feared that Alexander's offer would imply recognition of the Board. Besides this possible explanation it is difficult to explain why a compromise between the two could not have been achieved.

The Board gradually revealed an assertiveness commensurate with its increased confidence. After M. Cohen of Oudtshoorn had complained of a delay in the issue of letters of naturalization to him, the Board expressed its displeasure to the government, stating that Cohen's papers had been recommended and had been returned to the government on 12 December of the previous year. Other complaints were made and the government was beseeched to issue letters of naturalization to applicants as soon as they were recommended by the Board. Dissatisfaction was expressed when certificates for naturalization were sent to agents who refused to hand them to applicants without the payment of a small fee. The Board appealed to the government that letters of naturalization should be sent directly to the applicants.[46]

The issue of naturalization had in fact become a serious problem for the government. According to the Aliens Naturalization Act of 1883 and the amended Act of 1889 naturalization depended essentially on the good character and record of the applicant. This posed no problem for the majority of East European Jews and they therefore comprised a high proportion of those naturalized, a fact noted by the Governor, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson.[47] In a memorandum to the High Commissioner he pointed out that the Aliens Naturalization Act left it to the discretion of the Governor, acting on the advice of his Ministers, to grant letters of naturalization. He continued:

> 'Ministers are aware that it is within their competence to advise refusal of naturalisation even when the conditions laid down in the Act have been complied with. *I have (illegible) drawn the attention of the ministers to the large proportion of Russian and Polish Jews who*[48] I have drawn the attention of the Minister to the matter.'[49]

Estimates of the proportion of Russian and Polish Jews who had taken out letters of naturalization were regularly despatched by the Governor, to the High Commissioner[50] and it is clear that the matter was becoming a contentious issue at ministerial level as well. In December 1902 Sprigg informed the Governor that although the Aliens Naturalization Act pre-

scribed no minimum term of residence, the qualifying period for naturalization was one year. He added that it was the practice to refuse letters of naturalization to persons not intending to reside in the Colony.[51]

The number of people who were naturalized during the first six months of 1903 increased. During the previous two and a half years 1 572 Russians and Poles 'almost all bearing Jewish names' had become naturalized. Of the persons naturalized during the 18 months after December 1901, 89 per cent were Jewish.[52] By September 1903 Sprigg's cabinet was advocating an increased period of naturalization. The Governor was notified that while in practice it had been customary to insist upon at least one year's residence in the Colony before granting letters of naturalization, neither the Aliens Naturalization Act of 1883 nor that of 1889 prescribed a minimum period of residence for the purpose. They believed it would be in the general interests of the Colony to fix a minimum period of residence of two years before letters of naturalization were granted, and recommended that the Governor approve the term of residence being extended as from 1 October 1903.[53]

The recommendation was accepted and a notice to that effect appeared in the *Government Gazette* of 6 October 1903. The Governor had agreed because in terms of the Acts of 1883 and 1889 whereby the applicant for letters of naturalization had to be certified to be of good character, it was, as he put it

> 'not unreasonable to fix a minimum period of residence before any such officer can grant a certificate that the applicant is a person of good repute re. re. [sic] otherwise it might have the appearance of being an arbitrary Act contemplated to be employed only to an exceptional case at the decision of the Governor'.[54]

During the six months ending 31 December 1903 the number of people naturalized dropped 33 per cent below the previous six months although the proportion of Jews was still as high as about 70 per cent.[55] In May 1904 the Governor forwarded the *Report on the Working of the Immigration Act 1902* (Gregory Report) to the Secretary of State for Colonies, together with his comments on the Report. Presumably the annotations were what he considered to be serious issues raised by Dr Gregory. Besides the usual analysis of the proportion of Russian and Jewish aliens, the Governor quoted the description in the Report of these immigrants and concluded that from his statistics on naturalizations which he had previously despatched to the Secretary of State

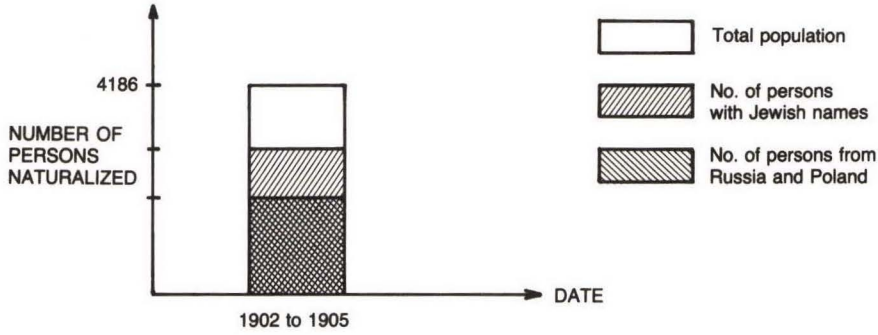
> 'it will be seen that during the three years ended 31st December, one-thousand, nine hundred and twenty-two Russians and Poles, nearly all bearing Jewish names, have been naturalised. Many have probably already come, many will certainly come on the register of voters.
>
> Since 28 September 1903 . . . the minimum period of residence requisite for naturalisation has been increased from one to two years. This has had the effect of placing a check, but only a temporary check, on naturalisation of Polish and Russian Jews. Dr Gregory makes certain recommendations, including the non-recognition of Yiddish as a European language, with a view to increasing the efficiency of the Act. . . .'[56]

A 'Bill to Further Amend the Aliens Naturalization Act 1883' to be read in May 1904[57] introduced a new set of precedents before Letters of Naturalization could be granted. According to the Bill an alien had to prove to the Minister that he had divested himself of his foreign nationality in accordance with the laws of the state concerned.[58] As this would have been an almost impossible task for the East European Jewish immigrant, it was obvious that the Amended Bill was an attempt to curtail the quantity of Russian and Polish naturalizations. The Bill was never read a second time. Its puzzling withdrawal corroborated the contention of the Board of Deputies that due to its intervention a Bill, 'which would have hampered if not entirely prevented the naturalization of Jews in the Colony', was withdrawn.[59]

Despite a decline,[60] the inordinate number of Russians and Poles becoming naturalized continued during 1904. It was estimated that approximately 67 per cent of the persons naturalized from 1902 to 1904 had Jewish names. Of these, 69 per cent were Russians or Poles.[61] On 28 July 1905 the government extended, at three days' notice, the naturalization period from two to five years. While the extension was largely a result of Britain's desire, expressed as early as 1902,[62] for a uniform naturalization period throughout South Africa,[63] it was also a means of curtailing the number of Russians and Poles becoming naturalized. *Ons Land*, in fact believed the extension to be a change in the right direction because of the number of 'Israelites', all with urban vocations, becoming naturalized. These people, the newspaper contended, had come to live but not to produce anything from the soil.[64]

Hundreds of Jews besieged the offices of the *Jewish Advocate*[65] with applications for naturalization. Alexander, who had always viewed naturalization as a form of security,[66] was available to sign the applications which were immediately despatched to the Colonial Secretary. Those applications that came in after hours were taken directly to the Secretary of the Department by Goldblatt. In this way several hundred Jews were naturalized on that day.[67] The rush was partly responsible for the 69 per cent increase of persons naturalized during 1905 compared to 1904.[68] The histogram below indicates the proportion of Jews, Russians and Poles naturalized between the beginning of 1902 and 1905.

Proportion of Jews, Russians and Poles naturalized, 1902–1905



Many of the Jews applying for naturalization had been resident in the Cape Colony before the Anglo-Boer War without taking out letters of naturalization. They were mostly males who had arrived determined to earn a living and eventually to accumulate sufficient capital, enabling their families to join them in South Africa. A comprehensive record of naturalizations carried out by the Board for the period beginning 3 November 1904 and ending 1 240 cases later in 1906 (the exact date is not given) makes interesting reading and reveals the following statistics.[69]

Age of applicant (yrs)	%	*Age of arrival at Cape Colony*	%
21–25	29	Under 21	23
26–30	26	21–25	28
31–35	14,6	26–30	20
36–40	14,6	31–35	13
41–45	6,3	36–40	7
46–50	4,6	41–50	7
51–55	2,3	Over 50	2
Over 55	2,3		

Period of years at the Cape Colony before application for letters (pre-war arrivals only)

5–10 years	86%
11–15 years	11,5%
Over 15 years	2,5%

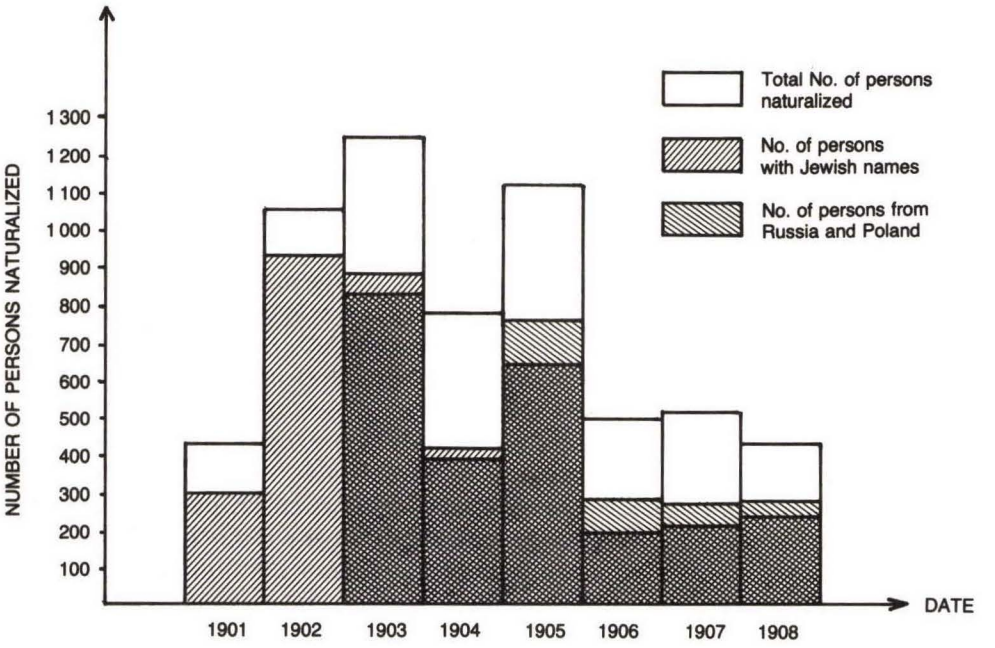
Hotz, who has analysed these statistics,[70] correctly points out that it was the younger generation who left their countries of origin to seek a home in South Africa. With 86 per cent of the immigrants applying for letters of naturalization 5 to 10 years after arrival, it appears that the importance of citizenship was appreciated only after the Anglo-Boer War. This was perhaps a result of Alexander's efforts to inculcate the value of citizenship and the imminence of anti-alien legislation. Prior to this, survival alone was paramount and it was the commercial sector which provided the greatest opportunity. Once again the forementioned naturalization records provide an invaluable sample of the kinds of occupation pursued by these immigrants.

Major occupations	*Approximate %*
Traders and merchants	33
Tailors and outfitters	11
Shoemakers	7
Builders	7
Clerks and shop assistants	5
Travellers	4
Feather buyers	3
Butchers	3
Cattle dealers and speculators	3
Catering and liquor	3
Watchmaker and jewellers	2
Cabinet makers	2
Bakers	2
Hawkers	2

The above occupations were, on the whole, geared towards urban life, a fact which exacerbated anti-alien feeling at a time when Cape Town was seriously affected by the depression and high unemployment. The *Cape Times*, in fact, noted the increasing scale of Russian and Polish naturalizations and indeed regretted that the majority were not of the class desired by the Colony.[71]

Naturalization figures decreased steadily during the next few years[72] as indicated in the histogram below.

Proportion of Jewish, Russian and Polish persons naturalized, 1901–1908



The increase evident during 1905 was a result of the rush of immigrants to be naturalized following the extended period of residence commencing from August of that year. By 1905, most East Europeans had become naturalized and with a declining immigration rate the reduction in the number of naturalizations is understandable.

Extending the period of naturalization was not a directly restrictive measure to counter East European immigration, but over a period of five years it was possible to judge the quality of the applicant for letters of naturalization and in this sense the time extension could have acted as a deterrent to immigration.

Some months after the great flood of applications for naturalization, Alexander communicated his irritation to the government that naturaliza-

tion cases sent to them by the Board were being investigated, contrary to the decision taken and confirmed in a letter to the Under Colonial Secretary, Noel Janisch.[73] He reiterated the previous arrangement and continued:

> 'This position I took to mean (& I understand it was re-affirmed at our recent interview) that where cases are referred to the Board by the Government they will be investigated by the latter before being so referred, and where cases are sent to the Government direct by the Board, no further investigation would be necessary. So far about 1 237 cases have passed through the hands of the Board. Of those 1 027 have been referred to the Board by the Government, and only 110 have been sent by the Board direct. Apparently further investigation is being made in some of the latter cases as a matter of course, and that is why I thought it best to write and make the position clear. . . .'[74]

It became evident some months later that the government was not entirely satisfied with the pace of the work carried out by the Board. Alexander affirmed that the Board had reported on all but fifty of the 1 200 cases submitted by the government. This was in addition to the more than 100 cases sent directly to the government. He explained that those delays that had occurred were unavoidable and were due to the arduous nature of the work being done by busy men, 'purely as a labour of love'. He asked the Assistant Under Colonial Secretary, W. B. Shawe, to assure the Colonial Secretary that he was doing his best to expedite the reports.[75]

A week later the Under Colonial Secretary complained that after the Board had recommended a certain J. Cohen for letters of naturalization it was found that the man was a pimp.[76] With no government records extant[77] it is difficult to estimate how seriously the government viewed such an oversight. However with prostitution rife in Cape Town[78] and a number of Jews known to be involved in the city's seamier side, it is probable that the government would not have looked kindly upon such an oversight by the Board. Perhaps this is a partial explanation for the government's decision to be solely responsible for all naturalization applications,[79] although it is more likely that the authorities felt they could cope with the decreasing number of alien Jewish applications. This would also facilitate a stringent vigilance over those applications, avoiding a recurrence of a Cohen-type situation. The Board was thanked for the assistance it had rendered and the government pointed out that it might still avail itself of the Board's services in the event of difficulties arising.[80]

Vigilance and the Jewish Lobby

Two of the most important functions of the Board, as envisaged by Alexander, were to be vigilance against anti-Jewish manifestations and lobbying, where necessary, on behalf of Jewish interests. This role was executed with vigour and adroitness.

It was the Half Holiday Bill of 1905 that first revealed the powerful Jewish lobby, skilfully orchestrated under the auspices of the Board and operated with the aid of Jewish members of parliament.

Despite waning religiosity, with the upper and middle classes taking to the country, cycling or playing games on Sunday, a half holiday, in addition to the sabbath, was considered desirable. Indeed all classes were making it plain that they regarded the quality of life as all-important. Since 1895 the problem as to which day the half holiday should be, remained unresolved. Cape Town shop owners disagreed among themselves and, in an effort to compromise, loopholes had been left in the Half Holiday Act of 1899 and the amended Act of 1904. These loopholes allowed the Asiatics, because of their large representation in trade to outvote the European trader, or employer of labour, as to which day (according to the provisions of the Act) should be the half holiday. According to the Attorney-General, Victor Sampson, the Bill, introduced in 1905, would limit the Asiatic influence by reducing the voting power of the employer of a small work force.[81] Invariably, the Asiatic trader employed only his wife and children, and so without directly discriminating against the Asiatic by name, his power regarding half holidays would be greatly diminished. It is evident in a memorandum written by M. O. Evans, Legal Advisor to the Attorney-General, that Asiatics were not the only source of concern:

> 'It appears that under the present law the adoption of the half holiday act [sic] requires the consent of two-thirds of the shopkeepers but may be cancelled by one half. Owing to the ever increasing number of Asiatic and undesirable small general dealers who employ no or very little assistance and are quite prepared individually to keep open all day and night—practically living in their shops—the European traders anticipate action on the part of those undesirables to cancel the holiday.
> The object of the principle act is to benefit the shop assistants. Clearly therefore those shopkeepers who run their shops—like the Asiatics and Peruvians[82]—without assistance or with only that of the family—should have no say in the matter.
> The question of a half holiday should not be left to these undesirables to decide who have no conceivable interest—such as employers naturally have—in the health and welfare of the shop assistants. The principle of the Bill is strongly supported in Grahamstown[83]—it is necessary to protect European assistants against the callous greed of Peruvians and Asiatics.'[84]

The 'Peruvian' aspect of the Bill remained clandestine.[85] What disturbed the Board was the effect the proposed Bill would have on Jewish butchers who closed their shops on Saturday for religious reasons but reopened them at the conclusion of the Jewish sabbath. Despite a gradual secularization of life, the sabbath still played an important part in the lives of the Jewish community. It was essential that butcheries be allowed to remain open on Saturday evenings to provide kosher[86] meat for the community. The problem was brought to Alexander's notice by L. Jacobs, the Board member representing the Uniondale Hebrew Congregation, in April 1905.[87] The matter was left to the President of the Board, who, when the proposed Bill came under discussion in the Cape Town Town Council[88] moved that 'the Government should be requested to exempt from the operations of the Act any

shops which were *bona fide* kept closed from Friday Sunset to Saturday Sunset'. Alexander also wished to include any shops which might be closed for 24 hours during the week days, in consequence of religious convictions held by the proprietor. The motion was carried, W. Thorne, the ex-Mayor, being the only councillor to vote against the amendment.[89] The *Chronicle* pointed out that there was a deeper meaning to the amendment. It was, the *Chronicle* commented, the first occasion on which the Jewish sabbath had been recognized by a corporate body.[90] Goldblatt's *Jewish Advocate* availed itself of the opportunity to discredit the Board's opponent, H. Liberman, by pointing to the ambiguous stand taken by the Jewish Mayor[91] 'who remained eloquently silent during the debate'.[92]

When the Half Holiday Bill came before the Legislative Assembly, Louis Abrahamson, a Jewish MLA for Cape Town, lobbied on behalf of the Board. Abrahamson, an Australian by birth, had come to the Cape as a young man where he was engaged in business for several years before going to the Witwatersrand to involve himself in the mining world. He returned to Somerset East and represented that district for the Afrikaner Bond from 1894 to 1898. During the war years he changed party affiliations and was elected in 1904 to represent the Progressive Party in the Legislative Assembly.[93]

At the request of Alexander,[94] Abrahamson endeavoured to secure an amendment on the lines adopted in the Town Council. Sensing that the House was against such a general exemption, Abrahamson, acting in consultation with Alexander, proposed the following clause which was adopted:

> 'Butchers who deal in kosher meat, and who satisfy the local authorities that they keep their shops bona fide closed from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday and who are duly registered by such local authorities shall be exempt from the provisions of this Act, as long as their shops are closed as aforesaid, and their employees are not employed on that day.'[95]

In the Legislative Council, C. A. Owen-Lewis, also at the request of Alexander,[96] moved to insert 'Bakers and' before 'Butchers' in Abrahamson's amendment. On the proposal of G. D. Smith, the whole clause was deleted by 11 to 8 votes. The Bill was then sent back to the Assembly without Abrahamson's clause.[97]

In the meantime, members of the Assembly had been approached by Alexander and Goldblatt.[98] When the debate was resumed Abrahamson moved that the clause be reinserted explaining that if his amendment were not agreed to it would inflict a hardship upon a large number of people, especially in Cape Town, because they would be unable to supply themselves with kosher meat prescribed by their religion. The MLA for Cape Town, Amos Bailey, while sympathizing with the principle advocated by Abrahamson, feared that it would jeopardize the entire Bill. His colleague, W. Thorne, now an MLA, also accepted the decision of the Legislative Council because, he asserted, by allowing these particular shops to open on Saturday evenings others would endeavour to follow suit. Colonel David

Harris pointed out that Thorne had forgotten that these stores or shops closed on Friday nights, and that they would not, if this amendment by the Legislative Council were agreed to, open again until Monday morning and a large number of people living in Cape Town would be unable to have meat which had been killed in the manner prescribed by their religion. Harris indicated that it was preferable for the whole Bill to go rather than to pass a measure in 'which they would knowingly do an injustice to a portion of the community'.[99] The matter was indeed a serious one. While many Jews were forced by the exigencies of survival to work on the sabbath, few ignored the dietary laws. They must have been pleased that Harris's pleas were sufficient to convince the House and that the proposals were adopted. In returning the Bill to the Legislative Council the Speaker of the House reported that the House thought it necessary that the clause be retained owing to the religious views of a large portion of the community.[100]

Several members of the Legislative Council who had previously supported Smith's motion to delete Abrahamson's clause had in the meantime been contacted by Alexander.[101] The Board's lobbying paid dividends as manifested in H. J. H. Claasens expressing that he knew more about the Bill than before and would accept the Legislative Assembly decision. When the vote was counted the Bill was adopted by 13 votes to 4.[102] To Jewish butchers and bakers the amendment meant the saving of a complete working day. The *Jewish Advocate* expressed great pleasure at Colonel Harris's speech:

> 'when a Jew wishes to do something for a fellow Jew he should be as brave as Colonel Harris who declared that he would rather have voted against the entire Bill if the above clauses had not been adopted, unlike Mr Chayim Ehulin[103] who seems to have hidden under his chair, and left the Editor of the journal to fight single-handedly against a pack of vociferous antisemites [sic].'[104]

Alexander, aware of the public relations potential of the exercise, requested Goldblatt to publish the details of the Board's work in connection with the Half Holiday Bill.

Details were supplied by S. Alexander in a letter to the editor of the Yiddish-language *Jewish Advocate*. Here was a chance for the Board to impress the East European Jews and convince them of the Board's importance. Goldblatt also asked to notify Jewish butchers throughout the Colony who wished to enjoy their privileges under clause 9 of the Act[105] that they should immediately register themselves at the office of the local Town Council or Village Management Board and give satisfactory proof that they kept their shops *bona fide* closed from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday and that they did not employ their employees during that time.[106]

The Board's success in amending the Bill reflected the community's growing importance. Certainly the East European Jews had made an impact on Cape Society, particularly Cape Town, where Yiddish was frequently heard on the streets. The large number of Polish and Russian Jews gave parts of the city, such as District 6, a distinctly cosmopolitan flavour as recalled by a writer in *The Cape*:

'. . . rows of shabby and unclean shops whose walls and cupboards are sprinkled with Yiddish characters, sloping streets crowded with coloured people, Indians, Russians, Poles, narrow lanes. . . . I recalled . . . the group of men that stand around the counter of the tailor and jewellers holding debates in Yiddish.'[107]

These Yiddish-speaking East Europeans and more importantly the Asiatics, posed a serious threat to the English businessmen, particularly during the lean post-war years. In 1905 a General Dealers Licence Bill was introduced, ostensibly as a means of dealing with trading abuses. One of the Bill's provisions stated that business records would have to be kept in a European language. Once again the question as to whether Yiddish was a European language came to the fore. Goldblatt compiled a special pamphlet[108] (with a foreword by Alexander) in which he convincingly advocated that this was the case.[109]

Prior to the introduction of the Bill, trading licences had been freely available on the payment of a £3 fee. The placing of stricter controls on the issuing of such licences was another means of countering anti-alien agitation.[110] In this case, however, the East European Jewish trader and hawker was a secondary target. The Asiatic, with his competitive business acumen and lower living standards, was the primary target of such legislation. Both these groups aroused the antagonism of the Cape British merchant class and sections of the farming and small town communities of the interior.

British merchant concern was sketched in a paper on 'Asiatic Trading in the Cape Colony' by M. J. Donavan, read under the auspices of the South African Liberal Association.[111] Donavan asserted that the existing laws in the Cape Colony had been made for a pastoral people rooted to the soil but these laws 'were being applied today to a cosmopolitan and floating population'. The Colony's commercial position, he said, had altered, but they stuck to the same laws. He pointed out that Russians, Hebrews, Greeks and Indians preponderated amongst the trading classes of the Colony. The Indians carried on their business under extraordinary conditions whilst the Hebrews were 'a bit too speculative'. Another speaker, Woollens, complained in strong terms of Russian Jews working on Sundays.[112]

On numerous occasions the Attorney-General was requested to deal with the 'anachronistic' commercial laws.[113] Dewdney Bros., a tailoring and millinery business in Victoria West, suggested that the Bill to be presented in the forthcoming parliamentary session, should allow the granting of general dealers' licences only to British subjects:

'During the late war a large percentage of the foreigners landing in this country were exempted form military duties owing to their being subjects of other countries yet they participate freely in the common privileges enjoyed by the loyal subjects of the British crown. . . . Another business that should be limited to British subjects only is the hawking about of Colonial Produce. Foreigners who are not naturalised and who probably have no intention of ever becoming so, make this a very profitable undertaking and in very little time become independent and later on a factor to be reckoned with.'[114]

The Attorney-General, Victor Sampson, agreed with the rationale and concern of H. Dewdney and appreciated

> 'that such a law would have to be carefully considered if the Aliens Act, the Undesirables Law and the General Dealers Law between them do not improve matters'.[115]

Herein lies the reasoning behind the Progressive Government's approach to counter the alien influx and appease the various interest groups agitating for restrictive legislation. While the government could not, for reasons mentioned above,[116] withdraw the acceptance of Yiddish as a European language for purposes of the Immigration Act of 1902, it could introduce other legislation designed to curtail or deter the influx of East European immigrants. So long as no overt anti-Jewish measures were adopted, the hands of the government were not in any way restricted. Sampson envisaged the combined effects of the Aliens, Undesirables and General Dealers laws to be sufficient to curtail the Russian and Polish influx into the country as well as their preponderance in the commercial field.

The Aliens Law (presumably the naturalization law) would act as a deterrent to immigration while the Immigration Act, despite its loopholes for Yiddish-speaking East Europeans, had some restrictive success, particularly with regard to Asiatics. The intention of the General Dealers' Licence Bill to be introduced in 1905 was quite clear. Section 4 of the Bill introduced the notion of the applicant's character and ability to keep intelligible records of his business transactions in a European language as criteria for acceptability.

Commenting on the provisions of the Bill, the *South African News* criticized the system under which licences were issued. It contended that the percentage of bankruptcies among small traders representing the least desirable European elements was large. In addition, there were very unsatisfactory features in the bankruptcy proceedings because no proper books were kept and other irregularities had been committed. Although the creditors could prosecute criminally, they seldom did, rather doing nothing and leaving the matter 'with the uncomfortable feeling that their money has found its way somehow to the remotest part of Europe'.[117]

The Board directly involved itself with the implications of the Bill. Following Goldblatt's pamphlet in support of Yiddish as a European language, Alexander met Abrahamson in what was the start of another exercise in exerting pressure in Jewish interests.[118] According to the *Jewish Chronicle* a deputation had visited the Attorney-General and were told that the Bill was aimed against the 'coolies' but the government would nevertheless not accept Yiddish as a European language for its purposes.[119]

Predictably, during the debate on the Bill no mention was made specifically of Polish and Russian Jews. Opposition speakers tended to take pleasure in unveiling the real reasons behind the Bill, pointing out shortcomings and objecting to the principles of the Bill itself. F. Ginzberg, a Jewish MLA for King William's Town, asserted that the Bill went against

the principles of free trade and warned that it would deprive many worthy people of their rights. He believed the existing sanitation laws were sufficiently comprehensive to deal with objectionable people. Sampson claimed that he had no intention of curtailing competition, although he was quite blunt in pointing out that the Asiatic was a source of unfair competition. His reason for the European language clause was that sometimes only the insolvent could read 'or pretend to read his books'. It was clear to Cronwright-Schreiner that certain interest groups could, for reasons of self-protection, hinder the 'small man' from obtaining a licence. Sauer warned against introducing 'a vicious principle, which really means that because a man is of a certain colour or a certain class he shall not have a licence'. Sampson's denial of this charge was unconvincing.[120] Because the Bill contained a principle of class legislation requiring careful consideration and because it was available only in English, presenting difficulties for Dutch members, it was agreed that the debate be postponed.[121]

Just prior to the reintroduction of the Bill in 1906 the *Cape Times* referred to general dealers springing up like mushrooms:

> 'Indian, Greek, Russian and Polish Jews, aliens from all parts of the globe, speaking a Pentecostal variety of tongues, flocked into the country and established themselves in little shops or stores throughout the colony, but especially in the large towns.'[122]

Reintroducing a slightly modified Bill, Sampson made it clear that it was intended to counter many undesirable storekeepers who had managed to evade the Immigration Act. Low-class men, he said, came to the Colony and indeed were encouraged, by the facility with which they could obtain licences to do so. A Bill making it difficult for them to get leave to deal would have been an additional safeguard to prevent such people entering. He believed the time had come when steps 'to protect our own people' against the alien had come. The liberal Cape laws, he feared, enabled the aliens to start businesses and to 'choke our people out'. Burton was cheered when he asked the Attorney-General why he did not simply admit to the real object of the Bill which was to monopolize trade in the hands of a 'few wealthy and influential people, and to squeeze out the small, the poor and the few'. He asked what Sampson meant by 'our people'. Thorne supported the Bill as a means to counter the Indian trader while Cronwright-Schreiner, changed his former stance and now spoke strongly against the objectionable class of traders that had overrun the hinterland. He argued that 'it was their duty to protect their fellow countrymen from the underhand assaults of the aliens' and he suggested that legislation be extended to include hawkers.[123]

To consider the prospect of including hawkers the Bill was referred to a Select Committee[124] which supported the recommendation.[125]

Having followed the foregoing debates, H. M. Cohen of East London, wrote to the *Chronicle* questioning what Jewish leaders were doing to safeguard Jewish interests. He was convinced the Bill 'was a ring in a great

anti-Semitic chain intended to harm Jews in the Colony'. Quoting and extrapolating from parliamentary reports Cohen pointed out that Sampson was concerned about the ease with which people coming into the country could take out a licence. Besides monopolizing trade in the hands of a few wealthy individuals, Cohen contended that the tactics to pass the Bill were the

> 'old beloved Jew-baiting song, and we leaders do not lift a finger to protect our own uprooted "kith and kin". I know pretty well that Zionists have got nothing to do with this sort of things [sic][126] which is not a direct step to Palestine, but where are our Boards of Deputies? Please say!'[127]

Despite Cohen's emotive extrapolations, he was correct in his perception of the rationale behind the Bill.[128] However, he underestimated the vigilance of the Board which had in fact prepared detailed amendments to be introduced by Abrahamson during the second reading of the Bill.[129] These amendments were essentially to safeguard Jewish interests against any discrimination in the licensing courts.

During the second reading Ginzberg led the lobby, pointing to the dangers of what he believed was 'repressive legislation'. The power of Town Councillors, themselves in many cases licence holders, was perceived by the MLA for King William's Town as potentially capable of crushing business opposition. Abrahamson, also envisaged problems in the issuing of licences and argued that the best and most impartial person to be given authority to grant licences was a magistrate.[130]

In the final General Dealers' and Hawkers' Licence Act the possibility of certain interest groups controlling the issue of licences existed. The Jewish lobby had been successful in abrogating the clause requiring books to be kept in a European language, as well as in introducing a few other minor amendments. Nevertheless, Sauer's forebodings during the closing stages of the debate remained a possibility

> 'Today it was the Asiatic, tomorrow it was going to be the Jew. He had heard it said already that the Jew with his great ability, was a keener competitor with the existing trader than the Asiatic.'[131]

Having managed to include Yiddish as a European language in the General Dealers' Licence Act, the Board still needed to translate its verbal acceptance, for purposes of the Immigration Act, into statutory recognition.[132] Indeed, concern about the influx of Yiddish-speaking East Europeans had not yet abated. In May of 1905 the *Cape Times* had commented as follows on the published mid-year statistics of naturalization:[133]

> 'Dr Gregory . . . is not of the opinion that the Act restricts to any great extent the entry of Russian and Jewish aliens . . . whether it is equitable to keep out the British Indian who possesses the means of subsistence because he cannot write a European language, an [sic] allow in Yiddish speaking aliens who can only satisfy the subsistence test by getting assistance from their compatriots . . . is another matter.'[134]

The Report of the Officer in charge of Immigration and Labour of 1906 reiterated the same theme as Dr Gregory's 1904 Report. The number of European British subjects, European foreign subjects and Asiatics for the years 1903, 1904, 1905 were included in the Report.[135]

	1903	1904	1905	Total
European British subjects (approximately)	45 923	35 146	36 474	117 543
European foreign subjects*	14 559	6 343	5 332	26 232
Germans and Russians	6 024	4 037	3 327	13 388
Asiatics	1 646	449	279	2 374

*Principally Jews.

The Officer in Charge of Immigration found the foregoing figures 'remarkable', particularly when 'taken in conjunction with Dr Gregory's first Report on the Act'.[136] In 1903 the proportion of European British passengers to European foreigners had been approximately 3,25 to 1, in 1904 it was 5,24 to 1 and in 1905 it was 6,75 to 1, which indicated that in addition to a gradually decreasing influx of aliens, there had been a decrease in the alien proportion of British subjects. The decrease, however, was not so marked in the case of Jewish immigrants. The Asiatic influx had been controlled by the education test but the acceptance of Yiddish had been of service mainly to the poorer class of Jew. The Officer in Charge believed that although the figures indicated a downward trend in the proportion of aliens to British subjects, 'the tide is still one of serious proportions and the desirability of still further checking it may merit attention'. The Report concluded that there was no real evidence to controvert the opinion expressed by Dr Gregory that

> 'of the new immigration into South Africa, one half is composed of foreign elements, and that in such the Jewish element is preponderant'.[137]

It is no surprise therefore that when the words 'European Character' were included in the Immigration Bill of 1906, the Dorshei Zion Association[138] suggested that the government be approached to follow the precedent set in Great Britain by exempting from the Aliens Act of 1905 people who had left their homes on account of religious and political persecution.[139] This would be an obvious means of aiding Jewish immigration to the Cape Colony.

Alexander appears to have heeded the advice of the Dorshei Zion Association. He asked for any papers concerning the British Aliens Act and regulations framed in this Act which were in possession of the London Jewish Board of Deputies. He pointed out how the British precedents would be of help in dealing with the Cape Immigration Bill which was coming before Parliament. The Board, Alexander wrote, wished to do everything in its power to safeguard Jewish interests. He also ordered *The Aliens Act and the Right of Asylum* by Sibley and Elias.[140]

When the London Board obliged, Alexander's reply was particularly interesting, not from the point of view of the Immigration Bill, but from its revelation of the continued tension between the Board and its antagonists:

> 'I gather from your letter, that Mr Jacobi[141] asked you to collect the debt due by his Congregation to your Board from the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony. Unless Mr Jacobi is merely perpetrating a harmless practical joke at the expense of your Board, I cannot regard his action as otherwise than impertinent, seeing that his Congregation has never been represented on my Board, & has never taken the slightest interest in its work and has never accorded it any sympathy. Moreover he has never discussed the matter of his Congregation's indebtedness to your Board with us at any time. . . .'

Alexander believed that the reason why the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation had not paid its debt[142] was because the London Board had recognized the Cape Board of Deputies.[143]

Despite not being recognized by the 'Mother Congregation' the Board continued its struggle to amend the Immigration Act of 1902. When the government introduced the Immigration Bill in 1906 the opportunity was seized officially to amend the Act to incorporate Yiddish as a European language. Addressing the Wynberg Zionist Association, Alexander explained how he, as President of the Board, was deputed in conjunction with Louis Abrahamson to wait upon Colonel Crewe to request the introduction of the desired amendment. A proviso was subsequently added to section 3, subsection (*a*) of the Bill of 1906—'provided that for the purpose of this subsection Yiddish shall be accepted as a European language'. Alexander also expressed hopes of introducing certain amendments to the Bill during the Committee stage. These concerned the age at which children should be allowed to land with their parents and provisions, based on the English Aliens Act of 1905, regarding the rights of asylum.[144]

During the second reading of the Bill, Abrahamson officially expressed the Jewish Board of Deputies' satisfaction with the Bill. He believed it was the unanimous wish of the whole country to exclude undesirables but that it was better to exclude them than to put disabilities on them once in the country. In a moving speech Colonel Harris declared that one could understand the Jewish race paying particular attention to the Bill because failure to pass that provision meant many immigrants would be sent back to suffer persecution, violence and even death in Russia. They could easily imagine, Harris continued, the feelings of those people on arriving at the Cape, having got out of Russia with the greatest possible difficulty, only to be turned back and left to the mercies of 'a barbarous and far from civilised people'. Harris proclaimed that he felt very strongly about that question 'because one of the strongest passions implanted in the human breast was sympathy with one's own race' and he felt personally grateful that the amendment to the Bill was accepted. He believed he was speaking on behalf of the entire Jewish community with which he was connected and he thanked the House for the tolerance and broad-mindedness it had displayed.

He could understand the sympathy of the members, many of whose ancestors had fled from France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, just as some of his people were fleeing from Russia now. The blending of these two races, he asserted, 'had produced a race second to none in any part of the world'. He believed that the amendment would have the most beneficial effect, and he would assure the House that the whole of the Jewish community would be deeply grateful for such a concession. Harris's speech received a great cheer from the House.[145]

Against the background of the Gregory Report and the anti-alien agitation during the post-war economic depression, the passing of the proviso was all the more creditable. But it was without the fear of a backlash that the Progressives piloted these amendments through the Legislative Assembly and Council. After all, legislation regarding naturalization and the issuing of general dealers' licences had by that stage been added to the statute book to discourage Russian, Polish and Asiatic immigration.

The *South African News* referred to Harris's speech as 'a manly speech for the race to which he belongs',[146] while Bender availed himself of the opportunity to gibe at the Board while thanking the Colonel in an open letter to the *Cape Times*:

> 'On behalf of the Jewish community I desire to assure you of their deep and abiding appreciation of the exceedingly graceful eloquent manner in which you expressed . . . their sentiments. . . . This resolution of the House adds but another to the many convincing proofs we have had of the breadth of sympathy which distinguishes the people of this Colony. . . .'[147]

Bender's claim to have written on behalf of the Jewish community was a frontal assault on the Board, while his reminder of the sympathy accorded to Jewry undermined the concept of vigilance against anti-semitic manifestations propounded by Alexander.

Alexander drafted two further amendments to be considered during the committee stage of the Immigration Bill based on the English Aliens Act:

> '1. Provision that in the case of an immigrant who proves that he is seeking admission to this country solely to avoid persecution or punishment on religious or political grounds, leaves [sic] to land shall not be refused on the grounds merely of want of visible means of subsistence or the probability of his becoming a public charge, and
> 2. the other providing for the establishment at the port of immigration boards consisting of persons having magisterial, business, or administrative experience, to which appeals should lie [sic] from the decisions of immigration officers.'[148]

The former amendment was accepted although the notion of appeal boards proved unacceptable to the Assembly.[149] Once again the Board could look with justifiable pride at its co-ordinated lobbying during the Immigration debate of 1906.

Another dimension of the Board's work was vigilance against anti-Jewish manifestations, a task carried out with alacrity, particularly during the first

two years of its existence. Only three months after its inauguration, the Board investigated a pay dispute on behalf of A. Kagan, a government railway employee.[150] The matter in itself was of little importance but the forwarding of the correspondence about the incident to Louis Abrahamson[151] was a harbinger of the way in which the Board would use this Jewish MLA to advocate its case in governmental forums.

The first anti-Jewish manifestation to which the Board reacted in earnest was an article in the *Cape Times* quoting the report of the District Surgeon of Wynberg, Dr C. Wright:

> 'Overcrowding is a serious menace to the health of the inhabitants especially among the Indians, Kafirs [sic] and worst of all considering they are Europeans, the Jews. These latter, however, are not so bad in this respect as formerly. They are now all of them well to do and rich, though they pretend not to be . . . The freedom and climate have done much to invigourate [sic] them and like Jasharus of old they have "waxed fat and kicked" certainly kicked off the trammels of serfdom. I also think they have kicked off the vermin and filth in which they formerly lived, and to which I alluded in my previous reports. They have waxed fat, rich and are good citizens, law abiding and laying up good store for themselves.'[152]

Dr Wright's comments must be seen in the context of the enormous fear of the importation of disease into the country. The Cape had been the first government to take action in this matter, declaring oriental or bubonic plague to be an infectious disease in terms of the Public Health Act of 1899.[153] Notwithstanding this, Dr Wright's remarks still touched the sensibilities of the Jewish community and the Board passed a motion that a letter of condemnation be sent to the government protesting against the medical officer's remarks. Such statements, the Board asserted, aroused prejudice against the Jews of Wynberg in the eyes of the non-Jewish community.[154]

Another issue that came to the Board's attention was a speech delivered in Middelburg by P. J. Hannon, the Government Expert on Agricultural Co-operation. Sharing the platform with Hannon was the Secretary for Agriculture, A. J. Fuller. In his speech Hannon had outlined the experience of agricultural co-operation abroad. Referring to the Irish experience, he said co-operation was a means to get people out of the hands of money-lenders and Jews. An association of farmers could provide its members with money in a more economical way and on more attractive lines than the Jews. He also alluded to 'Jew speculators' in the feather industry 'scheming to collar the farmers'. The audience, according to the newspaper report, acclaimed the last statement.[155]

Certainly Jews played an important role in eastern Cape commerce. Individual pioneers going back to the 1820 Settlers had made their mark in commercial adventures, particularly in the wool trade. Mosenthal Brothers of Port Elizabeth, dealing mainly in wool, skins and hides, were obvious examples.[156] By the 1870s Jews were widely scattered throughout the Cape, large numbers residing in Oudtshoorn. Many of the immigrants in 'little Jerusalem', as it was sometimes known, were involved in the ostrich feather

industry. Some dabbled in feather buying while running their stores, others travelled from farm to farm buying feathers and 'later even buying the feathers on the birds before they had been clipped'.[157] That they were perceived as speculators is not surprising and it is not surprising that Hannon's appeal made an impact on his rural audience.

Notice of the speech had been brought to the Board by the representative of the Middelburg Hebrew Congregation which was obviously disturbed by such sentiments emanating from a senior government official. The Board resolved that a letter be sent protesting against Hannon's attack on the Jews and requesting an explanation from the Secretary for Agriculture. In the event of no satisfactory reply being sent to the Board, the President, Alexander, would be authorized to call meetings of protest throughout the Colony. In any event, the correspondence would be sent to the press for publication.[158] Details of Hannon's anti-Jewish comments and an expression of concern about remarks 'calculated to bring the Jewish Community into public hatred, ridicule and contempt' together with the Board's resolution were sent to Fuller.[159]

The letter and Fuller's reply appeared in the *Middelburg Echo* of 1 December 1905. The Secretary for Agriculture denied it was the intention to bring the 'Jewish Community or any member of it into public hatred, ridicule or contempt'. He questioned the Board's assertions and interpretation, arguing that Hannon had not at any time used the expression 'Jew speculators', although he had referred to feather speculators. Fuller supported Hannon in wishing to eliminate the speculative element from the farming industry and referred to hundreds of complaints being made during his tour with Hannon, about transactions seriously affecting the farmers:

> 'I do not wish to enter into newspaper controversies but when the proper time comes your Board will probably be surprised to see in black and white evidence of certain transactions of which your Board can have no cognizance and with which I know you have no sympathy.'

He added that a deputation representing the Jewish community of Oudtshoorn had waited upon him and had complained of certain statements in one of Hannon's speeches. The latter immediately asked whether any of these statements were untrue and if they were, he was prepared to make amends for any injustice which might have been done to anybody. The deputation admitted to the truth of Hannon's statement but claimed the inference would reflect on the Jewish community. They agreed that Hannon had not mentioned the Jews by name, but they argued, it would most likely be inferred that the Jews were meant.[160]

Whilst the truth of Fuller's assertion can only be conjectured, the fact that the Oudtshoorn Jewish Community had taken unilateral action in forming a deputation must have been most disconcerting to the Board. It is not evident why they did not use the correct channels nor are there records of disciplinary action taken by the Board. Six months later, however, they requested that the Board controvert a statement made by H. J. Mulder,

MLA for Oudtshoorn, before a Select Committee on Indigent Whites, that in his district 'the small shopkeepers ultimately became the landowners'[161]—a statement which Oudtshoorn Jewry felt imputed dishonesty 'to a hard-working and often poorly remunerated class of people'. They also asked the Board to introduce amendments to the General Dealers' Licence Bill.[162] The Board replied that it had made every effort to have amendments introduced and that, with regard to Mulder's evidence they suggested that a public meeting be called in Oudtshoorn and that Mulder be invited to attend and explain his conduct.[163]

The success with the Immigration Bill marked the peak of the Board's efficiency. After this, its actions were erratic, and ultimately dependent on one man—Morris Alexander. The waning enthusiasm was most noticeable in its failure to involve itself in a press accusation that the Jews voted as Jews in the September Cape Town municipal elections.[164] Despite this causing a great outcry in general as well as in Jewish circles, no record of official or unofficial intervention by the Board is extant.

By 1906 the anti-alien agitation and occasional manifestations of hostility towards Jews had dissipated. Despite the prolonged economic depression,[165] with the decrease in the number of East European immigrants at the Cape Colony and the improved employment prospects,[166] the reasons which made the Russian and Polish Jew so conspicuous were removed.

The Jameson Ministry had shown an awareness of the alien problem, and its efforts to control the issue of general dealers' and hawkers' licences seemingly satisfied the Dutch and English merchant class. While the Jewish community remained dissatisfied with the system under which licences were issued, the new immigrants were, in the main, settling into their new life and contributing to Cape society in general.[167] In short, a renewed period of harmony between Jew and Gentile had begun. However, relations within the Jewish community were not as harmonious.

Dissension and Decline

In October 1906 David Goldblatt addressed a meeting of protest held under the auspices of the Somerset Strand Hebrew Congregation, specifically for the purpose of obtaining from Goldblatt, the recognized co-organizer of the Board, an explanation of the work being done by this body.[168] Besides there being what appeared to be adequate grounds for complaint, evidence suggests that a rift between Goldblatt and Alexander had occurred on personal grounds. Goldblatt had apparently been incensed that he had not been invited to a meeting convened by Alexander and relations between the two remained cool. Alexander wrote as follows to Goldblatt in February 1906:

> 'I don't understand what you mean by my cool reception of you. With regard to your daughter[169] I only recollect seeing her once. I was busy at the time, & I told her I would send you a cheque[170] . . . I should be glad if you would report in writing on the case of David Silberman. . . . It was reported that he left Wynberg but we are now informed that you have called at the Colonial Secretary's office,

informed the official there, that Silberman still resides at the above address. I think it is against the best interests of the Board for delegates to go direct to the Government in matters of this kind, & I trust that in future you will let us have any information of this kind, that may be in your person. Please report whether David Silberman is a fit and proper person to become naturalised.'[171]

A letter the following day suggests that Alexander's brother, Solomon, had also had an altercation with Goldblatt. Morris Alexander, however, seems to have purged his irritation noticeable in the previous correspondence:

'With regard to David Silberman, the papers will be held over as requested. With regard to my brother, I regret, that there was any unpleasantness between you yesterday, as I consider it was quite unnecessary. Perhaps it was the warm weather that had such bad effects. With best regards to you and your wife and your family. . . .'[172]

There is no indication of the state of relations between these two 'elders' of the Board in the ensuing months. Whether Goldblatt, at Somerset Strand, was motivated by a personal vendetta against Alexander or was simply concerned about the Board's viability, or perhaps both, is unclear, but he certainly took advantage of a royal welcome. Despite his unexpected appearance, arrangements were made for no less than five receptions, two dance parties and a special general meeting.[173] It was at the meeting that the Board's foundations were rocked.

The Chairman of the Somerset Strand Community and founder member of the Board, J. Dorfan, expressed dissatisfaction with the Board's work during the previous twelve months. He had reason to believe nothing had been done during that period. He had written to the Board in November 1905 requesting that circulars containing particulars of meetings held, and work done, be sent to all delegates. The Board had informed him that it had intended printing its annual report at the beginning of 1906. This report was supposed to cover all the work done up to and including 1905.

In a lengthy reply Goldblatt stated that the Board itself was a body capable of doing much good for the Jews and government. The body itself, he asserted, was indispensable and if something went wrong there should be no complaint against the institution but against the administration which allowed such negligence. According to his knowledge, he felt in no better position to judge the doings of the Board than the Chairman, J. Dorfan. He did, however, feel that in the time complained of there was sufficient reason for the Board to have met more often than it had. He attributed this negligence to Alexander for personally taking on too many duties. He remembered that when Alexander had no other offices and duties the Board had flourished. As long as the delegates allowed matters to remain as they were, Goldblatt warned, the Board would become a name without a body, having instead merely a chairman. Delegates had not received invitations to meetings and the annual report had not been published—a job supposedly undertaken by Alexander. Goldblatt felt Alexander

should, in justice to the Board, resign either from some of his offices[174] or from his chairmanship of the Board. He went on to mention some serious cases which he felt should have been dealt with by the Board but had not been, because the chairman never had time. What was wanted, Goldblatt proclaimed, was to stir up matters and the meeting should serve as a beginning.

The gathering unanimously carried a resolution expressing its sorrow at the negligence of the Board for the past 12 months and its failure to deal with many cases during this period. The time to put aside this negligence had arrived and for this purpose J. Dorfan, the Somerset Strand delegate, was instructed to communicate with the Secretary of the Board asking for an explanation of the Board's apathy.[175]

Alexander reacted immediately to the *Cape Argus* report. A special meeting, at which attendance was urgently requested, was called by Alexander for Sunday 28 October. Apart from official and general business, the meeting was to consider the conduct of Dorfan and Goldblatt as reported in the *Cape Argus* (delegates had been sent a cutting) and to take such action as the Board deemed necessary.[176]

Besides the Somerset Strand meeting casting aspersions on the President of the Board, the publicity in the general press aggravated the indiscretion. A series of letters between Goldblatt and Alexander indicated the deterioration of their relationship as well as the astute competition Alexander was facing from the irate journalist, Goldblatt.

Goldblatt informed Alexander that it was essential the meeting did not take place in the President's office and that while the incident was being discussed Alexander was not to preside.[177] Alexander retorted that the meeting would take place in his office as announced. It was the recognized office of the Board and the place where every meeting had been held since the Board's inception. Alexander pointed out that it was his duty to preside over the meeting in his capacity as President, unless the assembled delegates, before whom Goldblatt's letter would be laid, decided otherwise at the meeting.[178] Still not satisfied, Goldblatt considered that the case was exceptional and that his claim was therefore just. He would come to the meeting and allow proceedings to continue only on the conditions mentioned in his previous letter. He continued:

> 'You seem to know well the duties that suit you, but you don't care to know what is just and right. I say distinctly that the case you have taken up cannot entitle you to be the plaintiff and judge in the one person and I do not think any Board of any decency will agree with you on this point.'[179]

Sketchy records of the minutes of the special meeting are extant. Goldblatt did appear. M. Kossick thought it would be better for Alexander to leave the chair but J. B. Shacksnovis, an English Jew, disagreed and Alexander remained in the chair. Thereupon Goldblatt stated that he could defend his case in the press and would have nothing to do with the meeting. He then left.

Dorfan claimed it was decided, at the meeting, to furnish the press with particulars. He would not divulge who wrote or posted the report in question other than saying the person was not a member of the Board. The meeting resolved to express the confidence of the delegates in the President and their satisfaction with the work so far accomplished. As an expression of this a banquet was to be held in honour of Alexander's departure to visit the United States.[180] The meeting also resolved, in the interests of the Jewish community in general and the Board in particular, to call upon Goldblatt and Dorfan to resign from their seats on the Board. If their letters of resignation were not received before 2 November 1906, the President was empowered to declare their seats vacant and to call upon their constituencies to elect replacements.[181] Goldblatt was informed by letter of the decision.[182]

It is not clear whether the two miscreants formally resigned or not. No evidence of their resignation is extant. Goldblatt began to use his newspaper, the *Jewish Advocate*, to bring the Board into disrepute. This was done by focusing on subsequent anti-Jewish incidents not investigated by the Board. In a leading article, 'Anti-Semitism in Cape Town', the editor commented on a court case in which a Jewish grocer had been brought before a magistrate on the charge of selling bread and milk on a Sunday. After being fined the magistrate said the General Dealers' Act of 1906 was infringed particularly by Jews and Indians. Half the cases of that sort that came before him involved Jews. Goldblatt took the Board to task for allowing the evidence to pass without intervention.[183]

It seems that Alexander was not seriously undermined by the Somerset Strand rebels. The record tends to show that he managed the Board increasingly as a one-man show, using his considerable influence and status to the benefit, where he deemed it necessary, of Cape Jewry.

He had certainly not lost credibility with the Oudtshoorn Vigilance Committee who brought to his notice some anti-semitic utterances by Judge W. M. Hopley. Apparently this judge of the Supreme Court, when confronted with an application to interdict the government from deporting two Jews, Cohen and Levy, had said, 'people with such names were better off out of the country'.[184] What Alexander did about this sort of problem is not on record. It is probable that he approached, in a private capacity, the authorities, many of whom he probably knew personally.[185] Indeed, if the records of the Board are complete (and there is no reason to believe that they are not), Alexander's autocratic power characterizes Board affairs from this point onwards.

At the same time as the Board was being threatened from within by Goldblatt and Dorfan, sections of the Port Elizabeth Jewish community, concerned about a case of over-charging an immigrant for permits by a Jewish attorney, were meeting to form a 'Friendly Aid Society'. They wished to affiliate themselves to the Board as the Port Elizabeth branch. Their spokesman, H. J. Rogally, in desiring to join, made it clear that they had not organized themselves in opposition to the Port Elizabeth Hebrew

Congregation,[186] but at the same time not with the approval of this Congregation. They felt the latter did not take up the interests, nor did it have the sympathetic attitude necessary to effect the objects which their Society intended doing.[187]

In January 1907, the Simonstown Hebrew Congregation withdrew from the Board after their delegate, M. Chenik, had objected to the Simonstown Zionist Association also sending a delegate to the Board, despite Alexander's assurance that both organizations were welcome to send representatives.[188]

Growing concern about the General Dealers' Licence Act of 1906 was indicated in a letter to the South African Zionist Federation, a separately functioning Jewish organization but also attuned to anti-Jewish manifestations.

Alexander explained how he foresaw difficulties in the Act whereby

> 'if two thirds of the members of the local body voting and forming a majority of the whole number of members constituting such a body refuse to grant a new general dealers' or hawkers' licence, their decision is final and no further applications for such licences can be made for 6 months. No reason need be given.'

Alexander went on to explain how he had endeavoured to put the power of issuing licences in the hands of magistrates. He then discussed the case of a Divisional Councillor in Uitenhage who had made objectionable remarks about Jews. The only remedy, Alexander believed, was to try to secure Andrews' defeat at the next Divisional Council election:

> 'Divisional Councillors are elected by the ratepayers—including the Jewish ratepayers who should keep this in view at the next election. An anti-Semite is unfit to discharge public functions. . . .'

Alexander believed that the General Dealers' Licence Amendment Act of 1906 would have to be amended as it 'is causing gross injustice to deserving people throughout the country'.[189]

In the Cape Town Town Council Alexander moved a resolution that a deputation urge the government to introduce a Bill during the next session of Parliament amending the General Dealers' and other Licences Amendment Act of 1906 and that such an amendment should provide that the Resident Magistrate or Assistant Resident Magistrate should be substituted for the Municipal Council, Divisional Council or Village Management Board, and that the laws of trade should be fixed by Parliament itself. The motion was carried.[190]

Alexander's approach of taking a 'Jewish problem' directly, in his personal capacity as Town Councillor and later as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, to the authorities, characterized the Board's activities. Collective decision making, via Board meetings, was unofficially abandoned.

The banquet in honour of the President on the eve of his departure for New York was held on 27 March 1907.[191] Soon after this, the long-awaited Annual Report of the Board, drafted by Alexander, was presented at a meeting of the Board held on 2 April 1907. The Report outlined the fight to

have Yiddish accepted as a European language from the time of the deputation to the Attorney-General in May 1903 to the successful struggle to have Yiddish officially accepted in the amended Immigration Act of 1906. Mention was made of the provisions of the English Aliens Act regarding the right of asylum being included. The Board's role in amending the Half Holiday Bill was outlined and its successful withdrawal of the Naturalization Bill, which would have probably prevented Jews and particularly Russian Jews, becoming naturalized, was noted. The task of helping the government with naturalization was outlined pointing to the cordial relations between the Board and the government. The efforts of the Board had led to the first Jewish Justice of the Peace for the District of Oudtshoorn being appointed, as well as obtaining the registration of the Rev. E. Walt of Middelburg as a Marriage Officer for that district. The Board had also been instrumental in meeting attacks made upon the Jewish community.

Generally it had achieved its objectives which were to take action in all matters affecting the interest of the Jewish community. Expenditure was minimal. The Board had met on 18 occasions with very fair attendances. It had worked in co-operation with the London and Transvaal/Natal Jewish Boards of Deputies. Because the Transvaal and Orange River Colony Governments had refused to recognize prospective immigrants who signed their names in Yiddish, the Board had urged steps to be taken to have Yiddish recognized as a European language during the ensuing session of the Transvaal Parliament. Copies of correspondence with the London Board were sent to Johannesburg to help in this matter.[192]

The Final Years

While Alexander was abroad, the Oudtshoorn Jewish Vigilance Committee attempted to counter the danger of a resolution at the Central Association Farmers' Congress in Oudtshoorn on 13 March 1907. The resolution revealed intentions to control also the purchase of Ostrich Feathers Dealers' Licences as incorporated in the General Dealers' Licence Act. Licences were being indiscriminately issued according to the resolution.

Foreseeing the same problems as manifested in the General Dealers' Licence Act of 1906, the Secretary for the Oudtshoorn Jewish Vigilance Committee, E. Morris, wrote to the *Chronicle* outlining the movement to restrict ostrich feather licences. Morris was deeply concerned:

> 'The experiences of the Jewish community in this district, and, my committee understand, in fact, all over the Cape Colony, is [sic] that no Jewish person can, except with the greatest difficulty, secure a licence to trade. The reason of [sic] this is that the Divisional Councils are composed almost exclusively of farmers, who unfortunately, are out of sympathy with the foreigner to put it plainly, one fears that there are seeds of anti-Semitism, which are only too ready to take root.'

Morris went on to describe how Jews

> 'of indisputable character in straitened circumstances, resident in the country for a considerable number of years, and trading throughout the whole period, are

suddenly, on applying for these hawkers' licences, turned away with a refusal stern [sic], and without a rhyme or reason and told to apply themselves to something—goodness knows what!'

To prevent similar inroads being made into the feather trade a petition was being circularized. Jewish MLAs were also being informed and if necessary a deputation would meet the Attorney-General. Morris then went on to give reasons why the Farmers' Association resolution should not be enforced.

Many struggling dealers would become paupers, while the ostrich feather industry would degenerate without the competition. Small dealers did not engage in illicit transactions or encourage the theft of feathers. Divisional Councils, as revealed by their issuing of general dealers' and hawkers' licences, were out of 'touch, knowledge and sympathy' with the newcomers seeking to earn a livelihood. The Oudtshoorn Jewish Vigilance Committee desired to maintain the present system of issuing licences through the post office authorities.[193]

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Morris's appeal was the non-involvement of the Board. Whether this was because it had lost credibility or simply because Alexander was abroad is a moot point. If the latter reason applied however, it would certainly have been a sad reflection on the viability of the institution itself.

On his return to Cape Town Alexander was drawn into the licence issue. At a meeting of the Aberdeen Divisional Council, an application for a hawkers' licence by Attorney Van den Berg on behalf of Israel Segal, revealed a disconcerting anti-Jewish tone reported in the *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*.[194] The matter was brought to the Board's attention through the South African Zionist Federation, which had been informed by the Graaff-Reinet Hebrew Congregation.[195] Why this Congregation did not report to the Board directly is not apparent. During the licensing application, Van den Berg had explained that his client had, besides acting as a ritual slaughterer for the Jewish community, also acted as Minister to the Jewish congregation. Councillor Van Zyl ridiculed the applicant's versatility and opposed his being issued a licence. He believed that sort of applicant to be detrimental to the farming community. The Resident Magistrate and another Councillor agreed with Van Zyl's sentiments but felt a certificate could not be withheld in cases where the applicant brought satisfactory evidence of his good character. Like Van Zyl, they feared that the Jewish element would eventually become their superiors but according to the law had to consent to the issuing of a licence. An indignant Van Zyl retorted that the people who had vouched for the applicant's good character were nearly all Jews, 'and we know that Jews stick to each other like a leech'. Van Zyl's motion was turned down.[196] Apart from notifying the Graaff-Reinet Hebrew Congregation that the matter would be laid before the authorities,[197] the Board does not appear to have tackled the issue in a formal sense. Once again it seems that Alexander was dealing with a communal problem in his personal capacity.

Alexander still maintained formal contact with Bender when necessary, such as the investigation of legal cases,[198] but it is evident that the feud continued[199] after Bender had requested the Philanthropic Societies of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Kimberley formally to acknowledge the sympathetic consideration given in connection with Jewish immigration by the Colonial Secretary, N. F. de Waal, and his predecessor, Colonel Crewe.[200]

Alexander informed the President of the Kimberley Philanthropic Society that the Cape Town Philanthropic Society had unanimously rejected Bender's proposal:

> 'In my opinion the publication of such a letter will give rise to misconstruction, & misconception. I would strongly urge your society not to act upon Mr Bender's letter, in the interests of the community. In my capacity as President of the Jewish Board of Deputies, which secured the recognition of Yiddish & other safeguards for the Jewish immigrants, I feel I have a special right to ask for your co-operation. All we ask for is justice & no favours.'[201]

The continued divergence in the philosophical outlooks of Alexander and Bender are reiterated in this letter. Alexander, the barrister, assumed Jewish rights to be fundamental and fought for these through whatever channels were necessary. Bender failed to perceive these rights as being threatened. Trusting in and dependent on British benevolence and justice, he believed the authorities deserved praise when such goodwill was manifested.

In February 1908, Alexander asked Goldblatt to assist him as a voluntary worker in the Legislative Assembly election which Alexander was contesting.[202] The fact that Goldblatt was approached and had already had his name put on the general committee indicated that the former amicable relations between the two founders of the Board had been re-established.

Not that Goldblatt had abandoned his crusade against anti-Jewish manifestations through his newspaper. An anomaly in the naturalization law whereby a naturalized citizen of the Cape Colony could gain only a document and not a passport to travel outside the borders of the Colony meant, as pointed out by Goldblatt, that he was offered no protection. This contradicted the law stating that a naturalized person enjoyed all the political rights and privileges of a British subject.[203]

The matter was brought by Goldblatt to the notice of W. P. Schreiner, former Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, and at the time MLA for Queenstown. Schreiner informed Goldblatt that the matter had been previously debated by Colonial statesmen but he believed the chances for change were slim. By printing the exchange of letters in the *Cape Argus* and the *Cape Times*[204] the issue was brought before the general public. Goldblatt planned a concerted Jewish protest meeting that would pass resolutions requiring the matter to be raised at the Prime Ministers' Conference in London.[205] Schreiner raised the issue in the Legislative Assembly and was informed by the Colonial Secretary, N. F. de Waal, that alterations were being undertaken.[206]

Through his newspaper, Goldblatt was in fact revealing the Board's lack of involvement. Perhaps Alexander, now a member of the Legislative

Assembly for Cape Town, was too busy or simply believed he could watch over Jewish interests through his direct involvement in legislation. Other anti-Jewish incidents were challenged in the *Chronicle*[207] while there was no formal involvement on behalf of the Board. In fact there are no records of Board meetings during this period.

Alexander's *modus operandi* is evident in a report of *The Jewish Chronicle*. According to the report the Immigration Department of Cape Colony was intending to alter immigration rules. A more severe educational test was to be insisted upon and the £20 monetary qualification would be abolished. There were to be stricter enquiries into character, a poll tax on all alien immigrants and a Board appointed at each port for the purposes of investigation. An immigrant found after two years to be a public charge or otherwise undesirable would be deported.[208]

Alexander informed the Colonial Secretary, N. F. de Waal, of the report. It referred, Alexander wrote, to reports of the Legislative Council Select Committee but was misleading, incorrect and would do harm to Jews intending to immigrate to the Cape Colony. Alexander requested an authoritative statement which could be published in *The Jewish Chronicle* and in Cape Town.[209]

De Waal immediately notified Alexander that he did not intend taking action with regard to the proposals of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council. The administration of the laws was to remain until such time as the Union Parliament re-examined the matter.[210]

Besides Alexander, the *Chronicle* maintained a keen vigilance with regard to matters affecting Jewry. When the Rev. D. P. Faure, founder of the Unitarian Church in South Africa,[211] contended that the Constitution of the Draft Act for Union made Jews ineligible for membership of Parliament because they were not of European descent,[212] the *Chronicle*, its headquarters since 1904 in Johannesburg, requested General J. C. Smuts, the Transvaal Colonial Secretary, to give an authoritative pronouncement on the subject. The General disagreed with Faure's contention claiming that the word 'European' was used to distinguish white persons from natives and it was in this sense that the word was used in the Draft Constitution.[213] But the matter did not end with Smuts's explanation. Two months later the *Chronicle* was informed that a Jewish man, departing from Durban bound for a Cape port, had to complete a form classifying nationality into European, Hebrew or Asiatic.[214] The *Chronicle* warned of the implications:

> 'While from this it will be gathered that there is no attempt to place the Jew on the same level as the Asiatic, it will equally be seen that there is no desire to concede him equality with the European and what we desire to point out is that this is hardly in accord with the statement of our Colonial Secretary.'

Whilst the Jewish community took pleasure in the prospect of Union, it nevertheless believed that

> 'pleasure will be considerably detracted from if they find that owing to carelessness, inadvertence or the absence of their own representative they have been

penalised, by the inclusion of the different British states in this country into one concrete whole'.[215]

It was now the turn of N. F. de Waal, Colonial Secretary for the Cape Colony to pacify the *Chronicle's* anxieties. De Waal, believing the *Chronicle* to have over-reacted, stated unequivocally that the Jews were regarded as Europeans and that the nationality classification which had caused the panic was to be eliminated.[216]

There does not appear to have been any Jewish lobby to maintain vigilance against this sort of problem during the National Convention of 1909. Perhaps Alexander, in his capacity as President of the moribund Board of Deputies, maintained a watchful eye, but, if so, there is no evidence extant. When issues pertinent to Jews emerged, they worked through the channels of broad-based general organizations. It is therefore no surprise that Jews were prominent in the Naturalization Reform Association,[217] a civil body which concerned itself with the naturalization provisions of the Draft Act. According to the Draft Act a person naturalized in the Cape Colony was a subject of any part of the Union, but as regards Britain or any other dominion he was an alien. The Association was successful in its efforts to introduce uniform naturalization throughout the Empire.[218]

The Closer Union Movement and its implications were considered by the Board. The President of the Transvaal Board of Deputies, S. Raphaely, expressed the need, in the light of probable union, for a federation or coalition of the two Boards. He foresaw no problems as his Board had already communicated with its Cape Town counterpart, stressing the necessity for one body to speak with one voice upon Jewish matters. This did not mean the surrender of the independence of either Board.[219] Alexander informed Raphaely in April of 1910 that the *status quo* should be maintained until after 31 May, after which they could go ahead with the scheme to unite the two Boards.[220]

On 30 September Raphaely reported 'that attempts to merge the Jewish Boards of Deputies into one Board have, in the past, been futile'.[221] Alexander, who appears to have been running the Board entirely on his own, was perhaps too involved in eloquently attacking the Minister of the Interior's Immigration Restriction Bill introduced in March 1911.[222] In doing this Alexander was working not only on behalf of Cape Jewry, but for South African Jewry as a whole. Alexander did conduct hasty negotiations with the Transvaal Board in January 1912 regarding a revised Immigration Bill being put before the House of Assembly.[223] Once again, Alexander led a successful attack on the Bill in the House, forcing the government to introduce an amended Bill in the following session.[224]

It was only in August 1912 that the inevitable amalgamation came about through a conference in Bloemfontein representing some seventy societies and institutions in South Africa and Rhodesia. The Cape Town Hebrew Congregation had been invited but the invitation was refused, the committee still maintaining that a Board of Deputies was unnecessary in a society in 'which the Jews, like the members of all denominations, enjoy the fullest

measure of civil and religious liberty'.[225] Despite its objections, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies was launched and was to play an important role as the representative body of South African Jewry as new problems confronted the community.

When one reflects on the eight years of the Board's existence, the indisputable role such an organization could play, and indeed did play, is patent. The various incidents and challenges revealed how important it was to have a single voice to speak on behalf of the Jewish community. The Board gave Cape Jewry a formal respectability typified in its co-operation with the Government concerning naturalization, perhaps the most praiseworthy task executed by the Board.

What emerges from the eight years is the dearth of Jewish leadership within the Board, beyond Alexander and Goldblatt. Following the deterioration in relations between these two the viability of the Board as an institution waned. Perhaps Goldblatt's Somerset Strand speech was really an attempt to capture the leadership of what he saw as a floundering organization. Not that the outspoken newspaper editor lacked justification in his criticism of the President. Alexander's eminence in the Jewish community, through his communal and civic contributions, however, prevented the petulant Goldblatt from usurping the barrister's position. Without a power base to work from within the Board, Goldblatt was destined to play, at best, a secondary role in Jewish communal affairs.

Alexander seemed incapable of delegating his power and as his public stature grew so he seems to have ignored the fundamental notion of collective decision-making. Whether this was a result of lack of respect for his mediocre colleagues or simply an arrogance inflated by civil and public acclaim is difficult to determine. What is evident is his intense involvement in public, legal, Zionist and Jewish affairs, as his letters to his future wife, Ruth Schecter, explain.

> 'I am still as full of work as ever. In fact I believe that I am one of the busiest men alive. I attended two meetings last night—one in connection with the election[226] & one in connection with Zionism.'[227]

Strangely, in his lengthy letters to Miss Schecter, despite mentioning Council and legal news in some depth, he seldom referred to Board affairs.[228] A favourite refrain of Alexander's was, 'I regret that owing to pressure of work. . .'. Certainly this was not idle boasting. Most striking was his sense of personal destiny as expressed in 1905 in a letter to his future mother-in-law. Writing on his future life with her daughter he showed remarkable perspicacity:

> 'It is our destiny to make history—& especially Jewish history—in the subcontinent. We shall go from strength to strength & you will be part of that history.'[229]

In commenting on the Board of Deputies many years later, Morris Kentridge, the eminent Jewish parliamentarian, pointed out where he differed from Alexander:

> 'I took up the attitude, however, that once a Jew was in Parliament, it was desirable that he should not be an executive member of the Board. I felt that such association with the Board by a member of Parliament might lead to misunderstanding. On this point I differed from my late colleague, Morris Alexander, who though he agreed that it was not right that the views of an individual Jewish member of Parliament should be attributed to the whole community, was himself for many years chairman of the Board at the Cape.'[230]

It does seem that during the years Alexander was a member of the Legislative Assembly and then of the Union Parliament he acted on the assumption that he could express the views of the Jewish community of the Cape Colony. Despite the dominance of one man, the Board had provided a forum for discussion and a structure for decision making on matters pertaining both to the internal life of the community and its relationship with the wider society. Its work was perpetuated in the national body.

Notes and References

Introduction

[1] M. A. Meyer (ed.) *Ideas of Jewish History.*
[2] A. Leon, *The Jewish Question. A Marxist Interpretation*, p. 74.
[3] L. Herrman, *History of the Jews in South Africa*, ch. 1, *passim.*
[4] D. Rudavsky, *Modern Jewish Religious Movements. A History of Emancipation and Adjustment*, ch. 4, *passim.*
[5] CCP 4/11/4 *Statistical Register for 1891*; 10/19 *Statistical Register for 1904.*
[6] G. Saron and L. Hotz (eds) *The Jew in South Africa. A History.*

Chapter One

[1] I. Abrahams, *The Birth of a Community*, p. 14.
[2] L. Herrman, *History of the Jews in South Africa*, chs. 4–7, *passim.*
[3] M. C. van Zyl, 'Transition, 1785–1806' in C. F. J. Muller (ed.) *Five Hundred Years. A History of South Africa*, p. 93.
[4] Herrman, *History of the Jews*, pp. 114–15. Norden had been among the few Jews in the 1820 settler contingent. After attaining some material success as a merchant in the Eastern Cape and prominence in 1837 when he became a member of the Grahamstown Municipal Board, he moved to Cape Town in 1840 where he became a Commissioner for the Cape Town Municipality. Herrman, *History of the Jews*, pp. 109–11; 'Benjamin Norden' by R. Musiker, DSAB I, p. 594.
[5] L. Herrman, *Cape Town Hebrew Congregation. A centenary history* 1841–1941, p. 8.
[6] See Herrman, *History of the Jews*, chs. 7 and 8, *passim.*
[7] Herrman, *Centenary History*, p. 19.
[8] In this battle Sir Harry Smith defeated the Boer forces under Andries Pretorius who attempted to undo the annexation of the Orange River Colony in February 1848.
[9] *Cape Town Mail*, 21 October 1848.
[10] When the British Government decided to use the Cape as a penal settlement an anti-convict movement was begun to protest against the proposed disembarkation of the *Neptune*'s 282 undesirable immigrants.
[11] 'Benjamin Norden' by R. Musiker, DSAB I, p. 594.
[12] Buyskes Collection, BC 157, No 3, Record of Names, U.C.T.
[13] *South African Commercial Advertiser*, 13 October 1849.
[14] Herrman, *History of the Jews*, ch. 10, *passim.*
[15] *Cape of Good Hope, Government Gazette*, 11 October 1849.
[16] Abrahams, *Birth of a Community*, p. 5.
[17] For instance the Rev. Mr Rabinowitz, successor to Pulver, inquired of Governor Wodehouse in 1868 whether it was necessary for Jewish convicts to work on the Jewish sabbath and festivals. GH 23/30, Wodehouse to Governor, 14 February 1868.
[18] It is likely that Cape Town Jewry read, at least occasionally, a copy of *The Jewish Chronicle*, (London), which commenced publication in 1841.
[19] M. de Saxe (ed.) *The South African Jewish Year Book, 1929*, pp. 50–1.
[20] Abrahams, *Birth of a Community*, p. 31. This society was established for the relief of distressed Jews, and is known today as the Jewish Board of Guardians.
[21] Op. cit. chs. 2–4, *passim.*
[22] According to M. Johnson's *Atlas of Physical Geography*, published in 1855, there were 170 Jews in Cape Town. Quoted in Abrahams, *Birth of a Community*, p. 137.
[23] G. W. Eybers, *Select Constitutional Documents Illustrating South African History, 1795 to 1910*, pp. 45ff. It is interesting to note that in Britain at that time a Member of Parliament had to take a Christian oath—a practice not implemented in the Cape Constitution. This meant that in Britain, although there was no statute forbidding a Jew to sit in Parliament, it was rendered impossible by reason of the Christian oath being against Jewish practice. The Jews had to fight persistently for 12 years before the elected and five times re-elected Jewish Member of Parliament, Baron Lionel de Rothschild, first elected in 1847, would take his place in the House of Commons in 1858. For details see C. Roth, *History of the Jews in England*, p. 254.
[24] G. W. Eybers, p. 63.
[25] For an examination of these conditions see E. Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale: The Formative Years of the Jewish Workers Movement in Tsarist Russia, passim.*
[26] Between 1881 and 1914 close on 3 000 000 Jews migrated from Eastern Europe to overseas countries. C. Gershater, 'From Luthuania to South Africa' in Saron and Hotz (eds.) *The Jews in South Africa. A History*, p. 60.
[27] See for example J. A. Froude 'Visit to the Diamond Mines' in *Short Studies of Great Subjects*, vol. IV, *passim*; J. W. Matthews, *Incwadi Yami*, ch. 8, *passim.*
[28] E. Rosenthal, 'On the Diamond Fields' in Saron and Hotz, p. 118.
[29] *Encyclopaedia Judiaca*, II, pp. 648–654.
[30] G. Saron, 'Jewish Immigration, 1880–1913' in Saron and Hotz, p. 93. The date of its establishment is not given. Rev. A. F. Ornstien was an English Jew, born in London, in 1836. Before his arrival in South Africa he had been in the Antipodes. Abrahams, *Birth of a Community*, p. 47.

[31] See M. P. Grosman 'A Study in the Trends and Tendencies of Hebrew and Yiddish Writings in South Africa since Their Beginning in the Early Nineties of the Last Century to 1930', 3 volumes, unp. D.Phil. thesis, University of Witwatersrand 1973, pp. 95ff.

[32] Op. cit. p. 106.

[33] Op. cit. pp. 113ff.

[34] For example, in 1878 the coinciding of *Nachtmaal* and the Jewish New Year meant that L. Rosenblatt, a Calvinia businessman, would lose the traditional *Nachtmaal* business. After the Rev. Joel Rabinowitz had written a letter to Professor N. J. Hofmeyr of the Stellenbosch Seminary explaining the position, the Kerkraad postponed *Nachtmaal* to accommodate Rosenblatt's interests. I. Abrahams, 'Western Province Jewry 1870–1902' in Saron and Hotz, p. 30.

[35] Op. cit. p. 106.

[36] E. Rosenthal, 'On the Diamond Fields' in Saron and Hotz, p. 118.

[37] *Uitenhage Times*, 13 September 1883.

[38] Sir Lewis Michell was appointed a minister without portfolio in Jameson's ministry.

[39] Standard Bank Archives, Diamond Volume, Michell to General Manager, 17 April 1882, (Henry Files). Quoted in R. V. Turrel 'Capital, Class and Monopoly; the Kimberley Diamond Fields 1871–1889', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1981, p. 315.

[40] R. V. Turrel, p. 314.

[41] *Cape Argus*, 3 October 1883.

[42] A. Addleson, 'In the Eastern Province', in Saron and Hotz, p. 30.

[43] 'J. Mosenthal' by M. Arkin, *DSAB* III, p. 638.

[44] *Port Elizabeth Telegraph*, 22 January 1875.

[45] *Di Afrikaanse Patriot*, 31 January 1879 and *De Zuid-Afrikaan Verenigd met die Volksvriend*, 13 August 1881. Quoted in M. A. S. Grundlingh, 'The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope, with special reference to Party Politics, 1872–1910' in *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 1969, II, p. 182.

[46] *Cape Times*, Parliamentary Report, 4 May 1882, 9 May 1882, 13 June 1882.

[47] G. Saron, 'Boers, Uitlanders, Jews' in Saron and Hotz, p. 183.

[48] See for example O. Osborne, *In the Land of the Boers*, pp. 82ff.

[49] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 2 October 1891.

[50] Quoted in Grosman, p. 111.

[51] *Zud Afrikanische Zeitung*, 3 June 1891.

[52] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 31 July 1891.

[53] L. Mirvish, 'Cape Town in 1910' in *Jewish Affairs*, May 1960.

[54] G39—93, *Labour Commission 1893*. Full transcripts of relevant debates are included in Appendix I.

[55] See for example *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 20 July 1893, p. 271; 22 August 1893, p. 320; 4 September 1893, pp. 372–395.

[56] See below, p. 94.

[57] MLA for Namaqualand, Treasurer in Cecil John Rhodes's first cabinet and Prime Minister of the Cape Colony before Union.

[58] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 4 July 1893, p. 95.

[59] Op. cit. 1 June 1889, p. 93.

[60] Son of J. C. Molteno, first Prime Minister of the Cape Colony.

[61] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 8 August 1893, p. 267.

[62] Op. cit. 24 July 1894, p. 341.

[63] For details regarding Asiatics in the Cape Colony see E. Bradlow, 'The Cape Community During the Period of Responsible Government' in B. Pachai (ed.) *South Africa's Indians. The Evolution of a Minority*.

[64] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 24 July 1894, p. 341. Britain did find the prohibition of destitute persons acceptable.

[65] Op. cit. 27 July 1894, p. 206.

[66] Op. cit. 4 August 1894, p. 430.

[67] Op. cit. 14 May 1895, p. 63.

[68] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 16 August 1895.

[69] Op. cit. 25 October 1895.

[70] C. Hirshfield, 'The British Left and the Jewish Conspiracy. A Case Study of Modern Anti-semitism' in *Jewish Social Studies*, Spring, 1981, p. 96.

[71] See for instance, *Cape Times*, Christmas Number, 1896. A Jewish journalist in Johannesburg, Meir Sivan, correspondent for the East European journal, *Hameliz*, implicated Jewish gold magnates in the raid, Grosman, p. 111.

[72] *Legislative Council Debates*, 28 May 1896, pp. 197ff.

[73] Abrahams, *Birth of a Community*, p. 86.

[74] *Cape Times*, 6 June 1896.

[75] See below, ch. 2, *passim*.

[76] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 6 July 1896, p. 223.

[77] Op. cit. 22 July 1896, pp. 642ff.

[78] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 31 July 1896.

[79] *The Owl* was started by an Englishman, Charles Penstone, in Johannesburg shortly before the Jameson Raid. The Raid, having more or less shattered the prospects of the weekly in Johannesburg, forced Penstone to restart the weekly in Cape Town. *Cape Times*, 6 August 1896. In 1902 *The Owl* had a circulation of 16 000. *The Owl*, 13 June 1902.

[80] See below, ch. 3, *passim*.
[81] Ibid.
[82] T. R. H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond. A History of a South African Political Party, 1880–1911*, p. 181.
[83] See below, ch. 3, *passim*.
[84] *The Owl*, 23 January 1897.
[85] *Cape Times*, 17 March 1897. The resolution was re-endorsed at the Bond Congress in 1899. *Cape Times*, 13 March 1897.
[86] *Diamond Field Advertiser*, 20 March 1899.
[87] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 8 April 1897, pp. 32ff.
[88] Op. cit. 1 December 1898, pp. 366–67.
[89] Perhaps J. H. Orchard came closest to overt anti-alien oratory when speaking on behalf of T. J. Anderson, standing as a Progressive candidate for a Cape Town seat in the Legislative Assembly. Cape Town, Orchard said, had far too long been represented by Swedes and Russians and so forth, but in Anderson they had a true son of the soil. *Cape Times*, 17 July 1898. Perhaps this played some role in inspiring the working classes of Cape Town, those in direct contact with the aliens, to return Anderson to the Assembly. However this is mere speculation.
[90] J. L. McCracken, *The Cape Parliament* 1854–1910, pp. 116–19.
[91] See below, p. 50.
[92] This Association had originally been established during the period of the Rev. Mr Ornstien's ministerial leadership at the Cape Colony.
[93] No records are extant and the writer found no further references to this Association.
[94] *Cape Times*, 1 April 1898.
[95] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 22 December 1900.
[96] Abrahams, *Birth of a Community*, p. 112.
[97] Grosman, pp. 16ff and 181–82.
[98] Abrahams, *Birth of a Community*, p. 109.
[99] Bender himself was a 'Balfour Zionist', a term denoting those who turned to Palestine only after the British Foreign Secretary, A. J. Balfour, in 1917 declared support for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Abrahams, *Birth of a Community*, p. 103.
[100] Hamlets.
[101] See M. Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing. The Story of South African Zionism*, and G. Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism. The South African Experience 1910–1967*, for an account of the origins and growth of Zionism in South Africa.
[102] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 22 December 1899.
[103] E. van Heyningen 'Cape Town and the Plague of 1901' in C. Saunders, H. Phillips & E. van Heyningen (eds) *Studies in the History of Cape Town*, vol. 4, p. 96.
[104] Derogatory term referring to East European Jews. The writer has been unable to ascertain the origin of this term. It has been suggested by Dr. E. Bradlow that it was possibly an acronym for Polish and East Russian Union. This accords with an explanation given by Max Sonnenberg, one time MLA in his autobiography *The Way I Saw It*, p. 52. According to E. Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, p. 620, Peruvian was a Transvaal colloquialism referring to Polish and Russian Jews.
[105] Viscountess Milner, *My Picture Gallery* 1886–1901, p. 138. Quoted in E. van Heyningen 'Refugees and relief in Cape Town, 1899–1902' in C. Saunders and H. Phillips (eds) *Studies in the History of Cape Town*, vol. 3, p. 81.
[106] Ibid.
[107] B. Porter, *Critics of Empire*, pp. 200–207.
[108] J. Galbraith 'The Pamphlet Campaign on the Boer War' in *The Journal of Modern History*, June 1952, p. 119.
[109] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 11 May 1900 and *The Owl*, 27 November 1903.
[110] Quoted in *The Jewish Chronicle*, 12 January 1900. Letter from Manfred Nathan.
[111] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 27 June 1900.
[112] *Cape Times*, Special, 17 December 1900.
[113] Quoted in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 23 January 1903.
[114] *Jewish Telegraph*, 20 July 1902. Quoted in Grosman, p. 189ff.
[115] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 24 May 1901.
[116] Op. cit. 16 August 1901.
[117] M. Shain 'The Jewish Population and Politics in the Cape Colony 1898–1910' unpublished M.A. dissertation, Unisa, 1978.
[118] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 11 July 1902.
[119] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 24 May 1901.
[120] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 8 January 1903.

Chapter Two

[1] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 7 February 1902.
[2] E. Rosenthal, *Southern African Dictionary of National Biography*, p. 141.
[3] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 21 February 1902.
[4] See for instance, 8 May 1903; 22 May 1903; 5 December 1904.

[5] Kishinev, a town in Bessarabia (Roumania) had become the symbol of Tsarist and Cossack oppression.
[6] See for instance, 5 June 1903; 19 June 1903; 3 July 1903; 29 January 1904.
[7] See below, ch. 3, *passim*.
[8] Started as the *South African Licensed Victuallers' Review* in 1902 in response to the Liquor Licensing Act of 1891.
[9] *Cape Times*, 20 March 1902.
[10] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 1 August 1902.
[11] Edouard Drumont, a notorious French anti-semite, was the author of *La France Juive*.
[12] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 1 August 1902.
[13] Op. cit. 22 October 1902.
[14] Op. cit. 8 November 1902.
[15] *Cape Times*, 2 February 1903.
[16] E. Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, ch. 1, *passim*; also 'Morris Alexander' by I. Abrahams, in *DSAB* I, p. 10.
[17] See above, p. 11.
[18] *The Owl*, 13 February 1903; 20 February 1903; 27 February 1903; 6 March 1903; 13 March 1903; 20 March 1903.
[19] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 21 February 1903.
[20] See below, ch. 3, *passim*.
[21] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 19 September 1902.
[22] Op. cit. 1 August 1902. The Imperial Government had reminded the Government of Roumania that it was not fulfilling its obligations to its Jewish population as provided by the Treaty of Berlin.
[23] Zeev Rogov writing in *Hameliz*, 22 February 1903. Quoted in Grosman, p. 643.
[24] The Board of Deputies for British Jews was established in 1760 to watch and take action with reference to matters affecting the welfare of Jews as a community.
[25] *Cape Times*, 29 December 1903.
[26] A shortage of black labour after the war forced the mine owners to consider the importation of cheap Chinese labour.
[27] See below, p. 45.
[28] *The Owl*, 21 January 1903.
[29] Ibid.
[30] See below, p. 30.
[31] Son of the Rev. Joel Rabinowitz, minister of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation 1859–1882.
[32] Quoted in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 23 January 1903.
[33] This was a reference to the East European fish merchants, see above, p. 18.
[34] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 23 January 1903.
[35] *Peninsula Herald*, 7 February 1903. Quoted in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 20 February 1903.
[36] For reactions to Asiatics in the Cape Colony see E. Bradlow 'The Cape Community during the Period of Responsible Government' in B. Pachai (ed.), *South Africa's Indians. The Evolution of a Minority*.
[37] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 27 July 1899, p. 87.
[38] *Cape Times*, 13 May 1902.
[39] Nephew of the first president of the Orange Free State and MLA for Paarl.
[40] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 30 September 1902, p. 579.
[41] Op. cit. p. 581.
[42] Op. cit. 11 November 1902, p. 656.
[43] Op. cit. 12 November 1902, p. 666–7.
[44] *Legislative Council Debates*, 14 November 1902, pp. 264–6.
[45] *Government Gazette* No. 8514, 1903.
[46] Saron, when commenting on the reduction of East European Jews after the Act came into force, states: 'whether the falling-off in numbers of Jewish immigrants was one of the intended effects of the new Cape law, or whether it was due to the depression can only be surmised'. G. Saron, 'Jewish Immigration 1880–1913' in Saron and Hotz, p. 95. Indeed, Saron suggests that the effects on East European Jews were 'probably not foreseen'. Ibid. p. 92. The writer disagrees with Saron's interpretation and shall examine this viewpoint. See below, pp. 25–7.
[47] PMO 104, Agent-General to Prime Minister, 5 December 1901.
[48] PMO 82, Governor to Prime Minister, 5 December 1901.
[49] Op. cit. Prime Minister to Governor, 13 December 1901.
[50] PMO 83, Secretary of State to Governor, 30 January 1902 (Copy).
[51] The question of loyalty, even after hostilities had ceased, was a recurrent theme in the anti-alien and anti-Jewish agitation. See below, ch. 3, *passim*.
[52] PMO 104, Prime Minister to Governor, 11 March 1902.
[53] PMO 85, Secretary of State to High Commissioner, 19 June 1902 (Copy).
[54] Op. cit. High Commissioner to Secretary of State, 26 June 1902 (Copy).
[55] See M. Streak, *Lord Milner's Immigration Policy for the Transvaal 1897–1905*, *passim*.
[56] See above, p. 13 and G. Saron, 'The Long Road to Unity' in Saron and Hotz, p. 238.
[57] Streak, p. 16.
[58] Op. cit. p. 33.
[59] Op. cit. p. 42.

[60] PMO 85, Secretary of State to High Commissioner, 27 June 1902 (Copy).
[61] PMO 86, A. Wodehouse (British Consulate, Riga) to Lansdowne (Foreign Office), 5 June 1902 (Copy).
[62] PMO 86, Secretary of State for Colonies to Foreign Office, 12 July 1902 (Copy).
[63] The report compiled by the Assistant Dock Commandant, A. Lingham, described the impecunious state of the Russian passengers arriving on the ss *Goth* and suggested that unless steps were taken to limit the issue of permits from Libau the object of the permit system was defeated.
[64] PMO 85, General Officer Commanding Cape Town to High Commissioner, 4 July 1902.
[65] PMO 86, War Office, London, to Under Secretary of State, 26 July 1902 (Copy).
[66] PMO 83, Secretary of State to High Commissioner, 23 July 1902 (Copy).
[67] See J. A. Garrard, *The British and Immigration 1880–1910*, ch. 3 *passim* and C. Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society 1876–1939*, chs. 1–5, *passim*.
[68] PMO 85, High Commissioner to Governor, 15 August 1902.
[69] PMO 85, Prime Minister to Governor, 15 August 1902.
[70] See above, ch. 1, *passim*.
[71] Ibid.
[72] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 20 August 1902, p. 1.
[73] CO 2414, Folio 2001, Dr A. J. Gregory to Colonial Secretary, 27 October 1902.
[74] Op. cit. Colonial Secretary to Dr A. J. Gregory, 28 October 1902.
[75] Surely Dr Gregory was thinking of East Europeans.
[76] CO 2414, Folio 2001, Dr Gregory to Colonial Secretary, 4 November 1902.
[77] *Cape of Good Hope Government Bills*, Bill No. 57, 1902.
[78] The Governor informed the Secretary of State that the Bill was introduced late owing to an oversight in the Colonial Secretary's Office. GH 35/118, Governor to Secretary of State, 93/7 undated. It is likely that the draft bill was being closely analysed in an attempt to conceal its anti-Asiatic provisions which would prove an embarrassment to the Imperial power. GH 35/118, 83/7 undated.
[79] G. Saron, 'Jewish Immigration 1880–1913' in Saron and Hotz, p. 91.
[80] Op. cit. p. 95.
[81] See below, pp. 27ff.
[82] The Colonial Secretary.
[83] G. Saron, 'Jewish Immigration 1880–1913' in Saron and Hotz, p. 92.
[84] AB 57—1902. Bill to place certain Restrictions on Immigration and to provide for the Removal from the Colony of Prohibited Immigrants.
[85] Asiatic was defined in the Bill as any person wherever born and wherever last domiciled other than a British subject.
[86] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 12 November 1902, p. 666.
[87] G. Saron, 'Jewish Immigration 1880–1913' in Saron and Hotz, p. 92.
[88] Act 47 of 1902. To place certain Restrictions on Immigration and to provide for the Removal from the Colony of Prohibited Immigrants.
[89] See above, chs. 1 and 2, *passim*.
[90] GH 35/118, Prime Minister to Governor, 19 December 1902.
[91] Op. cit. Secretary of State to Governor, 5 February 1903.
[92] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 24 April 1903.
[93] Union Castle; Shaw Saville and Albion Line; Geo. Thompson, Blue Anchor Lines, White Star Line and Messrs Ismay Imrie and Company.
[94] GH 35/118, Secretary of State to Governor, 6 February and 9 February 1903.
[95] Op. cit. Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office (for Viceroy) to Governor, 9 February 1903.
[96] GH 35/118, Prime Minister to Viceroy, 11 February 1903.
[97] Op. cit. Consul General to Governor, 17 February 1903.
[98] Op. cit. Prime Minister to Secretary of State, 6 March 1903 and Medical Officer of Health to Under Colonial Secretary, 13 March 1903.
[99] Morris Alexander in his capacity as Hon. Secretary of the Cape Town Philanthropic Society denied this accusation. *The Jewish Chronicle*, 3 April 1904.
[100] Telegram quoted in *The Jewish Chronicle*, 13 February 1903.
[101] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 13 February 1903.
[102] Ibid.
[103] A social club formed in 1897—not to be confused with the Anglo-Jewish Association which appears to have been defunct at the time of the crisis.
[104] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 13 February 1903.
[105] Ibid. This line of argument was taken up in 1905 by David Goldblatt, a Yiddish and English-speaking journalist, who published a pamphlet justifying Yiddish as a European language. See below, p. 90 and Appendix II.
[106] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 20 February 1903.
[107] Op. cit. 27 March 1903.
[108] 'T. E. Fuller' by F. R. Metrowich, *DSAB* I, p. 304.
[109] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 27 March 1903.
[110] Op. cit. 6 February 1903.
[111] Op. cit. 20 February 1903.
[112] Docked at Cape Town 8 February 1903. *Cape Times*, 11 February 1903.

[113] Not clear when she docked in Cape Town but the *Galecka* was reported to be in Table Bay by 10 February 1903. *Cape Times*, 11 February 1903.
[114] Docked at Cape Town 10 February 1903. *Cape Times*, 11 February 1903.
[115] *Cape Times*, 11 February 1903.
[116] Interview with the Rev. Mr Bender, *Cape Times*, 11 February 1903.
[117] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 10 April 1903.
[118] Ibid.
[119] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 15 May 1903.
[120] This would explain the assurance of the writer that Bender's explanation of events was erroneous and left a false impression.
[121] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 15 May 1903.
[122] Ibid.
[123] G. Saron, 'The Long Road to Unity' in Saron and Hotz, p. 234.

Chapter Three

[1] See G. Saron, 'Boers, Uitlanders, Jews' in Saron and Hotz, pp. 191–2.
[2] Hoggenheimer actually started as 'Hoggenheimer of Park Lane' in the musical comedy, *The Girl from Kay's*, first produced in London in November 1902. For an account of the transplantation of this character into South African political life see M. Shain, 'Hoggenheimer—the making of a myth' in *Jewish Affairs*, September 1981.
[3] *The Owl*, 3 April 1903.
[4] See cartoon no. 1, *The Owl*, 26 September 1902; no. 2, *The Owl*, 22 August 1902.
[5] See cartoon no. 3, *The Owl*, 1 December 1905; no. 4, *The Owl*, 31 January 1902: no. 5, *The Owl*, 20 December 1901.
[6] *The Owl*, 5 June 1903.
[7] *Cape Times*, 5 January 1904.
[8] Op. cit. 28 January 1904.
[9] Op. cit. 3 February 1904.
[10] *South African News*, 27 April 1904.
[11] *Cape Times*, 18 March 1904.
[12] It is interesting to note that at the time of the Carnegie Commission on Poor Whites in the 1930s there were suggestions that Jewish speculators were partly responsible for the origins of the problem in the nineteenth century. *The Poor White Problem in South Africa, Report of the Carnegie Commission.* Part I. J. W. F. Grosskopf, *Economic Report. Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus.*
[13] *Cape Times*, 5 February 1904. See cartoon no. 6, *The Owl*, 13 February 1903; no. 7, 12 December 1902; no. 8, 6 May 1904.
[14] See for example, 'Stories of Strange People', No. 5. 'Sam Saulinski', *The Owl*, 6 November 1897 and 'Old Diamond Field Days. The Pioneer Talks', *The Owl*, 8 June 1900.
[15] See cartoon no. 9, *The Owl*, 1 November 1901.
[16] *The Owl*, 13 March 1903.
[17] *Cape Times*, 7 April 1904.
[18] *The Owl*, 31 January 1902.
[19] See cartoon no. 10, *The Owl*, 20 March 1903.
[20] See cartoon no. 11, *The Owl*, 14 November 1902; no. 12, *The Owl*, 18 March 1904.
[21] *The Owl*, 12 June 1903.
[22] See Appendix IV.
[23] It was later confirmed that the minister was not Jewish.
[24] *Cape Times*, 30 March 1898.
[25] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 17 November 1899.
[26] *Cape Times*, 5 January 1904.
[27] Op. cit. 5 February 1904.
[28] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 23 January 1903.
[29] Op. cit. 6 June 1902.
[30] Op. cit. 1 May 1903. The advertisement is quoted in this article.
[31] *The Owl*, 14 August 1903.
[32] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 7 August 1903.
[33] *South African News*, 9 February 1904.
[34] Op. cit. 24 March 1904.
[35] *Cape Times*, 7 December 1905.
[36] Op. cit. 16 July 1906.
[37] *Legislative Council Debates*, 23 July 1906, pp. 226–7.
[38] The Territorial Association was a child of the Zionist movement aiming at an autonomous settlement for Jews but not restricting the territory to the Jewish ancestral home in Palestine or Israel.
[39] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 20 July 1906.
[40] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 28 April 1899.
[41] Ibid.
[42] *Cape Times*, 11 November 1903. At the Synod it was pointed out that the *Kerkraad* had carried on a mission among Jews but without success. On one occasion after another organization, the South

African Mission for the Jews, had reported no conversions, *The Owl* commented on the Mission's policy of focusing the proselytizing activities around free English lessons for the new arrivals. 'He (the Jew) appreciates free intruction in English, and is prepared to take similar blessings on the same liberal terms even though he has to swallow a simultaneous dose of Christian doctrine'. *The Owl*, 27 March 1903.

[43] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 13 November 1903.

[44] *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 13 November 1903.

[45] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 20 November 1903.

[46] The incident occurred during the campaigning for the Legislative Council.

[47] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 13 November 1903.

[48] Op. cit. 20 November 1903.

[49] Op. cit. 24 July 1903. In April 1904 *The South African Jewish Chronicle* complained that the Catholic Convent was not helpful in allowing Jewish children to attend Passover services and *seders* (ritual meals commemorating the redemption and exodus of the Jews from bondage in Egypt). The convent also forced them to wear the school badge, which had a cross, on all occasions including synagogue attendances. *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 4 August 1905.

[50] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 4 August 1905.

[51] In this country an anti-alien organization, the British Brothers' League, made it a cardinal principle that the word Jew should never be mentioned. J. A. Garrard, *The English and Immigration 1880–1911*, p. 6.

[52] The departure of British soldiers at the end of the Anglo-Boer War caused a dramatic decline in the economic fortunes of the Cape Colony. With the extended market for local produce removed and the economic expansion of the Transvaal delayed by a shortage of labour and political uncertainty, a severe depression, which led to unemployment in the large centres, set in. L. M. Thompson, *The Unification of South Africa 1902–1910*, pp. 52ff.

[53] Parliamentary and official concern at the alien influx will be examined in ch. 4.

[54] *Cape Times*, 11 November 1902.

[55] Op. cit. 10 November 1902.

[56] *Cape Argus*, 23 February 1904.

[57] *The Owl*, 6 November 1903.

[58] The Afrikaner Bond became the South African Party in 1902.

[59] *South African Review*, 30 January 1903.

[60] As previously mentioned, the denial of being anti-semitic was a common characteristic of the anti-alien agitation.

[61] *South African Review*, 6 February 1903.

[62] Op. cit. 13 February 1903.

[63] *South African News*, 15 October 1903.

[64] Op. cit. 23 October 1903.

[65] Ananias was a member of the early Christian Church who conspired with his wife Sapphira to deceive and defraud the brethren. (Acts v, 1ff). M. F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p. 48.

[66] *Uitenhage Times*, 11 October 1903. The metaphor implied that Juta was of Semitic or Jewish extraction.

[67] Juta claimed that if he were he would be proud to be Jewish. As it happened he was of Jewish descent. Isaac Purcell, an independent labour candidate, was also accused of being Jewish. In denying the accusation he said Jews were as good as anyone else. *Cape Times*, 24 June 1904.

[68] *South African Review*, 13 November 1903.

[69] *South African News*, 29 December 1903.

[70] Op. cit. 12 January 1904.

[71] *Cape Times*, 29 December 1903.

[72] *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 7 January 1904.

[73] *Cape Times*, 5 January 1904.

[74] Op. cit. 6 January 1904.

[75] Op. cit. 11 January 1904.

[76] Op. cit. 16 January 1904 and 18 January 1904.

[77] See Grundlingh, pp. 293–7.

[78] See for example, *Cape Times*, 28 January 1904; 3 February 1904; 4 February 1904; 5 February 1904; 13 February 1904.

[79] *South African News*, 3 December 1903.

[80] Woodstock was densely populated with Russian and Polish Jews.

[81] *Cape Times*, 4 February 1904.

[82] *The South African Jewish Chronicle* accused the general press of at times trying to influence the Jewish electorate. See M. Shain, *Jews and Politics*, pp. 192ff.

[83] *Cape Times*, 9 February 1904.

[84] Op. cit. 10 February 1904 and 19 February 1904; *South African News*, 18 January 1904.

[85] *South African Review*, 5 February 1904.

[86] See Grundlingh, pp. 293–7.

[87] 1904 Census for Cape Colony. CCP 4/11/4, Statistical Register for 1904.

[88] *South African Review*, 4 March 1904.

[89] Op. cit. 25 March 1904.

[90] *The Owl*, 8 April 1904.

Chapter Four

[1] See above, pp. 31–2.
[2] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 1 March 1907.
[3] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 12 April 1907.
[4] In January 1903 Goldblatt and Garlick had visited the Attorney-General to discuss the appointment of additional JPs to meet the demands of the Jewish community. AG 1034, Goldblatt to Garlick, 8 January 1903. The fact that they had worked together in this instance does lend credibility to Solomon's interpretation.
[5] Grosman, p. 326.
[6] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 15 May 1903.
[7] *Cape Times*, 20 May 1903.
[8] *Cape Times* and *South African News*, 21 May 1903.
[9] *Cape Times*, 23 May 1903.
[10] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 26 June 1903.
[11] Ibid.
[12] *South African News*, 20 May 1903.
[13] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 22 May 1903.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] See below, note 19.
[17] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 26 June 1903.
[18] This is apparent from later correspondence between the Port Elizabeth Hebrew Congregation and the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony. See below pp. 79–80.
[19] These were: Bnei Zion Association, Stellenbosch; Cape Town Philanthropic Society; Oudtshoorn Hebrew Congregation; East London Hebrew Congregation; Ponevies Congregation; De Aar Hebrew Congregation; New Hebrew Congregation; Beth Hamedrash Congregation; Mafeking Hebrew Congregation; Kimberley Zionist Association; Griqualand West Hebrew Congregation; Ahavath Zion Association; Grand Order of Israel; Wynberg Hebrew Congregation; Malmesbury Hebrew Congregation; Uniondale Hebrew Congregation; Somerset Strand Jewish Congregation; Beaufort West Hebrew Congregation; Dorshei Zion Association; Jewish Sick Relief Society; Tamchay Zion Association; Malmesbury Zionist Association. Reported in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 29 May 1903.
[20] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 29 May 1903.
[21] Op. cit. 5 June 1903.
[22] Ibid.
[23] G. Saron, 'The Long Road to Unity' in Saron and Hotz, p. 234.
[24] S. G. Cohen, 'A History of the Jews of Durban 1825–1918', pp. 324–5, unpublished M.A. Dissertation, University of Natal, 1977. There were similar problems to those faced by Cape Jewry that led Durban Jewish leaders to believe a representative Jewish body would gain a more favourable response from the Natal government.
[25] G. Saron, 'The Long Road to Unity' in Saron and Hotz, p. 234.
[26] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 7 August 1903.
[27] Ibid.
[28] *The Owl*, 6 November 1903.
[29] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 3 July 1903.
[30] Op. cit. 31 July 1903.
[31] Op. cit. 7 August 1903.
[32] Op. cit. 1 August 1903.
[33] Op. cit. 4 September 1903.
[34] Op. cit. 11 September 1903.
[35] *The South African Jewish Chronicle* exposed untoward power manipulation by a small coterie within the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation. This clique 'had influenced communal politics to the detriment of the community'. *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 9 October 1903.
[36] 'European persons who are agricultural or domestic servants, skilled artisans, mechanics, workmen or miners, and are able to produce a certificate signed by the Agent-General of the Colony in England or elsewhere to grant certificates for the purposes of the Act, certifying that the person named therein has been engaged to serve, immediately on arrival in the Colony, an employer therein of repute at an adequate remuneration, and for a reasonable period of time'. The Immigration Act 1902. Act 47, 1902.
[37] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 24 July 1903.
[38] Op. cit. 8 January 1904.
[39] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 26 February 1904.
[40] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 8 January 1903.
[41] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 5 February 1904.
[42] A derogatory term used by anti-semites for Johannesburg.
[43] Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, published in 1899, reputably provided the Nazis with their racial philosophy, while De Gobineau's *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, published about 1855, was a notorious contribution towards racist doctrine.

[44] The writer was referring to J. R. Herbert, the British artist who was commissioned to paint the frescoes of the new Houses of Parliament in 1846. One of the most notable of these frescoes was 'Descent of Moses from Sinai'. *Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*, vol. 3, p. 34.

[45] Jewish mining magnates were accused of importing Chinese to alleviate the labour shortage for the goldmines in Johannesburg. See above, p. 47.

[46] *The Owl*, 12 February 1904.

[47] Grosman, p. 445.

[48] *Cape Times*, 18 March 1904. The letter, from 'A Farmer Pure and Simple' was dealt with in ch. 3.

[49] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 25 March 1904.

[50] Such letters were a regular feature particularly during the first few months of 1904.

[51] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 1 April 1904.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Op. cit. 25 March 1904.

[54] *The Owl*, 8 April 1904.

[55] Op. cit. 22 April 1904.

[56] It is notable that Gregory made no mention of the Act's provisions *accidentally* affecting East European immigrants. See above, pp. 25–7.

[57] GH 35/118, Dr A. J. Gregory to Under Colonial Secretary, 13 March 1903.

[58] Op. cit. Under Colonial Secretary to Robinson, 13 March 1903.

[59] *Cape Times*, 29 May 1903.

[60] *Legislative Council Debates*, 27 August 1903, p. 318.

[61] Op. cit. 31 August 1903, p. 325.

[62] Op. cit. 15 March 1904, p. 79.

[63] Op. cit. 17 March 1904, p. 92.

[64] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 6 May 1904.

[65] *Legislative Council Debates*, 29 March 1904, pp. 65–6.

[66] Grundlingh, p. 298.

[67] During the Anglo-Boer War thousands of Cape Colonists had taken up arms against the Imperial Government when their districts were invaded. As a form of punishment they were disfranchised for five years. Grundlingh, pp. 268–74.

[68] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 28 March 1904, pp. 165ff.

[69] *Legislative Council Debates*, 11 April 1904, pp. 87–8.

[70] Cape of Good Hope, Legislative Council Resolution No. XLI—1904.

[71] The writer was unable to identify the nature of this organization. It was probably a short-lived respone to the prevailing economic conditions.

[72] CO 2414, Folio 2001. J. E. Erasmus to Colonial Secretary, 30 May 1904.

[73] Op. cit. Under Colonial Secretary to J. E. Erasmus, 6 June 1904.

[74] *Report of the Working of the Immigration Act 1902*. G63—04. vol. IV.

[75] This is surely further evidence that the Act was intended to exclude the impecunious East European immigrant and not solely the Asiatic. See above, pp. 25–7.

[76] See Appendix III.

[77] See above, p. 67.

[78] Louis Abrahamson was quizzed about his attitudes towards the Immigration Act. He was in favour of maintaining Yiddish as a European language. *Cape Times*, 22 June 1904.

[79] *Cape Times*, 1 June 1904.

[80] Op. cit. 30 April 1904.

[81] Op. cit.

[82] A week later *The South African Jewish Chronicle* retracted this statement accepting the Report as the work of Dr Gregory alone.

[83] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 6 May 1904.

[84] Harris came from England to the Diamond Fields in 1871. In his search for wealth his early fortunes were mixed. After seeing active service in the Gaika–Galeka campaign in 1874 and having been mentioned in despatches, he was promoted to a captaincy for services in the field. Shortly after this he helped to put down a Griqua rebellion with a voluntary force. Business success led him to a Directorship of De Beers Consolidated in 1890. By 1894 he was Lieutenant Colonel Commanding the Victoria Rifles, a role in which he helped quell another tribal uprising in 1896. A year later he succeeded B. I. Barnato as one of the Kimberley representatives in the Legislative Assembly. During the Kimberley Siege Harris took control of the Town Guard. For his services he was mentioned in despatches. *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 7 March 1902 and D. Harris, *Pioneer, Soldier and Politician*.

[85] The Bill referred to was a new Naturalization Bill which would have made it virtually impossible for Russian Jews to become naturalized. See below, p. 76.

[86] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 13 May 1904.

[87] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 8 July 1904.

[88] Quoted in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 27 May 1904.

[89] G. Saron, 'Jewish Immigration 1880–1913' in Saron and Hotz, p. 97.

[90] *Cape Times*, 3 June 1904.

[91] In March 1904, owing to indisposition, Bender had been unable to attend a conference with the Colonial Secretary and others. The extant documentary records do not state for what purposes the meeting was convened. In his absence, Bender was informed that those who attended the meeting were

to discuss the matter among themselves and thenceforth prepare a memorandum for the Colonial Secretary. Alexander was to convene the meeting. It was presumably at the August meeting referred to above that the prepared memorandum was to be discussed. Probably Bender did not paticipate in drafting this memorandum. CO 2414, Folio 2001, Under Colonial Secretary to Bender, 5 March 1904.

[92] Events related by Alexander during an interview. *The Jewish Chronicle*, 17 May 1905.

[93] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 4 September 1904.

[94] Of course, the word 'represented' is a misnomer as the Board of Deputies hardly represented the entire Colony. See below, pp. 75–7.

[95] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 17 May 1905.

[96] Interview with Morris Alexander, *The Jewish Chronicle*, 17 May 1905.

[97] Numerous Zionist societies were formed at this time. See Gitlin, *Vision Amazing*, chs. 1–4, *passim*.

[98] See E. Rosenthal, 'On the Diamond Fields', in Saron and Hotz, ch. 6, *passim*, for Jewish involvement on the diamond fields.

[99] Alexander was the Chairman, David Goldblatt the Vice-Chairman, L. Jacobi the Treasurer and L. Alexander and D. Goldblatt the Joint Honorary Secretaries. Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1902–1903, 13 July 1902.

[100] See above, pp. 31–2.

Chapter Five

[1] The records of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony are included in the Morris Alexander Papers which are housed in the archives of the Jagger Library, University of Cape Town. These contain a number of files and letter books covering the period 1899 to 1912, the year in which the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony amalgamated with the Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal. The obvious care, enthusiasm and detail apparent in the Letter Book 1904–1907 and the waning records in the Letter Books covering the period 1907–1912 (these deal more with Alexander's personal, legal and Zionistic affairs) in its own way reflects the history of this institution.

[2] Abrahams, *Birth of a Community*, p. 152. Based on the 1891 Census for Cape Colony. CCP 4/11/4, *Statistical Register for 1891*.

[3] L. Herrman, *History of the Jews in South Africa*, p. 263.

[4] PMO 179, Board to Colonial Secretary—forwarded to Prime Minister, 12 September 1904.

[5] PMO 179, Under Colonial Secretary to Board, 21 September 1904.

[6] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 10 September 1904.

[7] Op. cit. 30 September 1904.

[8] See above, p. 70.

[9] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 19 September 1904.

[10] This, according to the letter, had been sent to Alexander on 28 September 1903, presumably to aid the latter in his preparation for the establishment of the Board.

[11] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Board to London Board of Deputies, Letter Book 1904–1907, 28 September 1904.

[12] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Board to Johannesburg Board of Deputies, Letter Book 1904–1907, 20 October 1904.

[13] Op. cit. 27 November 1905.

[14] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 3 August 1906.

[15] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 12 October 1904.

[16] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 28 October 1904.

[17] Op. cit. 11 December 1904.

[18] Op. cit. 10 November 1904.

[19] Presumably synonymous with the Parade Dealers' Association claimed to be represented by D. Goldblatt. See above, p. 71.

[20] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 6 January 1905.

[21] Op. cit. 15 April 1905.

[22] Op. cit. 24 December 1904.

[23] 'Any person resident in this Colony, who has previously obtained a certificate of naturalisation as a British subject as aforesaid may obtain letters of naturalisation under the provisions of this Act if he shall submit such certificate and make an application to the Colonial Secretary, stating in the said application (1) That he is the person named in such certificate (2) That the certificate has been obtained without any fraud or intentionally false statement and (3) That the signature and seal (if any) thereto are to the best of his knowledge and belief genuine'. Aliens Naturalization Act 1883, Act No. 2, 1883.

[24] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 19 February 1905.

[25] Op. cit. undated letter, *circa* February 1905.

[26] L. Mirvish, 'Cape Town Jewry in 1910' in *Jewish Affairs*, May 1960.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Afternoon prayer.

[29] Evening prayer.

[30] Literally, 'House of Study', a name often given to a Synagogue where daily study circles in Talmud and cognate subjects are held.

[31] Discourses on Bible, Talmud and cognate subjects.
[32] L. Mirvish, 'Cape Town Jewry in 1910' in *Jewish Affairs*, May 1960.
[33] Presumably the Executive of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation.
[34] Sir Lewis Michell.
[35] CO 6171, Harris to Crewe, 3 February 1905.
[36] See below, pp. 89ff, 95–6.
[37] H. Liberman; M. Eilenberg; Adv. M. Alexander; Dr F. Harris; Rev. A. P. Bender.
[38] Alexander Papers, BC 160, File 1899–1912, 22 February 1905.
[39] A. Addleson, 'In the Eastern Province', in Saron and Hotz, pp. 303ff.
[40] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 5 April 1905.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 5 April 1905.
[43] See above, p. 71.
[44] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 17 May 1905.
[45] See above, p. 79.
[46] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 21 June 1905.
[47] For the half-year period ending 30 June 1901 the Governor, after analysing the names and residences of persons naturalized, estimated the proportion of Russian and Polish Jews at about 63 per cent. During the following six months it increased to 65 per cent.
[48] This sentence was crossed out and reworded 'I have drawn the attention of the Minister to the matter'.
[49] GH 35/173, Governor to High Commissioner, 17 February 1902.
[50] The Governor estimated that approximately 87 per cent of the persons who had taken out letters of naturalization during 1901 and 1902 were Jewish—nearly all from Russia and Poland. GH 35/173, Governor to High Commissioner, 5 August 1902 and 23 February 1903.
[51] PMO 295, Sprigg to Governor, 27 December 1902.
[52] GH 35/173, Governor to High Commissioner, 12 August 1903.
[53] Op. cit. Sprigg to Governor, 24 September 1903.
[54] Op. cit. Clerk of the Executive Council to Prime Minister, 20 October 1903.
[55] Op. cit. Governor to High Commissioner, 18 March 1904.
[56] ZP 1/1/403, Governor to Secretary of State, 2 May 1904.
[57] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 3 May 1904, p. 403.
[58] *Cape of Good Hope, Legislative Council, Bills*. Naturalisation Law Amendment Bill No. 41–1904.
[59] See above, p. 76.
[60] Thirty-seven per cent less than in 1903. About 52 per cent of the total number were Jewish. GH 35/173, Governor to High Commissioner, 3 April 1905.
[61] GH 35/173, Governor to High Commissioner, 3 April 1905.
[62] GH 35/118, Sir Montague Ommaney to Sprigg, 12 July 1902 (Copy).
[63] GH 35/173, High Commissioner to Governor, 29 May 1905.
[64] *Ons Land*, 1 August 1905.
[65] Goldblatt's Yiddish newspaper.
[66] Alexander, p. 32.
[67] Grosman, p. 458.
[68] GH 173, Governor to High Commissioner, 22 January 1906.
[69] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Cape Naturalizations List III, No. 2.
[70] L. Hotz, 'Jews who arrived 60 years ago' in *Jewish Affairs*, February 1963.
[71] *Cape Times*, 17 January 1906.
[72] GH 35/173, Governor to High Commissioner, 19 January 1907; 20 January 1908 and 29 January 1909.
[73] See above, p. 77, also Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 19 February 1905.
[74] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 2 November 1905.
[75] Op. cit. Alexander to Shawe, 10 March 1906.
[76] Op. cit. Miscellaneous, List III 4, 1906.
[77] The writer made a thorough examination of the Colonial Office Records in the Cape Archives.
[78] A Morality Act to deal with the question of prostitution had been introduced in 1902. See R. Hallett 'Policemen, Pimps, and Prostitutes—Public Morality and Police Corruption' in C. Saunders and H. Phillips (eds), *Studies in the History of Cape Town*, vol. 1.
[79] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Miscellaneous, List III, No. 4, 1906.
[80] Ibid.
[81] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 6 May 1904, p. 449.
[82] See above, footnotes to ch. 1, note 104.
[83] This is confirmed in a telegram from the Grahamstown Chamber of Commerce to the Attorney-General. AG 1992, April 1904.
[84] AG 1992, Undated.
[85] As we have seen, this unwillingness to mention overtly Jews by name and the substitution of this word with 'undesirable' or other such euphemisms characterized much of the formal anti-alien agitation.
[86] Meat slaughtered according to prescribed Jewish ritual.
[87] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 13 June 1905.
[88] Alexander had been elected to the Town Council in 1905.

[89] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 19 May 1905. It will be remembered that Thorne had been praised by this paper on his re-election as Mayor of Cape Town in 1902. See above, p. 19.
[90] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 19 May 1905.
[91] Liberman was elected Mayor of Cape Town in 1904.
[92] Grosman, p. 456.
[93] *South Africa*, 17 October 1914, p. 117.
[94] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 13 June 1905.
[95] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 9 May 1905, p. 418.
[96] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 13 June 1905.
[97] *Legislative Council Debates*, 25 May 1905, pp. 299–302.
[98] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 13 June 1905.
[99] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 29 May 1905, p. 632.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 13 June 1905.
[102] *Legislative Council Debates*, 31 May 1905, pp. 360–1.
[103] A Jewish Town Councillor.
[104] Quoted in Grosman, p. 457.
[105] The clause introduced by Abrahamson.
[106] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 13 June 1905.
[107] *The Cape*, 3 January 1908.
[108] See Appendix I.
[109] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 12 May 1905.
[110] 'A Farmer Pure and Simple' besides haranguing against Jewish traders (see above, p. 46) also suggested stricter control on the issue of business licences. The issue of licences, he suggested, should be based on the character of the applicant and local business needs. *Cape Times*, 18 March 1904.
[111] This Association, formed by J. X. Merriman and J. W. Sauer, was an organization for the English members of the South African Party and worked for that party in the cities.
[112] *Cape Times*, 22 September 1904.
[113] See for instance AG 1993, South African Liberal Association to Attorney-General, 23 September 1904.
[114] AG 1993, H. Dewdney to Attorney-General, 23 February 1905.
[115] AG 1993, Attorney-General to H. Dewdney, n.d. March 1904 [sic].
[116] See above, p. 70.
[117] *South African News*, 22 February 1905.
[118] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 21 June 1905.
[119] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 2 June 1905.
[120] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 11 April 1905, pp. 244–8.
[121] Op. cit. 13 April 1905, pp. 255–6.
[122] *Cape Times*, 25 April 1906.
[123] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 30 May 1906, pp. 31ff.
[124] Op. cit. 26 June 1906, p. 229.
[125] Report of the Select Committee on the General Dealers' Bill 1906, A26—06. To obtain a licence applicants had to obtain a certificate from the Municipal Council in the case of a business to be carried on within a Municipality, while in the case of a business to be carried on outside a Municipality, a certificate from the Divisional Council or Village Management Board was necessary. General Dealers' and other Licences Amendment Act 1906, (Act 35 of 1906). The danger that people who comprised these councils or boards had a vested interest was what concerned the Jewish community.
[126] Cohen was referring to Zionist organizations which concerned themselves only with returning to Palestine.
[127] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 15 June 1906.
[128] He failed to include the Asiatics who aroused greater concern than the East European Jews.
[129] Alexander Papers, BC 160, File 1899–1912.
[130] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 7 August 1906, p. 527.
[131] Op. cit. 16 August 1906, p. 624.
[132] Accepted since the Jewish deputation visited the Attorney-General in May 1903. See above, pp. 59–60.
[133] Published in the *Government Gazette* bi-annually.
[134] *Cape Times*, 4 May 1905.
[135] Section 10 of the published *Report on the Working of the Immigration Act 1902*, G53—05. The figures in the Report do not mean that all immigrants remained in the Cape Colony. Many went inland.
[136] See above, pp. 68–9.
[137] *Report on the Working of the Immigration Act 1902*, G53—05.
[138] A Cape Town Zionist association.
[139] Alexander Papers, BC 160, File 1899–1912, Dorshei Zion Association to Board, 18 March 1906.
[140] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, Alexander to London Board, 24 April 1906.
[141] Secretary to the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation.
[142] Links had existed between the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation and the London Jewish Board. However, this association was merely an expression of the traditional ties between Colonial Jewry (Anglo-Jewry) and the home country. It was not a means to safeguard the Jewish community at the Cape Colony as was envisaged in the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony. This explains why

the Rev. Mr Bender did not use these established ties with the London Board as an argument against joining the Cape Board. I am indebted to Mr G. Saron for clarifying relations between the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation and the London Board of Deputies.

[143] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 16 May 1906.

[144] *Cape Times*, 21 June 1906, also Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 25 May 1906.

[145] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 20 June 1906, pp. 187–9.

[146] *South African News*, 21 June 1906.

[147] *Cape Times*, 22 June 1906.

[148] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1905–1907, 23 June 1906.

[149] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 14 August 1906, pp. 583–6.

[150] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 22 December 1904.

[151] Op. cit. 23 December 1904.

[152] *Cape Times*, 7 August 1905.

[153] E. van Heyningen 'Cape Town and the Plague of 1901' in C. Saunders, H. Phillips and E. van Heyningen (eds) *Studies in the History of Cape Town*, vol. 4, p. 74.

[154] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 21 November 1905.

[155] *Middelburg Echo*, 27 October 1905.

[156] A. Addleson, 'In the Eastern Province' in Saron and Hotz, pp. 298ff.

[157] G. Aschman, 'Oudtshoorn in the Early Days' in Saron and Hotz, *passim*.

[158] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1904–1907, 3 November 1905.

[159] Ibid.

[160] *Middelburg Echo*, 1 December 1905.

[161] The full text of Mulder's evidence before the Select Committee read:

'*Interviewer:* Who succeed as a rule after they have got rid of their farms? Are there many Dutch people?

Mulder: Yes, mostly Dutch but there are a good many Jews getting the upper hand. I do not like to say very much about them, but over the whole district they have small shops and the poor people buy on credit from them, and very soon they are over their ears in debt.

Chairman: Then they must sell their produce to the dealer?

Mulder: Yes, then when they get into this debt they never get out of it. And the land becomes the property of the Jew.

Chairman: Does he work on the farm for the Jew?

Mulder: Sometimes.'

C3—06. Report of the Select Committee on Labour Settlement for Indigent Whites, Minutes of Evidence, p. 27.

[162] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Miscellaneous, List III, 4, 1906.

[163] Ibid. Letter Book 1904–1907, 3 September 1906.

[164] *Cape Times*, 12 September 1906.

[165] See Thompson, p. 54.

[166] The white population almost certainly decreased after 1904. Many of the destitute either returned to Britain or moved to the inland Colonies. Thompson, p. 54.

[167] M. Geffen, 'Cape Town Jewry 1902–10' in Saron and Hotz, ch. 3, *passim*.

[168] *Cape Argus*, 18 October 1906.

[169] Sarah Goldblatt, subsequently to be executrix of C. J. Langenhoven's estate.

[170] What this incident was about is unclear and not germane to this study. What is relevant is that relations between Alexander and Goldblatt were strained.

[171] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1905–1907, 24 July 1905 and 20 February 1906.

[172] Op. cit. 21 February 1906.

[173] *Cape Argus*, 18 October 1906.

[174] Besides being President of the Board, Alexander was a Town Councillor, President of the New Hebrew Congregation, Honorary Secretary of the Dorshei Zion Association and Honorary Secretary of the Cape Town Philanthropic Society.

[175] *Cape Argus*, 18 October 1906.

[176] Alexander Papers, BC 160, File 1899–1912, 22 October 1906.

[177] Op. cit. Miscellaneous, List III, 4, 1906.

[178] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1905–1907, 25 October 1906.

[179] Op. cit. Miscellaneous, List III, 4, 1906.

[180] Alexander was departing for the United States to renew acquaintance with Ruth Schecter, his wife-to-be and daughter of the famed Cambridge scholar, Professor Solomon Schecter.

[181] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1905–1907, 29 October 1906.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Grosman, p. 458.

[184] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Miscellaneous, List III, 4, 8 December 1906.

[185] In his capacity as a Town Councillor and prominent advocate.

[186] This Congregation was not affiliated to the Board.

[187] Alexander Papers, BC 160, File 1899–1912, undated. Meeting held on 20 October 1906.

[188] Op. cit. Letter Book 1905–1907, 13 January 1907 and 17 January 1907.

[189] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1905–1910, 1 February 1907.

[190] *Council of the City of Cape Town*, Record Book 1/1/1/63, 15 February 1907, and Alexander Papers, BC 160. Letter Book 1907–1909, 7 February 1907.

[191] Alexander Papers, BC 160, File 1899–1912.
[192] Ibid.
[193] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 17 May 1907.
[194] *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 30 October 1907.
[195] Alexander Papers, BC 160, File 1899–1912, 22 November 1907.
[196] *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 30 October 1907.
[197] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1905–1910, 21 November 1907.
[198] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1905–1910, 5 December 1907.
[199] In an interview in London, Bender, discussing Cape Jewry in some depth, failed to even mention the Board's existence. *The Jewish Chronicle*, 10 May 1907.
[200] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 5 June 1908.
[201] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1907–1909, 20 May 1908.
[202] Op. cit. 12 February 1908.
[203] Grosman, p. 459.
[204] *Cape Argus*, 27 May 1908 and the *Cape Times*, 29 May 1908.
[205] Grosman, p. 460.
[206] *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 29 July 1908, p. 382.
[207] Such as the dismissal of a Jewish teacher in Venterstad and the shabby handling by the police of a Jewish suicide case. *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 1 January 1909 and 30 July 1908, respectively.
[208] *The Jewish Chronicle*, 26 November 1909.
[209] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1905–1910, 15 December 1909.
[210] Op. cit. 15 December 1901.
[211] E. Rosenthal, *Southern African Dictionary of National Biography*, p. 121.
[212] Quoted in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 12 March 1909.
[213] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 19 March 1909.
[214] This was probably a legacy of the Cape Government's concern about the number of Jews entering the Colony.
[215] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 14 May 1901.
[216] Op. cit. 4 June 1909.
[217] *Cape Times*, 17 March 1909.
[218] Op. cit. 17 April 1909.
[219] *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 22 October 1909.
[220] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1910–1911, 25 April 1910.
[221] Alexander, p. 68.
[222] Op. cit. pp. 65ff. According to this Bill wide discretionary powers were to be given to immigration officers. The latter could dictate a literary test in any language. The Bill was shelved at the end of the 1911 Session. See E. Bradlow, 'Immigration into the Union 1910–1948: Policies and Attitudes', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978, vol. I, pp. 190–1.
[223] G. Saron, 'Jewish Immigration 1880–1913' in Saron and Hotz, p. 103.
[224] E. Bradlow, 'Immigration into Union', pp. 191–2.
[225] G. Saron, 'The Long Road to Unity' in Saron and Hotz, p. 265. It was only in 1919 that the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation joined the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.
[226] Election to the Town Council in 1905.
[227] Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1905–1907, 6 September 1905.
[228] See Alexander Papers, BC 160, Letter Book 1905–1907, *passim*.
[229] Op. cit. 1 November 1905.
[230] M. Kentridge, *The South African Jewish Board of Deputies. The Story of Fifty Years 1903–1953*, p. 28.

Appendices

I Extracts from a Commission of Enquiry into Labour in the Cape Colony 127

II Yiddish: Is it a European Language? 130

III Tables included in the Gregory Report 133

IV Ye Goldbug Dirge and The Jews Lament 134

APPENDIX I

Extracts from a Commission of Enquiry into Labour in the Cape Colony, 1893[1]

Interview with D. P. de Villiers Graaff, Afrikaner Bond MLC Western Province and Cape Town Town Council.[2]

Q. J. T. MOLTENO (Afrikaner Bond MLA, Namaqualand): Have you watched the 'set in' to this country of Polish and Russian Jews?

A. D. P. DE VILLIERS GRAAFF: Yes, of course it is a question for legislation, and a difficult one too, but I think it desirable that something should be done. I am certainly not in favour of pauper immigration of the Russian or Polish Jew into the country.

Q. J. T. MOLTENO: Do you know, as a matter of fact, that there is a 'set in' in this direction and that there were about fifty on the *Lismore* and about a hundred on the *Warwick Castle*?

A. D. P. DE VILLIERS GRAAFF: I quite believe it.

Q. J. T. MOLTENO: Do you think it desirable in the interests of labour to take some steps with a view to prevent this?

A. D. P. DE VILLIERS GRAAFF: Yes, the question must be dealt with and faced sooner or later. They will not make agriculturalists.

Interview with J. X. Merriman, MLA Namaqualand, Treasurer and Commissioner of Lands, Mines, and Agriculture in C. J. Rhodes's cabinet, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, 1908–1910.[3] Merriman expressed himself to be in favour of the importation of white labour.

Q. J. C. FAURE (Resident Magistrate, Graaff-Reinet): Then, as in this country the supply of labour is rather restricted would you be in favour of Polish Jews coming into the country?

A. J. X. MERRIMAN: No, but how are you going to prevent them?

Q. J. C. FAURE: Do you know that in America and New Zealand they are prevented?

A. J. X. MERRIMAN: Perhaps that is a good thing.

Q. J. C. FAURE: Do you know in your official capacity that they are coming into the country?

A. J. X. MERRIMAN: I do not know that in my official capacity, but I do know it, and as a citizen I regret it.

Q. J. C. FAURE: Do you not agree with it?

A. J. X. MERRIMAN: No.

Q. J. C. FAURE: You would not think much of the Indian, the Chinamen or the Polish Jew?

A. J. X. MERRIMAN: I would not have one of them although I should be going too far to say that of every one of them. Some of the most enterprising people I have known are Polish Jews and we cannot condemn them all. They believe in God and I should not like to class them all in one sweeping category, but I still think we have enough.

Interview with L. Maclean, Joint manager in Cape Town of Castle Mail Packets, Company, Ltd.[4]

Q. J. T. MOLTENO: You are aware that America has shut its doors to pauper immigration?

A. L. MACLEAN: Yes, we already see a good many more booking third class in consequence.

Q. J. T. MOLTENO: I believe there will be a large influx of Russian Jews. There are fifty on the *Lismore* and a lot more on the water on the *Warwick Castle*.

A. L. MACLEAN: Yes, they are beginning to come out but are paying full fares.

Q. J. T. MOLTENO: What is their destination?

A. L. MACLEAN: I think they find their way to Johannesburg.

Q. J. C. FAURE: Are they a desirable acquisition? They do not work with their hands, they live by their brains. They are not a class to supply the labour market.

A. L. MACLEAN: No.

Interview with T. E. Fuller, Progressive MLA, Cape Town.[5]

Q. J. T. MOLTENO asked Fuller if he anticipated a great immediate influx of Polish and Russian Jews.

A. T. E. FULLER: Well, there are a great many third-class passengers coming here now. What becomes of them I do not know. They do not beg for their food. I suppose they come under agreements.

Interview with Auguste Albrecht, wine farmer, Constantia.[6] M. L. NEETHLING (MLC Western Province) pointed out that the importation of German immigrants was not right. They were 'obtained through the medium of a Jew'.

Q. J. T. MOLTENO: Have you heard that Polish Jews are coming out here?

A. A. ALBRECHT: I think the Government should prevent them with head and foot.

Q. J. T. MOLTENO: You know them?

A. A. ALBRECHT: They will be a pest to the country. That is one of the reasons why Germany was glad to get rid of them.

Interview with D. E. Hutchins, Conservator of Forests and Fellow of the Meteorological Society.[7]

Q. J. M. ORPEN (MLA Wodehouse) asked if he (Hutchins) thought there would be no difficulty in getting Italians to immigrate.

A. D. E. HUTCHINS believed they could divert some of this immigration: I should suggest an alternative in the immigration law viz. that certain immigrants should be classified as suitable, for instance domestic servants, and labourers from Southern Europe and that all the rest shall be classed as unsuitable and made to pay for their own passages. Polish Jews would naturally fall under the latter.

Q. J. M. ORPEN: Are these then bogus immigrants coming out under the Act?

A. D. E. HUTCHINS: Yes, it is impossible to distinguish. I have some knowledge of Polish Jews, through my brother, in Russia, and who holds the view that the Russian Government are quite right in expelling them.

Q. J. M. ORPEN: You know as a fact, that a large number is coming out, do you regard them as a desirable class of immigrants?

A. D. E. HUTCHINS: No.

Q. J. M. ORPEN: What do you think of the Indian Coolie?

A. D. E. HUTCHINS: I class Chinamen and Coolies with the Polish Jews, as unsuitable immigrants and should give them no aid.

Q. J. M. ORPEN: Would you prohibit their coming in?

A. D. E. HUTCHINS: I should like to but it is a difficult matter.

[1] G39—93, *Labour Commission 1893.*
[2] Op. cit. p. 135.
[3] Op. cit. p. 144.
[4] Op. cit. p. 88.
[5] Op. cit. p. 97.
[6] Op. cit. p. 105.
[7] Op. cit. p. 202.

APPENDIX II

Yiddish: Is it a European Language?

Yiddish, as a spoken language, is about 1 200 years old, that is to say, it did not exist before the Jew arrived in Germany. At that time the knowledge of writing was not general, but was confined to priests and privileged persons. The German alphabet was therefore not known to the masses. The Jew, anxious as he was to learn the language of his new home and bringing with him the Hebrew characters from his native land, could do no better than produce the new tongue in the old characters. This is the reason why YIDDISH is written in Hebrew characters.

Hebrew is essentially a Semitic language, but Hebrew is not Yiddish. Hebrew, like all other Asiatic languages, is written without vowels, while Yiddish like all European languages is written with vowels. The word 'Yiddish' itself is spelt with vowels; it comes from the German word *Jude*, and *Jüdisch* means Jewish or Yiddish. The word 'Hebrew' is still spelt without vowels. Yiddish absorbed not only German itself, but also the Greek and Latin elements found in German.

Yiddish literature includes novels, poems, histories, scientific works of all kinds, hundreds of newspapers and periodicals published annually, quarterly, monthly, weekly, daily and even twice a day, both in Europe and America. There are hundreds of publishers and booksellers in Russia, as well as in England, Germany and America, who sell none but Yiddish works and periodicals, and who publish thick catalogues containing thousands of titles of Yiddish books. Six such booksellers are to be found in Cape Town, and a similar number in Johannesburg. Books written in English, German and French are frequently translated into Yiddish, as for instance the works of Shakespeare, Byron, Darwin, Isaac Newton, Tolstoi, Zola, Dumas, Eugene Sue, and George Eliot, whose favourite work among the Jews is Daniel Deronda. While on the other hand Yiddish works are translated into Russian, Polish, French and English. The names of Salom Jacob Abramowitz, E. Zunzer, Sh Frug, are well known as Yiddish authors, whose works have been translated into other European languages, and a book written in English by Prof. Leo Wiener, called 'History of Yiddish Literature', testifies to these facts. I. M. Dick alone wrote close on a hundred good novels in Yiddish. Morris Rosenfeld, though not one of the greatest Yiddish poets, is well-known to the European world for his classical style. Most modern European Hebrew authors who formerly wrote in Hebrew only, and have tried their best to re-establish Hebrew as a living language in Europe, have been compelled by circumstances to write in Yiddish, because 90 per cent of the Jews in Europe understand nothing but Yiddish. Besides literature that may be ranked as necessary, there are numbers of artistic magazines and journals published in Yiddish, as for instance *Minikes' Monthly*, and many others.

There are dictionaries of Yiddish and all other European languages and *vice versa*. Harkavy's Yiddish–English and English–Yiddish dictionary is now in its 6th revised and enlarged edition, a work in 2 volumes, each containing 759 pages. The same author has published a book for teaching Yiddish to English students. A Yiddish Illustrated Encyclopaedia is now being published by the author of this pamphlet, and enjoys a wide circulation. From that work the following article has been selected and translated into English, in order to show what class of matter the Yiddish reader is able to digest.

'AGASIZ, LUDWIG JOHN RUDOLPH, natural scientist, born on 28th May, 1807, at Mottier, in the canton of Freibourg, Switzerland, devoted himself in his youth to the study of Zoology, and became in 1832 professor of natural history at Neuchatel. In 1846 he travelled to N. America, and there obtained the professorship of zoology and geology at New Cambridge. There he founded the Museum of Comparative Zoology. He travelled afterwards for scientific purposes to Brazil and to the S. Atlantic Ocean, made investigations as to the depth of the ocean, and returned to New Cambridge satisfied with the results of his journey. He then wrote many books, and died there on the 14th December, 1873. His "Theory of Creation" which supports the teaching of the French professor, Cuvier, is, in spite of his bitter hatred of, and antagonism to, the Darwinian theory, most important in support of that doctrine. His opinion that the fossilised skeletons and plants found in the earth are not these of antediluvian human beings, but of animals and plants found in the earth before the creation of man, that they are of one family with the animals at present existing, that the embryos of all classes of animals represent one family, that present and former animals are of the lower origin, that spiritualistic apparitions are delusive and deceptive, his observation that the spread of mankind on the earth takes place in the same regions as the spread of mammals; all these things speak in spite of himself for Darwin. He only differs from the Darwinian theory herein, that he maintains that Nature works by catastrophe, whereas Darwin maintains that it develops by way of evolution. Agasiz has most adherents in theological circles, and even his best friend and co-labourer, Prof. Carl Vogt, was never inspired by him, but remained all his life a disciple of Darwin.'

The above translation was made by Prof. Hubertus Elffers, sworn translator to the Supreme Court of the Cape of Good Hope, and at the same time to prove that Yiddish is nothing but a German language, the following affidavit was procured from him:

'I certify that the accompanying translation was written by me in English, while the original in Yiddish was read aloud to me. I cannot read Yiddish, the language being written in Hebrew characters, but its similarity to German is so great that I had no difficulty in rendering in English what was read to me. It may therefore be concluded generally that Germans will have no difficulty in understanding Yiddish, though the fact of its being written in Hebrew may prevent their reading it. Jews not acquainted with the characters of other European languages will likewise understand German, since Yiddish is but a dialect of that language.

HUBERT C. ELFFERS,
Sworn Translator.'

The following list of Yiddish periodicals will give an idea of the strength of the Yiddish reading world, and the places of their publication will show that none of them are published in Asia:

DAILIES—*Herald* (twice a day), New York; *Forward* (daily), New York; *Yiddische Volks-stimme*, New York; *Tageblatt*, New York; *Advertiser*, London; *Express*, London; *Der Freund*, St Petersburg; *Der Tag*, Vilna; *Tageblatt*, Lemberg.

WEEKLIES—*Yiddisher Advocate*, Cape Town; *Hacohow*, Johannesburg; *Express*, London; *Telephone*, London; *Volks Advocate*, New York; *Yiddische Gazetten*, New York; *Yiddischer Journal*, New York; *Neues*, Drohbitch; *Der Americaner*, New York; *Das Yüdische Wort*, Cracow; *Yüdisches Wochenblatt*, Tchernowitz; *Yuditsches Frauenwelt*, Warschau, *Yudische Volkszeitung*, Warschau, *Arbeiter Freind*, London; *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*, London; *Witzblatt*, Lodz.

MONTHLIES—*Zukunft* (Illustrated), New York; *Yudische Zukunft*, Cracow; *Yudische Bibliothek*, Warsaw, *Minikes' Yom Tov* (Illustrated), New York.

There are many more of lesser value, but none of them are published in Asia.

Only Yiddish is spoken by the Jews living in and around Germany. An American Yiddish newspaper states that in Wilna (Russia) alone 204 673 persons (89 per cent of the Jewish population), and in Witebsk 175 936 (99,2 per cent of the Jewish population) speak Yiddish only. The language is to them the mother language, without which they could not exist. A German, a European Jew, and an Asiatic Jew could not converse together, the German and the European Jew would understand each other, whereas the Asiatic Jew would understand neither.

Since it serves as a medium for the thoughts of millions of people, since it possesses its own literature, since it serves the same purpose as any other language does, it is undoubtedly a living language.

As it conveys to its readers through channels of its daily and weekly newspapers all the latest news and discoveries in all branches of knowledge, and instructs them in everything that is worth knowing not only with regard to its own nation and creed, but also all others, it is certainly an intellectual language.

The fact that it did not exist before the Jews appeared in Europe, the fact that a German will understand it, the fact that the whole of its literature is published in Europe and America, the fact that the Jews in Asia (with the exception of a few who have emigrated from Europe), do not understand it, the fact that German interpreters are frequently used by English Judges to translate Yiddish evidence before their courts, the fact that the Hebrew Bible had to be translated into Yiddish, the fact that it is the mother language of millions of Europeans, all show that Yiddish is a European language. It was born in Europe and has grown up there.

Some may find fault with it, as may be done with any language, as some find fault with the English language, as Swift says: 'Our language is extremely imperfect, and in many instances it offends against every part of Grammar.'

As regards the Semitic alphabet that Yiddish is written in, I have at the outset shown the circumstances that necessitated such use, and one who raises an objection against Yiddish being a European language on that ground, shows his ignorance of the Aryan alphabets, and the fact that there is no such thing as a European alphabet in existence.

Neibuhr says: 'Languages have one inscrutable origin as have all national peculiarities, and he has but an imperfect knowledge of a people, who does not know their language.'

So I believe in the present case that because the Yiddish language is not known to our legislators, they do not know the Jewish people, and this article has been written with the object of bringing the facts before them, and of giving them and the general public, a knowledge of the Yiddish language in order that they may be in a position to better understand the Jewish people. I trust that it will also prove to the English-speaking world that the Jew who speaks Yiddish is not as ignorant as he might be supposed to be by those who do not understand him.

The South African Jewish Chronicle, 12 May 1905.

APPENDIX III

Tables included in the Gregory Report†

TABLE 4. Showing the number of Immigrants from Foreign Ports landed in the Colony and the number prohibited during the period 1st May to 31st December, 1903, distinguishing (a) British Subjects, (b) Aliens, and (c) Russian and Jewish Aliens.

Date	NUMBER LANDED				NUMBER PROHIBITED			
	Total	British, including Colonial and Indian	Alien Nationality	Russian and Jewish Aliens	Total	British, including Colonial & Indian	Alien Nationality	Russian and Aliens
May–June.....	10,054	8,022	2,032	641	17	—	17	2
July–September	18,193	14,068	4,125	2,308	93	27	66	5
October–December	18,686	13,971	4,715	2,033	224	25	199	77
Total	*46,933	36,061	*10,872	4,982	334	52	282	84

TABLE 5. Showing the relative proportions to British subjects of (a) Aliens and (b) Russian and Jewish Aliens landed in the Colony and prohibited, respectively, during the period 1st May to 31st December, 1903.

Date	Percentage Proportion of Aliens Landed to all Persons Landed	Percentage Proportion of Russian and Jewish Aliens Landed to all Persons Landed	Percentage Proportion of all Aliens prohibited from Landing to all Persons Prohibited	Percentage Proportion of Russian and Jewish Aliens prohibited to all Persons Prohibited
May–June.....	20,23	6,38	100,00	11,76
July–September	22,67	12,69	70,97	5,38
October–December	25,23	10,88	88,84	34,38
Total	23,17	10,62	84,43	25,15

* From this number has been excluded 432 Natives imported for employment on the Johannesburg Mines from German Damaraland. Technically, these were Aliens, but to consider them as such in this review would be misleading, and they have, therefore, been deducted from all figures in the Table.

† G63—04 *Report on the Working of the Immigration Act 1902–1904*, p.12.

APPENDIX IV

Ye Goldbug Dirge AND The Jews Lament

YE GOLDBUG DIRGE

We trust it may be flirting,
but we're not convinced it is
Our annals we'll be dirting
If we do the Chinese Biz

We know the Goldbug's vision
Of mansions built of gold
But hit him with derision
Watch his ugliness unfold

The Goldbug say 'the' labour
Is purely for *our* good
But is it as a neighbour
Or to improve their brood?

Nabobs whine the output's poor
And gold can find no backers,
Guess this chil's not Johnny Raw
To play with Chinese crackers

Timidus thinks not for us
This Chino-Jew invasion,
Oh, such as him we nearly cuss
Who'll herd the dirty Asian

Have we forgot the 'Neptune'
And what our fathers did?
We will not have another tune
Whene'er the Goldbugs bid

Lets leave the Goldbugs ranting,
But give our ship no list;
Let them all go levanting
We'll not be Chinese kissed.

A T W
The Owl, 18 September 1903

THE JEWS LAMENT

Why do I wonder through the street
And humbly beg from all I meet?
Why am I dressed in ragged clothes
With holes through which the rude wind blows?
Why do I shork some honest work
Nor be a bricklayer or a clerk?
Ask me some more questions. I
Will tell you why in my reply,
Oh! listen to this tale of woe
I am a Jew as perhaps you know
For people knows—all through my nose
I once was rich. A millionaire
In Joburg town.
'Tis I who got the Chow up there
I took him up. He took me down
We owned so many mines—we Jews
We'd all to gain and naught to lose
By working up that Chinese ruse
    For labour—cheap
At least thats what we thought: but now
Iknona chow
I spent my time in wondering how
    He learns his tricks—Oh! I could weep
He looked so innocent and bland
When he first landed on the land
That all the Jews said it was grand
To have him there
And Ike was patted on the back;
'Taws Ikey's scheme, and all the pack
Said 'Idea good
For England will not give a d..n'.
And this they drank in fizzing champ
    which Ikey stood
But now the Chinese own the place
The same old Jew boys have the face
    To blame poor Ike.
And in the blessed synagogue
You'll find the priests are all agog
For Ikey's blood—
A state of things which he don't like
    You see—I'm Ike.
He wondered on. I heard him say
Oh! Ikey Goldman curse the day
You thought you'd make Chow labour pay
    Oh! heathen crew
To take in so poor Ikey Mo
Unhappy Jew!

T A N
The Owl, 9 June 1903

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Index

A

Aberdeen Divisional Council
  application for hawkers' licence, 105
Abrahamson, Louis
  Cape Jewish Board of Deputies, 91, 93
  early career, 88
  General Dealers' Licence Bill, 89, 91, 93
  Half Holiday Bill, 88–9
Additional Parliamentary Representation Bill, 67
  and see Elections
Adler, Dr N. M., 30
Afrikaner Bond, 47
  immigration, 10, 25
Albrecht, A., 128
Alexander, Morris
  anti-semitism, 97, 99, 105
  Bender, Rev. A. P., 106
  Board of Deputies
    formation of, 58, 59, 62, 65, 71–3
    role of, 103, 104, 109, 110
  early career, 19
  General Dealers' Licence Bill, 91
  Half Holiday Bill, 86–9
  Immigration Bill, 1906, 94–6
  Immigration Restriction Act, 1902, 31, 32, 57
  naturalization, 75–81, 83–6
  relations with Goldblatt, 99–102
  Roumanian Relief Fund, 73
Alexander, Solomon, 77, 89, 100
Alexander II, Tsar, 3
Aliens Act (Britain), 94, 95
Aliens Naturalization Act, 1883, 81
  amended Act, 1889, 81
Alliance Israelite Universelle, 3
Anglo-Boer War, 12, 13
  Jewish involvement, 13
Anglo-Jewish Association
  Cape Town, 3
  London, 29
  Transvaal, 32
Anti-alienism, 6–10, 12, 21–6, 51–5, 64, 66–9
  in Cape Town Town Council, 66
  in legislative assembly, 7, 8
  in legislative council, 21, 22, 66
  nature of, 45–51
Anti-Convict Indemnity Fund, 2
Anti-semitism, 2–5, 9–13, 18, 20, 48–51, 64–5, 97–9, 102, 105, 107
  extent of, 51
  Jameson Raid, 8
  Jewish response, 11, 18–21, 48–51, 54, 64, 65
Asiatics
  General Dealers' Licence Bill, 90–3
  Half Holiday Bill, 87
  opposition towards immigration of, 7, 22–7

B

Bailey, Amos, 67, 68
Bancoora, 28
Barkly, Sir Henry, 4
Barnet-Clarke, Rev. William, 50
Bartlett, J., 66
Batavian administration, xvii
Bender, Rev. A. P., 9, 11, 15, 16, 18, 50, 64, 65, 71, 72, 74, 78
  anti-alienism, 9, 50
  Board of Deputies, 71, 77–80, 96, 106
  immigration, 30–2, 57, 65
  opposition towards, 30–2
Berlyn, A., 18
Board of Deputies—*see* Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony
Boomplaats, Battle of, 6
Boonzaier, D. C., 45
Beth Hamedrash, 74, 78
Brink, A., 50
Burton, 92

C

Cape Times
  anti-semitism, 6, 9, 13, 18, 19
Cape Town, 19, 20, 74
Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, 1, 11, 15, 58, 59, 74, 78, 95, 108
Cape Town Philanthropic Society, 3, 106
Cape Town Town Council, 53, 103
Carver, J., 54, 55
Catholic Church, 51
Chamberlain, H. S., 64
Chamber of Commerce, Cape Town, 21
Chamberlain, Joseph, 22–4, 27, 52
Chenik, M., 103
Citizens Relief Committee, 53
Claasens, H. J. H., 89
Cohen, H. M., 92–3
Cohen, J., 86
Cohen, M., 81
Crewe, Col. C. P., 70, 75, 95, 106
Cronwright-Schreiner, 49, 92

D

Davis, Flora, 48
De Beers Consolidated Mines, 10, 45
De Gobineau, Count Joseph, 64
De Mist, J. A., xvii
Deputation to Attorney-General, 59–61
De Villiers, J. N. P., 66
De Villiers Graaff, D. P., 127
De Waal, N. F., 106–8
Dewdney, H., 90–1
De Zuid Afrikaan, 54
Discrimination
  absence of, 3
  and see Anti-semitism
Donovan, M. J., 90
Dorfan, J., 71, 100–2
Dorshei Zion Association, 94
Draft Act for Union
  Jews, 107–8
Dutch Reformed Church
  Jews, 50

E

East European Jews, 3
  occupations, 84–5
  relations with Anglo-Jewry, 11–12
  Zionism, 12
Edelman, S. A., 71
Egersdorfer, H., 45
Ehulin, C., 89
Eilenberg, M., 63
Elections, 10, 53, 55
  Jewish vote, 55
Erasmus, J. E., 68
Evans, M. O., 25, 87

F

Faure, Rev. D. P., 107
Faure, J. C., 127–8
Faure, Sir Pieter, 21, 27, 30, 66–7
Field, W., 46
Fremantle, Prof. H. E. S., 53
Fuller, A. J., 67, 97, 98
Fuller, T. E., 28, 29, 63
Funds
  collection for Jews of Morocco, 2
  Jewish soup kitchen, London, 2
  Syrian Relief Fund, 2

G

Galeka, 30
Garlick, J., 31, 57
General Dealers Licence Act, 93, 102–3
General Dealers Licence Bill, 90–3, 99
Ginzberg, F., 91–3
Gobineau—*see* De Gobineau
Goldblatt, David, 17, 31, 32, 54, 88, 106
  Board of Deputies, 99–102, 106, 109
    formation of, 32, 57–9, 71–3
  early career, 57
  Half Holiday Bill, 88–9
  immigration, 31, 32, 57, 58
  naturalization, 91
  Yiddish as a European language, 83, 91
Goldblatt, Fanny, 57
Goldreich, S., 57
Goldsmid, Lionel L., 15, 17, 30, 31, 62, 73
Graaf, J. A. C., 68
Graaff-Reinet Hebrew Congregation, 105
Graham, T. L., 29, 30, 60, 67–70
Gregory, Dr A. J., 25, 65, 66, 68–70, 82, 93, 94
Gregory Report, 65, 66, 68–70, 82, 93, 94
  Jewish response to, 70
Gromer, R., 77

H

Half Holiday Act, 1899, 87
  amended Act, 1904, 87
Half Holiday Bill, 1905, 86–9
Hannon, P. J., 97, 98
Hare, W., 53
Harlech Castle, 30
Harris, Col. David, 78, 79, 89, 95, 96
Harris T., 47
Hely-Hutchinson, Sir Walter, 22, 25, 28, 71, 81
Herrman, Dr Louis, 75
Hertz, Rabbi J. H., 32
Herzog, 30
Hobson, J. A., 13
Hoffman, N. D., 6
Hoffman, Dr J. M., 21
Hofmeyr, Jan, 47
Hoggenheimer, 20, 45, 48
Hopley, W. M., 102
Hotz, L., 84
Hutchins, D. E., 129

I

Illicit Diamond Buying
  Jews, 47
Immigration, 36
  Chinese, 53, 54
  undesirable, 6, 21–5, 63–70
Immigration Restriction
  Act, 20–7, 57, 58
  Asiatics, 65, 67
  Bill, 24–7, 94–6, 108
  repercussions, 27–32, 57
Indians—*see* Asiatics

J

Jacobi, L., 58, 59
Jacobs, L., 87
Jameson, L. S., 8, 56, 67, 70
Jameson Raid, 8, 45
Janisch, N., 65, 77, 86
Janssens, J. W., xvii
Jewish Advocate, 64, 83, 88, 89
Jewish Association (London), 28
Jewish Board of Deputies (British), 20, 28–30, 62, 63, 94, 95
Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony
  aims, 75, 76
  annual report, 1907, 104
  anti-semitism, 98, 105
  dissension within, 99–102
  formation of, 71, 72
  General Dealers' Licences, 90–2, 103
  Half Holiday Bill, 86–9
  Immigration Restriction Bill, 94–6
  membership, 71, 76, 77
  movement towards, 32, 57–60
  naturalization, 77, 78, 80, 82, 83
  need for, 31, 32, 51, 57, 59–62
  opposition towards, 58, 59, 78, 79
  relations with British Board, 76
  relations with Transvaal/Natal Board, 76, 108
Jewish Chronicle (London), 5, 29, 47
Jewish Telegraph, 13
Jewish Territorial Association, 49
Juta, Sir Henry, 53

K

Kagan, A., 97
Keet, Rev. B. B., 4
Kelly, J. W., 48, 53, 54
Kentridge, Morris, 110
Kimberley, 3, 11
  Philanthropic Society, 106
Kishinev atrocities, 48, 49
Kossick, J., 71

Kossick, M., 101
Kottler, L., 71
Kuhn, P. G., 21

L

Labour, Commission of Inquiry into, 6
Labour Bureau, 52
Langerman, M., 62, 67
Le Roux, A. S., 7, 8
Leo XIII, Pope, 51
Liberman, Hyman, 63, 88

M

Maclean, L., 128
Michau, P. W., 49
Michell, L., 4, 70, 71, 79
Middelburg Echo, 98
Milner, A., 13, 22, 23, 62
Milner, Lady, 12
Molteno, J. T., 7, 127, 128
Morris, E., 104, 105
Mosenthal, J., 5
Mosenthal Brothers, 97
Mulder, H. J., 98, 99
Muller C. F. J., 50

N

Naturalization, 71, 75
  Bill, 1904, 83
  Board of Deputies, 75, 76, 80–3
  in England, 91, 106
  opposition towards, 83, 85, 86
  statistics, 83–6
Naturalization Reform Association, 108
Neptune, 1, 2
New Hebrew Congregation (Roeland Street), 11, 19, 73, 74, 78
Norden, B., 1, 2
Norman, 30

O

Okiep, 47
Orpen, J. M., 129
Ornstien, Rev. A. F., 3, 5
Oudtshoorn, 11, 74–6
  Jewish Vigilance Committee, 105
Owl, The, 9, 10, 18–20, 45, 47, 48, 51, 52, 56, 62, 64, 65
Owen-Lewis, C. A., 88

P

Paarl, 59, 74
Peninsula Herald, 21
Peruvian, 12, 46, 87
Petersen, Dr A. H., 53
Philanthropic Society
  Cape Town, 3, 8, 106
  Port Elizabeth and Kimberley, 106
Philo-semitism, 4, 49, 51, 71
Poor Whites, 6, 7
Pope Leo XIII, 51
Population statistics, 1, 11, 56, 74
Port Elizabeth, 11, 59, 74
  Philanthropic Society, 106
Pretorius, M. J., 49
Progressive Party, 54–6
Public Health Act, 97
Pulver, Rev. I., 2

R

Rabinowitz, Rev. J., 8
Rabinowitz, M., 20, 64
Raphaely, S., 108
Rhodes, Cecil John, 8
Richmond, 5
Rietman, 50
Robertson, 59
Rodolf, S., 2
Roeland Street Synagogue—*see* New Hebrew Congregation
Rogally, H. J., 102
Rothschild Brothers, 4
Roumanian Relief Fund, 19

S

Sampson, V., 91–3
Saron, G., 25–7
Sauer, J. L., 26, 92
Schecter, Ruth, 109
Schreiner, Olive, 49
Schreiner, W. P., 21, 106
Segal, I., 105
Settle, Sir H. H., 24
Shacksnovis, J. B., 101
Shawe, W. B., 86
Sieberhagen, W. G., 67
Silverman, D., 100
Smartt, T. W., 49, 55, 75
Smith, G. D., 88
Smith, Sir Harry, 1, 2
Smith, H. S., 47, 48
Smous, 5, 46, 47
Smuts, J. G., 107
Society of the Jewish Community of Cape Town, 1
Solomon, J., 57
Sonnenberg, C., 9
South African Federation of Jewish Congregations, 11
South African Jewish Chronicle, 15–18, 48, 50, 51, 58
  circulation, 15
South African Liberal Association, 90
South African News, 13, 47, 49, 52, 58, 91
South African Party, 55
South African Review, 18, 52–7
South African Zionist Federation, 105
Sprigg, J. G., 7, 9, 22, 24, 27, 28, 82
Stereotype, anti-Jewish, 45–8

T

Thorne, W., 19, 66, 88
Tintagel Castle, 21

U

Undesirables—*see* Immigration; Anti-alienism

V

Van den Berg (attorney), 105
Van Zyl, D. J.A., 8

Van Zyl (councillor), 105
Venter, M. M., 7
Vigilance Committee, 79

W

Walt, Rev. E., 104
Walton, E. H., 22
Woolends, George, 52
Wright, Dr C., 97

Y

Yiddish as a European language, 26–9, 57–9, 65–9, 91–3, 130

Z

Zionism, 12
Zionist Congress, Basle, 12
Zud Afrikanische Zeitung, 6