

A HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF DURBAN

1825 - 1918

by

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*"And seek the peace of the city ...
and pray unto the Lord for it,
for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace."*

(Jeremiah 29:7)

*"וודרשו את שלום העיר ...
והתפללו בעדה אל ה'
כי בשלומה יהיה לכם שלום."
(ירמיהו כט:ז)*

*"The financial assistance of the Human Sciences
Research Council towards the costs of this
research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions
expressed or conclusions reached are those of
the author and are not to be regarded as a
reflection of the opinions and conclusions of
the Human Sciences Research Council."*

INTRODUCTION

Greatly stimulated by an honours course in South African Jewish history, and dismayed to learn of the almost total absence of detailed historical studies on Jewish communities in South Africa, I gladly undertook the task of writing the history of my own community. It is to be hoped that the present study of the third largest Jewish community in South Africa will stimulate other South African Jewish historians to produce detailed studies on other Jewish communities.

It is intended that this work will form the first part of a larger study of the history of the Jews of Durban, from the arrival of the first Jew in Natal, in 1825, to the present. The scope of this dissertation is limited to an account of Durban Jewry from 1825 to the end of 1918. For the present study the history of Durban has not been treated as a central issue, and only those developments which affected the Jewish community directly have been discussed and analysed. Nevertheless, by referring to the part played by Jewish residents in the public and general life of the town, I have sought to indicate the contribution which Jews in Durban have made to the life of their town.

For the sake of clarity this work has been written in a chronological form. Accordingly the study has been

divided as follows: The Early Period; Jewish Residential Settlement (1848-1874); Later Jewish Residential Settlement (1875-1899); Jewish Participation in the General Life of the Community (1857-1895); The Establishment of Corporate Jewish Activity in Durban; Jewish Life in the Boer War Period; Religious Life in Durban in the Post War Period (1902-1914); The Growth of Jewish Welfare, Zionism and Social and Cultural Societies in Durban (1902-1914); Between the Wars; Jewish Participation in the General Life of Durban (1902-1914); The Jewish Community and the War Effort and Jewish Life in Durban (1914-1918).

The present study was handicapped by the absence of a complete history of Durban, and by the relative inadequacy of the previously undertaken studies of the Jewish community in Durban, in works dedicated to the history of South African Jewry in general. Although The Jews in South Africa A History, edited by Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz, and A History of the Jews in South Africa From the Earliest Times to 1895, by Louis Herrman were invaluable, the present research was hampered by the absence of scholarly apparatus in these works. These sources have, therefore, been used sparingly and only in the absence of independent corroborating evidence.

Research of the history of Durban Jewry was also complicated by the total absence of any early minute books or institutional records. Consequently, in the present study much use has been made of contemporary

newspaper reports, primarily The Natal Mercury, London Jewish Chronicle and South African Jewish Chronicle.

As will become clear from the body of this work the journalists did not cover all events. Whilst The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register is a major source for early Jewish business activity, it unfortunately has its limitations. Since the Almanac only records the names of those owning businesses, it is not possible to determine from this source when those, who eventually opened businesses in Durban actually arrived in Durban. It should also be borne in mind that the Almanacs, which were produced annually, were, until the edition of 1896, published in the year prior to that in which they appeared. Thus it is difficult to determine precisely when a particular person opened or closed a business.

In addition to these above mentioned sources, the present research has drawn upon the recollections of members of the Jewish community who were interviewed by me. Unhappily, a series of interviews has yielded contradictory information and opinions, no doubt the result of human frailty and the passage of time. Therefore only when the recollections of those who were interviewed seemed to correspond with what could be reasonably deduced from other sources, or could reasonably explain clearly defined tendencies, were those interviews included.

In expressing my gratitude to all those who helped me in my work I feel particularly indebted to my professor, Rabbi A. Weiss, for his encouragement, assistance and sound counsel.

Grateful acknowledgement is due to Mrs B. Hartstein and Mrs F. Poplock at the library of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg; Mrs C. Friedman Spitz, curatrix of the Jewish Museum, Cape Town; and Miss M. Sauer, Miss L. Howell and Mrs C. Striepe of the Don Africana Library, in Durban, for all their assistance.

I am also very grateful to Mrs S. Spencer of the library of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, for her help in determining the religious affiliations of the early Natal Settlers. My thanks also to Mrs N. Solomon, of Johannesburg, for information about her father, the late Rev. H. Rubin; Mrs D. Perl and Mr. V. Lipinski, for sharing their old family papers with me; Mrs P. Goldberg, for the loan of most useful source material, and Mrs D. Landau for all her assistance. Mr. Eric Rosenthal, of Cape Town, and Mr. Gustav Saron, of Johannesburg, were also extremely co-operative and helpful.

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To Mrs Ethel Stiller and Mrs Bernice Friedman, who accepted the task of typing this dissertation, I extend my very special thanks.

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* * *

In accordance with the rules of the University of Natal, I hereby state that this whole thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my own original work.

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CHAPTER I

THE EARLY PERIOD

BEGINNINGS OF EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

On December 25, 1497, the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama named the coastal area around the Kei River, Terra do Natal:

This name, which initially referred to the coast of Pondoland, was later in the Portuguese period extended to cover a larger area, stretching from a starting point (Ponta Primeira) at the Kei River, through a central point (Ponta do Meio) at the Umzimuubu River, to the furthest point (Ponta Derradeira) which was probably the Bluff at Durban.¹

Over a century later, in 1554, another Portuguese navigator, Manuel de Mesquita Perestello, wrote about Black tribes which had settled on the slopes of the Bluff, but it is certain that he never brought his ship into the harbour.²

The first building to be erected by Europeans, in

¹W.J. De Kock, "Explorers and Circumnavigators of the Cape", in 500 Years a History of South Africa, ed. C.F.J. Muller (Pretoria, n.d.), p. 8.

²Eric Rosenthal, Schooners and Skyscrapers (Cape Town, 1963), p. 12.

what is now called Durban, was a hut which was built by the survivors of the Good Hope in May 1685. This ship had left England, under the command of Captain John Adams, bound for the Rio de Natal - the Durban Bay - intending to collect slaves to be sold in Jamaica, and had been wrecked whilst crossing the Bar. Three months later a ship under the command of Captain Wynnford, which arrived on a hunting expedition, discovered the survivors of the Good Hope, who had by this time built a small craft. While some of the survivors left with Adams and Wynnford, "five stayed behind in Durban Bay - the first voluntary white settlers in Natal"³ and they engaged in trade with the local tribes.

When, in February 1686, the Indiaman Stavenisse ran aground, the survivors who were able decided to make an overland attempt to reach Cape Town. Those who were left behind on the beach were joined by two English crewmen of the Good Hope, which had been wrecked almost a year previously. Together they built a ship the Centaurus, which safely reached Table Bay.⁴ The Cape Governor, Simon van der Stel, keen to know more about Natal, despatched the Centaurus, which he had purchased, to examine the area more closely. In the following year, 1688, Van der Stel sent the Noord to reconnoiter the

³Ibid., p. 15.

⁴For a fuller account see Ibid., pp. 17-18.

coast. The Noord entered Durban Bay in January 1689, remaining for about a week. Van der Stel, delighted with the results of this expedition, ordered the Noord to return to the Bay, and on behalf of the Dutch East India Company, to stake a claim to the land. In 1717 the Council of Seventeen, in Amsterdam, instructed the Cape Governor to erect a trading station if prospects for profitable trade appeared to exist. The commander, Van Taak, who was sent by the Governor, however, apparently became discouraged and did not land at Port Natal.⁵

In 1824, four men, including James Saunders King and Francis George Farewell, entered Port Natal intent on trading with the native people who had, by this time, come to be dominated by the Zulus, under their chief Chaka. Having achieved their objective and realising the potential of the port, King and Farewell wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Bathurst, hoping to stimulate the Government's interest in the area.⁶ Whilst they were waiting for a reply a group of men, including Henry Francis Fynn, Ogle, Jantje Michael a Hottentot, and Fredrick an African interpreter, sponsored by a number of Cape Town residents, set sail for Port Natal on board the Julia in April 1824.

Determined to meet Chaka, Fynn set out with Jantje Michael and a guide. In June Fynn learnt of the arrival

⁵For a fuller account see Ibid., pp. 18-21.

⁶For a fuller account see Ibid., pp. 24-27.

of the Antelope, bringing Farewell, Halstead, Cane, Pietersen, Hoffman and others to the port. Joined by Farewell and Pietersen, Fynn was given an audience by Chaka. During their visit the Zulu leader granted an area of land thirty five miles along the coast and a hundred miles inland to F.G. Farewell and Company. On August 27, 1824, Farewell raised the Union Jack, and, in the name of Great Britain, took possession of the Port.⁷

In view of the predominantly English complexion of the future community, it is worth noting that amongst the thirty five Whites in the country only three were Britishers. Most of them were Dutch, with three Germans, two Frenchmen and one Dane.⁸

In October 1825 Lieutenant King returned to Natal, bringing with him the first Jew to be associated with Durban, Nathaniel Isaacs.

Nathaniel Isaacs.

Nathaniel Isaacs was born in Canterbury, England in 1808. Little is known about his father who was from Chatham and who died when Nathaniel was still young. His mother, Lenie, was the daughter of Nathaniel Solomon of Margate and his wife Phoebe Mitz, a Dutch

⁷For a fuller account see Ibid., pp. 29-30.

⁸Ibid., p. 30

Jewess.⁹ In October 1822 Nathaniel Isaacs joined his maternal uncle, Saul Solomon, at St. Helena, where for nearly three years he was employed in the counting house of his uncle's firm. When the brig Mary, commanded by Lieutenant James Saunders King, arrived at St. Helena with goods for Saul Solomon, Isaacs befriended King and was invited by him to join the brig on its voyage to Cape Town. Upon their arrival in Cape Town in June 1825, distressing rumours regarding the fate of Farewell and his expedition were circulating in the Colony, and King agreed to journey to Natal in order to determine what had happened to Farewell. Nathaniel Isaacs accompanied King on this voyage. At the start of this trip he began compiling a diary in which he recorded highlights of the voyage from Cape Town to Natal, as well as a detailed account of his travels and observations, over a period of seven years, in Natal. In terms of his contribution to Natal, this diary, which he had published in London in 1836, under the title, Travels and Adventure in Eastern Africa, Descriptive of the Zoolus, Their Manners, Customs, Etc., Etc., with a Sketch of Natal, is probably Isaacs most

⁹Louis Herman, "Nathaniel Isaacs a Biographical Sketch", in Nathaniel Isaacs, Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa Descriptive of the Zoolus, Their Manners, Customs With a Historical Sketch of Natal. Newly revised and edited by Louis Herman and Percival R. Kirby (Cape Town, 1970), p. IX.

enduring legacy, providing us as it does with much of the early history of Natal.

The Mary, reached Port Natal on October 1, 1825, where it was wrecked whilst crossing the bar. Upon safely reaching the shore the crew resolved to build another vessel, which was named the Elizabeth and Susan, and was launched in March 1828.¹⁰ Isaacs and King learnt that Farewell was alive, and that he had gone to visit Chaka, from whom he returned on October 20, five days after the return of Francis Fynn from a trading expedition with the Pondo.

King, Farewell and Fynn, having decided to visit Chaka, left Isaacs in charge of Farewell's establishment. During the absence of his friends, from October 26 - November 11, Isaacs spent his time trying unsuccessfully to heal a sick man. He also visited the kraal of Mataban, the chief of the Amathuli, who had been subdued by Chaka.¹¹

Upon listening to King's account of his journey to Chaka's kraal, Isaacs desire to visit the Zulu monarch was only strengthened. He willingly agreed to supervise a group of Farewell's servants, who were to collect and convey the ivory which Chaka had given to the earlier

¹⁰ Nathaniel Isaacs, Travels and Adventure in Eastern Africa Descriptive of the Zoolus, Their Manners, Customs With a Sketch of Natal, p. 117

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 24-26.

party. Accompanied by Thomas Halstead and sixty servants Isaacs set out on November 29, 1825, on what was to be the first of many journeys which he would make to the royal residence.¹² Having collected the ivory, Isaacs, Halstead and six of the servants continued to Chaka's kraal where, on December 3, they were given an audience by the King. On the following day, Isaacs presented his gifts of bangles and sweet oil to the Zulu monarch who requested him to rub his leg with oil, "an honour to which none but his subjects of rank were admitted".¹³ After two further interviews with the King, Isaacs and his party set off on their return journey, arriving back at the settlement on December 12, 1825.¹⁴

In February 1826, accompanied by Fynn, George Biddlecomb and a group of servants, Isaacs set off on his second visit to Chaka.¹⁵ In the course of that year Isaacs paid two more visits to Chaka. On his journey in July 1826 he was accompanied by John the Hottentot, the Zulu interpreter Fredrick, and ten servants.¹⁶ On his visit to the Zulu leader in November 1826 James King's servant Nasapongo and some other servants travelled with him.¹⁷

¹²Ibid., p. 31.

¹³Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 71.

Lieutenant King, who had left Natal during Isaacs' second visit to Chaka, returned in October 1826, and together with Isaacs began, with Chaka's permission, to trade for ivory. Having joined up with Lieutenant King, Mr. Hatton and George Biddlecomb at Chaka's kraal, in December 1826, Isaacs then set off for a tour of the Natal interior.¹⁸

In January 1827 Isaacs found himself, together with James King, once again in the presence of the Zulu leader, who promised King a grant of land on the Umlallas River and the exclusive right to trade in his dominions. On the following day Isaacs accompanied King to the river, where on the most conspicuous sand-hill, he raised the Union Jack.¹⁹

During Isaacs' and King's excursion, two of Farewell's Hottentot servants, Michael and John, who had been left at the Royal kraal violated a chief's wife, which act so angered Chaka that he proposed to kill all the white residents of Natal. Fynn and Isaacs returning to Chaka's kraal, found themselves unable to quell the King's anger. In order to appease him they were forced to accede to his demand that they lead an attack against the Umbatio tribe, who had entrenched themselves in a rocky stronghold from where they were able to repel every Zulu attack. Whilst welcoming this opportunity

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 77-79.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 86.

to save their lives, Fynn and Isaacs nevertheless found the thought of fighting an innocent people extremely painful. Rather reluctantly Isaacs and a small party joined up with the Zulu army. After two encounters with Isaacs and his party the Umbatio tribe surrendered and agreed to become tributary to the Zulus.

In the face of later criticism over his participation in the battle against the Umbatio, Isaacs justified his actions and those of his party by explaining that, "our presence was the means of saving them from annihilation, and not in contributing to it: the terror of our arms saved the spilling of human blood, and the horrible massacre that always accompanied Chaka's wars".²⁰

During the fighting Isaacs was wounded by a spear, which entered his back. Whilst it caused him considerable discomfort, it nevertheless strengthened his reputation as a soldier. The Zulu warriors, surprised by the bravery of the white men, honoured Isaacs with the name "Tombooser" or "the brave warrior who was wounded at Ingoma".²¹ It was with this title that Isaacs was addressed by Chaka, when he and Lieutenant King went to the royal residence to pay their respects.

²⁰Ibid., p. 99.

²¹Ibid., p. 96. For a fuller account of this episode see Ibid., pp. 87-95.

Upon King's departure from the Zulu capital Isaacs explored the Natal interior, in search of ivory. He was, in fact, the first white person to visit the chief uNzwakele, a vassal of Chaka, who had previously only encountered white people at Chaka's residence.²²

Whilst on a visit to the Zulu monarch during July 1827, King and Isaacs first learnt of Chaka's intention to send a delegation to meet the British sovereign George IV. In February 1828 these plans were formalised. Chaka decided that the chief Sotobe, a servant Kati and his interpreter Jacob should accompany James King, in whose hands was placed the responsibility for the welfare and protection of the delegation.²³ Nathaniel Isaacs agreed to accompany King and the Zulu delegation, and they sailed for the Cape on board the Elizabeth and Susan on April 30, 1828. After spending three months at Algoa Bay, where the Government officials were unwilling to recognise King as Chaka's representative, or to establish diplomatic relations with the Zulu ruler, Lieutenant King and the Zulu emissaries returned to Natal on board H.M.S. Helicon. Isaacs followed them on board the Elizabeth and Susan. During his visit to the Royal kraal in August 1826, Isaacs presented Chaka with the gifts which he had brought from Algoa Bay.²⁴

²²Ibid., p. 100.

²³For a fuller account see Ibid., pp. 106 - 107 and pp. 117 - 118.

²⁴For a fuller account see Ibid., pp. 119-130.

Shortly after returning to the small white settlement at the port, Isaacs and Henry Francis Fynn, who had remained in Natal as a hostage for Chaka's delegation, witnessed the death of James King on September 7, 1828, his remains later being interred on the Bluff.²⁵ Upon receiving the news of King's death Chaka sent word that he now recognised Nathaniel Isaacs as the spokesman for the white settlers, and summoned him to his residence:

As a remuneration for the presents he had received from me, as well as for my attention to his people on the last mission, and for the wound I had received in the war in Ingoma, he created me a chief of Natal, and granted to me the tract of country lying from the river Umslukee to the river Umlass, a space of twenty five miles of sea coast and one hundred miles inland, including the bay, islands and forests near the point, and the exclusive right of trading with his people...²⁶

With the assassination of Chaka on September 24, 1828, the white settlers of Port Natal felt their position to be insecure, despite assurances from Dingaan, Chaka's successor, to the contrary, and many resolved to return to the Cape. Isaacs, who was given command of the Elizabeth and Susan, left the port on December 1, 1828, intent on settling his late friend's estate and disposing of their joint property.²⁷ However the ship

²⁵Ibid., p. 136.

²⁶Ibid., p. 142.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 160-162.

was seized by the Collector of Customs in Algoa Bay and sold under the British Registry Act. Isaacs, receiving no compensation then proceeded to Cape Town, where he tried in vain to win support from the authorities for his plan to develop Natal for commerce and colonisation. In March 1829, he returned to St. Helena in order to regain his health which had been failing. After a year, having fully recovered, Isaacs accepted a passage to Port Natal, aboard an American brig. Upon his arrival in Natal on April 1, 1830, Isaacs learnt of the death of Farewell and a party of settlers at the hands of Chief Cataoe of the Amaquabi tribe.²⁸

When Dingaan heard of Isaacs arrival in Natal he immediately invited him to his residence. Isaacs, Fynn and about fifty servants departed for the Royal kraal on April 18, where they remained from April 29 - May 2, and where they were well received by the king.²⁹

Fynn and Isaacs entered into a business agreement. They decided that Fynn would trade with the Enthangwini, whilst Isaacs would confine his operations to the Zulus and it was not long before Isaacs found himself again at Dingaan's kraal, where he remained from May 28 - June 15.³⁰

Isaacs and Fynn took a large number of native people

²⁸Ibid., pp. 163-169.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 174- 181.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 181-188.

under their protection and upon establishing his own kraal at Mount Pleasant³¹ Isaacs was obliged to draw up a system of laws and regulations to control the people who had attached themselves to his kraal. Accordingly a committee was made up of leading members of every party was established to deal with all matters relating to the community, its decisions being subject to Fynn's and Isaacs' approval. In addition a tribute system was introduced and members of the committee were made responsible for collecting and delivering the bushels of corn which were demanded as tribute under the system.³²

Isaacs paid a further visit to Dingaan during December 1839.³³ In the new year whilst on a trading expedition Isaacs came to rest at the kraal of Mkhonto, the king of the Amacele. The king offered him his sister's hand in marriage, on condition that he conform to the local customs, a condition which Isaacs felt that he could not meet.³⁴

Early in March 1831 Isaacs learnt of rumours that were circulating in Cape Town, that accused him of being an American agent who was teaching the native people how to use fire arms. These accusations were strongly denied

³¹Ibid., p. 195.

³²For a fuller account see Ibid., pp. 198-199.

³³Ibid., pp. 218-224.

³⁴Ibid., p. 246.

by Isaacs, who pointed out that his aims had always been of a commercial rather than of a political nature, and that his settlement was always open for inspection.³⁵

Fynn and Isaacs spent from April 9 - 20, 1831, at Dingaan's Kraal,³⁶ after which time the king's friendly attitude towards the white settlers changed to one of aggression. Accordingly Isaacs and the other white settlers prepared to leave the port. On June 24, 1831, Isaacs departed on the brig St. Michael, journeying to Delegoa Bay, Madagascar, Johana Island and Brava from where the St. Michael sailed to St. Helena, where Isaacs disembarked on March 2, 1832. Shortly after Isaacs' departure Jacob, the Zulu translator who had caused the friction between Dingaan and the white settlers, was executed, and Isaacs' partner Fynn returned to Natal to take possession of his and Isaacs' kraal.³⁷

The King expressed to Mr. Fynn particular solicitude for my return, and intimated a wish that I should be written to on the subject, for that he should not feel easy until he saw me again. This being promised and my return pledged, I have made up my mind to redeem his pledge at an early opportunity as my arrangements in Europe will permit, because I feel that Natal offers advantages for colonisation which ought not to be disregarded.³⁸

³⁵For a fuller account see Ibid., pp. 256-259.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 260-268.

³⁷Ibid., p. 283.

³⁸Ibid.

Isaacs, despite his plan to the contrary, never did return to Natal. Upon arriving at St. Helena he tried to persuade the British Government to take over Natal. In an effort to win support for his scheme he had six installments of his journal published in the South African Commercial Advertiser in 1832. He not only tried to engage the interest of the Cape merchants, but also corresponded with friends in London.

During a visit to Cape Town in September 1832, Isaacs was unable to gain an interview with the Governor. Nevertheless the letter which he sent to the Governor, which included a covering letter to the Cape Colonial Secretary, containing information regarding Natal and it's potential, was transmitted to the British Government. When, two years later, the Cape merchants, who favoured the annexation of Natal, petitioned the King-in-Council, reference was made to these documents which the Cape Governor had received from Isaacs and had forewarded to Britain.

Before he left for England, at the end of 1832, Isaacs again wrote to the Cape Governor and requested, in the event of Britain occupying Natal during his absence, that he be given preference to a certain piece of land. In the reply which Isaacs received from the Colonial Secretary, the Governor explained that he could not comply with the request, since the land was not in the Colony, and that furthermore if the land were to come under the British it would be disposed of by public auction. Isaacs, however, was still hopeful that a

British occupation of Natal could be brought about. He now sought to achieve his objective through the establishment of a joint stock company entitled, "The South African Company for Commerce and Agriculture at the Bay of Natal", but this scheme, too, failed to achieve fruition.³⁹

In London Isaacs became a partner in the firm G.C. Redman & Co., and a part owner of their two merchant ships engaged in trade off the West African coast. Whilst Redman remained in London Isaacs settled in Sierra Leone from where he helped conduct the affairs of their shipping business. At one time little was known about Isaacs' life in West Africa and it was generally believed that, except for occasional visits to England, he spent the remainder of his life in Africa, where he was assumed to have died.⁴⁰ Later research, however, has cast considerable light on this period of his life.

A letter addressed to Fynn from Sierra Leone, dated September 17, 1840, shows that Isaacs had by this time returned to Africa.⁴¹ In this letter, Isaacs spoke of

³⁹Louis Herrman, "Nathaniel Isaacs, A Biographical Sketch" in Ibid., pp. XII-XIII.

⁴⁰Louis Herrman, A History of the Jews in South Africa : From the Earliest Times to 1895 (London, 1930), pp. 81-82.

⁴¹P.R. Kirby, "Unpublished Documents Relating to the Career of Nathaniel Isaacs the Natal Pioneer", Africana Notes and News, XVIII, No. 2, (Johannesburg, 1968), p. 64.

the promise which he saw in Natal, and he also suggested forming a company in order to exploit Natal. But nothing came of this, and in 1844 Isaacs sold his properties in Freetown and bought Matacong Island.

At Matacong Isaacs not only achieved influence but also amassed much wealth, partly through his involvement with slave traders. This led to his clash with the Governor of Sierra Leone, Sir Arthur Kennedy, and his hurried return to England in 1854.⁴² Isaacs had left his partner Thomas Reader at Matacong, which he again visited in 1859 and 1860. In 1863 Isaacs visited Freetown, but he never returned to live permanently in West Africa.

The discovery by Dr. Herrman of Nathaniel Isaacs' will, drawn up in Liverpool, by Nathaniel Isaacs of Liverpool in the County of Lancaster in England, Merchant, on 4 April, 1868, has revealed that Isaacs, in fact, died in Egremont, Cheshire, England on January 26, 1872.⁴³

Among the legatees who were mentioned in his will were his children by his first wife, Phoebe Anne Manning and Brown Hilton Isaacs; and by Mrs. Mary Ann Lightburn, his second wife, Emily Eunice Isaacs and Alfred Isaacs.

⁴²For a fuller account see the precis by P.R. Kirby ("Further Facts Relating to the Career of Nathaniel Isaacs, the Natal Pioneer", Africana Notes and News, XVIII, No. 6 (Johannesburg, 1969), p. 239.) of Christopher Fyfe, A History of Sierra Leone (O.U.P. 1962), pp. 275 et seq.

⁴³P.R. Kirby, "Unpublished Documents Relating to the Career of Nathaniel Isaacs the Natal Pioneer" p.

Isaacs' will makes no mention of his children who were born in Natal, and whom he left there when he departed in 1832. In his journal, which he revised before its publication in 1836, Isaacs sharply criticised the missionary Stephen Kay, the author of Travels and Researches in Caffraria, who alleged that white settlers in Natal had adopted the native people's practice of concubinage.⁴⁴ Yet, in a letter addressed to Fynn, written from Cape Town in December 1832, Isaacs confirms that whilst living in Natal he fathered an illegitimate son.

With reference to the only letter I have recorded from you dated 10th August, I find your promise to get my little fellow Porter and place him under the superintendence of Mr. Boyce at the Missionary Station. I trust, dear Fynn, that you will not neglect this promise, and have him baptised as Henry Porter Isaacs; any reasonable expense on his account that you may deem expedient you may always rely on getting disbursed from me. This will empower and authorise you to act on my behalf towards my dear little boy, and I beg of you to attend particularly to his education, as when he gets old enough I intend to either give him a trade or take him with me. I cannot forget this duty although an illegitimate child, and had he been old enough I should have snatched him from his mother's arms when I left Natal.....⁴⁵

Research into the unpublished diary of Captain Robert Garden of the 45th Regiment has not only revealed the

⁴⁴Nathaniel Isaacs, Travels and Adventure in Eastern Africa Descriptive of the Zoolus, Their Manners, Customs With a Sketch of Natal, pp. 97-98.

⁴⁵P.R. Kirby, "Unpublished Documents Relating to the Career of Nathaniel Isaacs, the Natal Pioneer", pp. 67-68.

fate of Henry Porter Isaacs, but has also proved that whilst in Natal, Isaacs also fathered two daughters. In Garden's entry for Sunday, 19 June, 1851, it is recorded that at the American Missionary Society on the Afalca:

Whilst preparations were being made for breakfast, two Caffir women and a boy bearing two bowls of Caffir beer came to pay their respects from a neighbouring kraal and after them came the daughter of one of them, the child of a Mr. Isaacs formerly living in Natal in the time of Chaka, an author of work on Natal and the Zulu. She is married to a Caffir, a native teacher at one of the missionary establishments in Natal. It is singular that with such strong evidence of white blood in her veins she should have allied herself to a Caffir instead of to one of her own caste. But the reason assigned is that a brother and sister by the same father having died from neglect and ill usage whilst in the service of some white people, she renounced all connection with the civilized part and allied herself to the savage part of the community.⁴⁶

In one of his articles, Kirby relates that Nathaniel Isaacs had a bachelor cousin aged ninety eight living in Durban in 1927, who recalled hearing Nathaniel Isaacs speak of his adventures in Natal. When interviewed this man refused to permit his surname to be published and insisted on being called "Mr. S.". However, Kirby notes, "it is manifest that it (his name) was Solomon, since he and Nathaniel had two uncles named Saul and Ben,

⁴⁶Ibid., Further Facts Relating to the Career of Nathaniel Isaacs, the Natal Pioneer, p. 238.

and his uncle Saul had been in St. Helena."⁴⁷

From papers that have been made available to me, I am able to confirm that this man's name was, in fact, Solomon. He had been a prominent freemason in England and had been made a co-executor for an orphaned child. His fellow executor disappeared with the funds and Solomon felt honour bound to restore the sum in full, which practically bankrupted him. He then immigrated to Durban and worked as a builder into his late seventies. Even after his retirement he continued to live by himself, and attended synagogue regularly.⁴⁸

BEGINNINGS OF URBAN ORGANISATION

From 1832 the number of new settlers increased, mainly as a result of such 1820 Settlers as Dick King and Alexander Biggar arriving in Port Natal. In 1834 the settlers drew up 'The Petition of Merchants and Others for a Settlement at Port Natal', which was sent to the Commander-in-Chief of the Cape of Good Hope, and addressed to the King-in-Council. In this petition, the settlers related the history of the territory, and

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 242

⁴⁸From the personal recollections of Otto Ballin, in the Archives of the Council of Natal Jewry.

called on the King to make the necessary preparations for occupying the port and the territory, and for forming a Government establishment and adequate military force at Port Natal.

However, in his reply in March 1835, Sir Benjamin D'Urban explained to the petitioners that in view of the finances of the Cape, the Government felt that it could not recommend to the King the establishment of a new Settlement, which would of necessity create additional expenses.

Meanwhile in February 1835, Captain Alan Gardiner had arrived in Natal to engage in missionary activity. Having been made unwelcome at Dingaan's capital, he had returned to Port Natal, where the white settlers had invited him to open a mission station, which he did, calling it the Berea.⁴⁹ In May 1835 Gardiner met Dingaan at Congella, where the Zulu monarch, "consented to waive all claims to the persons and property of every individual now residing in Port Natal".... while still"regarding them as his subjects liable to be sent for when ever he thought proper"....⁵⁰

A month later on June 23, 1835, the settlers met at the home of F. Berkin where, without Government backing,

⁴⁹See, inter alie, Eric Rosenthal, Schooners and Skyscrapers, pp. 46-47.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 47.

they drew up plans to lay out the new town of D'Urban and to establish regulations. That same day the settlers also decided to raise funds for the erection of a Church. In order to help attain the necessary amount, three firms were asked to open lists, Drummonds, Bankers of Charing Cross, London, Dixon and Burnies of Cape Town and Messrs. B. Norden and Maynard of Grahamstown.⁵¹

Benjamin Norden of the last mentioned company was one of the Jews who had come to South Africa as an 1820 Settler, attached to Willson's party. For three years he farmed in the Albany district before moving to Uitenhage, where he became involved in trading in ivory. Having moved to Grahamstown in 1829, he worked as an auctioneer and later a merchant, and became increasingly active in public affairs. In 1834 he was one of those who contributed to the building fund of the Settler Church at Bathurst, and three years later he worked with the committee in Grahamstown, formed for building the first jetty at Port Elizabeth.

Whilst involved in the ivory trade Norden had come to be attracted by Natal's untapped resources. Realising the commercial value to Britain of Natal, he was one of the first advocates of the extension of British rule

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 51-53.

into the territory.⁵²

On one of his expeditions to Natal, in December 1835, Benjamin Norden was entrusted with a letter from the Cape Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, to the Zulu king Dingaan.⁵³

In about 1840 Norden moved to Cape Town, where, until his retirement to Britain in 1875, he worked for the Jewish community, and was also prominent in the civic affairs of the town. The first recorded Jewish congregation met at his home on the eve of the Day of Atonement in September 1841, and upon the establishment of a permanent congregation called Tikvath Israel, Norden was appointed one of it's Elders.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, in D'Urban attempts by the settlers to get the area between the Tugela and Umzimkulu Rivers recognised as a Colony, named Victoria in honour of the Queen, met with failure. Whilst the Colonists awaited a change in attitude from London, they were encouraged by the arrival of the Voortrekker leader Piet Retief and his advance party, who arrived at the Port on October 19, 1837.⁵⁵

⁵²L. Herrman, A History of the Jews in South Africa, p. 110.

⁵³Deborah Abelson, "In Natal", in The Jews in South Africa A History, ed. Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz (London, 1955), p. 336.

⁵⁴For a fuller account see Louis Herrman, A History of the Jews in South Africa, pp. 111, 114-117, 134-137, 142-147 and 160.

⁵⁵Eric Rosenthal, Schooners and Skyscrapers, p. 58.

The prospect of large numbers of Voortrekkers settling in and around D'Urban gladdened the small white settlement, and plans were made to meet again with Retief on his return from Dingaan.

In the interim, town planning regulations having been drawn up on June 23, 1835, it was decided to hold a sale of land in D'Urban. This took place on November 21, 1837. "The stands, 150 feet by 300 feet brought relatively good prices. No. 1 went to Mr. G. Britton for £10.".⁵⁶

George Britton had come from Britain to the Cape Colony in 1817 as a trooper in the 21st Light Dragoons. After his discharge from the army he had received permission to remain in the Cape. He was one of the earliest Jewish settlers in Port Elizabeth, where he was engaged in trading and elephant hunting. "We hear of him in Natal in 1835, and subsequently as being interested in the coastal trade connecting Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town".⁵⁷

In 1845 George Britton was involved in a business in Main Street, Port Elizabeth. Three years later, though he probably continued to live in Port Elizabeth, he joined Tikvath Israel, the Hebrew Congregation in Cape Town, which at this time was the only established Jewish

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 76.

⁵⁷Louis Herrman, A History of the Jews in South Africa, p. 206.

congregation in South Africa:

Among the new members was an old settler George Britton, who had been engaged in trading with the natives on the Eastern Frontier for twenty years and more, and who was amongst the early British adventurers who founded Durban in 1835.⁵⁸

This quote, which refers to Britton's membership of Tikvath Israel, is the only reference that I have found which credits him with having been one of the founders of Durban in 1835. Although I have been unable to confirm this it is, nevertheless possible that this is in fact correct, since we know that in 1835 he was active in Natal.

In 1851, when Tikvath Israel was in need of funds, it called on its members and sympathisers, including George Britton, who was now in St. Helena. He had probably become a partner in the firm Solomon, Gideon, and Moss, having been closely associated with the Moss family.⁵⁹

ANNEXATION OF PORT NATAL⁶⁰

When news of the death of Piet Retief and his party, who were on a second visit to Dingaan in January 1838,

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 133-134.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 206.

⁶⁰ C.F.J. Muller, "The Period of the Great Trek, 1834 - 1854", and M.C. van Zyl, "Natal, 1845 - 1902", in 500 Years A History of South Africa, ed. C.F.J. Muller, pp. 137-146., and 184-187.

reached D'Urban, a group of thirty whites under Robert Briggar, accompanied by some Hottentots and approximately one thousand five hundred refugee Zulus, left Port Natal to go to the assistance of the Voortrekkers. This party was ambushed by Dingaan's army at the Tugela River, and only four whites and about a third of the Zulus managed to escape.

As Dingaan's armies approached D'Urban the settlers evacuated the town and boarded the Comet, which happened to be lying at anchor. From the safety of the brig they looked out on the destruction of their settlement. After nine days the Zulu withdrew, leaving such havoc behind them that only a few settlers had the inclination to remain, the remainder sailing on to Lourenco Marques.

The Cape Governor, Sir George Napier, realising the advisability of occupying Port Natal, wrote to the Colonial Secretary about the matter. At the same time he made preparations for transporting troops to the Port. The vessel the Helen, which served as a troopship, and the H.M.S. Leveret reached Durban on December 3, 1838. Thirteen days later, while the Voortrekkers, under Andries Pretorius, were engaged in what was to become known as the Battle of Blood River, the British troops raised the Union Jack at Port Natal and declared martial law.

At the first session of the Volksraad of the Republic of Natalia, held in Pietermaritzburg on July 31, 1839, Pretorius addressed a letter to Captain Jarvis, the head of the British garrison which had remained in order to

attain peace between whites and Zulus. As Governor Napier had declared the British occupation of the Port to have been for the purpose of restoring peace with the natives, this objective having now been achieved, Pretorius in his letter, requested Jarvis to leave the Port. As instructions had arrived from London to evacuate Port Natal the British troops left D'Urban on Christmas Eve on the Vectis.⁶¹

The Trekkers now established their authority in Port Natal, and appointed F. Roos as landdrost. Unknown to them, Lord Russell, the British Prime Minister, had decided to resume the military occupation of Port Natal. When the Natalia Volksraad in a gesture of friendliness called on the Queen to acknowledge their independence, Sir George Napier, on December 2, 1841, not only refused their request, but also announced his intention to re-occupy Natal.

In March 1842 Captain Thomas Charlton Smith left Umtata under orders to re-occupy D'Urban. Expecting assistance from Holland and from Jan Mocke in Transorgania the Trekkers decided to meet Smith in a show of strength, whilst refusing to acknowledge Britain's claim to supremacy. In May 1842 Smith and his party were met by a Trekker delegation at the Umbilo River with a letter

⁶¹Eric Rosenthal, Schooners and Skyscrapers, p. 63.

protesting against the entry of the British into Natal. Smith, having refused to accept the letter, then established a laager at the Old Fort.

Meanwhile, Commandant General Pretorius and a party of Trekkers arrived at Congella where, daily, they were joined by other Trekkers. Having received an ultimatum from Pretorius either to leave Natal or to fight, Smith decided on May 23, 1842 to surprise the Boers by attacking them that night at Congella. The Trekkers, however, were not caught off guard, and pursued the British to the Old Fort. They then returned to Congella.

George Christopher Cato, who had been called upon by Smith to get relief from Grahamstown, sent Dick King, who was accompanied by his servant Ndongeni, and within ten days the two men had reached their destination. The Southampton and the Conch relieved Smith's garrison, and on July 15 the Volksraad acknowledged the authority of Queen Victoria, in Natal. Following the relief of Durban, the British moved on to occupy Pietermaritzburg and on May 12, 1843 Natal became British, being annexed to the Cape Colony on May 31, 1844.

In December 1845, a government for Natal came into operation, the legislative authority remaining in the hands of the Cape, whilst the Lieutenant Governor and his council enjoyed executive authority in Natal. Martin West was made the first Lieutenant Governor, and served until his death in August 1849, when he was succeeded by Benjamin Pine.

On May 15, 1854, in his capacity as Lieutenant Governor

Benjamin Pine proclaimed the township of Durban to be a Borough in terms of Ordinance No. 1 of 1854 "For establishing Municipal Corporations with the District of Natal".

Under this Proclamation the boundaries of the Borough were fixed as follows:
 East, by the Indian Ocean; North, by the Umgeni River; Northwest, by the Farms Springfield, Brickfields and Cato's Manor; and South and South East, by the Lots 1 to 11 on the Umbilo River, by the Umbilo River and the Bay of Natal.⁶²

EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION - THE JEWISH ROLE

Following the British occupation, most of the Voortrekkers left Natal, thereby reducing the numbers of whites resident in the area. Despite the large scale emigration from Great Britain during the 1840's, relatively few emigrants chose to settle in South Africa, preferring to immigrate to the United States, Canada or Australia. Of those that settled in South Africa, most chose to live in the Cape, few being attracted to

⁶² Durban : Fifty Years' Municipal History, Compiled for the Durban Corporation in celebration of the Jubilee of the Borough, by W.P.M. Henderson, Assistant Town Clerk (Durban, 1904), p. 3.

Natal. Immigration, however, was essential if Natal was to prosper, and Jonas Bergtheil, a German Jew, "was the first man in Natal to act on his belief that it was the ideal place for colonisation and, incidentally for the cultivation of cotton."⁶³

Born in Bavaria, South Germany, in 1819, Jonas Bergtheil came to the Cape in 1834. In 1843 Bergtheil joined Tikvath Israel in Cape Town, and soon thereafter sailed for Natal, arriving in Durban, which at the time consisted of only a few houses, after a nineteen day voyage.

As a partner in the firm Ph. J. Jung & Co., which he formed with Philip Jacob Jung in February 1845, Bergtheil controlled ship passage, ship freight and land agencies and established a general store in Pietermaritzburg.⁶⁴

Bergtheil's interest in land development led to his appreciation of its potential and the need for its exploitation. In partnership with Jung and some Cape Town merchants Bergtheil took over the farm Wandsbeck from Edmund Morewood, a pioneer of sugar cultivation.⁶⁵ Having experimented with cotton during 1846 Bergtheil realised that if cultivated extensively cotton could become a valuable export.

⁶³Deborah Abelson, "In Natal", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 336.

⁶⁴B.H. Kemp, Jonas Bergtheil in Natal 1843 - 1866. Unpublished Masters Dissertation (University of Natal Pietermaritzburg, 1952), p. 8.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 13.

Eliciting no response from British farmers, whom he was trying to attract to Natal, Bergtheil decided to attempt to induce poor German Jews to come to Natal and to engage in cotton production. Jonas Bergtheil returned to Germany in order to select suitable settlers, but his plan failed to materialise, through the ignorance of the potential settlers and the disparagement of the plan by certain local Jewish leaders.⁶⁶ Bergtheil subsequently decided, in 1847, to apply to the Lieutenant Governor, Martin West, for permission to establish a village on his farm, and to settle poor German workers upon his estates.⁶⁷

Returning to Bavaria Bergtheil induced forty seven families of German peasants to immigrate to Natal. On November 27, 1847, they sailed from Bremen on board the Beta, arriving in Durban on March 23, 1848.⁶⁸

Upon their arrival in Natal, each family was allocated two hundred and fifty acres of land in the Pinetown area, in what subsequently became known as New Germany. The New Germany estate comprised fifteen thousand five hundred acres. The main farm was Wandsbeck, on which the village of Westville was established.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Pages from the Jewish Past in South Africa - No. 1. "An early Natal Pioneer : Jonas Bergtheil", Jewish Affairs, May 1951, p. 23.

⁶⁷B.H. Kemp, Jonas Bergtheil in Natal 1834 - 1866, p. 10.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 22.

⁶⁹Ibid.

Bergtheil proved to be a most generous patron, not only providing the settlers with land, but also with building materials with which he helped them to build their houses, a church and a school and to lay out a cemetery. From Germany Bergtheil brought a minister and school teacher to see to the community's religious and educational needs. For almost two years Bergtheil had to also provide the settlers with their food and clothing.⁷⁰

When, in 1848, there was a fear that the chief Panda would advance with a large force on Durban, Bergtheil concerned for the safety of his settlers, applied to the Lieutenant Governor Martin West for protection. As auxillary troops were unavailable West appointed Bergtheil as Captain Commander of the settlers. Bergtheil enlisted all the able bodied men, many of whom had served in the German army, and fortified the settlement. Whilst an agreement with Panda averted the expected attack, Bergtheil, determined that his settlers should not be again caught unprepared, established Shutzenfest, or prize shooting, at New Germany.⁷¹

⁷⁰Personal Reminiscences of Jonas Bergtheil "A Jewish Pioneer in Natal", Jewish Affairs, June 1954, pp. 12-13.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 14

Although Bergtheil's scheme to cultivate cotton failed because of a shortage of reliable labour, the settlers remained and New Germany became, in time, a prosperous agricultural settlement.

Whilst his partner Jung had settled in Natal, Bergtheil had continued to live at the Cape, and between 1844 and 1849 had paid an annual visit to the area. Bergtheil returned to Natal in November 1855 after an absence of six years, and the German settlers who had been encouraged by him to settle in New Germany, showed their esteem for him by formally welcoming him to their settlement, a week after his arrival:

Early on that day a cart garlanded with flowers, in the regular German style and accompanied by a number of men of horseback arrived before the hotel in Durban, and Mr. Bergtheil accompanied by the Resident Magistrate, Mr. Fynn and his lady, proceeded towards the German settlement. Near the German House, triumphal arches were erected, plainly proving the fertility of the soil in producing such splendid flowers. Mr. Bergtheil was met by all the men belonging to the German settlement and several of the neighbours, headed by their minister Mr. Posselt.⁷²

Having been presented with a written address:

Mr. Bergtheil thanked the community in a few words and promised an answer to the address in writing. Dinner and coffee were provided here by the occupier. During the time the settlers amused themselves by firing guns, singing songs and loudly cheering. Here the cart started, accompanied by all the men, on foot and on horseback, and some distance on, from distance

⁷²The Natal Mercury and Advertiser, November 23, 1855, p. 4.

to distance, arches were erected, and Mr. Bergtheil was welcomed by the ladies of the settlement who presented him with a crown of choice flowers, attached to which was an address in poetry. This was again repeated by the children a little further on, and it was late in the evening before the whole procession reached the so called Packhuis. As soon as it came in sight it was received with loud cheering, firing of guns and ringing of bells; and, after Mr. Bergtheil had thanked the people again, he handed them an address in which he expressed his appreciation for the address and the reception.⁷³

The newspaper report concludes with an observation which perhaps is the most sound testament to Bergtheil's popularity and foresightedness:

It was a pleasant sight to see men, women and children so really pleased to see the man back again, who, eight years ago, induced them to leave their home - an incident seldom seen. Women and children seemed well dressed and in comparative wealth, to what they were when they left Germany.⁷⁴

Bergtheil never forgot the settlers and their descendents. On the occasion of New Germany's Golden Jubilee in 1898, Bergtheil sent a letter from London which was read at the anniversary celebrations.⁷⁵

Jonas Bergtheil and his partner Jung were initially so optimistic about the possibilities of cotton and land speculation that they promoted The Natal Joint Stock Cotton Cultivating Company to further their financial ambitions.⁷⁶

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵The Natal Mercury, April 21, 1898, p. 4.

⁷⁶B.H. Kemp, Jonas Bergtheil in Natal 1843 - 1866, p. 10.

Established in March 1847 at Cape Town the Company bought twenty thousand seven hundred and fifty acres of land along the north coast of the Umhloti River.⁷⁷ Unable to attract emigrants from the United Kingdom, the Company's directors, with the approval of the Cape Government, entered into an agreement with the Cape Town Emigration Officer to forward to Natal some of the Irish immigrants who had arrived at Table Bay, on board the Duke of Roxburgh. Accordingly, approximately twenty eight men, women and children were brought to Natal at the Company's expense.⁷⁸ However, owing to want of funds, proper management and efficient labour the whole scheme ended in failure. By 1849 the Natal Joint Stock Cotton Cultivating Company was defunct.⁷⁹

Having failed in his attempts to encourage large scale cotton cultivation, Bergtheil nevertheless continued with his project of promoting immigration. In December 1849 Bergtheil and his partner Jung obtained control of C.P. Landman's farms Kruysfontein and Weltevreden. The farms, comprising over twelve thousand acres on the Umlass River, approximately seventeen miles south of Pietermaritzburg, Bergtheil named New England. The farms Boshoek and Zeekoeihoek on the Umgeni River, ten miles north of Pietermaritzburg he called New Scotland.⁸⁰

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 38.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 39.

⁷⁹For a fuller account see Ibid., pp. 33-46.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 52.

Bergtheil's plan was to attract agricultural settlers with a moderate capital. However his scheme proved to be too expensive for the ordinary immigrant, and those agriculturalist immigrants who did qualify for this scheme generally chose to settle in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. This scheme also encountered opposition from the Colonial Office, the Governor at the Cape and Lieutenant Governor Pine, who felt that there was too much attention to profit and nothing philanthropic about it.⁸¹ Although in December 1850, a small party did sail in the Indiaman John Line for New England, they did not prosper.⁸² The failure of this project compelled Bergtheil to have the land transferred or sold to the Natal Land Company.⁸³

Whilst resident in Natal Bergtheil also became involved in public affairs. In 1856 plans were made for Natal's secession from the Cape Colony and the introduction of a legislative council of four officials and twelve elected members. The first session of the Legislative Council in Pietermaritzburg was opened in March 1857. Among the twelve elected members was Jonas Bergtheil, who together with Joseph Henderson,

⁸¹For a fuller account see Ibid., pp. 57-66.

⁸²Alan F. Hattersley, More Annals of Natal With Historical Introductions and Notes (Pietermaritzburg, 1936), pp. 111-112. Cited in B.H. Kemp, Jonas Bergtheil in Natal. 1843-1866, p. 65.

⁸³B.H. Kemp, Jonas Bergtheil in Natal 1843-1866, p. 66.

represented Pietermaritzburg.

His election manifesto reflects his concern for the development of Natal and his interest in the welfare and just treatment of all its inhabitants:

...Upon the Kafir, or Native Labour Question, I think that in framing laws for the Natives, we must above all things be just and use such endeavours to improve their social position, from time to time as may be consistent with the welfare of the Colony, bearing in mind always that this welfare is unavoidably and inseparably connected with the quality of the assistance obtainable from the Natives. At the same time in the administration of laws affecting, and in carrying out any system of Government of the Natives, it is I conceive, imperative to be firm and uncompromising in the highest degree. I should be prepared to introduce a system of general registration among the Natives... I would curtail the extent of the Native locations and give a permanent interest in the soil to each Native family within the location, granting to the European those portions which may be left at liberty on the condition of occupation alone..... Emigration from Europe ought to be encouraged by all means, and great care taken that proper and correct information, as to the Colony, be given to emigrants, and intended settlers, before their leaving home. Moreover a well founded confidence should be inspired, that the immigrant will be cared for on arrival here...

...With reference to grants for Ecclesiastical purposes, I deprecate any secular interference in religious matters; which are, in my opinion, matters of conscience to every individual, and I should, consequently, be opposed to grants (either in money or land) in favour of any religious body; but at the same time I would encourage and promote, by all possible means, the great and mentally fertilising principles of Education throughout, every part of the Colony....⁸⁴

⁸⁴The Natal Mercury and Mercantile and General Advertiser, January 15, 1857, p. 4.

Bergtheil was a member of the Legislative Council from 1857 to 1866, when he returned to England. During that time he contested four elections. The elections of 1857 and 1859 he won with Joseph Henderson and those of 1862 and 1866 with John Akerman.⁸⁵

When the Lieutenant Governor formed an Immigration Committee in 1857, Bergtheil was one of the three elective members of the Legislative Council who served on the Committee.⁸⁶ He was also the chairman of the Select Committee which considered the Charter in 1858, and a member of the Select Committee of 1865.⁸⁷

As a practising Jew, Bergtheil appreciated the fact that out of consideration for his wife and himself official parties were never given on Friday night.⁸⁸ By his actions he showed himself to be equally conscious of the feelings of other minority groups. When one of the Members of the Legislative Council, Mr. Scheepers, asked for permission to address the House in Dutch, it was Bergtheil who said that he had intended to give notice of a motion to permit Mr. Scheepers to address the House in Dutch, or to have an interpreter. He

⁸⁵B.H. Kemp, Jonas Bergtheil in Natal. 1843-1866, p. 85

⁸⁶The Natal Mercury and Durban and Pietermaritzburg Advertiser, August 27, 1857, p. 3.

⁸⁷B.H. Kemp, Jonas Bergtheil in Natal, 1843-1866, p. 109.

⁸⁸"An Early Natal Pioneer : Jonas Bergtheil", p. 23.

moved that permission be granted to Mr. Scheepers to address the House in Dutch.⁸⁹ This matter was settled by the Speaker's permitting the use of Dutch in the Legislative Council.

Whilst a member of the Legislative Council, Bergtheil, and his wife Ziporah Salomons, lost an infant daughter, Fanny Mirriam, and a son, Isaac Albert. On the monument over their grave in the Commercial Road Cemetery, Pietermaritzburg, it is recorded that:

Jonas Bergtheil, the Father of Fanny Mirriam and Isaac Albert Bergtheil, was a Legislative Councillor during the years 1856-1866, and sat in the Natal Parliament before Jews were admitted into the English Parliament. He was the pioneer of organised white immigration into the Colony of Natal.⁹⁰

In addition to his work in the Legislative Council, Bergtheil was the founder and president of the Literary and Commercial Club. When he amalgamated the Club with the Natal Society, he served as vice president with Theophilus Shepstone in 1857 and as president in 1858.⁹¹ He also served as a director of the first financial establishment in the area, the Natal Fire Insurance and Trust Company, from which was later created the Colonial

⁸⁹The Natal Mercury and Durban and Pietermaritzburg Advertiser, February 25, 1858, p. 3.

⁹⁰"A Jewish Pioneer of Natal", p. 14.

⁹¹B.H. Kemp, Jonas Bergtheil in Natal. 1843-1866, p. 113.

Bank of Natal, on which he served as one of the Board of Directors.⁹² Bergtheil also became a director of the Marine Fire Assurance and Trust Company of Natal and a director and trustee of the Natal Association for the Introduction of Woolled Sheep. He had an interest in the Natal Land Company. (Cape) and in the Natal Land and Colonisation Company of London. He was a promoter of the Natal Railway Company, which constructed the first railway in South Africa, from the Bay to the Point. Bergtheil was also a founder of the Natal Auction Company and a promoter of the Natal Boating Company.⁹³

Jonas Bergtheil was also responsible for bringing to South Africa the celebrated German traveller and explorer Karl Mauch. Mauch was one of South Africa's earliest gold prospectors and the discoverer of the Zimbabwe Ruins.⁹⁴

In 1866 Bergtheil left Natal and settled in London, where he became a warden at the Bayeswater Synagogue and involved himself in Jewish communal work. Until his death on December 26, 1901 Bergtheil retained his interest in South Africa, attending a meeting of the

⁹²The Natal Mercury, May 6, 1862, p. 1.

⁹³B.H. Kemp, Jonas Bergtheil in Natal, 1843-1866, pp. 114-115.

⁹⁴"An early Natal Pioneer : Jonas Bergtheil", p. 21.

Natal Land and Colonisation Company only a fortnight before he passed away.⁹⁵

Whilst living in the Cape and being associated in business with Jung, who was in Natal, Jonas Bergtheil was assisted by Simon Oppenheim, a German Jew, who together with his brother Hermann had settled in Cape Town. In 1844 Hermann Oppenheim had become a regular subscriber to Tikvath Israel. He was also listed as one of the founders, when preparations for the opening of the synagogue were being made in 1849.⁹⁶ Hermann Oppenheim was associated with Bergtheil in his proprietorship of land and in cotton experiments in Natal. He also helped Bergtheil promote the Natal Joint-Stock Cotton Cultivating Company which had been started at Cape Town in March 1847.⁹⁷ Periodically, Simon Oppenheim supplied Bergtheil with fairly large amounts of money. When Jung died in Natal, in November 1851, Bergtheil consulted his principal creditor, and Simon Oppenheim recommended that persons should be sent out to realise the estate in Natal. The two people who were sent were Hermann Oppenheim and his partner J.A. Jackson. Whilst acting as Bergtheil's agents and attornies responsible for winding up their friend's

⁹⁵The Natal Mercury, January 29, 1902, p. 3.

⁹⁶Louis Hermann, A History of the Jews in South Africa, pp. 122 and 144.

⁹⁷B.H. Kemp, Jonas Bergtheil in Natal, 1843-1866, p. 10.

affairs, these men, in fact, sought to establish a business of their own. Through these two men's mis-handling of his affairs, Bergtheil was finally forced to declare himself insolvent and to appear before a court, which concluded that his honesty was beyond reproach and that his case was indeed one of misfortune.⁹⁸

Under these circumstances Hermann Oppenheim had arrived in Durban in March 1852. He remained in Natal for three short periods, until his final departure in 1853. Whilst in Natal, Hermann Oppenheim became associated with the Natal Sugar Company, which was established in 1853, a year after Edmund Morewood successfully produced the first sugar cane on his northcoast farm, Compensation. A committee was created to form a Sugar Company which would:

...either purchase the canes, or manufacture them on account of the grower, at his option. It would also offer encouragement to small planters, by making advances on cane crops, having attained a certain degree of maturity. It would thus be strictly a manufacturing and merchant concern having no plantation of its own...⁹⁹

On February 15, 1853, a general meeting of the inhabitants of the district of Natal was held in Durban,

⁹⁸For a fuller account see, The Natal Independent and General Advertiser, September 14, 1854, p. 3.

⁹⁹The Natal Mercury and Commercial and Shipping Gazette, February 10, 1853, p. 3.

and the prospectus for the Sugar Company was unanimously approved and passed. H. Oppenheim (of the firm J.A. Jackson & Co.) was named one of the members of the Provisional Committee, which included Edmund Morewood and other prominent Durban citizens.¹⁰⁰

Before Hermann Oppenheim left Natal, on board the Sir Robert Peel, on May 11, 1853, he gave his power of attorney to his partner J.A. Jackson, to whom all claims against him were also directed.¹⁰¹

Four years later a report appeared in the local press regarding the vessel the Rory Brown, which was allegedly brought into the harbour through the wrong channel and was almost involved in an accident whilst crossing the bar.¹⁰² This report evinced a hasty denial by the Commander of the vessel, C.F. Oppenheim.¹⁰³

Whilst I am unable to offer proof for my idea, I do think that it is not entirely illogical to suggest that Commander Oppenheim may have been a relation of Simon and Hermann Oppenheim, who were resident in Cape Town, and who, like other immigrants to South Africa, may have induced a relative to come and join them at the

¹⁰⁰Ibid., March 3, 1853, p. 1.

¹⁰¹Ibid., March 31, 1853, p. 2.

¹⁰²Supplement to The Natal Mercury, March 28, 1857, p. 2.

¹⁰³The Natal Mercury and Mercantile and General Advertiser, April 2, 1857, p. 3.

Cape. Even if he were not a relation of Simon and Hermann Oppenheim, his surname which he had in common with two men whom we know were Jews, still leaves open the possibility that he was a German Jewish immigrant or of German Jewish origin. Thus we may have yet another Jew connected to Durban in these early days.

CHAPTER II

JEWISH RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT

(1848 - 1874)

Whilst on a visit to Liverpool in England, in 1846, Jonas Bergtheil met Joseph Charles Byrne, an Irishman, who had spent some time in the Cape and in Natal. Byrne, who knew little about the area, saw in Natal's need for settlers an opportunity to make money. The immigration scheme that he organised brought about three thousand settlers to Durban, in the years 1848 - 1851. Many of these English and Scottish immigrants later left for the Australian gold fields, but those who remained helped to found such towns as Ladysmith, Verulam and Pinetown, and contributed to the development of the economy of the area:

Although it is correct to assert that one could not expect conscious Jews to travel to the new Colony as Byrne Settlers when a goodly portion of the latter were members of a body known as the 'Natal Christian

Colonisation Society', which was under the direction of W.S. Irons, yet on pursuing the list of Byrne Immigrants one discovers suggested Jewish names such as Samuel Goldston, Arthur Gordon, Joseph and Hannah Harris, William Hart, James Jacobs, George Marcus, Charles G. Moss, John Moss, Thomas Myers and Augustus Schreiber.¹

When trying to determine the religion of these and other settlers, one has to bear in mind that official records do not always state each immigrant's religious affiliation. In many cases the religion of a particular settler can only be determined by the Church records in which his name is recorded. This does not necessarily mean that a particular person mentioned in such a record was always a Christian. As far as Jewish immigrants are concerned this may only indicate that upon arriving in Natal, which had few Jewish settlers, young single men in particular abandoned their faith and entered into one of the Christian congregations.² Since some of the immigrants remained in Natal for only a short while, and therefore do not appear in church marriage, baptismal or death records, it is difficult to determine their religious persuasion. Nevertheless this raises the possibility that some of these people with Jewish sounding names, may in fact have left Durban

¹ S.A. Rochlin, "Centenary of the Byrne Settlers. A Link with Jonas Bergtheil", Hashalom (May 1949), pp. 5 and 23.

² Cf. case of Isaiah Solomon. See below p.49.

without having assimilated.

From amongst suggested Jewish names which Rochlin took from the lists of Byrne Settlers, I have been able to determine that Joseph and Hannah Harris, who arrived on May 9, 1850 were Wesleyans; the subsequent marriages and baptisms of James Jacobs and his family, and Fredrick Jacobs and his wife, who arrived on November 2, 1849, aboard the Dreadnought, were in Wesleyan and Anglican Churches; the baptism and marriage records of the family of George Marcus, who arrived on the Aliwal, are in the Wesleyan Church, though the names of his children, Hannah, Isaac and Sinai do sound Jewish. Charles G. Moss was a Wesleyan, and the records of the baptism of Augustus Schreiber's children are in the Anglican Church.³

On examining the lists of settlers,⁴ other suggested Jewish names were, Mr. Goldsmith, who arrived on January 18, 1849 on the brig Flora. He was, in fact, the super-cargo on this voyage, and in all probability left on the same ship. Jonathan Harris and family who arrived on January 23, 1850, and were, in fact, Wesleyans. Robert Arnold Moss who arrived from London on the Edward on

³Information supplied in a letter from Mrs. S. Spencer of the Library of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, April, 1975.

⁴Ethel Campbell (Compiler), The 1848-1852 Natal Settlers Including the Byrne Settlers and their Allotments of Land in Natal (Durban, n.d.).

May 2, 1850, married twice, both times in the Anglican Church. Alex Brodie and James and Francis Brodie who arrived from Liverpool on board the Unicorn on September 17, 1850, left no indication of their religion, having all departed from Natal by January 1853.⁵

Among the settlers who arrived in Durban in 1850 were Messrs Isaiah Saul Solomon and his brother John (Jacob Saul Solomon). They travelled on the Hannah, which reached Durban on February 2, 1850. A Mrs. Solomon, who arrived in December 1850 on the Amazon, was, in all probability, the wife of John Solomon. The Solomons had emigrated from Britain to the Cape, where in 1849, "Isaiah Solomon a newly arrived settler, became a member of Tikvath Israel".⁶ When preparations were being made for the opening of the first synagogue in Cape Town in 1849, Isaiah Solomon's name was included on a list of founders.⁷

Upon arriving in Durban, the Solomons seem to have moved directly to Pietermaritzburg, where they opened the first tailor's establishment, in one of the few double storey buildings in that city, situated at the corner of Henrietta and Longmarket Streets. Later, they

⁵Information supplied in a letter from Mrs. S. Spencer of the Library of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, April, 1975.

⁶Louis Herrman, A History of the Jews in South Africa : From the Earliest Times to 1895 (London, 1930), p. 142.

⁷Ibid.

established separate businesses, Isaiah Solomon opening at 19 Church Street, and John in another building in the same street.⁸

On August 23, 1862, Isaiah Solomon was married to Miss Dinah Grant by the Venerable Archdeacon Grubb, at St. Mary's Church, Pietermaritzburg.⁹ Since we know that Isaiah Solomon had, unlike his brother, whose name does not appear on the list of members of Tikvath Israel, joined the Jewish society in Cape Town, we can only assume that it was his being cut off from a Jewish community, and his finding himself in a town with few, if any eligible Jewish ladies, which led to him marrying in a church.

Isaiah Solomon's bride was the proprietress of the first milliner's shop in Natal, which opened in 1859, in the same building as that in which Isaiah and John Solomon had their business.¹⁰ Once they were married, their two shops were dubbed Solomon's Temple, and this was the name which they later used in advertising their business. Mr. & Mrs. Isaiah Solomon had two daughters. One was born on August 16, 1863,¹¹ and the other on November 11, 1864.¹²

⁸Eric Rosenthal, "Forgotten Jewish Pioneers of Natal". Hasholom Rosh Hashonah Annual (September, 1950), p. 44.

⁹The Natal Mercury and Commercial Advertiser, August 29, 1862, p. 2.

¹⁰Eric Rosenthal, "Forgotten Jewish Pioneers of Natal", p. 44.

¹¹The Natal Mercury, August 18, 1863, p. 2.

¹²

After Isaiah Solomon's death, his wife, during the 1870's, continued in business and not only dealt in millinery but came to deal in other goods as well.

Since John Solomon was married before he left Cape Town, it is not possible to determine his wife's religious affiliations. However as his daughter, Rebecca, was married on December 19, 1871 to Thomas Francis De la Mare, of Jersey, at St. Peter's Cathedral by the Lord Bishop of Natal,¹³ it would seem that his family were raised as Anglicans. John Solomon died at his home in Church Street, aged sixty five, on April 8, 1872, only a few months after his daughter's marriage.¹⁴

On December 30, 1851, the Iris docked in Durban, bringing Martin and Moritz (Morris) Hirsch, who were from Chrenstochow in Kolm, Poland.¹⁵ These men left for Ladysmith, where they became merchants. In 1859, Morris Hirsch became sole proprietor of the business. His brother Martin, who moved to Pietermaritzburg, acted as his General Agent.¹⁶

In the following year Martin Hirsch had an announcement published calling for all claims on him to be forwarded, and all indebted to him to settle their

¹³Ibid., January 20, 1872, p. 2.

¹⁴Ibid., April 13, 1872, p. 2.

¹⁵Information supplied in a letter from Mrs. S. Spencer, April 1975.

¹⁶The Natal Mercury and Durban and Pietermaritzburg Advertiser, October 6, 1859, p. 1.

accounts by April 30, 1860.¹⁷ This would seem to indicate that Martin Hirsch was intent of leaving Pietermaritzburg, and, in fact, no later references to him appear in the local press.

Morris Hirsch on the other hand, became an auctioneer at Klipriver, his agent in Ladysmith being A. Simons.¹⁸ The last reference to Morris Hirsch appears to be an advertisement from August 1862, in which he advertised an auction sale, which he was to conduct on the Market Square, Ladysmith. This auction was to include the sale of the parsonage of the Dutch Reformed Church at Ladysmith.¹⁹

Martin and Morris Hirsch were very probably related to Mark Hirsch, the son of Aaron and Sophia Hirsch of Laindskeig, Prussia, who arrived in Natal in 1849, settling in Pietermaritzburg.²⁰ Mark Hirsch was one of those who contributed to a fund for relief of Byrne Immigrants, following the wreck of the Minerva at Port Natal on July 4, 1850.²¹

The history of the Jews from this time becomes very much a history of personalities who happened to settle

¹⁷Supplement to The Natal Mercury, April 5, 1860, p. 2.

¹⁸The Natal Mercury and Commercial Advertiser, July 11, 1862, p. 1.

¹⁹Ibid., August 8, 1862, p. 3.

²⁰Information supplied in a letter from Mrs. S. Spencer, April 1975.

²¹S.A. Rochlin, "Centenary of the Byrne Settlers. A link with Jonas Bergtheil", p. 23.

in Durban. Some remained for only a short while, whilst others became established, and were later amongst the founders of the Hebrew congregation.

By 1856, when Durban was granted full municipal management, the White population of Natal had increased to approximately eight thousand. However, it is impossible to determine how many of these townsmen were Jews. The number of White residents almost doubled in the decade following, and amongst the many new arrivals, there were a number of Jews.

On February 25, 1857 a Miss Cohen arrived in Durban from England, on the barque Admiral. Her first name and what became of her upon landing is, however, not known.²² Mr. J. Bloch, who was formerly of Pietermaritzburg and Greytown, moved to Durban in 1859. He opened a business in West Street as a General Commission Agent and Collector.²³ Quite early in 1860, Mr. Bloch moved his business to the corner of Field Street and Pine Terrace.²⁴ An advertisement relating to a private boarding house in Pine Terrace run by a Mrs. Bloch,²⁵ may possibly add weight to the suggestion that Mr. Bloch was married. Since, like advertisements relating to Mr. Bloch's business this advertisement about the boarding house ceases to appear in the press after March 1860,

²²Eric Rosenthal, "Forgotten Jewish Pioneers of Natal", p. 44.

²³Supplement to the Natal Mercury, October 13, 1859, p. 1.

²⁴Ibid., March 22, 1960, p. 2.

²⁵The Natal Mercury and Durban and Pietermaritzburg Advertiser, March 22, 1860, p. 2.

I feel that the assumption can be made that these two people were married, and left Durban together, thereby explaining why the advertisements no longer appear.

A man, who came to Natal from the Cape in about 1863, and who spent nineteen years in Durban, was Luben Jacobs.²⁶ He was a bookbinder who ran a business in Chancery Lane, and did translations from English into Dutch. He was later also connected with the staff of The Natal Mercury as a general bookbinder. At the time of his death he left a wife and four children.²⁷ Since in February 1865 Luben Jacobs lost his only child Adriaan P.M. Jacobs, aged two years, at Cape Town,²⁸ it is unclear whether he had left a wife and the deceased child in Cape Town when moving to Durban, or had upon the death of his child brought his wife to Durban, where he started a family. The fact that Luben Jacobs did translations from English to Dutch, and that his son was named Adriaan, may indicate that he was of Dutch origin. On the other hand living at the Cape for a while Luben Jacobs may have assimilated into Cape society thereby not only learning Dutch but also giving his son a Dutch name. At his

²⁶ Referred to in Eric Rosenthal, "Forgotten Jewish Pioneers of Natal", p. 45.

²⁷ Of the four children who survived him, one, a daughter was born at Rose Cottage, St. George's Street on November 27, 1872. (The Natal Mercury, November 28, 1872, p. 2.).

²⁸ Ibid., March 9, 1865, p. 2.

funeral the address at his graveside was delivered by a Presbyterian Church Minister, the Rev. Mr. Martin.²⁹ This indicates that in respect of his religion, Luben Jacobs had, by 1882, disassociated himself from his Jewish origins, despite the fact that by this time a Jewish community in Durban had been formally established.

1863 also marks the arrival in Durban of another Jew, S.H. Hart. He seems to have only remained in the town for about six or seven months. However, whilst resident in Durban, Hart acted as a Broker and Commission Agent, and had offices and a warehouse in Field Street.³⁰

The names of Aaron and Elias de Pass appear in the lists of men, qualified and liable to serve on juries, in and for the county of Durban for the years 1855 - 1860. In all these lists their place of abode is recorded as being Cape Town, their business that of merchants, and the nature of their qualification is stated as either owners or possessors.³¹ It would appear that neither Aaron nor Elias de Pass actually settled in Durban, since Cape Town is stated as their

²⁹Ibid., July 11, 1882, p. 3.

³⁰Ibid., April 7, 1863, p. 4.

³¹The Natal Mercury and Commercial and Shipping Gazette, August 8, 1855, p. 4. Supplement to The Natal Mercury, August 8, 1856, August 11, 1859, p. 2., August 29, 1861., The Natal Mercury, August 2, 1864, p. 2. and August 1, 1865, p. 6.

place of abode. However this then raises the question of how they would be able to serve on juries if they were never in Durban. Presumably, although I cannot verify this, for some part of the year, or for a period during the long time that they appear on the jury lists, Aaron and Elias de Pass must have been in Durban as well, in order to warrant their names appearing on these lists. Possibly as shippers, the de Pass's were in Durban for short periods whilst their ships were being stocked for founneys to the East and Australia. It is also possible, that, whilst their names appeared on the jury lists, as eligible for service, Aaron and Elias de Pass were never resident in Durban and their names continued to appear only by virtue of their being suitably qualified.

It was in Cape Town that Aaron and Elias de Pass made their most significant and lasting contribution.³²

Another member of the same family who made a notable contribution to the development of the sugar cane industry in Natal was Daniel de Pass. He was the son of Aaron de Pass, and he arrived in Cape Town in 1859. Two years later Daniel entered his father's firm, De Pass, Spence & Co. Amongst other things the firm was involved in the freighting of fish to Mauritius,

³²For a full account see, Louis Herrman, A History of the Jews in South Africa, pp. 123-127, 133, 135, 144, 160, 169 and 181.

from where sugar was imported for the Cape Colony.³³ Daniel de Pass decided to attempt the large scale cultivation of sugar in South Africa, since the varieties which had been introduced earlier had not been successful.

In 1868 De Pass acquired the insolvent Reunion Sugar Estate which was near Durban. Upon becoming the owner of the property he expended a vast amount of money on improvements and introduced the most advanced and most scientific methods in farming. Not only was the Reunion farm one of the first sugar estates to erect a vacuum pan,³⁴ it also secured third place "in one section of a competition for vacuum pan sugars sponsored by Messrs. Dentzelman and Lipperts, merchants of Durban".³⁵ In 1877 De Pass added a complete concreter plant to the mill's equipment as well as a tramline, on which the first locomotive to run on a sugar estate in Natal operated. Four years later he built a siding track from the Reunion will to the main line at a cost of £1,000.³⁶

Notwithstanding the damage caused by the floods of

³³Ibid., p. 194.

³⁴Robert F. Osborn, Valiant Harvest The Founding of the South African Sugar Industry, 1848-1926 (Durban, 1864), p. 287.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

1868 and the frost of 1869 the estate had its sugar on display at the International Exhibition in London in 1873.³⁷ Up until 1878 China cane was almost exclusively grown on the Reunion Estate. However, in that year smut started to destroy this variety of cane and experiments were undertaken to find a suitable alternative. Daniel de Pass experimented with cane from Egypt, Louisiana, Mauritius, the West Indies and India, and ultimately the variety from India proved to be the most successful. This new variety of cane was named Uba.³⁸ Emanating from the Reunion estate, the Uba cane is credited with having "saved the sugar industry in Natal in the second half of the 80's".³⁹

Associated with Natal through his involvement in sugar production, Daniel de Pass came to identify with his fellow Jews in Durban, principally through the fund raising endeavours which he carried out on behalf of their congregation.⁴⁰ In recognition of the services which he had rendered on it's behalf, the Durban Hebrew Congregation elected him a life member of the Congregation.⁴¹

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., p. 120.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Durban Hebrew Congregation. Fiftieth Anniversary 1884-1934 5644-5694 (Durban, 1934), p. 7.

⁴¹Ibid.

In addition to his interests in Natal, Daniel de Pass came to control the valuable Pomona Copper Mine in South West Africa. His right to work the mine was granted under protocol following the German annexation of the territory.⁴² Although he returned to the United Kingdom in 1895 Daniel de Pass did not sever his ties with Durban. Both he and his son, Alfred, reflected their link with the town and their interest in its cultural development by being amongst the first contributors of art works to the Municipal Art Gallery.⁴³ In 1920 Daniel de Pass sold his interest in the mine and his farm at Reunion, and a year later he died in England.⁴⁴

For a short while one of the managers of the Reunion Sugar Estate was De Pass's first cousin Daniel Montagu

⁴²From a letter written by Alfred de Pass to Dr. Louis Herrman, November, 1926, in the Jewish Museum, Cape Town.

⁴³The Natal Mercury, May 18, 1899, p. 7 and August 28, 1899, p. 6.

⁴⁴From a letter written by Alfred de Pass to Dr. Louis Herrman, November 1926.

Kisch.⁴⁵ Kisch was born in 1840, and was the son of Mr. & Mrs. M. Kisch of Sprouston, near Norwich in England.⁴⁶ Daniel Kisch and his brothers Benjamin and Henry followed their maternal uncle to the Cape,⁴⁷ from where Daniel journeyed to Natal in 1860.

As early as February 1862 Daniel Kisch was advertising his business in Durban as a General Commission Agent, with premises in West Street adjoining the store of Messrs. Harry Escombe & Co.⁴⁸ However, an announcement, printed under this advertisement, regarding the chopping of wood on land for which he had been appointed agent, is dated January 28,⁴⁹ and so, presumably his

⁴⁵Daniel Kisch's mother, Hannah, was the sister of Aaron de Pass. (Ibid.). It would seem that Daniel Kisch was a cousin of Tiberius Benjamin Kisch, who was also a nephew of Aaron de Pass. (Louis Herrman, A History of the Jews in South Africa, p. 236). T.B. Kisch, the son of the local district surgeon Dr. Braham Kisch, was a storekeeper in Colesburg. He was one of the men who refused an offer to buy the first diamond discovered in South Africa, not realising its value or significance. Eric Rosenthal, "On The Diamond Fields", in The Jews in South Africa A History, ed. Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz (London, 1955), p. 106). Daniel Kisch was also related to H.M. Kisch, who was the son-in-law of Aaron de Pass. (Louis Herrman, A History of the Jews in South Africa, p. 189). In 1838 H.M. Kisch had formed a partnership with John Morton in Grahamstown engaging in merchant activity. (Ibid., p. 101).

⁴⁶The Natal Mercury, April 9, 1874, p. 2.

⁴⁷From a letter written by Alfred de Pass to Dr. Louis Herrman, November 1926.

⁴⁸The Natal Mercury and Commercial Advertiser, February 20, 1862, p. 1.

⁴⁹Ibid.

business had opened at about the beginning of 1862. By March 1862 Daniel Kisch was advertising the availability of household goods, clothing, stationary, prayer books and Bibles at his store in West Street,⁵⁰ which indicates that he had decided to become a general dealer. In later advertisements he in fact described himself as a general merchant and importer.⁵¹ In June 1862 he moved to larger premises in West Street, which had previously been occupied by a Mr. Glinster.⁵² There he extended his business to include a retail grocery store.⁵³ Five months later, Daniel Kisch entered into partnership with Arthur Wilkinson.⁵⁴ It seems that his partnership endured until Daniel Kisch's departure from Natal in about mid 1863.

From 1865 Daniel Kisch was in Matabeleland, where between 1868 and 1873 he acted as chief advisor to the chief Lobengula.⁵⁵ In 1875 Kisch returned to Britain where he was married on the last day of that year to Rebecca, eldest daughter of Mr. J.A. Spiers of Wenbourne

⁵⁰Ibid., March 28, 1862, p. 1., Also April 25, 1862, p. 3., May 9, 1862, p. 1. May 30, 1862, p. 1.

⁵¹Ibid., September 23, 1862, p. 1., and September 30, 1862, p. 1.

⁵²Ibid., June 20, 1862, p. 2.

⁵³Ibid., September 30, 1862, p. 1.

⁵⁴Ibid., November 21, 1862, p. 1.

⁵⁵Louis Herrman, A History of the Jews in South Africa, p. 236.

Park Terrace.⁵⁶

Returning to South Africa, Daniel Kisch settled in Pretoria where he and his wife were two of the earliest Jewish residents.⁵⁷ By June 1874 he had become a partner in the firm Kisch and Harsant, Importers and General Merchants.⁵⁸ He later established himself as a photographer in Pretoria.⁵⁹ Despite the Grondwet of 1864, which had been enacted by the Volksraad of the South African Republic, and which limited positions in the state service to Christian Protestants, Daniel Kisch became a J.P. in 1875. Under the British regime of 1877 - 1881, Daniel Kisch served as Auditor General. It was in Kisch's home that the first religious services in Pretoria were held in 1876, and in his home a Jewish wedding was solemnised in 1878.⁶⁰ At a meeting held in April 1898 Daniel Kisch was elected to the Zionist

⁵⁶The Natal Mercury, February 24, 1874, p. 2. This wedding notice incorrectly describes the Rev. Dr. Adler, who officiated at the ceremony, as the Chief Rabbi of the Portuguese Jews, whereas in fact Rabbi Adler was the Chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazi Jews.

⁵⁷London Jewish Chronicle, December 11, 1891, p. 18.

⁵⁸The Natal Mercury, June 30, 1874, p. 2.

⁵⁹From a letter written by Alfred de Pass to Dr. Louis Herrman, November, 1926.

⁶⁰Louis I. Rabinowitz, "The Transvaal Congregations" in The Jews in South Africa, p. 174.

Provincial Committee, which led to the establishment of the local Zionist Association.⁶¹

Daniel Kisch was not the only member of his family to serve the British Government. His brother H.M. Kisch, who served as officiating under secretary to the Government of Bengal in the General Revenue Departments, was, in November 1878, appointed under secretary in the Judicial and Political Departments.⁶²

One of the early Jewish settlers in Ladysmith was Daniel Kisch's brother, Benjamin, who opened the firm of B. Kisch and Company, Grocers and General Dealers, in that town.⁶³ In May 1862 Morris Hirsch⁶⁴ announced that Benjamin Kisch had taken over the management of his business in Ladysmith, and that he had been given full power of attorney.⁶⁵ Benjamin could not, however, have remained manager of Morris Hirsch's business for very long, for in 1862, he established a photographic studio in Durban.⁶⁶ By 1870 Benjamin Kisch was running

⁶¹London Jewish Chronicle, May 6, 1898, p. 19.

⁶²The Natal Mercury, November 16, 1878, p. 3.

⁶³E. Rosenthal, "Forgotten Jewish Pioneers of Natal", p. 45.

⁶⁴See above p.50.

⁶⁵The Natal Mercury and Commercial Advertiser, May 30, 1862, p. 1.

⁶⁶The Natal Mercury, February 20, 1882, p. 1.

a photographic studio in Smith Street.⁶⁷ In September 1872 he transferred the studio to larger premises in the street, opposite the Durban Club.⁶⁸ Significantly the new photographic studio was advertised as Messrs Kisch Brothers, since Benjamin's brother, Henry, had become a partner in the firm. The Kisch Brothers' photographic business, called The Studio, was no doubt quite large, since an artist was employed "solely for the retouching of negatives and coloured photographs".⁶⁹ The Kischs' advertised photographs at what they claimed were the lowest rates, fifteen shillings per dozen, and ten shillings per half dozen.⁷⁰

In December 1875 Henry Kisch proceeded to the East Coast on business. During the few months that he was absent from Durban, Benjamin ran the establishment on his own,⁷¹ and made several additions and improvements to the business.⁷²

Four months later Messrs Kisch Brothers announced their intention of opening a branch of their photographic

⁶⁷Ibid., September 24, 1870, p. 1.

⁶⁸Ibid., September 5, 1872, p. 4.

⁶⁹Ibid., September 13, 1873, p. 4.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., December 24, 1875, p. 4.

⁷²Ibid., January 27, 1876, p. 3.

business in Pietermaritzburg,⁷³ and Henry Kisch moved to the capital to manage the studio there. On January 24, 1878, Henry Kisch was married by the Reverend G.M. St. M. Richie at St. Saviour's Church, Pietermaritzburg, to Georgina Emily, eldest daughter of George Vincent Lambert, the borough auditor.⁷⁴

By this time Benjamin, who had presumably been married before his arrival in Durban, had started a family of his own. On October 12, 1871, at Mona Place, Benjamin's wife had given birth to a daughter,⁷⁵ and three years later, on December 24, 1874, she had presented Benjamin with a son.⁷⁶ A third child, a daughter had been born on October 22, 1876.⁷⁷ Benjamin Kisch and his wife later had two more children, a son born on February 2, 1880,⁷⁸ and a daughter born on May 25, 1884.⁷⁹ Kisch's wife, Alice, appears to have

⁷³Ibid., April 8, 1876, p. 3.

⁷⁴Ibid., January 31, 1878, p. 2.

⁷⁵Ibid., October 14, 1871, p. 2. This child died thirteen months later and was buried in the Church of England section of the West Street Cemetery.

⁷⁶Ibid., December 29, 1874, p. 2.

⁷⁷Ibid., October 24, 1876, p. 2.

⁷⁸Ibid., February 3, 1880, p. 2. Reginald D. Kisch died on February 16, 1905, and is buried in the Church of England section of the West Street Cemetery.

⁷⁹Ibid., May 29, 1884, p. 2.

been of the Anglican faith, for his children were raised as Christians of that denomination.

During 1880, Benjamin Kisch apparently made plans to leave Durban, but was requested by his many friends in the town, to reconsider his decision. Upon deciding to remain in Durban, he erected new premises on part of his ground in Mercury Lane.⁸⁰ Two years later he opened a photographic studio in Pinetown, which he placed under the management of a Mr. Ingram.⁸¹

In October 1884, Henry Kisch returned to Durban, where, for three months, he ran the photographic business in Mercury Lane, before deciding in December of that year to open his photographic studio.⁸² He obtained a lease for a plot of land in West Street, next to Kettle's Store, immediately opposite the Standard Bank, and made preparations for the building of a studio there.⁸³ The studio was completed within a few months, and, in August 1885, Henry Kisch began to advertise the Cosmopolitan Photographic Studio.⁸⁴ A year later, however, Henry Kisch announced that he was starting business at the West End Studio.⁸⁵ This would

⁸⁰Ibid., October 23, 1880, p. 2.

⁸¹Extra to the Natal Mercury, June 3, 1882, p. 1.

⁸²The Natal Mercury, December 6, 1884, p. 2.

⁸³Ibid., December 13, 1884, p. 2.

⁸⁴Ibid., August 28, 1885, p. 1.

⁸⁵Ibid., July 26, 1886, p. 2.

seem to indicate that his earlier venture had met with complications and had been abandoned, or Henry Kisch, may, in fact, have simply changed the name of the Studio.

In the meantime, Benjamin, who was apparently an amateur student of Electricity and Scientific machinery decided, in November 1835, to engage:

....a first class Mechanician, who will undertake to Manufacture and Repair Electrical and Scientific Instruments such as Telephones, Microphones, Electric Bells, Morse and Needle Instruments, Induction Coils, Electric Pens, Batteries etc., etc. All Philosophical Instruments repaired and parts made such as Telescopes, Microscopes, Theodolites, Electro Plating and Gilding.....⁸⁶

This business was also run in Mercury Lane.⁸⁷ However, it is unclear as to whether it was in a separate store, or in the same store as that which housed the photographic studio.

Troubled by recurring bouts of ill health, Benjamin Kisch signalled his retirement by publishing a notice, in May 1887, which called for the settlement of all debts owed to him, and the submission of all claims by his creditors.⁸⁸ This announcement also informed the public that his brother Henry had assumed control of the Mercury Lane Establishment.⁸⁹

⁸⁶Ibid., November 3, 1885, p. 2.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid., May 25, 1887, p.2.

⁸⁹Ibid.

In 1889 Mrs. B. Kisch took over the management of The Studio in Mercury Lane, securing the services of Mr. J. Henly Smith from the Strand, London, as an Operator.⁹⁰ Mr. Henly Smith not only worked at The Studio, but also spent time executing orders in Stanger.⁹¹ The high standard of Mrs. Kisch's photographs was reflected in her winning a silver medal in the photographic section of the Durban Fine Art Exhibition in 1892.⁹²

Henry Kisch left the Mercury Lane Studio when his sister-in-law assumed the management of the business. In August 1889 he announced his intention to open his New Studio in West Street, next door to T.J. Garland, within six weeks.⁹³ However, it was only six months later that his New Studio was finally opened.⁹⁴ In 1894 Henry Kisch sold his business to Mr. W.B. Sherwood of Pietermaritzburg.⁹⁵ A year later, upon the death of Benjamin Kisch, the photographic studio in Mercury Lane was sold by public auction.⁹⁶ This sale marked the end of the commercial ties, which as photographers, the

⁹⁰Ibid., August 30, 1889, p. 1.

⁹¹Ibid., November 23, 1889, p. 2.

⁹²Ibid., July 12, 1892, p. 3.

⁹³Ibid., August 30, 1889, p. 1.

⁹⁴Ibid., February 21, 1890, p. 1.

⁹⁵Ibid., April 5, 1894, p. 2.

⁹⁶Ibid., December 13, 1895, p. 2.

Kisch brothers had maintained with the town over a period of twenty five years. Both branches of the Kisch family nevertheless continued to reside in Durban. Henry practiced as an engineer at 52 Palmer Street⁹⁷ whilst his sister-in-law did not engage in any sort of business but simply recorded her residential address, 23 Back Beach Road, in each subsequent edition of the Almanac.⁹⁸

Yet another member of the Kisch family, Seymour Kisch, was, for a short while, resident in Durban in 1884 and 1885. On September 22, 1884, Seymour Kisch went into business as an auctioneer and House Estate Agent with offices in West Street.⁹⁹ He does not, however, appear to have remained in the town for longer than a year, and his name appears in only one Natal Almanac, that of 1885.¹⁰⁰

As far as can be determined, Benjamin Kisch appears to have been the first member of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, founded in 1884, to have settled in Durban.

Another Jew who settled in Durban during the 1860's was Henry Adler. He came to Natal in 1866, having,

⁹⁷The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1896, p. 127., 1897, p. 144., 1898, p. 148., and 1899, p. 183.

⁹⁸Ibid., 1897, p. 144., 1898, p. 148., 1899, p. 183.

⁹⁹The Natal Mercury, September 20, 1884, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1885, p. 123.

together with his brother William, been a trader in Winburg in the Orange Free State. Henry Adler first settled in Pietermaritzburg, where he became a partner in the firm Adler and Escombe General Merchants, at 21 Longmarket Street, Pietermaritzburg.¹⁰¹ Later, he moved to Durban where he joined the firm Adler, Escombe and Gladstone, and in connection with his brother, William, founded the firm of Adler Brothers.¹⁰²

In 1874 Henry Adler married Bertha Baumann, the daughter of Isaac and Caroline Baumann, who had been amongst the first settlers in Bloemfontein. On their wedding day a half holiday was proclaimed in the town, as all the members of the Volksraad wished to attend the wedding of the first Bloemfontein born girl to get married in Bloemfontein. The Rev. Rapeport journeyed from Port Elizabeth specially for the occasion.¹⁰³

Together with his brother, William, who on September 18, 1872, had been married in Cape Town by Rev. G.H. Siegmann Jun. to Cecilia Elizabeth, youngest daughter of George Vegottini of Weinberg, Orange Free State,¹⁰⁴ Henry started up his General Merchant business in Smith

¹⁰¹Eric Rosenthal, "Forgotten Jewish Pioneers of Natal", p. 45.

¹⁰²South African Who's Who 1912 - An illustrated Biographical Sketch Book of South Africans, Edited and Published by the Proprietor Ken Donaldson, 4, 5 and 6 African Banking Corporation Buildings, Johannesburg. Printed by Bemrose and Sons, Limited, Derby, p. 3.

¹⁰³Myer Pencharz and Dora Sowden, "In The Orange Free State", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 324.

¹⁰⁴the Natal M

Street. In time Messrs. Adler Bros. came to be appointed agents of the City of Glasgow Life Assurance Company¹⁰⁵ and the sole agents in Natal for Lithaeur Stomach Butters and Singer's Sewing Machines.¹⁰⁶ This firm expanded its business operations through Natal, the Free State and Transvaal. On of its branches, Adler and Wolff was opened in Longmarket Street, Pietermaritzburg,¹⁰⁷ Whilst a partner in Messrs. Adler Bros. William Adler also served as a director of the Durban Tramways Company.¹⁰⁸

From an announcement regarding the birth of a daughter to William Adler on September 19, 1880, at Derby Villa, New Waldon, Surrey, England,¹⁰⁹ it would seem that William had left Durban for a short while. By 1881, however, he had returned to the town. In August 1881, Henry Adler retired from the firm of Messrs. Adler Bros., and left with his family for

¹⁰⁵Ibid., April 3, 1878, p. 3. See also The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1880, p. 244., 1881, p. 351., 1882, p. 327., 1883, p. 331., 1884, p. 361., 1885, p. 339., and 1886, p. 336.

¹⁰⁶The Natal Mercury, April 16, 1880, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., July 17, 1880, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1882, p. 327., 1883, p. 332., 1884, p. 361., 1885, p. 340., and 1886, p. 337.

¹⁰⁹The Natal Mercury, October 19, 1880, p. 2.

Bloemfontein.¹¹⁰

William Adler remained in Durban and continued to run the business that he and his brother had established. In September 1884 the store of Messrs. Adler Bros., was destroyed "by the greatest fire from which Natal has yet had to suffer".¹¹¹ Undeterred by this unfortunate setback William Adler opened temporary offices in the upper storey of Messrs. Acutt, Blaine & Co., Smith Street,¹¹² from where he continued to conduct his business.

Adler lived in Durban for another two years,¹¹³ and in this period, having twice served as a Director of the Natal Chamber of Commerce,¹¹⁴ he was made the Chamber's Chairman,¹¹⁵ thereby becoming the first Jew to attain this position. Even after leaving Durban

¹¹⁰ Ibid., August 8, 1881, p. 3. Whilst en route to Bloemfontein, the Adler's infant daughter, born on January 13, 1881, (Ibid., January 14, 1881, p. 2.), died at Cradock of inflammation of the lungs. (Ibid., August 22, 1881, p. 3.).

¹¹¹ Ibid., September 5, 1884, p. 3.

¹¹² Ibid., September 12, 1884, p. 1.

¹¹³ This is based on the fact that his name last appears in The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1886, p. 125.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 1881, p. 353. and 1883, p. 335.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 1886, p. 336.

William Adler continued to visit the town. In 1899 it is recorded that Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Adler, of Johannesburg, were staying at the Marine Hotel.¹¹⁶

Meanwhile, in 1885, Henry Adler went to the Lydenburg gold fields, and then to Barberton, where he remained until 1887, when he decided to settle in Johannesburg. During the Uitlander agitation in the Transvaal Henry Adler was one of the Vice Presidents of the Responsible Government Association, and was Vice President of the Nationalist Association.¹¹⁷ He was also a member of a deputation, which, in 1897, met with Kruger to discuss the disabilities applying to Jews in the Transvaal.¹¹⁸

The discovery of diamonds in the Cape, between 1867 and 1870, attracted hundreds of new immigrants to the Colony, and also lured settlers from other areas in South Africa, including Natal. Whilst the impact of this discovery on the Jews of Durban cannot be gauged, it is possible that some Durban Jews were amongst those who left the town in this period and moved to the

¹¹⁶The Natal Mercury, October 17, 1889, p. 4.

¹¹⁷South African Who's Who 1912 - An Illustrated Biographical Sketch Book of South Africans, p. 3.

¹¹⁸Gustav Saron, "Boers Uitlanders and Jews", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 198.

diamond fields.

One of those who left from Durban for the Diamond Fields was David Harris. In time he became one of the leading Jewish personalities in Kimberley. Attracted to South Africa by the favourable reports concerning diamonds, that were reaching London, David Harris set sail for the Cape in 1871. Upon reaching Cape Town rumours that the diamond fields were practically exhausted, prompted him to continue his journey to Natal in the hope of finding employment in Durban. When he arrived in Durban David Harris learnt that the rumours he had heard concerning the diamond fields were grossly exaggerated. Within a short while he joined a party which was leaving for the diggings. In Kimberley, David Harris gained valuable interests in the diamond fields, and eventually came to serve on the board of De Beers Consolidated Mines.¹¹⁹

By 1871 the effect of the discovery of diamonds was being felt in Durban. John Abrahams, who opened a business in Durban as a merchant and importer, with premises at West Street west end, in May 1871, noted that

¹¹⁹ He also attained a distinguished military record through service in the Gaika-Galeka War of 1877-1878, and in the siege of Kimberley during the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. Harris also came to be a respected politician. He served in the Cape Legislative Assembly, and after Union in 1910, in the South African Parliament. For a fuller account of his life and achievements see L. Hotz, "A Jewish Pioneer, Soldier and Politician", in Hasholom Rosh Hashonah Annual (September, 1851), pp. 18-43.

his business also dealt in valuing diamonds.¹²⁰ Two months later John's brother Lewis joined him in business,¹²¹ and Abrahams Brothers, as the firm came to be known, continued to advertise its merchandise until June 15, 1872.¹²² On that date their names also appeared in the press, in a list of persons qualified to vote at the election of Councillors for the Borough of Durban, Colony of Natal, for the period commencing July 15, 1872, and ending July 14, 1877. On this list their place of abode was recorded as West Street, their calling, that of merchants, and their qualification was renters.¹²³ It would seem, however, that since no more advertisements regarding their business appear in later newspapers, the Abrahams brothers left Durban in the latter part of 1872. Like many others, they may possibly have moved to the Diamond Fields.

Diamonds found at the Diamond Fields must have been obtainable in Durban, possibly from those prospectors who returned to the town. This is borne out by an advertisement which was placed in a local newspaper by an English Jew, M.J. Levy, who was a Commission Agent at 166 Frenchurch Street, London E.C., calling for

¹²⁰The Natal Mercury, May 23, 1871, p. 2.

¹²¹Ibid., July 18, 1871, p. 1.

¹²²The last advertisement referring to Abrahams Brothers is in Ibid., June 15, 1872, p. 2.

¹²³Ibid., p. 4.

rough and cut diamonds, pearls and all kinds of precious stones.¹²⁴

In July 1873, a Mr. Otto Rothschild of Port Elizabeth, who ran a General Merchants and Agents firm in that town, opened an outlet for his goods consigned to him at Durban, at the store of Mr. W.M. Smith in West Street, at the back of Messrs. Fields and Bennetts.¹²⁵ By March of the following year Otto Rothschild & Co. had opened a store in West Street where cigars, clothing, clocks, jewellery, cutlery, toiletries, lamps and statues, and general fancy goods were made available.¹²⁶ This may be an indication that Rothschild had moved to Durban, or may simply mean that the firm of Otto Rothschild had expanded by opening up in Natal, and Rothschild may have remained in Port Elizabeth. In April 1874, similar wares were advertised, and it was announced that monthly shipments of foreign cigars to Durban had been arranged.¹²⁷ Since no more advertisements regarding Otto Rothschild & Co. appear after this date it may be assumed that the store in West Street was closed. If Rothschild had come to Durban, it is possible that he had returned to Port Elizabeth.

¹²⁴Ibid., May 16, 1871, p. 4.

¹²⁵Ibid., July 24, 1873, p. 1.

¹²⁶Ibid., March 3, 1874, p. 1.

¹²⁷Ibid., April 16, 1874, p. 1.

George Cohn, who arrived in Durban in 1874, sold a furniture cream which was prepared by him, and which was made available through all chemists and grocers, at one shilling a bottle. All those wishing to purchase this cream wholesale were directed to apply to Cohn, care of Mr. Hart of Smith Street.¹²⁸ This Mr. Hart may very well have been another Jewish resident of the town. The following notice no doubt provides the reason for Cohn's departure from Durban in 1876, since after this date no further mention of him appears in the local press:

George Cohn,
 Son of the late Moritz Gumpel Cohn of
 Birmingham. He is requested either to
 come home, or give Power of Attorney to
 act on his behalf concerning the Berlin
 Estate of his late Aunt.
 Apply for further particulars to Messrs.
 Robinson and Vause "Natal Mercury" Office
 Durban.
 His passage home will be arranged for.¹²⁹

¹²⁸Ibid., August 27, 1874, p. 4.

¹²⁹Ibid., November 2, 1876, p. 4.

CHAPTER III

LATER JEWISH RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENT

(1875 - 1899)

From the ranks of the post 1874 Jewish settlers in Durban emerged the nucleus of the Hebrew Congregation, and of the different organisations which were subsequently established before the turn of the century.

1875 marks the arrival in Durban of J. Rudolph and E. Emanuel. The former was a merchant, with an office in Central West Street. He seems to have remained in Durban for only two or three years.¹ The latter, on the other hand, remained in Durban for a longer period.

E. Emanuel was a member of an old Anglo-Jewish

¹This is based on the fact that his name only appears in The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register for 1876, p. 307., and 1877, p. 311.

family which lived in Portsmouth. He apparently arrived in Durban in about May or June 1875, and became a partner in the firm Gumpelson and Emanuel, in Field Street.² The firm later moved to West Street, into premises which had formerly been occupied by the Natal Bank.³ In 1880 Emanuel's brother, Michael, arrived with his family in Durban. He soon opened up a jewellery business in West Street, and no doubt attracted considerable attention by advertising as being by appointment to the Queen.⁴

²The Natal Mercury, June 5, 1875, p. 4. However it was not until 1885 that the firm Gumpelson and Emanuel appeared in The Natal Almanac. (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1885, p. 120.). Until 1884 E. Emanuel continued to be recorded as a merchant, operating first in Smith Street, (Ibid., 1877, p. 308.), then in West Street (Ibid., 1878, p. 290.), and later in Russell Street, (Ibid., 1879, p. 337.). After removing once again to West Street (Ibid., 1880, p. 367., and 1881, p. 480.), his business address is recorded as St. George's Street. (Ibid., 1882, p. 501., and 1883, p. 532.). However, from 1872 The Natal Almanac does record the firm Emanuel & Co., merchants and importers, Central West Street. (Ibid., 1882, p. 501., 1883, p. 532., 1884, p. 107., and 1885, p. 119.). As the reference to Gumpelson and Emanuel in the 1885 edition of The Natal Almanac records the firm as merchants, West Street, it would appear that Emanuel & Co. was another name for Gumpelson and Emanuel. (Ibid., 1885, p. 120.).

³The Natal Mercury, May 20, 1876, p. 1.

⁴Ibid., April 18, 1881, p. 1.

It appears that E. Emanuel and his family⁵ left Durban in about 1885.⁶ A few years later Michael Emanuel relinquished business in the town⁷ and left with his family⁸ for the Transvaal gold fields.⁹ Michael Emanuel later settled in Johannesburg where he opened a jewellery store.¹⁰ During February 1890 he paid a visit to Durban,¹¹ returning once again for a holiday in April 1896.¹²

While resident in Durban both brothers rendered sterling service to the Hebrew Congregation, being two of its founders and staunchest supporters. At the same time

⁵Including his son, born in Durban, at Smith Street West, on May 20, 1879, (Ibid., May 22, 1879, p. 2.), his second son, born on October 14, 1880 (Ibid., October 22, 1880, p. 2.), and his daughter, who was born at the Berea, on December 24, 1883 (Ibid., January 3, 1884, p. 2.).

⁶This is based on the fact that after 1885 his name no longer appears in The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register and the local press.

⁷The Natal Mercury, March 2, 1889, p. 1.

⁸Including a son, born at West Street on July 26, 1881, (Ibid., July 28, 1881, p. 2.), a son, born at Currie Road on July 2, 1883. (Ibid., July 4, 1883, p. 2.), and a third son, born on May 16, 1885. (Ibid., May 16, 1885, p. 2.).

⁹From the personal recollections of the late Philip Wartski, in possession of his daughter Mrs. P. Hayman.

¹⁰The Natal Mercury, April 17, 1893, p. 3.

¹¹The Natal Mercury Visitors' List (Ibid., February 13, 1890, p. 4. and February 27, 1890, p. 4.

¹²The Natal Mercury, April 7, 1896, p. 4.

Michael Emanuel was prominent in Masonic circles,¹³ and for a term was also the treasurer of the Addington Building Society.¹⁴

In January, 1876, Marcus Hayman opened a business in Smith Street, as an importer of clocks and jewellery, Birmingham and Sheffield Wares.¹⁵ His notice for the settling of all accounts outstanding against him and a notice granting the lawyers, Messrs. Goodricke & Son, his power of attorney,¹⁶ are the last references that one finds to him. Presumably Hayman left Durban, having been in the town for approximately three months.

An advertisement of May 1876 appears to be the only reference to Levy & Co. This firm of auctioneers was responsible for disposing of an insolvent estate by auctioning, among other things, the landau that had been the property of the Second Lieutenant Governor General of Natal, Sir Benjamin Pine, and an omnibus with four carriage horses.¹⁷

¹³In 1883 he was the Junior Warden of the Port Natal Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners Attached to Mark Masters Lodge No. 288. (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1883, p. 335). He subsequently served the lodge as Senior Warden (Ibid., 1884, p. 372.) and W.C.W. (Ibid., 1888, p. 350.). In May 1887 he was made Secretary of the Inanda Lodge. (The Natal Mercury, May 4, 1887, p. 2.) For over two years he also served the Finnemore Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners attached to Mark Lodge No. 358. (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1889, p. 428. and 1890, p. 499.).

¹⁴Ibid., 1886, p. 338.

¹⁵The Natal Mercury, January 20, 1876, p. 2.

¹⁶Ibid., March 16, 1876, p. 1.

¹⁷

In 1872, Bernhard Lipinski, whose name was to become closely linked with that of the Hebrew Congregation in Durban, had come to Durban from England.¹⁸ He originally settled in Pietermaritzburg, where he ran a jewellery business at 22 Church Street. At first this firm was advertised as Messrs. Lipinski and Frank,¹⁹ and later as Lipinski Brothers.²⁰ At the beginning of 1876 Bernhard Lipinski was still in business in Pietermaritzburg.²¹ However, during that year he moved to Durban and joined the firm Messrs. Gumpelson and Emanuel.²² By 1884 Lipinski was a partner in this firm.²³ With Emanuel's departure from Durban, in about 1885, the firm became known as Messrs. Gumpelson and Lipinski.²⁴

¹⁸ Baer (called Bernhard) Lipinski was born in Czainikau, Prussia on August 7, 1852. Upon his father's request and for the purpose of his emigration to England the Royal Prussian Government released him from his status as a Prussian subject in July 1864. (The original notification of his release from the Union of Prussian Subjects is in the possession of his grandson, Mr. Victor Lipinski). In England Bernhard Lipinski settled in Hull, from where he emigrated to Natal in 1872. (South African Jewish Chronicle, February 8, 1907, p. 127.).

¹⁹ The Natal Mercury, July 16, 1874, p. 4.

²⁰ Ibid., November 13, 1875, p. 4.

²¹ Ibid., January 4, 1876, p. 5.

²² South African Jewish Chronicle, February 8, 1907, p. 127.

²³ From the personal recollections of Mr. Philip Wartski.

²⁴ The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1886, p. 133., 1887, p. 132., 1888, p. 133., 1889, p. 132., 1890, p. 130., 1891, p. 132., 1892, p. 98., 1893, p. 147., 1894, p. 154., 1895, p. 155, 1896, p. 124.

In about 1900 Lipinski purchased the interest of Mr. Gumpelson and the business became known as B. Lipinski & Co.²⁵ A prominent resident of the Borough and a distinguished member of the Masonic Craft,²⁶ Bernhard Lipinski was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1905.²⁷

From 1880, the Jewish community of Durban began to increase in size, though it was a relatively small increase when compared to other towns. In general, the number of Jews in South Africa increased, as immigrants from Eastern Europe, fleeing harsh persecution, came to settle in South Africa. Relatively few Jews came to Durban, in comparison with other towns. This is possibly owing to the fact that Durban had no mineral

²⁵ South African Jewish Chronicle, February 8, 1907, p. 127.

²⁶ He was initiated into the Port Natal Lodge No. 738 on October 11, 1877. (George Russell, First Twenty Five Years of Freemasonry in Natal, compiled from the records of the Port Natal Lodge No. 738 (Durban, P. Davis, 1884), p. 46. He was an office bearer in this lodge in 1888 and 1889 (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1888, p. 350., and 1889, p. 428.). He first served the Port Natal Royal Archer Chapter in 1889, (Ibid., 1889, p. 428.). A year later he was Comps. of the lodge (Ibid., 1890, p. 498.), and thereafter he served as treasurer for four consecutive terms. (Ibid., 1893, p. 629., 1894, p. 657., 1895, p. 674., and 1896, p. 480.). He was also a founder member of the Lodge of Israel. (The Natal Mercury, January 30, 1907, p. 8.).

²⁷ The Governor of the Colony of Natal, Sir Henry McCullum appointed him a Justice of the Peace on November 2, 1905. (The original letter of appointment is in the possession of his grandson, Mr. Victor Lipinski.).

attractions, and had a rather small Jewish population with no organised Jewish communal life. Of those who did choose to settle in Durban, some remained for only a few years before moving off to larger towns with greater economic potential.²⁸

Abrahamson and Hirschberg was a firm of importers and wholesalers which opened in Excombe's Building, Field Street, in February 1880.²⁹ This firm does not appear to have operated beyond 1882,³⁰ the year in which a cigar manufacturer and general dealer, Joseph Rosen, who owned a store in West Street West first appeared in The Natal Almanac.³¹ This man remained in Durban until about 1886, after which date no further reference to him appears.³²

On July 15, 1880 a clerk, formerly in the employ of

²⁸ See below pp.117-118 (on Jews going to the gold fields). On East European Immigration see below pp.132-133.

²⁹ The Natal Mercury, January 28, 1880, p.1. and February 7, 1880, p.4.

³⁰ This is based on the fact that the firm's name last appears in The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1882, p.497.

³¹ Ibid., p.508.

³² His name last appears in The Natal Almanac, in 1886. (Ibid., 1886, p.142.).

the Union Steamship Company, was committed for trial on an allegation of embezzlement. As the clerk bore the rather Jewish sounding name of Levi, this case might not only point to an additional Jewish resident in the town, but may also be one of the earliest cases in which a Jew in Durban appeared in a court accused of a criminal act.³³

In November 1880 Messrs Hart and Henochsberg started an importing business in a temporary warehouse in West Street, opposite the Kentish Tavern.³⁴ Prior to his departure from England Mr. Asher Hart had been a respected Freemason in Liverpool.³⁵ Upon opening his business in Durban the local press observed that both he and Mr. Henochsberg "are introduced to us from home as a highly respectable firm of manufacturers."³⁶

The firm of Hart and Henochsberg found more suitable premises in University House, West Street,³⁷ where it developed into a large business with branches in Pietermaritzburg and Johannesburg.³⁸ Messrs. Hart and Henochsberg closed their business in February 1889.³⁹

³³The Natal Mercury, July 16, 1880, p. 3.

³⁴Ibid., November 17, 1880, p. 1.

³⁵Ibid., November 19, 1880, p. 3.

³⁶Ibid., November 17, 1880, p. 3.

³⁷Ibid., July 4, 1884, p. 1.

³⁸The Natal Mercury Christmas Supplement, December 22, 1888.

³⁹The Natal Mercury, February 27, 1889, p. 1.

David Nathan Henochsberg opened up as a general importer in West Street West,⁴⁰ and two years later became an outfitter, with a store at 403 West Street.⁴¹ He later transferred his business to 363 West Street,⁴² and then, in conjunction with Henry J. Henochsberg,⁴³ he opened Henochsberg Bros. at 367 West Street.⁴⁴ However, in The Natal Almanac the names of D.N. Henochsberg and H.J. Henochsberg were also recorded separately, the former as a merchant at 30 Palmer Street, the latter as a merchant at Back Beach Road.⁴⁵ In July 1896 H.J. Henochsberg took over the business of Henochsberg Bros.⁴⁶ Accordingly, only his name appears

⁴⁰The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1890, p. 132.

⁴¹Ibid., 1892, p. 99.

⁴²Ibid., 1896, p. 149.

⁴³H.J. Henochsberg was formerly resident in Pietermaritzburg where in 1883, 1884 and 1885 he was vice president and treasurer of the Hebrew Congregation. (London Jewish Chronicle, November 30, 1883, p. 10., November 21, 1884, p. 12. and November 13, 1885, p. 7.).

⁴⁴The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1894, p. 155.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶The Natal Mercury, July 4, 1896, p. 1.

in The Natal Almanac of 1897.⁴⁷ In the following year, however, both he and D.N. Henochsberg⁴⁸ are recorded in The Natal Almanac.⁴⁹

The name of G. Roberts and H. Heller appear in The Natal Almanac of 1880. G. Roberts was a forwarding and commission agent, with business premises at Simpson's Buildings, West Street.⁵⁰ Although his name does not appear in subsequent editions of The Natal Almanac, he was resident in Durban in 1883 when the Hebrew Congregation was founded.⁵¹ H. Heller was an outfitter and general importer in West Street.⁵² He remained in Durban until 1884 when he left for the gold fields.⁵³

⁴⁷The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1897, p. 141.

⁴⁸D.N. Henochsberg had by this time served the Addington Masonic Lodge No. 1937 as Junior Deacon, (The Natal Mercury, March 29, 1890, p. 5.) Junior Warden (Ibid., March 30, 1891, p. 3.) and Senior Warden (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1894, p. 656.). He was later the first Master of the Lodge of Israel. (South African Jewish Chronicle, August 31, 1906, p. 213.).

⁴⁹The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1898, p. 144.

⁵⁰Ibid., 1880, p. 372.

⁵¹From the personal recollections of the late Philip Wartski.

⁵²The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1880, p. 368.

⁵³Harry Graumann, Rand Riches and South Africa (Cape Town, 1929), p. 8.

The firm of J. Rosenthal & Sons, importers and wholesalers, advertised the arrival of large stocks of hosiery, haberdashery, clothing, linen, jewellery and domestic requirements, in a newspaper of November 1881.⁵⁴ This business appears to have only operated for about eleven months.⁵⁵ This may have been due to the death of Mr. Joseph Rosenthal, in England,⁵⁶ for his family may have decided to close their business in Durban, and to return to England.

In 1881 another firm of importers and wholesalers was that of Julius Levenberg, whose business was in Imperial Buildings, West Street West.⁵⁷ However it was not until 1888 that his name first appeared in The Natal Almanac.⁵⁸ Thereafter it was annually recorded in the business directory, where from 1892 his business address was 442 West Street.⁵⁹ In August

⁵⁴The Natal Mercury, November 16, 1881, p. 3.

⁵⁵This is based on the fact that the last reference to him appears to have been in Ibid., October 5, 1882, p. 1.

⁵⁶Ibid., August 30, 1882, p. 2. Mr. Rosenthal died at the age of fifty five, on August 24, 1882 at Fernacre, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

⁵⁷Ibid., January 5, 1881, p. 1.

⁵⁸The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1888, p. 139.

⁵⁹Ibid., 1889, p. 138., 1890, p. 136., 1891, p. 137., 1892, p. 105., 1893, p. 153., 1894, p. 160., 1895, p. 162., 1896, p. 128., 1897, p. 144. and 1898, p. 149.

1898 Julius Levenberg took Mr. Richard John Davids, of Durban, into partnership, and the name of the firm was changed to Julius Levenberg and Davids.⁶⁰

Another Jewish pioneer of this period was J.H. Graumann. From approximately 1876 to 1879 Graumann ran the Point Store and Criterion Hotel near the harbour. Later he was a hotel keeper in Pinetown, his name last appearing in The Natal Almanac in 1885.⁶¹

In 1882 Philip Wartski arrived in Durban.⁶² In time his name came to be closely connected with the synagogue and other Jewish institutions. He also served the

⁶⁰ The Natal Mercury, August 19, 1898, p. 4. and The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1899, p. 184.

⁶¹ The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1883, p. 451., 1884, p. 23., and 1885, p. 26.

⁶² Born in 1853 in Tourek, near Kalish in Poland, the seventh child of Reb Yitzchak of Warte, Wartski moved to England in 1868 and lived in London until 1871. He then moved to Wolverhampton where he became a traveller for a large firm. In 1875 he decided to settle in Liverpool, where he married his wife, Elizabeth, in 1876. Wartski remained in Liverpool for about three years and then moved to Bangor in Wales, where he stayed until he emigrated to Durban in 1882. (From the personal recollections of the late Philip Wartski.).

Masonic Order with great distinction.⁶³ Today he is still remembered for his sharpness and paradoxically his extreme gentleness.

Wartski soon opened a furniture store in West Street, and a shop called the Furnishing Depot., on the corner of Point Road and Smith Street. Upon closing the store in West Street, in August 1884, Wartski retained his business in Point Road.⁶⁴ From 1885 to 1887 Wartski's store was located in Bradshaw Crescent, off Point Road.⁶⁵ Subsequently Wartski was a general dealer in West Street.⁶⁶

⁶³He served the Addington Masonic Lodge No. 1937 in 1889 (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1889, p. 429.). He was Junior Overseer and later Junior Warden of the Finnemore Lodge of Mark Masons No. 358. (Ibid., 1893, p. 629., and 1894, p. 657.). For three years he was the 2nd Assistant of the Port Natal Royal Ark Chapter No. 738 (Ibid., 1894, p. 657., 1895, p. 674., and 1896, p. 480.). In 1894 he was made the Worthy Master of the Umlazi Lodge No. 1976 Bellair, (Ibid., 1895, p. 672.), and in the following year was the Immediate Past Master of the Lodge (Ibid., 1896, p. 479.). He served in the District Grand Mark Lodge as District Grand Junior Deacon (Ibid., 1895, p. 673.), and in 1896 was District Grand Sword Bearer of the District Grand Lodge of Natal. (Ibid., 1896, p. 478.). Upon the creation of the Lodge of Israel he was the first Director of Ceremonies. (South African Jewish Chronicle, August 31, 1906, p. 213.).

⁶⁴The Natal Mercury, August 4, 1884, p. 1.

⁶⁵This is based on the fact that the firm was recorded in The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1886, p. 143. and 1887, p. 153.

⁶⁶Ibid., 1888, p. 155., 1889, p. 153., 1890, p. 151. and 1891, p. 151.

From 1892 The Natal Almanac describes him once again as a furniture dealer, first at 175 West Street,⁶⁷ then at 359 West Street⁶⁸ and later at 361 West Street.⁶⁹

Upon his arrival in Durban Wartski sought out the Jewish residents of the town. Later he recalled that they were Mr. M.H. Emanuel, Mr. and Mrs. E. Emanuel, Mr. and Mrs. H. Heller, Mr. Asher Hart, Mr. Alexander Simon, Mr. and Mrs. I. Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Jacobs and Mr. and Mrs. Bernhard Lipinski. In addition there were a few Jewish traders in the district, among them Isaac Goldberg, David Heller, I Grainger and H. Graumann (later Sir Harry Graumann), who lived in Kokstad.⁷⁰

Since a number of personalities who have already been discussed, and are known to have been in Durban at this time have been omitted, it is obvious that this list does not record all the names of Jews resident in the town in 1882. This may possibly have been due to the fact that the people with whom Wartski came into contact were not friendly with those other Jewish residents,

⁶⁷Ibid., 1892, p. 120., 1893, p. 168., 1894, p. 176. and 1895, p. 178.

⁶⁸Ibid., 1896, p. 137., 1897, p. 157. and 1898, p. 162.

⁶⁹Ibid., 1899, p. 199.

⁷⁰Arthur Markowitz, "Philip Wartski", Hasholom Rosh Hashonah Annual (September, 1950), p. 51.

though in a town with few co-religionists this seems unlikely. Most probably when Wartski himself came to record this list he included only those foremost in his memory.

Of those whom Wartski did recall, mention has already been made of the Emanuel's,⁷¹ Mr. H. Heller,⁷² Mr. Asher Hart⁷³ and Mr. Bernhard Lipinski⁷⁴ and Mr. Alexander Simon apparently opened the firm A. Simon & Co., in Point Road, in about 1883.⁷⁵ His name continues to appear in The Natal Almanac from this time on.⁷⁶ Throughout his life,⁷⁷ Alexander Simon was a leading member of the Hebrew Congregation. Another

⁷¹See above pp.77-79.

⁷²See above p. 86.

⁷³See above p. 84.

⁷⁴See above p. 81.

⁷⁵This is based on the fact that his name first appears in The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1884, p. 116.

⁷⁶Ibid., 1884, p. 130., 1885, p. 130., 1886, p. 143., 1887, p. 147., 1888, p. 149., 1889, p. 147., 1890 p. 146., 1891, p. 147., and 1892, p. 115. which also records A. Simon as an outfitter at 256 Point Road. In 1893, p. 163., 1894, p. 171., 1895, p. 173., 1896, p. 134., 1897, p. 153. and 1898, p. 158. Only A. Simon, outfitter, 256 Point Road appears. 1899, p. 194. records A. Simon & Co. and A. Simon, 223 Point Road.

⁷⁷He spent the rest of his life in Durban and upon his death on August 1, 1922, he was buried in the Stellawood Cemetery. His wife, Bertha, was buried alongside him upon her death on October 13, 1924.

active member of the Congregation was Mr. Isadore Lee,⁷⁸ who together with his wife Rebecca,⁷⁹ arrived in Natal in 1879.⁸⁰ In about 1886 Isadore Lee established a tailoring business in Little Grey Street,⁸¹ which, in 1891, he moved to 92 Queen Street.⁸² Lee was resident in the town until his death on January 9, 1909.⁸³ Dave Jacobs apparently started business as a storekeeper in Grey Street in 1883,⁸⁴ and this business was transferred to West Street in 1885.⁸⁵ Jacobs may have left Durban in the course of 1888, for it is in The Natal Almanac of that year that his name last appears.⁸⁶

⁷⁸Mr. Lee was also an active Freemason, and for two consecutive years he served as the Outer Guard of the Loyal Durban Lodge of the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows (The Natal Mercury, December 5, 1894, p. 3. and December 4, 1895, p. 5.). In 1893 he was also elected to the Committee of the Durban Building Society No. 17. (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1894, p. 654.).

⁷⁹The daughter of Henry Abrahams, a Hebrew and English publisher of St. Mary's Avenue, London. (London Jewish Chronicle, February 12, 1909, p. 13.).

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹This is based on the fact that his name first appears in The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1887, p. 138.

⁸²Ibid., 1892, p. 104.

⁸³London Jewish Chronicle, February 12, 1909, p. 13.

⁸⁴This is based on the fact that his name first appears in The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1884, p. 110.

⁸⁵Ibid., 1886, p. 135.

⁸⁶Ibid., 1888, p. 136.

In 1883 Wartski drew up a list of the members of the original Hebrew Congregation.⁸⁷ Included in this list are a number of persons, who, by virtue of the fact that they were included on the list were obviously resident in Durban at the time. The list includes the name of E.R. Robinson,⁸⁸ who, in 1884, was a tobacconist in Pine Terrace.⁸⁹ Upon joining his brother in Durban, Victor Robinson⁹⁰ came to also be recorded as a tobacconist in Pine Terrace.⁹¹ As only the firm of E.R. Robinson & Co., is recorded in The Natal Almanac from 1892 - 1897,⁹² this may be a sign that Victor Robinson had joined Edward Robinson in his business at

⁸⁷ Arthur Markowitz, "Philip Wartski", p. 51.

⁸⁸ Edward Robinson was attracted to South Africa by it's economic potential. Upon establishing himself in the town he brought his brother Victor and his nephew Harry Jordan (whose mother was Edward's sister Sophie) to Durban. He later married his first cousin Clara Benson. (From a personal interview with Mrs. Valda Davis, January 1977.). For more biographical background see footnote 214 p. 115 below.

⁸⁹ The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1885, p. 124.

⁹⁰ Victor Robinson subsequently married Cecile Henochsberg of Johannesburg, whose family, like his own was from Liverpool. (From a personal interview with Mrs. Valda Davis, January 1977.).

⁹¹ The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1891, p. 146.

⁹² Ibid., 1892, p. 113., 1893, p. 161., 1894, p. 169, 1895, p. 170., 1896, p. 133. and 1897, p. 151.

163 Pine Street. From 1892 E.R. Robinson was also recorded as the sole proprietor of the tobacconists at 156 Berea Road,⁹³ and after 1897 only this entry appeared under E.R. Robinson in The Natal Almanac.⁹⁴ In 1892 the name of J. Simon, an outfitter at 219 Point Road, first appears in The Natal Almanac.⁹⁵ Later editions of the Almanac, in 1898 and 1899, describe him as a traveller.⁹⁶ As Jacob Simon was Alexander Simon's brother⁹⁷ he may have been involved in the business A. Simon & Co. This would then explain why his name only appeared in an Almanac from 1892. A third brother, Joseph, had arrived in Durban in 1879.⁹⁸ In the course of time he settled in the Transvaal, from where he returned to Durban before the outbreak of war in 1899.⁹⁹ In that year his name was recorded in The Natal Almanac.¹⁰⁰ A year later he passed away at his residence, 73 Leopold Street¹⁰¹ and

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid., 1898, p. 156. and 1899, p. 192.

⁹⁵Ibid., 1892, p. 115.

⁹⁶Ibid., 1898, p. 158. and 1899, p. 159.

⁹⁷The Natal Mercury, January 6, 1900, p. 6.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1899, p. 194.

¹⁰¹The Natal Mercury, January 5, 1900, p. 4.

and was buried in the Jewish cemetery at the corner of Queen and Brook Streets.

The name of J. Granger,¹⁰² who was a storekeeper in West Street, first appears in The Natal Almanac of 1883.¹⁰³ He apparently remained in business in Durban for another four years, his name last being recorded in the Almanac of 1887.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²He may be the Joshua Granger whose wife gave birth to a son on January 3, 1877. (Ibid., January 9, 1877, p. 2.).

¹⁰³The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1883, p. 533.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 1887, p. 131.

James Henry Isaacs, who was one of the original members of the Durban Hebrew Congregation was formerly a resident of Pietermaritzburg.¹⁰⁵ In 1891 Isaacs settled in Durban,¹⁰⁶ where he opened a tobacconist shop,

¹⁰⁵ He was particularly active in the Hebrew community of Pietermaritzburg Hebrew Congregation. (London Jewish Chronicle, November 30, 1883, p. 10., November 21, 1884, p. 12. and November 13, 1885, p. 7.). In January 1890 the Governor of Natal appointed him the Jewish Marriage Officer for the City of Pietermaritzburg (The original letter of appointment is in the archives of the Durban United Hebrew Congregation.). Isaacs, who resided at 84 Burger Street, ran a store at 22 Church Street. (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1885, p. 94., 1886, p. 102., and 1887, p. 100.). In 1887 he apparently decided to open an outfitting business at the premises which had formerly housed his store. In the same year he moved into a new home in Loop Street (Ibid., 1888, p. 99.). In the following year the Almanac recorded that Isaacs was involved in the firm of Cohen & Company, and that he had changed his residential address to Pieter Maritz Street. Ibid., 1889, p. 98.). In 1886, whilst resident in the Capital, Isaac was appointed Worthy Master of the Prince Alfred Lodge No. 936., and was thus the first Jewish Master in Natal (London Jewish Chronicle, February 5, 1886, p. 5.). Later, upon taking up residence in Durban, he was equally active in the Masonic Craft, serving firstly as W.C.N. of the Natalia Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No. 252. (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1890, p. 498.). He then served two terms as P.S. of the Natalia Royal Arch Chapter No. 1665, (Ibid., 1891, p. 367. and 1892, p. 471.), and two terms on the committee of the Prince Alfred Royal Arch Chapter No. 956. (Ibid., 1892, p. 471. and 1893, p. 629.).

¹⁰⁶ This is based on the fact that Isaacs' name appears in the Almanac in 1891 with his Pietermaritzburg address (Ibid., 1891, p. 101.), and then only re-appears in the 1894 edition with his Durban business address. (Ibid., 1894, p. 157.). Also in 1891 J.H. Isaacs was elected president of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, which would imply that he was resident in the town. (London Jewish Chronicle, November 27, 1891, p. 11.).

Havanah House, at 333 West Street.¹⁰⁷ Isaacs' shop served as an advanced booking office for live shows,¹⁰⁸ and Isaacs was the Durban agent for Hess & Co's Monster Sweepstakes¹⁰⁹ and Joe Lee's Sweepstake.¹¹⁰ In 1897 Messrs J.H. Isaacs & Co. secured the tender for the supply of magazines and newspapers to the Durban Library and the Durban Institute.¹¹¹ Shortly before the outbreak of war, in 1899, Mr. Isaacs expanded his business activities by opening a hairdressing establishment called the Burlington.¹¹² When Mr. Isaacs later moved, for a short while, to Johannesburg, Mr. Philip Wartski acquired Havana House.

The name of D. Lipinski, another founder member of the Congregation, appears in the Almanac of 1885, as a storekeeper in Grey Street.¹¹³ It is in this capacity that his name appears in the Almanac of the following year,¹¹⁴ which is also the last occasion on which his

¹⁰⁷The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1894, p. 157.

¹⁰⁸The Natal Mercury, January 1, 1884, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., March 25, 1896, p. 1.

¹¹⁰Ibid., March 31, 1896, p. 2.

¹¹¹Ibid., November 8, 1897, p. 3.

¹¹²Ibid., March 11, 1899, p. 9.

¹¹³The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1885, p. 124.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 1886, p. 137.

name features in the business directory of The Natal Almanac. L. Levinson was a storekeeper in West Street West in 1884.¹¹⁵ However, after this date his name no longer appears in any Almanac. B. Cinamon's name does not appear in any Almanac until 1892.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, as one of the founders of the Congregation he must have been resident in the town in 1883.¹¹⁷ Initially Mr. Cinamon ran a business, called The Little Wonder, in Smith Street, where he lent money on valuables.¹¹⁸ Later he was described as a clothier at 9 St. George's Street.¹¹⁹ In 1894 the Almanac gave his address as Victoria Street.¹²⁰ A year later it was recorded that his business was in Gardiner Street.¹²¹ Notwithstanding the fact that he had become the proprietor of the Anglo African Supply Store in Gardiner Street,¹²² the Almanac for 1899 gives his business address as 361a West Street.¹²³

¹¹⁵Ibid., 1884, p. 137.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 1892, p. 91.

¹¹⁷This is based on the fact that his name appears on the list compiled by the late Philip Wartski.

¹¹⁸The Natal Mercury, January 12, 1889, p. 1.

¹¹⁹The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1892, p. 91. and 1893, p. 138.

¹²⁰Ibid., 1894, p. 145.

¹²¹Ibid., 1895, p. 146.

¹²²This is confirmed by The Natal Mercury, May 1, 1897, p. 10.

¹²³The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1899. p. 170.

Wartski's list also includes the names of a number of people about whom there appears to be little information. They are B. Levy and J. Levy, who may possibly have been associated with the firm Levy & Co.,¹²⁴ P. Newman, I. Barnett and S. Michaelson. In August 1891 Mr. S. Michaelson of Llandwarne was among the visitors to Durban staying at the Royal Hotel¹²⁵ and a year later he was resident in Volksrust.¹²⁶ Further names on Wartski's list are K.M. Kisch (possibly Daniel Montagu Kisch), B. Saphra, A. Jacobson, L. Traub, L. Tallerman, L. Behrman and H. Cohen.

Owing to the absence of other sources of information, it cannot be established with accuracy how long these people were in Durban, before the founding of the congregation, or in what activities they became engaged. The absence of earlier records may indicate that these people had not been in Durban for a significant length of time before 1884. Wartski in his personal recollections in fact re-inforces this hypothesis by saying that from 1883 quite a few new Jewish settlers arrived in Durban.¹²⁷ In all events, it can be safely

¹²⁴See above p. 80.

¹²⁵The Natal Mercury, August 18, 1890, p. 4. and August 21, 1890, p. 4.

¹²⁶Ibid., December 10, 1891, p. 2.

¹²⁷From the personal recollections of the late Philip Wartski.

assumed that the people who appear on the founders list and have not been recorded previously, had not by 1883, achieved commercial importance.

In 1885 D. Goldberg, a storekeeper in Grey Street, appeared for the first time in the Almanac.¹²⁸ The Almanac for the following year records the names of B. and L. Goldberg, as storekeepers in Grey Street.¹²⁹ Although there are no further references to B. Goldberg in later editions of the Almanac he might very well have remained in Durban, and may have been the same B. Goldberg, who, in 1897 was the General Manager of the Colonial Advance & Discount Co.¹³⁰ L. Goldberg, who in the 1892 and 1893 edition of the Almanac was described as a clothier, at 434 West Street,¹³¹ achieved prominence in Jewish and Zionist affairs in the town. From 1892 to 1897 his business address was recorded as 399 West Street,¹³² whereafter his shop was relocated at 439 West Street.¹³³ The Almanac fails to record

¹²⁸The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1885, p. 120.

¹²⁹Ibid., 1886, p. 132.

¹³⁰The Natal Mercury, May 13, 1897, p. 4.

¹³¹The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1892, p. 97. and 1893, p. 146.

¹³²Ibid., and 1894, p. 152., 1895, p. 154., 1896, p. 123. and 1897, p. 139.

¹³³Ibid., 1898, p. 142. and 1899, p. 177.

that in this period L. Goldberg was also the manager of the Colonial Bankruptcy Stock Association.¹³⁴

Although the Almanac of 1899 stated that Louis Goldberg was a clothier,¹³⁵ an advertisement from a newspaper of April 1898 indicates that at his premises, at 439 West Street, Goldberg also practised as a pawnbroker.¹³⁶ In 1892 and 1893 the name of M. Goldberg, a clothier at 434 West Street, appeared in the Almanac, alongside that of L. Goldberg.¹³⁷ His name then ceases to appear in subsequent editions of the Almanac. However in 1890 a Mr. Maurice Goldberg was connected with the firm Messrs. J. Goldberg & Co.¹³⁸ The possibility therefore exists that he was the same M. Goldberg who had earlier owned a store in West Street. The name of M. Harris, a jeweller in Point Road, and G. Levin, a tobacconist in West Street, appear for the first time in the Almanac of 1885.¹³⁹ The former's name is also recorded

¹³⁴The Natal Mercury, July 18, 1891, p. 4. and May 4, 1897, p. 3.

¹³⁵The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1899, p. 177.

¹³⁶The Natal Mercury, April 30, 1898, p. 3.

¹³⁷The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1892, p. 97. and 1893, p. 146.

¹³⁸The Natal Mercury, March 11, 1890, p. 3.

¹³⁹The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1885, pp. 121. and 124.

in three subsequent editions of the Almanac.¹⁴⁰

In 1888 Eugene Levy & Co. opened up as general merchants in Smith Street, and were sole agents for L.T. Pivers French Perfume, Corytopsis du Japon.¹⁴¹ Eugene Levy appears to have remained in Durban until 1892, after which date his name no longer appears in the Almanac.¹⁴²

Mr. Max Pincus¹⁴³ was amongst the thirty or forty Germans who celebrated the birthday of the Emperor of German, William II, at the Princess Cafe, on Saturday, January 26, 1889.¹⁴⁴ From the time of his arrival in Natal in 1872 Pincus did not associate himself with his fellow Jews resident in Durban, and in 1878 he married a Gentile lady Hannah Elizabeth Davis.¹⁴⁵ Throughout his residence in the Colony Max Pincus was connected with the firm of A. Fass & Co., and was a partner in the firm from the year 1882.¹⁴⁶ Well known

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 1886, p. 133., 1887, p. 133. and 1888, p. 134.

¹⁴¹The Natal Mercury, September 17, 1888, p. 1.

¹⁴²The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1889, p. 138., 1890, p. 136., 1891, p. 137. and 1892, p. 105.

¹⁴³Pincus was born in Prussia in 1848. His father was professor S. Pincus of Konigsberg University (Information supplied in a letter from Mrs. S. Spencer of the Library of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, April, 1975.).

¹⁴⁴The Natal Mercury, January 30, 1889, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵Information supplied in a letter from Mrs. S. Spencer, April, 1975.

¹⁴⁶The Natal Mercury, November 12, 1897, p. 4.

to the residents of Durban through his participation in the public and general life of the town,¹⁴⁷ his death, on November 11, 1897, was the cause for much regret.¹⁴⁸

Two other men who were present at this party and who may have been of Jewish origin were A. Oppenheim and L. Baumann, though if they were, then like Pincus they were certainly not active within the Jewish community. A visitor to Durban in 1884 had in fact noted the presence of a large number of German Jews who had intermarried and had become alienated from their

¹⁴⁷Pincus commenced his duties as Consul for Belgium on January 25, 1889, and he appears to have served in this capacity for at least five years. (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1890, p. 390., 1891, p. 629., 1892, p. 180., 1893, p. 640., 1894, p. 603. and 1895, p. 676.). He was also a Justice of the Peace (The Natal Mercury, November 12, 1897, p. 4.), and appears to have been the first Jew in Durban to have been so honoured. In 1891 he was elected the vice president of the Queen's Park Cricket Club (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1892, p. 464.) and in the following year he assumed the presidency of the club, retaining this position until his death in 1897. (Ibid., 1893, p. 418., 1894, p. 651., 1896, p. 472., 1897, p. 616. and 1898, p. 792.). He was also on the committee of the Durban Club (Ibid., 1893, p. 618., 1894, p. 652., 1895, p. 661. and 1896, p. 466.) and the Durban Chamber of Commerce. (Ibid., 1895, p. 658., 1896, p. 464. and 1897, p. 613.). For two years he also served as vice president of the Durban Bay Angling Club (Ibid., 1897, p. 612. and 1898, p. 741.).

¹⁴⁸The Natal Mercury, November 12, 1897, p. 4. Pincus was buried in the Church of England Section of the West Street Cemetery on November 13, 1897. (Ibid., November 16, 1897, p. 5.).

Judaism.¹⁴⁹ These men may have been amongst those to whom this correspondent was referring.

The German Consul for Natal, Mr. Mouhaupt, who occupied the chair at this celebration, had, in 1880 married a Miss Cecilia Baumann,¹⁵⁰ who, if not a practicing Jewess was certainly of Jewish origins. The fact that Miss Baumann was married in a private ceremony at the home of Henry Adler,¹⁵¹ who had himself married Bertha Baumann of Bloemfontein,¹⁵² whose family was related to the Baumanns who lived in Durban,¹⁵³ serves to strengthen this hypothesis regarding Cecilia Baumann's origins.

In 1889 Mr. R. Goodman arrived in Durban. He spent seven years in the town, gaining experience as a cutter, before he opened a tailoring establishment at 353 West Street.¹⁵⁴ Others whose presence in the town became apparent in 1890 included Messrs. B. Simons & Co., of Point de Galle, Singapore, Manilla, Rangoon, Japan and

¹⁴⁹See letter of Dr. G. d'Arbella, p. 143 below.

¹⁵⁰The Natal Mercury, April 22, 1880, p. 3.

¹⁵¹Ibid.

¹⁵²Myer Pencharz and Dora Sowden, "In The Orange Free State" in The Jews in South Africa A History, ed. Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz (London, 1955), p. 324.

¹⁵³The Natal Mercury, July 29, 1881, p. 3.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., June 2, 1896, p. 5.

Cape Town, who opened a jewellery store in West Street;¹⁵⁵ Professor Morris, who ran a hairdresser's business,¹⁵⁶ and B. Jacobs who was a tobacconist on the Berea.¹⁵⁷

Following a visit to the town by Mr. B. Myers, of London, and Mr. P. Myers, of Johannesburg,¹⁵⁸ the firm of Myer Bros., of Johannesburg and Birmingham, opened a branch of its jewellery store business in Durban, at 413, West Street, on November 3, 1890.¹⁵⁹ In 1892, upon deciding to close their retail business in Durban, and to extend their wholesale business, Messrs. Myer Bros. vacated their premises in West Street.¹⁶⁰ Until its new premises, next to Messrs. Reed and Champion, at the corner of Gardiner and West Streets, were completed, the firm took a temporary office at 5 Poynton Buildings.¹⁶¹ On May 20, 1893, the firm's new jewellery store was opened under the management of Bertie Myers,¹⁶² and there is no evidence to suggest that this

¹⁵⁵Ibid., March 4, 1890, p. 4.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., September, 13, 1890, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1890, p. 134.

¹⁵⁸The Natal Mercury, May 22, 1890, p. 4., May 30, 1890, p. 4. and August 18, 1890, p. 4.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., October 31, 1890, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., September 24, 1892, p. 1.

¹⁶¹Ibid., February 16, 1893, p. 2.

¹⁶²Supplement to The Natal Mercury, May 20, 1893, p. 5.

store was exclusively wholesale. After a short visit to Birmingham¹⁶³ Bertie Myers returned to Durban, whereupon his business was transferred to larger premises.¹⁶⁴ In terms of an agreement signed in Johannesburg on February 28, 1899, the firm of Myer Bros. in Durban severed its connection with branches of the same firm in Johannesburg and Cape Town, and came to be carried on exclusively by Bertie Myers.¹⁶⁵

Mr. Chas. Cohen, the South African representative of Thomas Houston International Electric Company, arrived in Durban in 1891. Whilst resident in the town he negotiated for the construction of an electric tramway,¹⁶⁶ and applied to the Town Council for permission to supply electric light in Durban.¹⁶⁷ Mr. Cohen appears to have resided in the town until 1894, in which year his name last appears in the Almanac.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ During which time he married Beatrice Ethel Silverston, in a ceremony performed at her parents home by the Revs. G.J. Emanuel, J. Fink and B. Woolf, on November 25, 1895. (The Natal Mercury, December 23, 1895, p. 3. and January 25, 1896, p. 6.).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., August 5, 1896, p. 1.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., March 4, 1899, p. 6.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., April, 30, 1891, p. 3.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., October 26, 1891, p. 3.

¹⁶⁸ The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1894, p. 145.

By 1891 Mr. Moss Heilbron had come to reside in Durban.¹⁶⁹ The Almanacs for 1892 and 1893 simply record that he was a jeweller at 39 Masonic Grove.¹⁷⁰ However, at the same time he was also the Durban agent for the Transvaal bookmakers, Emanuel Lee¹⁷¹ and Abe Goldman.¹⁷² For a while Heilbron was in partnership with John A. Biggs, but this partnership was dissolved on November 14, 1893.¹⁷³ Shortly thereafter he returned to Johannesburg where he joined Tattersalls, Mr. J.H. Isaacs being appointed his Durban agent.¹⁷⁴ Mr. C. Hahn was yet another Jew who settled in the town in 1891. Establishing himself as a broker, at 20 Commercial Road,¹⁷⁵ he later moved his offices to 42 Commercial Road.¹⁷⁶

Although in the 1890's a large number of Jews immigrated to South Africa in consequence of the anti Jewish persecutions in Russia, relatively few of these

¹⁶⁹In that year Moss Heilbron was elected to the committee of the Durban Hebrew Congregation. (London Jewish Chronicle, November 27, 1891, p. 11.).

¹⁷⁰The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1892, p. 100. and 1893, p. 149.

¹⁷¹The Natal Mercury, June 22, 1892, p. 4.

¹⁷²Ibid., December 2, 1892, p. 3.

¹⁷³Supplement to The Natal Mercury, November 18, 1893, p. 8.

¹⁷⁴The Natal Mercury, December 6, 1893, p. 4.

¹⁷⁵The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1892, p. 98.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 1899, p. 178.

Jews appear to have settled in Durban. Of those Russian Jews who did settle in the town mention is most frequently made of those, who, by their unsavoury conduct, reinforced the unfavourable impression which the general public held of Russian Jewry generally. One such Russian Jew was Alphonso Simon, who, notwithstanding the assistance that he received from his co-religionists, persisted in begging. For this reason he was ultimately brought before the local magistrate for soliciting tips and was duly prosecuted.¹⁷⁷

The majority of Jews who settled in Durban in the last decade of the nineteenth century were, however, more industrious and upright than Alphonso Simon. They included John Lazarus, who, in June 1893 married Miss Esther Simon,¹⁷⁸ whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. Simon, had long been residents of the town. John Lazarus was a salesman in a business in Berea Road,¹⁷⁹ until his untimely death in the Glencoe Rail Disaster on December 31, 1895.¹⁸⁰ In later editions of the Almanac P.

¹⁷⁷ The Natal Mercury, July 6, 1893, p. 3. and see also Supplement to The Natal Mercury, July 1, 1893, p. 5.

¹⁷⁸ The Natal Mercury, June 15, 1893, p. 3. and Supplement to The Natal Mercury, June 17, 1893, p. 5.

¹⁷⁹ The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1894, p. 160. and 1895, p. 161.

¹⁸⁰ The Natal Mercury, January 1, 1896, p. 4. On the Glencoe Rail Disaster see below p. 162-163.

Lazarus, who was no doubt a relation of John Lazarus, was recorded as a salesman in Berea Road.¹⁸¹ Phineas Lazarus was a dedicated worker in the cause of the Congregation and the Burial Board, and was also a distinguished member of the Addington Masonic Lodge No. 1937.¹⁸²

Mr. Ferdinand Israel arrived in Durban from Bloemfontein in January 1894. Immediately upon taking up residence in the town he began to give violin lessons.¹⁸³ Within a month of his arrival in Durban Mr. Israel also appeared in a concert in the Congregational School-room,¹⁸⁴ and thereafter he played in numerous public performances.¹⁸⁵ In 1896 Mr. Ferdinand Israel gave no performances in Durban as he was forced to spend the year in Bloemfontein with his dying father.¹⁸⁶ His return to Durban, in 1897, was marked by a concert in

¹⁸¹The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1896, p. 128., 1897, p. 144., 1898, p. 148. and 1899, p. 183.

¹⁸²He served the lodge for three consecutive terms, first as Senior Deacon, (Ibid., 1897, p. 691.) then as Junior Warden (Ibid., 1898, p. 808.) and ultimately as Senior Warden. (Ibid., 1899, p. 862.).

¹⁸³The Natal Mercury, January 16, 1894, p. 4.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., February 12, 1894, p. 3.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., March 19, 1894, p. 3., June 13, 1894, p. 2., October 31, 1894, p. 2. and June 21, 1895, p. 4.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., February 4, 1896, p. 3.

which he appeared with two of his brothers.¹⁸⁷ Within a short while Mr. Israel recommenced his music lessons,¹⁸⁸ and resumed his concert appearances.¹⁸⁹ In April 1903 he held a farewell concert prior to his departure for England,¹⁹⁰ from where he later returned to Durban.

Another Jew who appears to have arrived in Durban in 1894 was Mr. H. Kopelansky. He was initially a partner in Kopelansky & Strauss, tobacconists, at 195 Smith Street.¹⁹¹ Later he ran his own tobacconist shop at 324a West Street, where he was the sole agent for South Africa of Pinoza Hygenic Tobacco Company, London.¹⁹² Kopelansky's name only appeared in the 1898 edition of The Natal Almanac,¹⁹³ and as there are no later references to him in the general press, it would appear that he left the town in 1898. The arrival in Durban of A. and J. Benjamin first became apparent from the

¹⁸⁷Ibid., July 1, 1897, p. 5.

¹⁸⁸He was in fact appointed music professor of the Young Ladies' School of the Convent of the Holy Family (Ibid., December 17, 1897, p. 5.).

¹⁸⁹Ibid., February 7, 1898, p. 3., March 10, 1900, p. 4. and August 11, 1900, p. 6.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., April 1, 1903, p. 8.

¹⁹¹Ibid., July 13, 1894, p. 2. and July 18, 1894, p. 2.

¹⁹²Ibid., June 28, 1897, p. 6.

¹⁹³The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1898, p. 148.

Almanac of 1894.¹⁹⁴ Although both mens names only appear in one further edition of the Almanac,¹⁹⁵ they nevertheless were resident in the town for longer than two years. In February 1898 Mr. Alfred Benjamin was reported to have been instrumental in saving the lives of three of the passengers of the stean launch Viking, which foundered whilst crossing the bar.¹⁹⁶ Mr. Julius Benjamin, who in July 1889 journeyed from Pietermaritzburg to be married to Miss R. Goldstein in the synagogue in Durban,¹⁹⁷ subsequently settled in Durban where he remained until 1905.¹⁹⁸

On December 5, 1894, a coal dealer, Jacob Marcus Fisher committed suicide by hanging himself in his room in a boarding house in Pine Street. His death was attributed to his being compelled by circumstances to be separated, for eighteen months, from his wife and children in New York.¹⁹⁹ His place of origin is an indication of the fact that even from the United States Jews were attracted to South Africa.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., 1894, p. 140.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., 1895, p. 142.

¹⁹⁶The Natal Mercury, February 26, 1898, p. 11. and March 31, 1898, p. 4.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., July 11, 1889, p. 2.

¹⁹⁸London Jewish Chronicle, July 14, 1905, p. 20.

¹⁹⁹Supplement to The Natal Mercury, December 6, 1894, p. 5.

The Johannesburg sweep promoter and bookmaker Mr. Joe Lee, who had formerly been represented in Durban by Mr. J.H. Isaacs,²⁰⁰ announced his intention to settle in Durban in July 1896.²⁰¹ However, after only a few months in the town, Mr. Lee found it necessary, for business reasons, to return to Johannesburg.²⁰²

In contrast to Mr. Lee, whose sojourn in Durban was only of short duration, two of the Jewish immigrants who settled in Durban in 1896 not only came to reside permanently in the town, but also came to make a deep and lasting impression on the general and Jewish life of their town of adoption.

²⁰⁰See above p. 97.

²⁰¹The Natal Mercury, July 29, 1896, p. 3.

²⁰²Ibid., May 13, 1897, p. 4.

The first of these two Jewish immigrants was Felix Charles Hollander.²⁰³ Upon his arrival in the town he started his own jewellery business in West Street. He immediately became active within the Masonic order and in 1896 was elected Inner Guard of the Loyal Durban Lodge of the Order of Oddfellows.²⁰⁴ In 1899 he achieved the distinction of being the youngest man to be elected Master of the Rothsay Lodge,²⁰⁵ which lodge

²⁰³ He was born in Birmingham, England, on January 16th, 1875. His father, David Hollander was for many years the honorary choirmaster of the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation. His grandfather, the Rev. H. Hollander was a minister of the Congregation. Hollander was educated at the Birmingham Hebrew Schools and the King Edward Grammar School, Birmingham. At grammar school he won Free Scholarships, Minor and Major Scholarships and the Oxford Local Examinations Certificate.

Before immigrating to South Africa, Hollander was engaged in his father's export business. Mainly as a result of his father's trading contracts with South Africa Hollander sailed for the Cape in 1895. For a year he lived in Cape Town and in 1896 he moved to Durban. (From the file of F.C. Hollander, Archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg.). Three years after his arrival in the town Mr. Hollander married Miss Ethel Watson, who, upon her marriage, embraced the Jewish faith. Mr. and Mrs. Hollander had two children, a son, Mervyn, born in July 1900 (The Natal Mercury, July 12, 1900, p. 4.), who died of tuberculosis in February 1915. (South African Jewish Chronicle, February 19, 1915, p. 125.) and a daughter born in April 1907. (The Natal Mercury, April 22, 1907, p. 4.).

²⁰⁴ The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1896, p. 468.

²⁰⁵ From the file of F.C. Hollander, Archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

he had already served as Inner Guard²⁰⁶ and Secretary.²⁰⁷ Within a few weeks of his arrival in Durban Mr. Hollander appeared as a flautist in a number of symphony concerts,²⁰⁸ and as a member of the Durban Musical Association he played in a number of concerts which were arranged under its auspices.²⁰⁹ He came to serve on the Association's committee.²¹⁰ and was later treasurer of the Association.²¹¹ Hollander also responded with equal enthusiasm to things Jewish. In 1895 he helped conduct Religion Classes attached to the Durban Hebrew Congregation,²¹² and by 1899 he was elected to the Congregation's committee.²¹³

²⁰⁶The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1896, p. 468.

²⁰⁷Ibid., 1899, p. 867.

²⁰⁸The Natal Mercury, May 15, 1897, p. 6. and May 18, 1897, p. 4.

²⁰⁹Ibid., October 2, 1897, p. 4., October 5, 1897, p. 4., June 7, 1899, p. 4. and September 16, 1899, p. 6.

²¹⁰The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1898, p. 741.

²¹¹Ibid., 1899, p. 787.

²¹²London Jewish Chronicle, October 25, 1895, p. 17.

²¹³Ibid., October 13, 1899, p. 18.

The second important Jewish settler of 1896²¹⁴ was Charles Phineas Robinson.²¹⁵ Upon settling in the town he joined the legal firm of Mr. Eugene Renaud, and became an active member of the Durban Parliament, of which he was soon made the Deputy Speaker.²¹⁶ Having established himself in the town C.P. Robinson decided to pay a visit to his family in Liverpool, and on the

²¹⁴ According to the South African Who's Who 1912, C.P. Robinson arrived in the Colony in 1897. (South African Who's Who 1912 An Illustrated Biographical Sketch Book of South Africans, Edited and Published by the Proprietor Ken Donaldson, 4, 5 and 6 African Banking Corporation Buildings, Johannesburg. Printed by Bemrose and Sons Limited, Derby, p. 383.). However in September 1896 it was reported that "Mr. C.P. Robinson, Durban, a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Judicature, has been admitted an attorney by the Supreme Court". (The Natal Mercury, September 3, 1896, p. 4.) and this would therefore seem to indicate that he in fact arrived in Durban in 1896.

²¹⁵ Robinson was born on April 18, 1866, in Liverpool, the youngest son of Ralph and Emily Robinson. According to a tradition, formerly recorded in the family Bible, Charles Robinson's paternal grandmother or great grandmother was the daughter of Lord Gordon, who instigated the Gordon riots in 1780, and who later converted to Judaism. He was educated at the Liverpool Institution and upon becoming a barrister he was befriended by a member of the Argentinian Parliament who suggested that he settle in South America. Robinson spent four years in Beunos Aires, studying the law of the country, and shortly before he qualified his friend was killed in a duel. From South America C.P. Robinson then journeyed to South Africa to join his brothers Edward and Victor who were resident in Durban (From a personal interview with Mrs. Valda Davis, a daughter of the late C.P. Robinson January, 1977.).

²¹⁶ The Natal Mercury, August 17, 1898, p. 4. and The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1899, p. 787.

voyage to England he met his future wife, Miss Mabel Rosettenstein.²¹⁷ Charles Robinson and Mabel Rosettenstein were married in Johannesburg on April 28, 1903,²¹⁸ and established their home in Durban where C.P. Robinson was to make his contribution to Jewish and general life.

From 1896 the Jewish population of the town was further increased by the arrival of Mr. Cohen, a partner in the firm Fleming & Cohen, Practical Watch-makers & Jewellers, Mercury Lane²¹⁹ and Mr. Levy of Messrs. Singleton & Levy, Central Hostel, Durban, agents of Donaldson & Doyle's Gigantic Sweepstakes.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Her father Levin Rosettenstein and his half brother, Max, were well known personalities in Johannesburg, where the suburb of Rosettenville was named after them. In the Glencoe Rail Disaster on December 31, 1895, Mabel Rosettenstein lost her mother, Frances, her Aunt Kate (the wife of Max Rosettenstein) her sister, Leonora Klisser. Her brother Phillip was injured in the derailment. (For more detail see below pp. 162-164. Originally supposed to accompany her family on the ill fated train she went on holiday with her school teacher instead and thus, escaped the fate which befell her family (From a personal interview with Mrs. Valda Davis, January, 1977.)

²¹⁸ The Natal Mercury, April 25, 1903, p. 14.

²¹⁹ Ibid., June 11, 1896, p. 3.

²²⁰ Ibid., May 25, 1897, p. 2.

Other Jews whose presence in the town is revealed by The Natal Almanac include David Isaacs, a tobacconist of 13c Cemetery Lane;²²¹ Hyman Leaman, of 440 Point Road;²²² Isaac Barnett, a sailmaker at 466 Point Road;²²³ Dr. G. Ginsberg, who had a dental surgery in West Street;²²⁴ and B. Kischbaum, who ran a mineral water works at 227 Smith Street.²²⁵

Although it is generally not possible to determine the destination of those Jews who left Durban during this period, there must have been a large number of Durban Jews who joined the fortune hunters, drawn from all parts of South Africa and from places even further afield, who, in the 1880's made their way to the Transvaal gold fields. In 1888 a Durban correspondent in fact reported that "the High Festival services were well attended considering that nearly all the members are on the gold fields."²²⁶ Indeed so great was the attraction of gold

²²¹The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1897, p. 142., 1898, p. 146., and 1899, p. 181.

²²²Ibid., 1897, p. 144., 1898, p. 148. and 1899, p. 183.

²²³Ibid., 1897, p. 128., 1898, p. 130. and 1899, p. 165.

²²⁴Ibid., 1898, p. 142.

²²⁵Ibid., 1899, p. 183.

²²⁶London Jewish Chronicle, October 12, 1888, p. 13.

that there were even Durban Jews who, whilst continuing to reside in the town, were associated with the gold mining companies.²²⁷

Amongst the many fortune hunters who made their way to the Transvaal were a few of the founders of the Hebrew Congregation in Durban. Of these the most well known is Harry Graumann (later knighted).²²⁸ Together with Henry Heller,²²⁹ another founder member of the Congregation, and three other colleagues, Graumann journeyed to Barberton where he started trading in partnership with Henry Heller.²³⁰ Heller remained in Barberton where he came to be president of the Hebrew Congregation and the South African agent for the Anglo-Jewish Association.²³² In 1890 Heller passed through Durban en route for England where he sought to float several De Koop properties.²³³ David Heller who had

²²⁷In the Almanac for 1887 A. Hart is recorded as a director of the Pretoria Gold Mining Company (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1887, p. 286.). In the following edition of the Almanac B. Lipinski is recorded as a director of the same gold mining company, (Ibid., 1888, p. 280.).

²²⁸See above p. 90.

²²⁹See above p. 86.

²³⁰Harry Graumann, Rand Riches and South Africa, pp. 8. and 11.

²³¹Dora L. Sowden, "Transvaal Jewry 1902-1910", in The Jews of South Africa, p. 224.

²³²London Jewish Chronicle, November 22, 1889, p. 7.

²³³The Natal Mercury, May 8, 1890, p. 3.

been a trader in the district of Durban at the time of Wartski's arrival in the town²³⁴ also settled in Barberton.²³⁵

Another Jew associated with Durban who is known to have settled in the Transvaal during this period was Henry Adler.²³⁶ He went from Cape Town to the Lydenburg and Pilgrim's Rest gold fields in 1885, and he came to be closely connected with the mining industry. In 1886 he took up the famous Thomas Reef in Barberton. He remained a well known figure in that district until November 1887 when he moved to Johannesburg.²³⁷

Michael Emanuel²³⁸ was another former Durban Jew who was attracted to Barberton. He left for the gold fields with his family in 1889,²³⁹ and later settled in Johannesburg.²⁴⁰

In April 1886 Saul Jacobs, a former Natal Jew obtained a contract to prospect for gold on Block B of

²³⁴See above p. 90.

²³⁵Arthur Markowitz, "Philip Wartski", p. 51.

²³⁶See above pp.68-69.

²³⁷South African Who's Who 1912. An Illustrated Biographical Sketch Book of South Africans, p. 3.

²³⁸See above p. 78

²³⁹From the personal recollections of the late Philip Wartski.

²⁴⁰By 1893 he owned a jewellery store in that town. The Natal Mercury, April 17, 1893, p. 3.

the farm Langlaagte in the Heidelberg district.

Together with Samuel Coleman and Mrs. Fanny Rosenstein he formed the Langlaagte Co. In July 1886, acting as agents for Mrs. A.E. Mulder, those three partners sold Block B to J.B. Robinson for £800 cash. Not long after this deal had been finalised the discovery of the main reef occurred in the Langlaagte area.²⁴¹

²⁴¹S.A. Rochlin, "The Early Gold Fields", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 146.

CHAPTER IV

JEWISH PARTICIPATION IN THE GENERAL LIFE OF
THE COMMUNITY (1857 - 1895)

The role played by the Jews of Natal in the public life of the Colony was a small one, and apart from Jonas Bergtheil, who was a member of the Legislative Council from 1857 - 1866,¹ no other practicing Jews appear to have stood as candidates in subsequent elections. Since Bergtheil's election proves that the Jews were not expressly prohibited from seeking election to public office, it must be assumed that it was the reluctance or apathy of the Jews of Durban to offer

¹See above pp.36-38.

themselves as candidates in elections, which accounts for this state of affairs. This may also have been the result of the fact that many of the Jews who settled in Durban in this period remained for only a short while, and therefore did not have an opportunity to become involved in public life.

Notwithstanding their absence from amongst those seeking political office, some of the Jews of Durban did work for the nomination and election of certain candidates to the Legislative and Town Councils. From 1863 their names feature on the requisitions addressed to these candidates.²

²In 1863 Daniel Kisch and S.H. Hart signed a requisition to John Robinson. (The Natal Mercury, May 19, 1863, p. 3.). In 1880 B. Kisch and H. Adler worked to secure the election of Harry Escombe to the Legislative Council, (Ibid., September 22, 1880, p. 1.) and in 1883 a requisition asking B. Greenacre to stand for the Legislative Council was signed by M.H. Emanuel. (Ibid., April 23, 1883, p. 2.). M.H. Emanuel also signed a requisition addressed to F.A. Piccione, asking him to stand in municipal elections in 1890. (Ibid., February 11, 1890, p. 2.). In the municipal election of 1890 A. Simon supported the candidature of L.J. Wilson (Ibid., July 26, 1890, p. 3.) and in the following year he signed a requisition addressed to J.B. Cottam (Ibid., July 25, 1891, p. 3.). For the municipal elections of 1892 B. Cinamon, in Ward 2, supported W.R. Poynton (Ibid., July 15, 1892, p. 2.) M. Goldberg, in Ward 6 supported W.G. Friggens, (Ibid., July 15, 1892, p. 2.) and P. Wartski and B. Lipinski, in Ward 4, supported J. Payne, (Ibid., July 16, 1892, p. 2.). In 1893 D.N. Henochsberg and Louis Goldberg signed a requisition addressed to E.W. Farman, asking him to stand in the municipal elections for Ward 3. (Ibid., July 17, 1893, p. 2.). In the same election B. Lipinski signed a requisition addressed to J. Ellis Brown (Ibid., July 18, 1893, p. 2.). A year later J.H. Isaacs was a signatory to a requisition addressed to P.E.G. Mitcheson asking him to stand for the Town Council in Ward 6. (Ibid., July 18, 1894, p. 2.).

Outside the sphere of involvement in elective political activity Jews also participated in the general life of the town. On August 9, 1879, a committee, which included Henry Adler, organised a luncheon in the Market House in honour of the Durban Mounted Rifles.³ This function was a tribute to those who had helped in the defense of Durban, and was a reflection of the relief with which the imminent collapse of Cetshwayo was welcomed by the white residents of the town.

Upon the outbreak of the Anglo-Zulu War, on January 10, 1879, and the serious setback which the British suffered through Cetshwayo's victory at Isandhlwana on January 17, an attack on Durban had appeared imminent. Not until the arrival of reinforcements, in March 1879, was this threat of attack on the town finally removed.⁴ Although Cetshwayo's apprehension, on August 28, 1879, brought the war to an end, tension persisted in Zululand in consequence of the dissatisfaction that was aroused by the settlement which Sir Garnet Wolseley, The High Commissioner for South East Africa, imposed on the territory.

³Ibid., August 8, 1879, p. 1.

⁴Durban : Fifty years Municipal History, Compiled for the Durban Corporation in celebration of the Jubilee of the Borough by W.P.M. Henderson, Assistant Town Clerk. Durban 1904, pp 100-101.

The British Government, not wishing to spend money on restoring peace in Zululand, decided rather to reinstate Cetshwayo as chief of the Zulus.⁵ This plan, which met with opposition from the white residents of the Colony, came into effect in 1882. Public disapproval of the British Government's scheme was expressed at meetings such as that called by the Mayor of Durban, Mr. W. Arbuckle Jun., on December 16, 1881, in response to a requisition signed by a number of prominent townsmen, including W. Adler.⁶

In the wake of the Anglo-Zulu War Natal came to be embroiled in the first Anglo Boer War, which broke out in December 1880. The war was the result of dissatisfaction over the British annexation of the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek in 1877, and the strong desire within the Transvaal for the restoration of the Republic. This war, which was also called the War of Independence, was climaxed by the defeat of the British on Amajuba, on February 27, 1881, and formally ended with the signing of the Pretoria Convention in August 1881.⁷

⁵For a fuller account of the war and the post war developments in Zululand see M.C. Van Zyl, "Natal 1845 - 1902", in 500 Years A History of South Africa, ed. C.F.J. Muller (Pretoria, n.d.), pp. 193, 195 and 197.

⁶The Natal Mercury, December 14, 1881, p. 1.

⁷For a fuller account see J.S. Du Plessis, "The South African Republic" in 500 Years A History of South Africa, pp. 231-240.

In the heat of the conflict Henry and William Adler served on a committee which was formed by the Red Cross Association in Durban to provide relief for the sick and wounded on both sides engaged in the fighting.⁸

Whilst in Durban two Jews were helping to relieve the victims of war, in Tzarist Russia their co-religionists were made the victims of wide scale government inspired pogroms which attained their zenith in the spring and summer of 1881. To alleviate the suffering of Russian Jewry a relief fund was set up in London, and donations were solicited from men of goodwill throughout the Empire. In an eloquent letter addressed to the local press the Rev. Joel Rabinowitz of Cape Town sought contributions for the fund.⁹

The persecution, however, continued, and reached its' climax in 1891 and 1892 with the eviction of Jews from Moscow and from areas within the Pale of Settlement. Once again Jews rallied to the support of their oppressed co-religionists, and in response to a request from the London branch of the Russian Jewish Committee the President of the Hebrew Congregation set up a branch of the Committee in Durban.¹⁰ Messrs. J.H.

⁸The Natal Mercury, February 24, 1881, p. 1.

⁹Ibid., July 28, 1881, p. 3.

¹⁰Ibid., November 24, 1891, p. 1.

Isaacs, B. Lipinski, M. Heilbron, A. Simon, H.J. Henochsberg, P. Wartski, L. Goldberg and P. Myers were appointed to canvas and receive subscriptions in aid of the fund in Durban.¹¹ Subscription lists were also forwarded to the various banks in the Colony, and to S. Frank, Charlestown; S. Michaelson, Volksrust; Barands Bros., Vryheid and L. Werner & Co., Vryheid.¹² Sympathy with the objects of the fund was reflected in the long lists of subscribers that were published in the local press,¹³ and in the fact that contributions exceeded £304.¹⁴ Support for the fund was also reflected in letters to the press¹⁵ and in an editorial in The Natal Mercury.¹⁶

Not only responsive to the suffering of their co-religionists, the Jews of Durban also generously supported the fund set up by the Town Council for the relief of victims of the hurricane which struck the island of Mauritius on April 29, 1892. Among those present in the Council Chamber when the Mayor, Mr. B.W. Greenacre, established the fund were Messrs. J. Isaacs

¹¹Supplement to The Natal Mercury, November 28, 1891, p. 6.

¹²The Natal Mercury, December 10, 1891, p. 2.

¹³Ibid., December 2, 1891, p. 3. and December 16, 1891, p. 2.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., December 10, 1891, p. 4.

¹⁶Ibid., May 30, 1892, p. 2.

and B. Lipinski,¹⁷ who were also among the first to contribute to the Mauritius Relief Fund.¹⁸ The names of over fourteen Jewish subscribers appear on the fourth subscription list, which included an amount of £10.10.0. voted from the funds of the Hebrew Congregation.¹⁹

In contrast to their bretheren in Russia, for whom the Tzar was the embodiment of their oppressors, the Jews in Durban, in common with their co-religionists throughout the Empire looked on the British monarchy as the embodiment of the freedom which they had come to enjoy under the British. Accordingly they joined with the rest of the citizens of the Empire in celebrating Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. In keeping with other religious bodies in the town, the Hebrew Congregation in Durban marked the Queen's Jubilee by holding a special thanksgiving service at the synagogue in Grey Street.²⁰ Similarly, upon the death of Albert Victor Edward, Duke of Clarence, the eldest son of Edward and Alexandra, the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Jewish community joined the Queen's other subjects in mourning the prince's passing. A special memorial

¹⁷Ibid., June 1, 1892, p. 3.

¹⁸Ibid., June 6, 1892, p. 3. and June 14, 1892, p. 3.

¹⁹Ibid., June 14, 1892, p. 3.

²⁰Supplement to The Natal Mercury, June 22, 1887.

service was held in connection with the sad event in the temporary Synagogue Chambers, on Sunday January 17, 1892,²¹ and a message was cabled to the Chief Rabbi, in London, "conveying the Congregation's deepest sympathy with the Royal Family in their affliction".²² The absence of the Rev. Mr. Pincus from Durban prevented the Durban Hebrew Congregation from being represented amongst the ministers at the civic memorial service, held in the Town Hall on January 21.²³ Nevertheless, at the service Mr. B. Lipinski one of the Congregation's Trustees, was accorded a seat on the platform, together with the various chaplains, dignitaries, consular representatives and prominent townsmen.²⁴

In this period some members of the Jewish community were, in their personal capacity, in the forefront of the opposition to the Early Closing Movement. For a long time Saturday afternoon had come to be recognised in Durban as a half holiday by all but a few storekeepers, who refused to close their establishments. When, notwithstanding the pressure that was brought to bear upon them, a number of these firms persisted in opening on Saturday afternoons and evenings, a section of the shop assistants, without the support of the Early Closing

²¹Ibid., January 18, 1892, p. 6.

²²Ibid.

²³The Natal Advertiser, January 21, 1892, p. 3.

²⁴The Natal Advertiser, January 21, 1892, p. 3.

Association, decided to take matters into their own hands. On Saturday evening, July 11, 1891, an unexpected demonstration was held in West Street, and the stores of Messrs. H.J. Henochsberg, B. Cinamon, L. Goldberg and Councillor Bingham were stoned and forced to close.²⁵ Mr. Henochsberg, who was by far the greatest sufferer in the riot believed that "a good deal of anti Semitic feeling was imported in the affair".²⁶ The editor of The Natal Mercury, in express-support for the Early Closing Movement criticised the riotous methods adopted by the demonstrators, and alluded to Mr. Henochsberg's allegation by stating that:

...there must be no acts of violence and no religious rancour. Events have shown that the transgressions against holiday privileges are not confined to men of one creed or of one race only. That fact was at any rate impartially recognised on Saturday. Freedom of faith has been the Englishman's glory in the past, and we trust that it will continue to be one of the boasts of Natal...²⁷

Dissatisfied that only two men had been arrested in connection with the riots,²⁸ Mr. Louis Goldberg, the manager of the Colonial Bankruptcy Stock Association offered a £5 reward for information leading to the conviction of persons who wilfully smashed his store

²⁵Ibid., July 13, 1891, p. 3.

²⁶Ibid., July 14, 1891, p. 3.

²⁷Ibid., (2nd edition), p. 3.

²⁸Ibid., July 13, 1891, p. 3. and July 14, 1891, p. 3.

windows, or who threw eggs and other rubbish at the windows.²⁹

On the following Saturday evening West Street was crowded in anticipation of a further public outburst. However adequate police arrangements prevented a recurrence of the previous weeks unrest, and the crowd dispersed when Mr. H.J. Henochsberg and Mr. L. Goldberg shut their stores.³⁰

The question of Saturday closing, however, remained unresolved, and a year later the issue was revived. On August 16, 1892 a meeting of the leading merchants of the town was held under the presidency of Mr. B.W. Greenacre, to try and induce Mr. Henochsberg to conform to the custom of the town and close his store on Saturday afternoon and evening.³¹ Mr. Henochsberg remained uncompromising in his attitude, and in a lengthy letter to the press he outlined the reasons for his stand.³² Large numbers of his opponents gathered outside his store in anticipation of a popular demonstration on the evening of Saturday, August 20.³³ However, Mr. Henochsberg was not without his supporters, and 'Nils Desperandum' and 'Timothy' were but two of

²⁹Ibid., July 18, 1891, p. 4.

³⁰Ibid., July 20, 1891, p. 3.

³¹Ibid., August 17, 1892, p. 3.

³²Ibid., August 19, 1892, p. 3.

³³Ibid., August 22, 1892, p. 3.

the correspondents who wrote to the press upholding the right of Messrs. Henochsberg Bros. to remain open on Saturday afternoon and evenings.³⁴ This issue, which was finally settled by legislation in 1906,³⁵ was, in 1893, completely overshadowed by the granting of Responsible Government to the Colony.³⁶

³⁴Supplement to The Natal Mercury, August 23, 1892, p. 6.

³⁵See below p. 237.

³⁶On May 10, 1893, the Legislative Council of Natal had passed a law to institute Responsible Government, and two months later the British Government approved the law. (M.C. Van Zyl, "Natal 1845 - 1902", in 500 Years A History of South Africa, p. 196.).

CHAPTER V

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CORPORATE JEWISH ACTIVITY
IN DURBAN

It has already been noted that the first Jew arrived in Durban in 1825, and that from about 1850 Jews began to settle in the town in gradually increasing numbers.¹ It is, therefore, quite strange that a congregation was only formed in Durban in 1883, whereas in other towns in South Africa, the establishment of a Hebrew Congregation followed closely upon the arrival of Jewish settlers.

In Oudtshoorn, for example, it was noted in 1880, that there were only four or five Jewish residents. Yet, three years later a congregation was formed, made up of

¹See above, Chapters I., II. and III.

Jews in the town and in the district.² In Johannesburg New Year Services were held on September 20, 1886, whilst the town itself was only proclaimed on October 4, 1886.³ Two years after the township of Barberton was declared in 1884, a congregation was formed, and High Festival Services were held.⁴ Similarly in Germiston, which was founded as a town in 1896, a congregation was formed within a year.⁵

One possible reason for this may be that, unlike Oudtshoorn, which was the centre of the ostrich feather industry, and the Transvaal, which had the attraction of gold, Durban had very little to offer as an inducement to prospective settlers. Most Jewish settlers moved to where the commercial prospects appeared to be most favourable, and their large numbers made it possible to form congregations within a short space of time. Indeed, a resident of Durban, Mr. Joseph P.L. Goodman, complained in 1876 that:

Natal has been inhabited by white people for nearly thirty years and, it is strange, few of our co-religionists have remained sufficient time to enable a Jewish congregation to be

²George Aschman, "Oudtshoorn in the Early Days", in The Jews in South Africa A History, ed. Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz (London, 1955), pp. 124-125.

³Louis I. Rabinowitz, "The Transvaal Congregations", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 165.

⁴Ibid., p. 172.

⁵Ibid.

formed, the prospect of the place not being the brightest.⁶

It should also be borne in mind that the Jewish immigrants of the 1880's who settled in Oudtshoorn and on the Transvaal gold fields, were predominantly East European and generally observant. For these people, the establishment of a Hebrew Congregation was often regarded as a priority. Durban, with its predominantly Anglo-Jewish congregation, was not greatly affected by the wave of East European immigration of the 1880's and its greater religious commitment. Those East European Jews who did settle in Durban were generally labourers and artisans, and did not become the leaders of the community. Later they were to become, however, the back bone of the weekly minyan of the synagogue.⁷

The establishment of the Hebrew Congregation in Durban can be more accurately compared to the founding of the Hebrew Congregation in Port Elizabeth. The earliest Jewish settlers in the Eastern Province were amongst the 1820 Settlers who landed at Algoa Bay. From then on, until 1862, the history of the Jews of Port Elizabeth, like that of the Jews of Durban, is very largely a history of individuals. As in the case of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, which was formed through the initiative of one individual, P. Wartski,

⁶London Jewish Chronicle, March 17, 1876, p. 796.

⁷See D'Arbellas' letter on p. 143 below.

so in Port Elizabeth, a congregation was established in 1861 through the initiative of an individual, a Mrs. Abrahamson.⁸

The first public Jewish religious event in Durban took place in December 1875 when a minyan was held on the last day of Chanukah.

On this day our worthy and respected co-religionist Mr. Daniel M. Kisch of Pretoria, Transvaal Republic, made the first berith milah in Natal, he having come a distance of four hundred miles to observe this law. The Rev. S. Rapeport of Port Elizabeth (the nearest Jewish community from our isolated place, a distance of five hundred miles) officiated, the Minyan being obtained through the arrival of these gentlemen; the rite was successfully performed, after which the following gentlemen : Mr. D.M. Kisch, Rev. S. Rapeport and Messrs. H. and B. Kisch, E. Emanuel, W. Adler, Joseph R. Levy, Mr. Rudolph and son, Joseph P.L. Goodman, sat down to a sumptuous repast. Some excellent toasts followed, Mr. D.M. Kisch in eloquent words strongly advocating the cause of Judaism. The cloth being removed, grace was impressingly intoned by Rev. Rapeport.⁹

Why Daniel Kisch had his son's circumcision performed in Durban remains unanswered by this report. Presumably no person suitably qualified to perform this rite was domiciled in the Transvaal, which, at this time, was sparsely populated by Jews. Daniel Kisch may therefore have wanted to be in Durban to make it easier for the Rev. Rapeport, who had to make the journey from Port Elizabeth.

⁸ Abraham Addelson "In the Eastern Province", in The Jews in South Africa, pp. 302-304.

⁹ London Jewish Chronicle, March 17, 1876, p. 796.

The Jews of Durban performed their first corporate act in 1880, when, upon the death of a Jew named Morris Rouse, on November 24, they secured a burial ground in which to inter his remains. In the absence of a Jewish minister Mr. Hirschfield read the burial service and Messrs. B. Lipinski, H. Henochsberg, J. Hart and H. Heller officiated as pall bearers.¹⁰ The Rev. S. Repeport of Port Elizabeth, after having travelled through the Orange Free State and Transvaal, where he had officiated at Jewish marriages and circumcisions, arrived in Durban on December 14, 1880. During his visit to the town the rev. gentleman consecrated the cemetery which the Jews of Durban had secured, and enclosed at a cost of about £200.¹¹

The establishment of the burial ground, and its enclosure at a considerable expense does indicate that the Durban Jewish community had, at last, accepted its own permanence.

The first death of a Jew in Durban to be recorded in the local press occurred on February 9, 1883, when Mr. B. Albu, "a violinist who had played frequently for the Philharmonic Society, died in the hospital on Friday from heart disease".¹² Preparations for the

¹⁰Ibid., December 31, 1880, p. 11.

¹¹Ibid., January 28, 1881, p. 12.

¹²The Natal Mercury, February 12, 1883, p. 2.

funeral were performed at the hospital by a number of Jewish men, and the deceased was afterwards conveyed to the Jewish cemetery for burial.¹³

Although this fact cannot be confirmed, the third person to be buried in the Jewish cemetery may well have been Amelia Levinson, the daughter of Isaac and Kate Levinson, who died on February 16 1883, after an illness of fourteen days, aged seven and a half years.¹⁴

The day after Philip Wartski's arrival in Durban, on April 7, 1882, he met with some of the Jewish residents of the town and it was decided to hold a minyan for Pesach, at the home of Mr. Isadore Lee. Mr. I. Granger, Mr. M.H. Emanuel and Wartski offered to officiate. On April 10, 1882, the first Jewish divine service ever to take place in Durban was held.¹⁵ During 1883 quite a few newcomers arrived in Durban. In consequence the minyan was moved from Mr. Lee's house to the Masonic Hall, where services for up to thirty people used to be conducted by P. Wartski and J. Simon.¹⁶

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., February 19, 1883, p. 2.

¹⁵Arthur Markowitz, "Philip Wartski", Hasholom Rosh Hashonah Annual (September, 1950), p. 51.

¹⁶Ibid.

In 1883, Bernhard Lipinski and his wife returned to Durban from Great Britain, and on August 14, 1883, Mrs. Lipinski gave birth to a son.¹⁷ It has been suggested that this was the first Jew born in Durban.¹⁸ Owing to a lack of additional information the validity of this claim must be upheld. However both Benjamin Kisch's wife and the wives of M.H. and E. Emanuel had by this time given birth to children in Durban.¹⁹ Whilst Mrs. Kisch and her children apparently followed the Anglican faith, the religious affiliation of Mesdames M.H. and E. Emanuel remains unclear. As their husbands played a prominent part in the establishment of a Hebrew congregation one would expect them to have been of the Jewish faith. However at this time mixed marriage in itself does not appear to have been a bar to participation in Jewish communal life. B. Kisch, for example, whose family are known to have been members of the Church of England, was nevertheless one of the original members of the Hebrew Congregation in Durban.²⁰ Therefore, the possibility of the Emanuel brothers having joined the congregation under similar circumstances also

¹⁷The Natal Mercury, August 15, 1883, p. 2. This child was named Harry. His parents later had three more children, Leo, Arthur and Gladys. (Ibid., January 31, 1907, p. 7.).

¹⁸Deborah Abelson, "In Natal" in The Jews in South Africa, p. 339

¹⁹See above p. 64 footnotes, 75-79 and p.79 footnotes 5 and 8.

²⁰See below p. 140.

exists. Mr. M.H. Emanuel's participation in a concert for the building fund of the new St. Cyprian's Church²¹ could be interpreted as a sign of her having been a member of the Anglican Church. Yet, to have assisted a church in its fund raising efforts does not necessarily mean that the person was of that particular faith.²² As so little is known about the wives of M.H. and E. Emanuel, the possibility is ever present that either one or both of these women gave birth to a Jewish child before Mrs. Lipinski.

The likelihood of Mrs. M.H. Emanuel having been the first Jewish mother in Durban, is, in fact, strengthened by the newspaper report regarding the brit milah of the Lipinski's infant son on September 6. The article describing the ceremony, which was performed by the Rev. S. Rapeport, who was brought from Port Elizabeth specially for the occasion, concluded with the note that, "another event of a similar nature is to take place on the Berea on Sunday".²³ Had other Jewish boys not been born in Durban, there would have been no need to hold a circumcision ceremony on September 9.

It was in September 1883, during Rev. Rapeport's

²¹Extra to The Natal Mercury, August 10, 1880.

²²Cf. case of Benjamin Norden. See above p. 22.

²³The Natal Mercury, September 7, 1883, p. 2.

visit to Durban, that definite steps to form a properly constituted congregation were taken.²⁴ Wartski recorded that:

G. Roberts, H. Emanuel, J. Levenberg, E.R. Robinson, B. Levy, J. Simon, B. Newman, I. Lee, G. Solomon, D. Jacobs, I. Grainger, J. Granger, J.H. Isaacs, H. Graumann, J. Levy, P. Wartski, B. Lipinski, B. Kisch, B. Weinstein, I. Barnett, D. Lipinski, A. Simon, H. Heller, L. Levenson, H. Henochsberg, I. Goldberg, E. Emanuel, S. Michaelson, K.M. Kisch, B. Saphra, A. Jacobson, L. Traub, B. Cinamon, L. Tallerman, L. Behrman, A. Cohen, L. Hart and one or two others were the original members.²⁵

In 1883 the Congregation held services over the New Year at the Masonic Hall, Smith Street, which had been lent by the Port Natal Lodge. For the first time the general press referred to the Jewish holiday, concluding its announcement by informing its readers that the stores owned by Jewish townsmen would be closed.²⁶ A year later Jewish businessmen themselves notified the public, through the press, of their intention to close their stores over the Jewish New Year.²⁷

Sensing the need for a minister, who was qualified to act as a chazan, shochet and mohel, the members, at a general meeting held to frame the congregation's bye

²⁴ Arthur Markowitz, "Philip Wartski", p. 51.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ The Natal Mercury, October 2, 1883, p. 2.

²⁷ Ibid., September 19, 1884, p. 3. and September 20, 1884, p. 3.

laws, appointed the Rev. Mr. Weinstock, as their spiritual leader. The meeting concluded with the election of the following office bearers: Mr. B. Lipinski, president; Mr. H. Heller, treasurer; Mr. M.H. Emanuel, secretary; Messrs. D. Jacobs, J. Granger and I. Goldberg, committee.²⁸ Bernhard Lipinski and Daniel de Pass were the first Wardens.²⁹ Mr. M.H. Emanuel served as the first marriage officer, until he left Durban in 1899.³⁰

Initially it was decided that a temporary room would be hired for worship.³¹ However, when the inconvenience and expense of hiring a hall proved to be too great, it was resolved to purchase a suitable building and to establish a permanent synagogue.

On January 1, 1884 the former Wesleyan Chapel in Grey Street was consecrated by the Hebrew Congregation as their first synagogue.³² That same afternoon the marriage of Mr. J.H. Isaacs, the president of the

²⁸London Jewish Chronicle, December 28, 1883, p. 10

²⁹Louis Herrman, A History of the Jews in South Africa: From the Earliest Times to 1895 (London, 1930), p. 271.

³⁰From the personal recollections of the late Philip Wartski, in possession of his daughter Mrs. P. Hayman. Until 1891 he continued to be recorded, together with Mr. H.J. Henochsberg of Pietermaritzburg as a Jewish Marriage Officer for the Colony. (Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1890, p. 484., 1891, p. 495.).

³¹London Jewish Chronicle, December 28, 1883, p. 10

³²The Natal Mercantile Advertiser, January 5, 1884, p. 3.

Pietermaritzburg Hebrew Congregation,³³ and Miss Jenny Granger was solemnised in the newly consecrated synagogue. The service on this historic occasion was conducted by the Rev. Mr. Weinstock, assisted by Mr. M.H. Emanuel.³⁴

The expenditure incurred by the Congregation in purchasing the synagogue building and adapting it to meet its specific needs amounted to £475. Of this amount £175 was raised by the members, and the balance remained on mortgage. In need of funds to meet this liability and other expenses the Congregation turned to Daniel de Pass,³⁵ who was requested, "to canvass in London for subscriptions to enable the new congregation to liquidate its debts".³⁶ In February 1885 De Pass appeared, together with the Rev. Joel Rabinowitz, the former minister of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, Tikvath Israel, and the Chief Rabbi, the Very Rev. Dr. H. Adler, as a co-sagnatory to an appeal for funds which was published on behalf of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, in the London Jewish Chronicle.³⁷ In recognition of his endeavours, whereby more than £100 was added to the Congregation's funds, Daniel de Pass was

³³London Jewish Chronicle, November 30, 1883, p. 10

³⁴The Natal Mercantile Advertiser, January 5, 1884, p. 3.

³⁵See above pp.55-58.

³⁶London Jewish Chronicle, July 18, 1884, p. 12.

³⁷Ibid., February 6, 1885, p. 3.

elected a life member of the Congregation.³⁸ From the time of the community's inception Daniel de Pass also served as the Congregation's first representative on the British Jewish Board of Deputies.³⁹

A picture of the Jewish community in this period emerges from a letter written by a Dr. I. Gregory d'Arbella, Physician to H.M. The Sultan of Zanzibar, who visited Durban in June 1884. He reported that he had attended a Sabbath service at the synagogue in Grey Street, and that, "There was no more then a minyan, and all the congregation consisted of were Russian and Polish Jews. The poor fellows are all artisans, getting a living by their several handicrafts".⁴⁰ Thus it would seem that whilst the leadership of the congregation was in the hands of the English Jews, it was the Jews of East European origin who were the more observant. Dr. d'Arbella also spoke of another group of Jews who were resident in Durban:

There are a great many German Jews who do not take part in this laudable undertaking, and have completely left Judaism, having intermarried with Christians, and who try to hide their Jewish origin, but they are despised by both Christians and Jews.⁴¹

³⁸The Durban Hebrew Congregation Fiftieth Anniversary 1884-1934, 5644-5694 (Durban, 1934), p. 7.

³⁹Ibid., p. 15.

⁴⁰London Jewish Chronicle, July 25, 1884, p. 11.

⁴¹Ibid.

In addition to his duties as minister, the Rev. Weinstock also served as a teacher, and d'Arbella noted that, "the children attend a Hebrew class held at the house of the minister".⁴²

The Durban Hebrew Congregation held its first annual general meeting on September 14, 1884. The unfavourable financial position of the congregation, which was largely due to the outlay during the year for furniture and fittings for the new synagogue, tended to dominate the discussion at the meeting.⁴³ Not long after the annual meeting the Congregation sent an illuminated address, through Mr. Gumpelson of Birmingham, to Sir Moses Montefiore, on the occasion of his hundredth birthday. The address, which was designed by Mr. S.V. Bennett, was exhibited prior to the meeting in the window of the jewellery shop owned by Mr. M.H. Emanuel, the honorary secretary of the Congregation.⁴⁴

By February 1885 the Rev. Weinstock's ministry in Durban had ended, and the Congregation, finding itself without a spiritual leader, invited applications for the post, at a salary of £200 per annum, to be made to Mr. H. Gumpelson, 169 Edmond Street, Birmingham.⁴⁵ The

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., October 17, 1884, p. 7.

⁴⁴The Natal Mercantile Advertiser, September 11, 1884, p. 3.

⁴⁵London Jewish Chronicle, February 27, 1885, p. 3.

Rev. M. Friedlander, the Rev. Weinstock's successor, had by June 1885 assumed office with the Durban Hebrew Congregation. In that month he composed a service for the unveiling and consecration of a tombstone erected to the memory of a female child, Pasha Tuva.⁴⁶ This child, whose father's Hebrew name was Isaac, may possibly have been Amelia Levinson, the daughter of Isaac Levinson, who died in February 1883.⁴⁷ A month later the Rev. Friedlander officiated at a special service, held at the synagogue in Grey Street on July 30, in consequence of the death of Sir Moses Montefiore.⁴⁸

The Rev. Friedlander's ministry appears to have been as brief as that of his predecessor, and by June 1886 he had been succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Kramin. The first intimation of Rev. Kramin's appointment as minister of the Durban Hebrew Congregation comes from a report of the marriage of Mr. Bernhard Levy and Miss Fannie Isaacs, in the Masonic Temple, Pietermaritzburg.⁴⁹ As many of the members of the Pietermaritzburg Hebrew Congregation were also members of the Congregation in Durban,⁵⁰ and were therefore entitled to the services of

⁴⁶This service, which includes a specially composed prayer in English, is in the archives of the Durban United Hebrew Congregation.

⁴⁷The Natal Mercury, February 19, 1883, p. 2.

⁴⁸Ibid., August 1, 1885, p. 3.

⁴⁹Ibid., June 18, 1856, p. 2.

⁵⁰London Jewish Chronicle, November 21, 1884, p. 12.

the minister, the Rev. Kramin, accompanied by Messrs. B. Lipinski and P. Wartski, had journeyed to the Capital to perform the ceremony.⁵¹

As the newspaper report of the synagogue service held to mark Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, in June 1887, refer to the service being "conducted by the acting priest",⁵² it would appear that the Rev. Kramin, the Congregation's third minister, left Durban after only a short ministry. For the next few years the Durban Hebrew Congregation was without the services of a minister, and those duties associated with a minister

⁵¹Over the next few years the Durban minister was periodically called upon to officiate at a wedding ceremony involving members of the Pietermaritzburg Congregation. In 1891 the president and executive of the Durban Congregation travelled with the minister to the Capital to attend the wedding of Miss Kate Froomberg and Mr. A.J. Tyler, a proselyte. (*Ibid.*, December 18, 1891, p. 6.). As this marriage was solemnised in accordance with Jewish rites facilities for conversion to Judaism were obviously available. Mr. Tyler's conversion is particularly noteworthy in that it is the first recorded case of conversion to Judaism through the Durban Hebrew Congregation. Later, in August 1895, the minister of the Durban Congregation journeyed to Pietermaritzburg to officiate at the marriage of Miss Amelia Barnett and Mr. B. Froomberg. (*The Natal Mercury*, August 27, 1895, p. 3.).

⁵²Supplement to The Natal Mercury, June 22, 1887.

devolved upon prominent members of the congregation.⁵³ Although the need for a minister was keenly felt, the Congregation, despite an increase in membership, was not large enough to support one. In 1891 it was noted that "the funds of the Congregation are increasing but are not at present large enough to pay off the Building Fund. When this is done it will be the aim of the committee to arrange for a qualified Minister, Schochet and Mohel".⁵⁴

Since it has been established that three ministers, the Revs. Weinstock, Friedlander and Kramin had served the Congregation, it must be assumed that their short terms of office were conditioned by the inability of the community to afford adequate salaries, no less than

⁵³In the absence of a minister Messrs. I. Lee and I. Heiman conducted the High Holy Day services in 1889. (London Jewish Chronicle, November 15, 1889, p. 16.). Upon the appointment of a minister in 1891 Mr. I. Lee was presented with a silver Kiddush cup, in recognition of his services during the time that the Congregation had been without a minister. (Durban Hebrew Congregation Fiftieth Anniversary 1884-1934, 5644-5694, p. 7.). In 1889 the London Jewish Chronicle reported that Mr. I.F. Levy held the appointment of marriage officer from the Government. (London Jewish Chronicle, November 15, 1889, p. 16.). However, the Natal Almanac for 1889, 1890 and 1891 only records the names of M.H. Emanuel and H.J. Henochsberg as Jewish Marriage Officers for Natal, the former in Durban, the latter in Pietermaritzburg. (The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1889, p. 415., 1890, p. 484. and 1891, p. 495.).

⁵⁴London Jewish Chronicle, November 15, 1889, p. 16.

by the contention that Durban's climate was responsible for their short terms of office.⁵⁵

By January 1891 the community no doubt felt in a position to secure the services of a minister. At its quarterly meeting, on Sunday, January 11, held in the store of Mr. P. Wartski, who was then the Congregation's treasurer, the appointment of the Rev. Mr. Samuel Isaac Pincus, from Russia, as minister of the Durban Hebrew Congregation was discussed and approved.⁵⁶ The fact that the minister had to be appointed "subject to the approval of Dr. Adler", shows that the Congregation in Durban had chosen to come under the authority of the British Chief Rabbi. A few hours after the conclusion of the meeting Mr. Wartski's store was completely gutted by a fire, in which the minute book and other papers of the synagogue were destroyed. The cause of the fire was believed to have been, "the incautious dropping of a match or cigar ash at the meeting, for people in South Africa smoke on all occasions, including 'Shool' meetings."⁵⁷

The Rev. Pincus arrived in Durban early in 1891.⁵⁸

⁵⁵The Natal Mercury, March 7, 1892, p. 3.

⁵⁶London Jewish Chronicle, February 20, 1891, p. 16.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸The Natal Mercury, March 7, 1892, p. 3.

He no doubt succeeded in matching the hopes that the Congregation had placed in him, for at its annual general meeting, in September 1891, he was re-engaged as minister.⁵⁹ Upon his appointment as minister of the Durban Hebrew Congregation the Rev. Pincus was also made the Jewish marriage officer for Natal.⁶⁰

By 1891 the Congregation was not only able to support a minister, but its existence had also come to be recognised abroad. In consequence of the suffering of Russian Jewry the chairman of the Russian Jewish War Relief Committee in London turned to the president of the Durban Hebrew Congregation to solicit contributions for the fund from the general public of Natal.⁶¹

Upon the death of Prince Albert, Duke of Clarence, the eldest son of the Prince and Princess of Wales, in January 1892, the Jewish community like other religious denominations in the town organised a memorial service.⁶² However, for the Durban Hebrew Congregation the sadness which followed the prince's passing soon gave way to rejoicing and thanksgiving. On March 6, upon the completion of structural alterations, the

⁵⁹London Jewish Chronicle, November 27, 1891, p. 11.

⁶⁰The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register, 1892, p. 463.

⁶¹The Natal Mercury, November 24, 1891, p. 1.

⁶²Supplement to The Natal Mercury, January 18, 1892, p. 6.

synagogue was re-consecrated in the presence of Sir Charles Mitchell, the Governor of Natal.⁶³

The alterations had been necessitated by a growth in the Congregation's membership, which by 1892 had increased to such an extent that it had been decided to "increase the seating accomodation, renovate the building and make necessary additions".⁶⁴

On completion of the alterations it was noted that:

...The actual size of the synagogue has not been enlarged but there is now sitting room for a hundred worshippers. The building is square with light painted walls and nine windows. The entrances for men and women are side by side, the gallery being occupied by the latter, whilst all seats face the centre. The pews have been varnished, the seats upholstered and the synagogue presents a very cheerful appearance. The Ark, facing the east, towards which the minister's face is turned, is built in a blue gold star spangled recess in the wall, where are kept the scrolls of the Five Books of Moses. From the Ark hangs over on brass rods, the mantle of Utrecht velvet, from which descend three semi circular steps in squares of black and white, while above the curtain are the tablets of the ten commandments, presented by the President (Mr. J.H. Isaacs). On either side is a pedestal which holds a handsome lamp, a pair of candlesticks to match being placed beside the reader's desk, below which the officers of the congregation sit, while sufficient lighting is ensured by the suspension of several brass lamps. The building is thirty two feet by twenty five feet and the adjoining addition is seventeen feet by thirty two feet. Half of this, which is also well lighted, is to be used as a vestry room, the remaining portion being a schoolroom for children. The addition has been made so that when necessary

⁶³The Natal Mercury, March 7, 1892, p. 3.

⁶⁴Ibid.

the middle wall of partition may be removed, and the whole form one large synagogue. The new portion has cost about £350 with furnishing and renovation...⁶⁵

Provision having been made in the enlarged synagogue for a school room, the consecration ceremony was followed by the establishment of a school,⁶⁶ which it was hoped would meet an urgent need for Hebrew education within the community.

From the time that the Congregation's first minister had assumed office Hebrew classes were held for the children of members of the Congregation.⁶⁷ However the continuity of this very elementary Hebrew education was, no doubt, adversely affected by the short terms of office of the Congregation's first three ministers, and by the Congregation's unfavourable financial situation. The fact that the Congregation's plans for the alteration of the synagogue made provision for a schoolroom for the children is, however, an indication of the members awareness of the inadequacy of the existing classes. An attempt to remedy this unsatisfactory state of affairs was reflected in the introduction of religious

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷London Jewish Chronicle, July 25, 1884, p. 11.

instruction in 1892. Classes were held on Sundays from eleven to twelve,⁶⁸ and were conducted by the Rev. Pincus and by voluntary assistants, including Mr. F.C. Hollander.⁶⁹ The first distribution of prizes in connection with these Bible classes took place on October 16, 1892.⁷⁰

Although the Bible classes introduced in 1892 were, no doubt, an attempt to initiate more intensive Hebrew study, they were certainly not in any way comparable to the Hebrew education which was available in Cape Town, where Rev. Abraham Fredrick Ornstein had started the first private collegiate school for Jewish boys in South Africa, in 1884.⁷¹ The school, which had a boarding establishment, and which advertised in the Durban press,⁷² may have attracted students from Durban, but it failed to stimulate the Durban Hebrew Congregation to attempt the creation of a similar school in Durban. The lack of emphasis on Hebrew education in Durban may be regarded as a reflection of the predominantly English character of the Congregation's

⁶⁸The Natal Mercury, March 7, 1892, p. 3.

⁶⁹London Jewish Chronicle, October 25, 1895, p. 17.

⁷⁰The Natal Mercury, September 20, 1892, p. 3.

⁷¹Israel Abrahams, "Western Province Jewry, 1870 - 1902", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 26

⁷²The Natal Mercury, February 22, 1892, p. 4.

leadership. Yet, to equate English Jewry with apathy towards Hebrew education is to overlook the fact that the Rev. Ornstein and the leadership of Cape Town Jewry were also of English origin. In the case of Durban Jewry the shortcomings in the system of Hebrew education would seem to be as much the fault of the community itself, as of the absence of a minister or lay leadership who could inspire the community to establish a Jewish school. Dissatisfaction among certain members with the type of Hebrew education provided by the Durban Hebrew Congregation ultimately contributed to the split which occurred within the ranks of Durban Jewry.⁷³

CHEVRA KADISHA

It has already been noted that the Jews of Durban saw to the burial of their deceased co-religionists,⁷⁴ although it would appear that some Jews also made use of the local undertakers.⁷⁵ It was not until 1893, however, that the first Chevra Kadisha Committee was

⁷³See below p. 247.

⁷⁴See above p. 136.

⁷⁵See The Natal Mercury, January 3, 1896, p. 3. Reference to the burial of Mrs. J. Klisser and her two children.

formed, in conjunction with the Hebrew Congregation.⁷⁶ In view of the fact that in Johannesburg, for example, the Chevra Kadisha was formed for the object of burying the first Jew to die in that town in 1887⁷⁷ it is strange that a Chevra Kadisha should have only been formed in Durban thirteen years after the death of Morris Rouse, in 1880.⁷⁸ This may be attributed to the fact that the Durban community was, up until the late nineteenth century, predominantly Anglo Jewish. The formation of a burial society would, therefore, not have been so important to them as it was to East European Jews, who were more traditional and more strictly observant, and who were amongst the first settlers in Johannesburg. However, since prior to 1893 does not necessarily mark the commencement, in Durban, of the functions associated with a Jewish Burial Society, but may rather mark the formal establishment of an already existing burial committee.

In 1897 the Durban Corporation granted the Hebrew Congregation an additional piece of land for the enlargement of the burial ground at the corner of Queen and Brook Streets. Management of the cemetery was at once

⁷⁶"Durban United Hebrew Congregation Chevra Kadisha", in The Durban Hebrew Congregation 1952 (Durban, 1952), p. 13.

⁷⁷Dora I. Sowden, "In the Transvaal Till 1899", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 154.

⁷⁸On Morris Rouse see above p. 136.

vested in the Chevra Kadisha, of which Mr. S. Solomon was president and treasurer and Mr. P. Lazarus was secretary.⁷⁹ At a cost of nearly £150 the president enclosed the burial ground with a high wall and erected the entrance gates.⁸⁰

ZIONIST AND PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITY (1884 - 1898)

According to Philip Wartski the first Zionist association in Durban was formed in 1884 when he and a few of his friends established a branch of the Chovevei Zion Society, of which he was elected the first president.⁸¹ However, in 1891 it was reported that following a meeting, on August 23, a branch of the Chovevei Zion Society was formed in Durban.⁸² This seemingly apparent contradiction in regard to the society's formation may simply indicate that the first

⁷⁹The Natal Mercury, March 22, 1897, p. 4.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Arthur Markowitz, "Philip Wartski", p. 53.

⁸²London Jewish Chronicle, September 25, 1891, p. 11.

attempt to establish a branch of the Chovevei Zion Society in Durban had been unsuccessful, and that by 1891 the members of the Society, had "decided to adopt the rules and regulations of the parent body in London, and to write to Lieutenant Colonel Goldsmid asking that the new organisation be admitted as a Colonial Branch."⁸³ The honorary officers elected at the meeting were Mr. P. Wartski, president; Mr. Sidney Sprinz, treasurer and secretary; the Rev. Mr. Pincus, Messrs. J.B. Cinamon, A. Simon and S. Sonnenfeld, committee.⁸⁴ Interestingly the establishment of a branch of the Society in Durban predated the creation of a similar branch of the Society in Johannesburg.⁸⁵

In a further account of the establishment of a branch of the Chovevei Zion Society in Durban, it is claimed that Wartski only formed a branch of this organisation in 1897 in response to a letter which he had received from Joseph Prag, a leader of the Chovevei Zion in England.⁸⁶ Furthermore, it is alleged that Wartski formed the Society in Durban more out of a desire to oblige his friend than to further the cause of Zionism

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵A branch of the Society was formed in Johannesburg in January 1897. (Ibid., February 19, 1897, p. 27.).

⁸⁶Marcia Gitlin, The Vision Amazing (Johannesburg, 1950), pp. 60-61.

itself.⁸⁷ In view of Wartski's own recollections and the report of the London Jewish Chronicle in 1891 the suggestion that a branch of the Chovevei Zion was first established in Durban in 1897 appears to be historically inaccurate. On the other hand, as there is no record of any Zionist activity in Durban in the period following the two earlier references to the establishment of the Chovevei Zion Society, this account of the creation of a branch of the organisation in Durban may be a sign that in 1897 an attempt was made once again to revive the apparently inactive Society. The contention that Wartski formed a branch of the Chovevei Zion in Durban principally to oblige his friend rather than to advance the cause of Zionism is highly debatable. Had Wartski been unconcerned with Zionism it is highly unlikely that he would have chosen to attend the first World Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897 or to have helped establish the Durban Zionist Society, which succeeded the Chovevei Zion.⁸⁸

Although there is no evidence of the Chovevei Zion Society having been a particularly active Zionist body, members of the Jewish community in Durban did demonstrate their concern for the Palestinian Jewry, by joining the

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Arthur Markowitz, "Philip Wartski", p. 53

Shlom Jerusalem Society. The Society raised funds for the Jews of Palistine by distributing poor boxes to principal Jewish families in the town. It was led by Mr. P. Wartski, the hon. treasurer, and Mr. M. Goldberg, the hon. secretary, who were appointed by Rabbi Samuel Salant of Jerusalem.⁸⁹

Notwithstanding the attempts to establish a Zionist society in Durban, by the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, and the arrival of Jewish refugees from the Transvaal, Zionism had failed to take permanent root in Durban. This state of affairs was in no small measure a result of the disfavour with which Anglo-Jewry generally initially regarded the Zionist movement.⁹⁰ Durban, with its predominantly Anglo-Jewish community, merely reflected this negative attitude towards Zionism. The apparent weakness of Zionism in Durban did not dissuade S. Lennox Loewe and H.H. Morris, of the Transvaal Zionist Association from issuing an invitation to Zionists in Durban to appoint delegates to the United South African Zionist Congress, which met in Johannesburg in December 1898.⁹¹ At this Congress, attended principally by Transvaal Zionist bodies, a

⁸⁹London Jewish Chronicle, July 1, 1892, p. 20.

⁹⁰See The Natal Mercury, November 4, 1897, p. 4.

⁹¹Ibid., September 12, 1898, p. 7.

Federal Executive was elected, which, with minor changes in membership, held office up until the first South African Zionist Conference in July 1905.⁹²

Prior to the creation of a Jewish Benevolent Society, in Durban, Mr. Louis Goldberg, entirely on his own initiative, devoted his time to the welfare of his less fortunate co-religionists. Whenever a Jew needed help Mr. Goldberg would communicate with a few of his friends, and through voluntary contributions would raise the money required.⁹³

The first official Jewish welfare organisation established in Durban was the Ladies' Jewish Benevolent Society, which was formed at a meeting held on November 22, 1891.⁹⁴ However, this Society does not appear to have existed for any length of time. Seven years later

⁹²Jack Alexander, "South African Zionism", in The South African Jewish Year Book - Directory of Jewish Organisations and Who's Who in South African Jewry 1929, 5689-5690. Edited by Morris de Saxe, Associate Editor I.M. Goodman, Published by the South African Jewish Historical Society, P.O. Box 2711, Johannesburg (Johannesburg, 1929), p. 181.

⁹³"Durban Jewish Benevolent Society", in Durban Hebrew Congregation Golden Jubilee Brochure 1884-1934, 5644-5694 (Durban, 1934), p. 23.

⁹⁴The Natal Mercury, November 24, 1891, p. 3.

the Jewish men of the town established the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society, under the chairmanship of Mr. A. Benson, at whose tobacco store in West Street the Society's committee meetings were initially conducted.⁹⁵ The Benevolent Society had barely commenced with its activities when, in consequence of the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, refugees flocked to Durban from the Transvaal and Orange Free State. This large influx of refugees placed such great pressure on the newly established Society that a special relief committee had to be created to assist them.⁹⁶

⁹⁵"Durban Jewish Benevolent Society", in Durban Hebrew Congregation Golden Jubilee Brochure 1884-1934, 5644-5694, p. 23.

⁹⁶For more detail, see below p. 169.

CHAPTER VI

JEWISH LIFE IN THE BOER WAR PERIOD

In the years immediately preceeding the outbreak of war, a sense of uneasiness prevailed within the Transvaal as tension mounted between the Kruger Government and the British authorities.¹ With the opening of the Transvaal Natal Railway, in October 1895, the residents of Durban became increasingly aware of the unsettled conditions within the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek as the flow of refugees, mainly women and children, greatly increased.²

On December 31, 1895, receipt of the news

¹For an account of this period see J.S. Du Plessis, "The South African Republic", in 500 Years a History of South Africa, ed. C.F.J. Muller, (Pretoria, n.d.), pp. 243-258.

²see The Supplement of The Natal Mercury, December 31, 1895, p. 7.

of the derailment near Glencoe Junction of a refugee train, carrying five hundred passengers, cast a pall of gloom over Durban. Townsman, many of whom had relatives on the ill fated train, anxiously waited to learn the names of the victims of the disaster, thirty three of whom were killed and thirty five of whom were injured.³ Among the first passengers reported killed were Michael Meyers and John Lazarus of Durban, whilst Mr. Cohen, another passenger, was among those who escaped unharmed.⁴ On January 2, a short while after the remains of Michael Meyers and John Lazarus had been interred in the small Jewish cemetery, the bodies of Mrs. Jacques Klisser (née Leonora Rosettenstein) and her two children, Victoria Verona and Samuel Norman, and Mrs. Max Rosettenstein (Kate Olga), all of Johannesburg, arrived in Durban for burial.⁵

A description in the press of six of the victims of the disaster who were not immediately identified suggested that two of the dead were Jewesses.⁶ In order to check on this report three members of the Jewish community of Pietermaritzburg journeyed from the capital

³The Natal Mercury, January 1, 1896, p. 4.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., January 3, 1896, p. 4.

⁶Ibid.

to view the bodies.⁷ By January 6 these two victims had been identified as Mrs. Jacobson and Mrs. Rosettenstein (Frances Victoria, wife of Levin Rosettenstein).⁸ Mrs. Rosettenstein's remains were subsequently interred in the Durban Jewish Cemetery, next to those of her family who had died in the disaster. Mesdames Max and Levin Rosettenstein, who lost their lives in the accident, were the wives of the well known Transvaal personalities after whom the suburb of Rosettenville in Johannesburg was named.⁹ Another member of the same family Mr. Phillip Rosettenstein was injured in the disaster, and was one of the last of the accident victims to be discharged from Grey's Hospital, Pietermaritzburg, in April 1896.¹⁰

The Glencoe Rail Disaster did not stem the flow of refugees from the Transvaal and Russian and English Jews were amongst those who undertook the journey to Natal.¹¹ As a result of the daily arrival of refugees, the increase in the number of Jews residing in Durban must have been significant. In September 1897 a meeting was called to discuss the advisability of holding High Holy

⁷Ibid., January 4, 1896, p. 3.

⁸Ibid., January 6, 1896, p. 5.

⁹S.A. Rochlin, "The Early Gold Fields", in The Jews in South Africa A History, ed. Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz, (London, 1955), p. 147.

¹⁰The Natal Mercury, April 4, 1896, p. 3.

¹¹See Ibid., January 4, 1896, pp. 3. and 4.

Day Services in the Masonic Hall¹² the synagogue being considered unable to meet the needs of the augmented Jewish population. Whilst this meeting appears to have been somewhat premature, it is a clear indication of an increase in the number of Jews in the town.

However, until the outbreak of hostilities in 1899 the daily life of the residents of Durban was not significantly disrupted by the unsettled state of affairs in the neighbouring territories. As in previous years elections for the Town Council and the Legislative Assembly attracted great interest. As had long been the case Jewish names were among those to be found as signatories to the requisitions addressed to rival candidates in the elections of 1896, 1897, 1898 and 1899.¹³

In early March 1897 some of Durban's residents were no less concerned with the formation of a club, to be affiliated to the Jockey Club of South Africa, and to be known as the Durban Turf Club, than they were with the affairs of international consequence on their border. Harry Henochsberg, B.C. Myers, S.B. Joel and

¹²Ibid., September 11, 1897, p. 4.

¹³See Ibid., June 8, 1896, p. 2., July 27, 1896, p. 2., August 19, 1897, p. 3., July 20, 1898, p. 7., July 26, 1898, p. 3., August 9, 1898, p. 3., and March 9, 1899, p. 6.

B. Lazarus were amongst those who became foundation members of the Club.¹⁴

In those peaceful days before the war all political considerations were pushed aside when, during June 1897, the residents of Durban joined with all the other members of the British Empire in celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The Queen's Jewish subjects in Durban were closely associated with the celebrations held to mark the occasion. On the morning of June 20, whilst Thanksgiving Services were being held in the various churches, the Hebrew Congregation held its own service at the synagogue in Grey Street. The service, which was identical to that prepared by the Very Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler, Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, for use in all English synagogues, was conducted by the Rev. S. Pincus.¹⁵ That same afternoon the Freemasons of Durban held a Masonic Thanksgiving Service in the Town Hall and Messrs. P. Wartski and F.C. Hollander were members of the committee which organised the service.¹⁶ Mr. Hollander was also the Hon. Secretary of the Sub-Committee which was responsible for the musical portions of the Masonic Service.¹⁷

¹⁴Ibid., March 2, 1897, p. 5.

¹⁵The Natal Advertiser, June 21, 1897, p. 3.

¹⁶The Natal Mercury, June 8, 1897, p. 5.

¹⁷Ibid., June 9, 1897, p. 4.

The Jubilee celebrations, which continued for four more days, included a trade's procession, on June 22, through the centre of the town. B. Lipinski was one of the members of the Procession Committee which organised this highly successful feature of the celebrations.¹⁸ Fifty children from the Synagogue, wearing distinctive pink and yellow rosettes, participated in the festivities arranged for the children of the various Sunday Schools by attending the Juvenile Fete held at Albert Park.¹⁹ On the last night of the celebrations the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Payne, held a ball in the Town Hall to which more than eight hundred people, including Mr. F.C. Hollander and Mr. and Mrs. B. Lipinski were invited.²⁰

To commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee it was decided to erect a Palm House and Conservatory in the Botanic Gardens, and members of the Jewish community readily made their contribution towards meeting the costs of this scheme.²¹

In late 1897 the city of Basle, in Switzerland, was far more predominant in the minds of many Jews than were Pretoria or Johannesburg, and the name Herzl evoked as

¹⁸Ibid., June 1, 1897, p. 6.

¹⁹Ibid., June 24, 1897, p. 3.

²⁰Ibid., June 25, 1897, p. 4.

²¹Ibid., July 23, 1897, p. 2.

much interest as did the names Kruger and Rhodes, for this was the time of the first World Zionist Congress. Whilst the decision of the delegates at the Congress to work for the re-establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was considered by the local press, "to be an experiment doomed to failure",²² the whole question of a Jewish State aroused much public interest amongst the local populace, as was clearly demonstrated by correspondence in The Natal Mercury.²³

Even as the troubles within the Transvaal were reaching explosion point, life in Durban was not significantly unsettled. In July 1899 the opening of the Municipal Art Gallery was the most newsworthy event of the day. Once the decision to establish an art gallery in the town had been taken, an appeal had been directed to the citizens of Durban for subscriptions. This had met with a ready response from all sections of the population including Jews.²⁴ Daniel de Pass, upon learning of the proposed art gallery had placed £100 at the disposal of the Local Committee for the purchase of a work of art by a recognised artist. The Committee upon learning of De Pass's generosity had asked him to make the selection himself. In choosing A Study of

²²Ibid., November 4, 1897, p. 4.

²³Ibid., November 10, 1897, p. 7., November 19, 1897, p. 6., and November 22, 1897, p. 6.

²⁴Ibid., May 22, 1899, p. 7.

Flowers by Fantin-Latour and From Lace to Pottena by Rousoff, Daniel de Pass spent far more than the original sum which he had promised, and his generosity as one of the gallery's first patrons, did not go by unnoticed.²⁵ Daniel de Pass's son Alfred, who was a patron of fine art, served on the Gallery's Selection Committee in London, and was also the donor of a water colour, entitled Alhazai Garden, Seville, by G.S. Elgood R.I.²⁶

However, as war became imminent and the situation in the Transvaal deteriorated, the citizens of Durban demonstrated their concern for the large number of individuals who were suffering as a result of the financial depression. The Mayor, Mr. John Nicol, called for donations for the relief fund in Johannesburg, and his appeal was answered by contributions from both Gentiles and Jews.²⁷

As war,²⁸ which was to finally erupt on October 11, 1899, became inevitable the flow of refugees from the Transvaal to Natal quickened, and the Jews of Durban,

²⁵Ibid., May 18, 1899, p. 7.

²⁶Ibid., August 28, 1899, p. 6.

²⁷Ibid., August 3, 1899, p. 4.

²⁸On the war see James Barbary, The Boer War, (New York, 1969), and Eversley Belfield, The Boer War, (London, 1975), Volume II of R.L.V. French-Blake, (gen. ed.), Concise Campaigns.

like their fellow townsmen, prepared themselves for the difficult times which were to arise.

At a meeting, held in the synagogue on September 24, 1899, the Jewish community, in response to a communication which had been received from the Rand Relief Committee, organised a Jewish Relief Committee to meet and assist the Jewish refugees leaving the Transvaal. Mr. P. Wartski was elected to the chair and Mr. Jack Isaacs appointed secretary. Mesdames P. Wartski, A. Simon, Miss M. Goldberg and Messrs. Lipinski, Wartski, Leaman, Aaronstein, Henochsberg, Solomons and Jacobs, the latter two from Johannesburg, were appointed as a committee. Although Mr. J. Ellis Brown, the newly elected Mayor of Durban and a member of the Durban Relief Fund, had, at a meeting with Mr. Wartski, assured the chairman of the Jewish Relief Committee that the Jewish women and children would be provided for, the meeting decided that subscriptions should be taken for the provision of a Jewish Fund, to be placed at the disposal of the Committee. Accordingly a collection was held at the meeting and resulted in some £40 being donated within a few minutes.²⁹ The fund was further augmented by the profits of a successful Simchat Torah

²⁹The Natal Mercury, September 25, 1899, p. 7. and London Jewish Chronicle, October 27, 1899, p. 1.

Ball, held in the Masonic Hall on September 28.³⁰ It was mainly through the generosity of subscribers however, that the Durban Jewish Relief Committee was able to carry on its work. During the first few months of its operations the Jewish Relief Committee received monetary donations from the general public, the Durban Hebrew Congregation, Pietermaritzburg and Volksrust Jews and the Durban Benevolent Society. Mr. Wartski was also assured of assistance when required from the Mansion House Relief Fund. Clothing and small amounts of money were also given by members of the Jewish community as donations for the Relief Committee's work.³¹

Upon the outbreak of war many refugees fled from the Transvaal to Delegoa Bay, from whence they would journey by boat to Durban. Whenever there were Jews amongst the refugees arriving from Delegoa Bay they would be met at the harbour by Mr. Wartski, who would direct them to Lords' Grounds, where refugees could find shelter and food,³² and the Jewish Relief Committee would try to afford them all possible assistance. Interviews with those refugees who sought assistance were conducted in Mr. Wartski's shop. Those refugees who had

³⁰The Natal Mercury, September 28, 1899, p. 5.

³¹See Mr. Wartski's report, Ibid., November 16, 1899, p. 5.

³²Ibid., October 24, 1899, p. 6.

relatives or business interests in other parts of the country were given free travel passes, whilst every effort was made to find some form of employment for those who remained in Durban.³³ Each applicant received a shilling a day from the Jewish Relief Committee, whilst those who were located at various Relief Houses received a sixpence extra for Kosher meat.³⁴

The extent of the relief work undertaken by the Durban Jewish Relief Committee can be gauged from a report which Mr. Wartski presented at a meeting of the Committee on November 15, 1899. Mr. Wartski reported that from October 27 the Relief Committee had received one hundred and six applications for assistance. Of these, sixty eight of the applicants had been assisted to go to relatives in the Cape Colony, and thirty six of the remaining applicants had been located at Lords' Grounds. For those unable to find a home the Jewish Relief Committee had rented a house in Prince Edward Street, and the lady members of the committee attended to the needs of the families domiciled in the house.³⁵ The Jewish Relief Committee was the subject of an editorial in The Natal Mercury in which Mr. Wartski's report was described as, "....excellent proof of the

³³Ibid., October 31, 1899, p. 5.

³⁴London Jewish Chronicle, February 9, 1900, p. 11.

³⁵For a full report of the meeting see The Natal Mercury, November 16, 1899, p. 5.

manner in which they (the Committee) are dealing with the problem of relieving those of their race who had been unfortunately reduced by the outbreak of war...".³⁶

The Durban Jewish Relief Committee sought not only to provide for the material but also the spiritual needs of the refugees staying in Durban. In anticipation of the Passover the Committee applied to the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Adler, for matzot, and three thousand six hundred pounds of matza were sent from Britain by Sir Samuel Montague. Messrs. Wartski, A. Simon and E.M. Davis-Marks supervised the distribution of matza among the refugees in Durban and Pietermaritzburg and the regulars and volunteers who were serving in the armed forces in Natal. In addition the Committee held a public seder in Pine Street, for between one hundred and one hundred and fifty of the refugees, and provided food and accomodation for a dozen soldiers and volunteers during the Passover week.³⁷ In 1901 the Committee again assisted refugees, soldiers and volunteers who wished to observe the festival by supplying them with matzot which, following the Committee's application to the Chief Rabbi, were received from Mr. B. Weil.³⁸

³⁶Ibid., November 17, 1899, p. 4.

³⁷London Jewish Chronicle, May 25, 1900, p. 24.

³⁸The Natal Mercury, July 4, 1901, p. 9.

In July 1901 the final report and balance sheet of the Durban Jewish Relief Committee was presented to the Durban Hebrew Congregation. Although the war had not yet ended, the Relief Committee had no further part to play in the war effort for almost all the problems which had necessitated its formation had since passed and some of the refugees had even, by this time, managed to gain re-entry into the Transvaal, most of which now lay under British control. Mr. E.M. Davis-Marks, the hon. secretary, in presenting the report showed that during the period September 25, 1899, to May 28, 1901, the Committee had received four hundred and twenty applications for assistance or advice and that three hundred and fifty eight men, twenty nine women and thirty six children had been given assistance. In most cases the Committee had found employment for the refugees, thereby make monetary assistance unnecessary. The house which had been rented in Prince Edward Street on November 9, 1899, for those families which had been unable to find a home, had been relinquished on July 5, 1900. In his report Mr. Davis-Marks referred to the help which the Committee had received from the Rand Relief Committee, which had set aside a portion of Lords' Grounds and the Drill Hall to house single unemployed Jewish men, the boating companies, which had given the Jewish Relief Committee their support. Special mention was made of the proprietors of Hall's Australian Juveniles, who had given a matinee benefit

in June 1900 from which the Jewish Relief Committee had received half the proceeds. The meeting was brought to a close by Mr. Wartski's being asked to accept, from Mr. B. Solomon, an illuminated address which was presented as an expression of the Committee's gratitude for all his work.³⁹

At a meeting, on February 24, 1902, called by the Jewish refugees to express their thanks to the members of the Durban Jewish Relief Committee, Messrs. Wartski and Davis-Marks, who had already been the recipients of gifts from the Relief Committee,⁴⁰ were, together with Mr. A. Solomon and Mr. M. Meyers presented with silver gifts by the refugees.⁴¹

In concluding his report to the Durban Hebrew Congregation Mr. Davis-Marks had recommended that the Durban Jewish Relief Committee's balance in hand, which amounted to £24.0s.6d., should be handed over to the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society which had consented to continue the work which the Committee had relinquished.⁴² On the following Passover the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society, in fulfillment of this commitment, offered refugees matzot which had been supplied through S. Samuel M.P. and extended this offer to soldiers serving on the

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰London Jewish Chronicle, September 7, 1900, p. 8.

⁴¹Ibid., March 28, 1902, p. 22.

⁴²The Natal Mercury, July 4, 1901, p. 9.

front. Those soldiers who were on leave during the festival were invited by the Benevolent Society to attend the Passover Services.⁴³

The Durban Hebrew Congregation, as a congregation, made its own contribution towards assisting the refugees, principally by making arrangements to enable the refugees to hold services over the High Holy Days. Since the synagogue was not large enough to accomodate all the refugees, the Congregation rented the Masonic Hall, Smith Street, for the High Festival period. Arrangements for the services and the election of an executive were left to the refugees themselves, who met for that purpose at a meeting convened by Mr. E.M. Davis-Marks in the synagogue on August 19, 1900.⁴⁴ Morrie Hollander, a refugee who had failed to gain admission to the synagogue during the New Year Services, owing to his failure to have purchased a seating ticket, sharply criticised the authorities of the Durban Hebrew Congregation for the ill treatment which he felt they had metted out to refugees.⁴⁵ However his sentiments were not shared by those who had attended the services provided at the Masonic Hall, for each individual

⁴³Ibid., March 27, 1902, p. 10.

⁴⁴Ibid., August 29, 1900, p. 4., and London Jewish Chronicle, September 7, 1900, p. 9.

⁴⁵The Natal Mercury, September 28, 1900, p. 5.

worshipper at the Masonic Hall contributed towards the cost of a Sepher Torah, which was presented to the Synagogue on behalf of the Refugee Congregation by Mr. A. Solomon.⁴⁶ In 1901 the Durban Hebrew Congregation ensured that sufficient seating was available to accomodate all those who wished to attend the High Holy Day services, by arranging for services in the synagogue, the Addington Masonic Hall and the Mutual Hall in Gale Street.⁴⁷

The Jews of Durban, apart from their work amongst the Jewish refugees, also participated in general relief work. On August 28, 1899, the Johannesburg Women's Relief Fund was inaugurated by a group of Durban women who wished to assist the Transvaal refugees. The committee of the Fund included Mesdames Wartski and Solomon, who were also closely connected with the work of the Durban Jewish Relief Committee,⁴⁸ and these two ladies were appointed to the House Committee of the Johannesburg Women's Relief Fund.⁴⁹ Mrs. Solomon and

⁴⁶London Jewish Chronicle, January 18, 1901, p. 22.

⁴⁷The Natal Mercury, August 22, 1901, p. 6.

⁴⁸See above p.169.

⁴⁹The Natal Mercury, October 14, 1899, p. 7.

Mrs. Wartski served on one of the four house visiting committees, and together with other members of their committee they saw to the needs of the forty men and children housed and fed at 170 West Street.⁵⁰ The houses maintained by the Johannesburg Women's Relief Fund were supported by donations from local townsmen and organisations including Jewish individuals and the Jewish Relief Committee.⁵¹

Individual Jews also made their contribution towards assisting the volunteers and soldiers. With the wounded in mind Mr. J.H. Isaacs opened a subscription box at his shop, Havana House, Central Hotel.⁵² Other Jews willingly contributed to the Christmas Fund set up in 1899 to provide the volunteers at the front with Christmas fare.⁵³ When this fund was again launched in 1901 to provide the troops with periodicals, newspapers and gifts, Jews once again sent their subscriptions.⁵⁴ Former Durban Jews by their generosity demonstrated their strong attachment to Natal and their concern for the well being of the Colony's Volunteers. Daniel de Pass⁵⁵ contributed £100 to the Natal Volunteers War

⁵⁰Ibid., November 30, 1899, p. 6.

⁵¹Ibid., October 28, 1899, p. 7.

⁵²Ibid., October 24, 1899, p. 4.

⁵³Ibid., December 9, 1899, p. 7.

⁵⁴Ibid., November 28, 1901, p. 8.

⁵⁵See above p. 55.

Fund,⁵⁶ whilst Henry Adler⁵⁷ sent for £25 for the wounded of the Natal Carbineers which had been his old corps.⁵⁸

The call issued to the men of Natal to join the Volunteers did not go unheeded by the Jews of Durban, and until the volunteers returned to their homes in October 1900, Jewish names are to be found on the rolls of service. B.S. Wartski, who was one of the first to sign up for service, joined the C. Company of the Durban Light Infantry. He was one of those who were wounded on November 15, 1899, when the armoured train that was carrying half a company of D.L.I. and half a company of Dublin Fusiliers was attacked by the Boers near Chieveley.⁵⁹ One of those whom the Boers took as prisoner of war after the attack, was a war correspondent Winston Churchill.⁶⁰ Whilst Private O. Jacobson fought with the D. Company of the Durban Light Infantry,⁶¹ another Jew, Trooper V.R. Emmanuel served in the F. Squadron of the Colonial Scouts.⁶² Among those who joined the Natal Mounted Rifles was Trooper

⁵⁶The Natal Mercury, January 12, 1900, p. 6.

⁵⁷See above pp.68-69.

⁵⁸The Natal Mercury, January 29, 1900, p. 7.

⁵⁹Ibid., November 16, 1899, p. 5.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., October 10, 1900, p. 5.

⁶²Ibid., October 24, 1900, p. 5.

H.A. Joel, who was recruited after the siege of Ladysmith.⁶³

Included in the ranks of the Natal Volunteer Medical Corps were a number of women who served as nursing sisters. Sister H.J. Goodman was one of those who signed up at the outbreak of war to serve in the Medical Corps.⁶⁴ On October 18, Sister Goodman journeyed to the front to assume charge of the Volunteer's Convalescent Hospital. Before the removal of the hospital camp to Intombi she worked single handed to construct a place of refuge from the bombardment for her patients. In December 1899, at the request of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Ladysmith, the sister took charge of a hospital for civilians and thus came to be in the town during the historic siege.⁶⁵

At the turn of the century the Natal Rifle Association was placed on a war footing by the Government, and F.C. Hollander, who had been a founder and treasurer of the N.R.A., was appointed a captain in the Association.⁶⁶ Louis Barnett, who in 1929 was the hon treasurer of the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society, was the youngest

⁶³Natal Volunteer Record Annals and Rolls of Service in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1900, (Durban, 1900), p. 57.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 79

⁶⁵The Natal Mercury, October 29, 1900, p. 4.

⁶⁶From the file of F.C. Hollander. Archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

Jew in the British forces during the Anglo Boer War.⁶⁷

Inspired by the idea of Miss Milly Goldberg the Jewish girls of Durban made their contribution to the war effort by forming the Jewish Girl's Patriotic League, which sought to alleviate the suffering of the soldiers involved in the conflict. In May 1900, the League was formed by a few Jewish girls, who paid a weekly subscription of sixpence. It was not then envisaged that the League would develop within a short while into the comparatively large concern that it did. Under the committee, consisting of Miss M. Goldberg, hon. president; Miss Wartski, hon. vice president; Miss Hanson, hon. secretary; on whose resignation Miss Leah Hyams was appointed hon. secretary; Miss Rose Simon, hon. treasurer; and Misses Rachel Simon, Florrie Simon, Morris, Lee, Feinstein, Hanson, Hart and Harris; committee, literature, medical comforts and other small articles were collected and distributed to the soldiers of the various hospital ships. Monetary donations, including cheques from Lord Rothschild, Lord Milner and Mr. George Albu, and donations in kind from merchants

⁶⁷The South African Jewish Year Book Directory of Jewish Organisations and Who's Who in South African Jewry 1929, 5689-90. Edited by Morris de Saxe, Associate Editor I.M. Goodman, Published by the South African Jewish Historical Society, P.O. Box 2711, Johannesburg, (Johannesburg, 1929), p. 296.

and tradesmen⁶⁸ ensured that the League continued its work long after similar bodies had ceased to exist. The Committee of the League not only distributed articles to the wounded on the hospital ships, but also organised concerts in which most of the musical performances were given by committee members themselves. In December 1900 Misses Goldberg and Hyam visited base hospitals at Charlestown, Mooi River and Newcastle in order to distribute small Christmas gifts to the sick and wounded soldiers. Gifts were also periodically sent to the wounded in the hospitals at Moddespruit, Fort Napier, Charlestown, Utrecht, Howick, Pinetown, Estcourt and Convalescent Depot thus extending the League's work beyond Durban. In August 1901 the League discontinued its work since its funds were exhausted and the need for the type of assistance which it had provided was no longer urgent. In her final presidential report Miss Goldberg showed that the League, which had distributed almost £900 worth of comforts, had every reason to be proud of the part which it had played in assisting in the war effort.⁶⁹

Perhaps the greatest example of patriotism and philanthropy on the part of a Jew during the Boer War was the donation of the Princess Christian Hospital by

⁶⁸See The Natal Mercury, May 19, 1900, p. 7., July 20, 1900, p. 5. and August 19, 1901, p. 5.

⁶⁹For a full report see Ibid., August 19, 1901, p. 5.

Alfred Moseley. The hospital, which was erected at Pinetown on a piece of property donated by Mr. Frank Stevens, was Mr. Moseley's way of demonstrating his gratitude for the hospitality which he had received in South Africa, where he had amassed his large fortune. Mr. Moseley's original scheme contemplated a hospital with one hundred beds, but this was doubled at the Government's suggestion, and Moseley not only accepted the additional expense, but also accepted the cost of the equipment and four months catering as part of his scheme. The hospital, which included nine pavillions and a separate building which was used for officers, was brought to Natal from England and erected within six months.⁷⁰ More than five hundred people including Moseley, the Bishop of Natal, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Durban and senior Consular Officials, attended the inaugural ceremony which was held on May 25, 1900, the birthday of the patron Princess. The hospital, which had commenced its work in early April, was formally opened by Colonel Morris, the Commandant of Durban.⁷¹ Mr. Moseley remained in Natal until July 20, in order to superintend the hospital personally. After this date the military authorities assumed the management

⁷⁰Ibid., July 18, 1900, p. 5.

⁷¹Ibid., May 26, 1900, p. 8.

of the hospital.⁷² On the afternoon of July 20, which also marked the eve of Moseley's return to Britain, an interesting ceremony was held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall. Mr. Moseley was presented with an elaborate illuminated address. The address, which was signed by many of the leading citizens of Durban, expressed the appreciation of the public of Durban for his philanthropic gesture.⁷³ In recognition of his gift of the Princess Christian Hospital, Alred Moseley was subsequently appointed a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.⁷⁴

The Durban Hebrew Congregation made its own contribution during the war principally by arranging services in connection with the war effort. The first special service arranged by the Congregation was held on October 29, 1899, to pray for the success of the British arms in the war. The service, conducted in the presence of a large congregation, included a prayer for the Royal Family, the 41st Psalm for the sick and wounded, a sermon by Rev. Pincus and a collection in aid of the Durban Jewish Relief Committee.⁷⁵

⁷²Ibid., July 18, 1900, p. 5.

⁷³Ibid., July 21, 1900, p. 7.

⁷⁴Ibid., April 15, 1901, p. 7.

⁷⁵Ibid., October 31, 1899, p. 6. and The Natal Advertiser, October 30, 1899, p. 3.

The Jews, like members of other religious denominations in Durban, demonstrated their gratitude for the relief of Ladysmith, on February 27, 1900. A special synagogue service was arranged on March 1. Rabbi Dr. Hertz of the Witwatersrand Old Hebrew Congregation, who happened to be in Durban at the time, was asked to officiate.⁷⁶

Besides extending its hospitality to the troops and volunteers in Durban in 1900, the Congregation also lent a Sepher Torah to the Jews who were stationed on the front and who wished to observe the High Festivals. For the first time Jewish religious services were held in Dundee.⁷⁷

No service organised during the war, however, was as welcome as that held to mark the restoration of peace, after the Peace of Vereeniging had been signed on May 31, 1902.⁷⁸

⁷⁶The Natal Advertiser, March 5, 1900, p. 4.

⁷⁷London Jewish Chronicle, November 9, 1900, p. 12.

⁷⁸The Natal Mercury, June 3, 1902, p. 7.

THE JEWISH REFUGEES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION.

Whilst the arrival of Jewish refugees from the Transvaal created difficulties for Durban Jewry, these difficulties were largely offset by the uplift which the refugees gave to communal life during their sojourn in the town.

Though Jews of British and Western European descent were amongst those who moved to Durban upon the outbreak of war, it appears that the Jewish refugees from the Transvaal were largely of East European origin. Since Jews of East European origin had on the whole been sympathetic towards the Boer administration⁷⁹ they, like German and Dutch nationals, were subject to suspicion by the Natal authorities. Amongst those Jews arrested under Martial Law, on suspicion, in October 1899, and released when no evidence could be brought against them, were Messrs. Herschfield, Beattie and Warner.⁸⁰ Less fortunate was Mr. Nathan Marks who was arrested on sworn evidence that he was a Boer spy who had given information to the Boer Government, and whose name was allegedly in the records of the National Bank

⁷⁹Gustav Saron, "Boers, Uitlanders, Jews", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 196.

⁸⁰The Natal Mercury, October 28, 1899, p. 7.

as being in receipt of cheques from the State Secretary of the Transvaal.⁸¹ After being detained in Durban Gaol for a year Marks was discharged, by order of General Buller, nothing incriminating having been found against him, and he left for England.⁸²

Most Jewish refugees, however, encountered little difficulty in settling in Durban where they soon set about seeking ways in which to eke out a livelihood. The Durban Jewish Relief Committee assisted those refugees who were trained for a particular job to find employment in their field. Those refugees with no specialised training were provided by the Jewish Relief Committee with small lots of goods which they sold on the streets.⁸³ Prior to the war small street kiosks had been unknown in Durban but during the war years, manned almost entirely by the poorer class of Jew, they became a familiar site on all main streets.⁸⁴ Towards the latter part of the war one also finds Jewish refugees advertising their own businesses. Sallo Epstein opened a stamp shop at 23 Field Street Buildings, where he specialised in stamps from the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Swaziland,⁸⁵ whilst Arthur Meikle

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid., December 24, 1900, p. 7.

⁸³Ibid., October 31, 1899, p. 5.

⁸⁴London Jewish Chronicle, August 10, 1900, p. 9.

⁸⁵The Natal Mercury, March 16, 1901, p. 3.

conducted auctions from his offices at 37 Gardner Street.⁸⁶

One of the many refugees who made a personal contribution to Jewish communal life in Durban was Rabbi Joseph Herman Hertz who arrived in Durban from Delegoa Bay, on board the Induna, on December 23, 1899.⁸⁷ In 1898 Hertz had been appointed the rabbi of the Witwatersrand Old Hebrew Congregation, and until the outbreak of war had played a leading role in the struggle in the Transvaal for Jewish and Catholic religious emancipation. Strongly opposed to the political and educational disabilities under which the Jews and Catholics had to labour in the Transvaal,⁸⁸ Hertz, at a mass meeting convened by the Uitlander Council on July 26, 1899, at the Wanderer's Hall had, on behalf of the Jews and Catholics, demanded the removal of all religious disabilities in the Transvaal. In this way Hertz had raised the enmity of the Kruger Government towards himself. Upon the outbreak of war, Hertz, as an American citizen, had been granted a permit to remain in the Transvaal. After ten weeks he had received an ultimatum from the Government either to retract what he had said at the Wanderer's meeting and

⁸⁶Ibid., March 9, 1901, p. 4.

⁸⁷Ibid., December 24, 1899, p. 5.

⁸⁸See Gustav Saron, "Boers, Uitlanders, Jews", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 185.

make a public apology, or to leave the Transvaal within forty eight hours. Hertz chose the latter course,⁸⁹ and thereby happened to sail to Durban from Delegoa Bay on the same boat as Winston Churchill the war correspondent who had escaped from the Boers.

On December 28, a few days after his arrival, Hertz together with representatives of the Durban Hebrew Congregation attended the funeral of the Right Hon. Harry Escombe.⁹⁰ The deceased, who had always enjoyed high esteem amongst the Jews, had, until his appointment as Attorney General in the first Cabinet formed in Natal under Responsible Government, held the appointment of Town Solicitor, and he also served as the second Prime Minister of Natal. It had been Harry Escombe's intention to preside at a lecture on, "The Fight for Jewish and Catholic Emancipation", which Hertz gave, by invitation, in the Town Hall on January 8, 1900. However, owing to Escombe's untimely death, at the meeting, the proceeds of which were devoted to charity, the Mayor, John Nicol, took the chair.⁹¹ A lecture delivered at a later date by Hertz on, "The Synagogue in the Free State", was the first Jewish lecture ever delivered in Natal.⁹²

⁸⁹See Ibid., pp. 203 - 207.

⁹⁰The Natal Mercury, December 29, 1899, p. 7.

⁹¹Ibid., January 9, 1900, p. 7. and London Jewish Chronicle, February 9, 1900, p. 11.

⁹²London Jewish Chronicle, February 9, 1900, p. 11.

Rabbi Hertz opened an office at No. 11 Acutt's Arcade, Gardiner Street, where he received visitors every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons between three and five o'clock.⁹³ Until his return to the Transvaal, in January 1901, Hertz did not confine his activities to Durban, but also paid visits to the military front and to the Jewish community in Cape Town.⁹⁴

Among other lesser known refugees who made their contributions to Jewish life in Durban were Miss Lyons, who opened a school in the synagogue premises in Grey Street,⁹⁵ and Mr. C. Ticktin who opened the first Kosher restaurant in Durban on March 3, 1901.⁹⁶ Ticktin's The Johannesburg Restaurant, situated at 110 Queen Street, not only supplied Kosher food, but also catered specially for the two Seder nights in April 1902.⁹⁷ Rev. W. Kantrovitch, a refugee from Vryheid where he had served as the minister of the Hebrew congregation, during his sojourn in Durban

⁹³The Natal Mercury, January 4, 1900, p. 4.

⁹⁴The Natal Advertiser, March 5, 1900, p. 4.

⁹⁵The Natal Mercury, November 21, 1900, p. 7.

⁹⁶Ibid., March 2, 1901, p. 7.

⁹⁷Ibid., April 17, 1902, p. 7.

assisted at synagogue services,⁹⁸ and was also active in the Zionist Association.⁹⁹

Ernest Lezard was a Jewish refugee who made a contribution to the general rather than the Jewish life of Durban. Lezard, who in 1897, had been one of the founders of the Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society in Johannesburg,¹⁰⁰ became well known in Durban musical circles as the organiser of numerous public concerts and as the conductor of the Bijou Orchestra. The first concert under his management was held in the Town Hall on February 17, 1900,¹⁰¹ and at a concert held on March 3, 1900, the Bijou Orchestra made its' first appearance.¹⁰² Besides the general concerts, which became a weekly feature in the entertainment calendar of Durban, Ernest Lezard also organised a number of special concerts. These included a Great Scottish Concert, held under the auspices of the Caledonian Society,¹⁰³ and a concert held to mark the anniversary of the Order of Foresters.¹⁰⁴ An impressive concert was

⁹⁸ See Ibid., April 1, 1902, p. 9. and June 3, 1902, p. 7.

⁹⁹ The Natal Advertiser, April 16, 1902, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Dora L. Sowden, "In the Transvaal Till 1899", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 158.

¹⁰¹ The Natal Mercury, February 10, 1900, p. 4.

¹⁰² Ibid., February 26, 1900, p. 4.

¹⁰³ Ibid., March 30, 1900, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., June 2, 1900, p. 4.

presented by Lezard on May 23, 1900, in honour of Queen Victoria's eighty first birthday.¹⁰⁵ In order to give the children of the borough an opportunity to celebrate their Sovereign's birthday, Mr. Lezard organised free entertainment on the following day, in the Town Hall, for almost three thousand children.¹⁰⁶

On June 13, 1900, a Farewell Concert to mark the end of his first series of concerts, was held in Lezard's honour in the Town Hall. The high regard in which Lezard was held by his fellow conductors was clearly demonstrated by their eager participation in his farewell concert, whilst a presentation on behalf of the members of the Bijou Orchestra and the artistes who had participated in his numerous concerts, reflected the esteem of those with whom he had worked.¹⁰⁷

Less than a month later a Grand American Concert at the Town Hall, which featured the Bijou Orchestra under the baton of Ernest Lezard, marked Lezard's return to the Durban stage.¹⁰⁸ During 1900 Lezard and the Bijou Orchestra appeared in a number of concerts in which Jewish entertainers such as Mr. Ferd Israel,¹⁰⁹ Mr.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., May 23, 1900, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., May 25, 1900, p. 7.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., June 14, 1900, p. 6.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., July 7, 1900, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., August 11, 1900, p. 6. On Israel see above pp. 109-110.

Laurie Hart¹¹⁰ and Mr. E.V. Goldman¹¹¹ were amongst those who gave solo performances.

In March 1901 Ernest Lezard's request for permission to hold three Sunday concerts in the Town Hall was submitted by the Town Hall Music Committee to the Durban Town Council. It granted its' permission on condition that each programme be submitted to the Committee for approval.¹¹² This request, which had been approved by the Town Council, and which in view of the regular Sunday concerts presented by the Borough Organist did not establish a precedent, nevertheless became a subject of heated discussion. Discussion first arose over a question posed by one of the town councillors, when the recommendation of the Musical Committee was first put before the Town Council. Mr. Pickering's desire to know, "whether the Council knew that the applicant was a Jew",¹¹³ was sharply criticised in the press as being unnecessary and irrelevant, not only by Ernest Lezard¹¹⁴ but also by Gentile correspondents.¹¹⁵ Councillor Pickering responded to his critics by seeking to clarify his usage of the word Jew.¹¹⁶ Whilst Mr. Lezard

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Ibid., August 25, 1900, p. 6.

¹¹²Ibid., March 26, 1901, p. 9.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid., March 27, 1901, p. 7.

¹¹⁵Ibid., and Ibid., March 29, 1901, p. 5.

¹¹⁶Ibid., March 28, 1901, p. 6.

accepted his explanation,¹¹⁷ and the correspondence was closed, discussion aroused by Sunday concerts re-emerged after Lezard's first Sacred Concert which was held on April 14, 1901.¹¹⁸ Criticism of Lezard's Sunday concerts centred largely around the question of whether or not the music at the concert could be described as sacred, and was prompted by a letter which appeared in the press under the nom-de-plume "Fair".¹¹⁹ Arguments both for and against Lezard's conception of sacred music were published in The Natal Mercury.¹²⁰ Lezard, in his efforts to find a definition of the term "sacred music", even went so far as to write to different clergymen, whose replies he submitted to the newspaper for publication.¹²¹ Although Lezard did hold two more Sunday concerts¹²² they were not described as sacred, and he soon inaugurated a new series of concerts which were held on Saturday evenings.¹²³

In May 1901 Lezard & Company, Auctioneers and Valuers, re-opened their premises in Portland House,

¹¹⁷Ibid., March 29, 1901, p. 5.

¹¹⁸Ibid., April 13, 1901, p. 6.

¹¹⁹Ibid., April 15, 1901, p. 8.

¹²⁰Ibid., April 17, 1901, p. 5., April 22, 1901, p. 6., April 24, 1901, p. 10. and April 30, 1901, p. 10.

¹²¹Ibid., April 24, 1901, p. 10.

¹²²Ibid., April 26, 1901, p. 4. and May 10, 1901, p. 6.

¹²³Ibid., May 22, 1901, p. 4. and June 8, 1901, p. 8.

Commissioner Street, Johannesburg,¹²⁴ and Ernest Lezard made preparations to leave Durban. A special farewell concert tendered to him by the Members of his orchestra, who presented him with an ebony baton,¹²⁵ and by several local artistes, was held in the Town Hall, before a capacity crowd, on July 7, 1901.¹²⁶

The presence of the refugees in Durban also gave a considerable fillip to communal matters, and this was almost immediately noticable in the increased attendance at synagogue services. Prior to the war the synagogue had been poorly patronised, however by their regular attendance at Sabbath services the refugees ensured that at each service Rev. Pincus officiated before a crowded congregation.¹²⁷ Consequently the synagogue in Grey Street, which had formerly satisfied the needs of the Jews in Durban, now proved to be inadequate, a fact most clearly borne out by the need for the Durban Hebrew Congregation to arrange additional services in hired halls over the High Festival period.¹²⁸ Although

¹²⁴Ibid., May 18, 1901, p. 10.

¹²⁵Ibid., July 9, 1901, p. 7.

¹²⁶Ibid., July 8, 1901, p. 8.

¹²⁷London Jewish Chronicle, August 10, 1900, p. 9.

¹²⁸See above p. 175.

officials of the Congregation realised that many of the refugees would, upon the conclusion of hostilities, return to their homes in the Transvaal they nevertheless went ahead with plans for fund raising in order to build a newer and larger synagogue.¹²⁹ Whilst the immediate effect of the refugees on religious life in Durban was first felt during this period, the decision of many of these refugees to remain in Durban had a profound influence on religious life in the town long after the restoration of peace.¹³⁰

Refugees from Johannesburg were instrumental in forming and leading Jewish social and cultural societies which emerged in Durban during the war. They were modelled on The Johannesburg Social Club and The Jewish Guild which has been founded in Johannesburg prior to the outbreak of hostilities.¹³¹

At a meeting held in the Barrow Green Cafe in March 1901, some young Jewish men formed the Durban Jewish Sociables.¹³² Largely through the efforts of the

¹²⁹The Natal Mercury, September 25, 1901, p. 9. and October 10, 1901, p. 7.

¹³⁰See below p. 247.

¹³¹Dora L. Sowden, "In the Transvaal Till 1899", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 158.

¹³²The Natal Mercury, March 21, 1901, p. 4.

president, Mr. S. Levinsohn, the hon. secretary, Mr. F.J. Sandeman and the Committee consisting of Messrs. S.J. Franklin, M. Stiller, G.E. Meyers, J. Cohen, L.H. Goldberg, J. Tobiansky and J. Marks, the first of a series of fortnightly subscription dances was held in the Masonic Hall on March 28.¹³³ After two highly successful dances had been held,¹³⁴ a general meeting of the society was convened in the Meeting Room of the Victoria Cafe, on April 18, "in order to pass rules and to attend to general business".¹³⁵ On May 5, less than a week after the third subscription dance,¹³⁶ members of the Durban Jewish Sociables met to elect office bearers.¹³⁷ Mr. Sam Goodman was elected president of the society.¹³⁸

The tenth subscription dance, held on August 13, appears to have been the last dance arranged by the Durban Jewish Sociables.¹³⁹ In view of the popularity of the dances it is strange that the activities of the society should suddenly have ceased, nevertheless no

¹³³Ibid., March 30, 1901, p. 10.

¹³⁴Second dance held on April 16, see Ibid., April 19, 1901, p. 9.

¹³⁵Ibid., April 25, 1901, p. 4.

¹³⁶Dance held on April 31, see The Natal Advertiser, May 1, 1901, p. 3.

¹³⁷The Natal Mercury, May 4, 1901, p. 8.

¹³⁸See Ibid., May 18, 1901, p. 8.

¹³⁹Ibid., April 12, 1901, p. 6.

further reference to the Durban Jewish Sociables appears in the local press. The next subscription ball held under Jewish auspices took place on October 17, 1901, in aid of the Durban Jewish Club.¹⁴⁰ Since the emergence of the Durban Jewish Club followed upon the last subscription dance of the Durban Jewish Sociables, and men who had been associated with the Sociables were included on the committee of the Jewish Club,¹⁴¹ I do not believe that one can rule out the possibility of the Durban Jewish Club having been a continuation of the Durban Jewish Sociables. Whilst the ball held on October 17, was considered to be "...a most successful function..."¹⁴² no further balls appear to have been organised by the Jewish Club. One final notification regarding the Durban Jewish Club appeared in the press in November 1901, and advised the committee and subscribers of the club of a general meeting which was scheduled to be held on December 1, at the Goldfield's Cafe, West Street East.¹⁴³

Since neither the Durban Jewish Sociables nor the Durban Jewish Club suspended their activities owing to a lack of support, a possible explanation for their

¹⁴⁰Ibid., October 21, 1901, p. 6.

¹⁴¹See Ibid., p. 9. cf. Ibid., March 30, 1901, p. 10.

¹⁴²Ibid., October 21, 1901, p. 9.

¹⁴³Ibid., July 8, 1901, p. 8.

having apparently failed to be active beyond December 1901 is the permission granted by the British authorities for re-entry of a significantly larger number of refugees into the Transvaal. Leading personalities from the Durban Jewish Sociables and the Durban Jewish Club may possibly have returned to their former homes, and in this way the societies' leadership may have been weakened to such an extent that they found themselves unable to continue operating successfully.

By March 1902 the absence of a social club, where Jews of Durban could congregate for social or mental amusement, came to be so keenly felt that a number of young Jewish men took it upon themselves to form a club known as the Durban Jewish Social and Debating Club.¹⁴⁴ The club's aim was to foster a spirit of brotherhood amongst Jews in Durban, "and to provide a venue for the exchange of views on topics of general and more especially Jewish interest".¹⁴⁵ In pursuit of its' aims the Durban Jewish Social and Debating Club, under a committee led by Mr. S. Alleson, president; Mr. Lighter, treasurer; and Mr. Master, hon. secretary, rented a room at 3 Jackson's Buildings, West Street,

¹⁴⁴Ibid., March 12, 1902, p. 6.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

where books, magazines and newspapers in Yiddish and English were available.¹⁴⁶ The fact that literature in Yiddish and Hebrew was to be found at the club room indicates the East European and hence the refugee composition of the club's membership. The only function organised by the Club which received any press coverage was an address delivered by Mr. S. Cohen, the secretary of the local Zionist Association entitled, "Wherein Lies Salvation".¹⁴⁷ In the Club's choice of speaker there may lie the possible cause for its' apparent closure. By 1902 the Durban Zionist Association had become a rather large and well organised association¹⁴⁸ which may very well have catered for all the needs of those Jews who sought a venue for cultural and intellectual intercourse, particularly after the opening of the Zionist Hall and Reading Room in May 1902.¹⁴⁹ As a result, the facilities provided for intellectual stimulation by the Durban Jewish Social and Debating Club may have failed to attract those for whom they were intended. Whilst the Club's apparent failure to provide social activities, such as dances, may account for the Club's inability to attract a large membership from

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., April 10, 1902, p. 7.

¹⁴⁸See below p. 206.

¹⁴⁹The Natal Mercury, May 23, 1902, p. 6.

amongst those uninterested in intellectual activities, or unattracted by or opposed to Zionism.

The effect of the refugees on communal life in Durban was nowhere more clearly illustrated than in their creation of an active Zionist Association. Whilst an attempt had been made before the war to form a Zionist body in Durban, it had met with little success.¹⁵⁰ Zionism's initial failure to take root in Durban did not, however, discourage the refugees who, in the face of opposition from large sections of Durban Jewry, went ahead with plans to firmly establish a Durban Zionist Association.

The presence in Durban, during the war, of a large number of Transvaal Zionists is indicated by the fact that a letter sent from London by S. Lennox Loewe, addressed to those Zionist societies which wished to be represented at the Fourth Zionist Congress, appeared in the local press in June 1900.¹⁵¹ Their presence in Durban is further borne out by a letter, sent by H. Joffa, the hon. secretary of the West Rand Zionist Association, which was published shortly afterwards.

¹⁵⁰See above pp.155-158.

¹⁵¹The Natal Mercury, June 28, 1900, p. 6.

In Joffa's letter a call was made on Zionist leaders in Durban to convene a meeting in order to elect a representative for the Congress which was to be held in London.¹⁵²

It was not until April 1901, however, that a Zionist Association was actually founded in Durban. Since evidence to suggest the presence of a considerable number of Zionists exists from almost a year prior to the association's inauguration, the turbulent times must have prevented the Zionists from establishing their Association in 1900. Despite the continuation of the war, by 1901 conditions in Natal had practically returned to normal and attention could be given to cultural and social affairs. This no doubt, accounts for the emergence in 1901, not only of the Durban Zionist Association but also of the Durban Jewish Sociables.

The Durban Zionist Association was born out of a meeting held on April 14, 1901, at the synagogue in Grey Street, at which Mr. B. Nathanson was elected president; Mr. A. Abraham, vice president; Mr. S. Berman, treasurer; Messrs. B.J. Chaimowitz and J. Rabinowitz, secretaries; S. Gordon, H. Jacobson and M. Abraham, Committee.¹⁵³ At least one committee member, namely

¹⁵²Ibid., July 24, 1900, p. 5.

¹⁵³Ibid., April 17, 1901, p. 4.

Bernard Chaimowitz, had been among the founders of the Transvaal Zionist Association.¹⁵⁴ The fact that no Durban Jew appears to have been associated with the establishment of the Durban Zionist Association has been seen as an indication of the strong opposition of the English Jewish residents of Durban to Zionism, and as an expression of their deep seated aversion for the East European immigrant.¹⁵⁵ Whilst the Durban Jews may have had differences with their East European co-religionists I do believe that it was their traditional opposition to Zionism¹⁵⁶ which prompted them to remain aloof from the movement.

If, as has been asserted B. Lipinski, H.J. Henochsberg and other Durban Jews did go so far as to place obstacles in the way of the Association,¹⁵⁷ then perhaps this reaction stemmed from their displeasure at having their position of authority and leadership challenged by the leaders of the Durban Zionist Association.

Not all the Jews of Durban were, however, opposed to the Zionist movement and shortly after the formation of

¹⁵⁴ Marcia Gitlin, The Vision Amazing, (Johannesburg, 1950), p. 62.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ See above p. 158.

¹⁵⁷ Marcia Gitlin, The Vision Amazing, (Johannesburg, 1950), p. 62.

the Durban Zionist Association Philip Wartski enrolled as a member, and subsequently served on the committee and later as vice-president.¹⁵⁸ Rev. Pincus was another of the Durban Jews who in the early days of the Association participated at Zionist meetings.¹⁵⁹ Since both Wartski and Pincus were originally from Eastern Europe they no doubt found it easier to work with the Zionists than did their fellow Durban Jews of English origin.

Despite the opposition that the Association encountered new members were enrolled weekly, and the attendance at Zionist meetings grew to such an extent that the synagogue in fact proved to be too small to accomodate all those who wished to attend a general meeting held on May 26.¹⁶⁰ Under Nathanson, who served as president until his resignation in August 1901,¹⁶¹ the Durban Zionist Association directed much of its' attention to the question of establishing a Hebrew school in Durban.

The emphasis placed on Hebrew education was a distinguishing feature of East European Jewry. Hebrew education was considered to be of such importance that

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹The Natal Mercury, May 28, 1901, p. 7.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

¹⁶¹Ibid., August 5, 1901, p. 9.

many years later it was a contributory factor in the split which occurred in the congregation in Durban.¹⁶² When the creation of a Hebrew school was first debated by the Zionists, "it was pointed out that such a school would promote the study of the Hebrew language and further the interests and objects of the Zionists".¹⁶³ The Executive Committee of the Association received support both from local sources and from the Cape Colony. Almost immediately it began advertising for competent teachers,¹⁶⁴ and within a short while negotiations regarding the appointment of a qualified Hebrew teacher were initiated.¹⁶⁵ The question of a Hebrew school in Durban appears to have faded into obscurity after Nathanson's resignation, possibly owing to the large scale return of the refugees to their former homes, thereby making the creation of such a school impractical.

At a meeting held on August 4, Mr. Louis Goldberg was elected as Mr. Nathanson's successor.¹⁶⁶ It has been suggested that Louis Goldberg, who was an English Jew, who allegedly cared little for the Association but a great deal about being chairman of an organisation,

¹⁶²See below p. 247.

¹⁶³The Natal Mercury, May 28, 1901, p. 7.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., June 11, 1901, p. 9.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., July 9, 1901, p. 7.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., August 5, 1901, p. 9.

was appointed president in order to attract English Jews to the movement and to remove the image of foreignness from the Association.¹⁶⁷ Whilst the choice of Goldberg may certainly have been motivated by the Association's desire to win over more English Jews to the Zionist cause, the suggestion that Goldberg accepted the presidency simply to attain high office in an organisation is unfounded in view of his having already been appointed the President of the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society.¹⁶⁸ Under Goldberg the Association spent much of 1901 attracting new members, encouraging the purchase of shares in the Jewish Colonial Bank,¹⁶⁹ and establishing a Jewish Colonial Trust Club.¹⁷⁰ It was during the early period of Goldberg's presidency that the first lady members were enrolled to form a society of their own under the guidance of the Durban Zionist Association.¹⁷¹ The Association's activities in 1901, which included a social gathering in honour of Rabbi Hertz who visited the town in August,¹⁷² were brought to a climatic close by the staging of a Chanukah concert. The concert, held in the Masonic Hall on

¹⁶⁷ Marcia Gitlin, The Vision Amazing, p. 63.

¹⁶⁸ See report of A.G.M. of the Society, The Natal Mercury, November 5, 1902, p. 13.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., August 20, 1901, p. 9.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., November 20, 1901, p. 15.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., August 20, 1901, p. 9.

¹⁷² Ibid., August 12, 1901, p. 5.

December 12, was attended by the local magistrate of Durban, Mr. Koch, and featured a programme of songs and music.¹⁷³

The first meeting of the Durban Zionist Association in 1902, was followed by a celebration at the residence of Mr. M. Abrahams, to mark the holding of the fifth World Zionist Congress in Basle. At the function toasts to the health of Dr. Herzl and Mr. Goldberg were proposed by Rev. S. Pincus and Mr. Samuel Cohen, the hon. secretary, respectively, and an address was delivered by Mr. Morris Kantrovitch.¹⁷⁴

On April 13, 1902, the first annual meeting of the Association was held in the Synagogue Chambers. In his address the president was able to indicate that the Association, which had begun with a membership of eleven, had, in the period of a year increased in number to three hundred and had furthermore ended the year with a surplus of over £100.¹⁷⁵ The election of office bearers at the meetings resulted in the re-election of Mr. Goldberg as president, and the elevation of Samuel Cohen and Morris Kantrovitch to the post of joint hon. secretaries. Three of the most senior positions in the

¹⁷³Ibid., December 12, 1901, p. 11.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., January 7, 1902, p. 15. and London Jewish Chronicle, February 14, 1902, p. 15.

¹⁷⁵The Natal Advertiser, April 16, 1902, p. 8.

Association were in consequence held by English Jews. In addition at least two Jews from England, Rev. W. Kantrovitch and B. Cinnamon were voted on to the Committee,¹⁷⁶ thus proving that the English Jews were not, as has sometimes been suggested, entirely detached from Zionist affairs. Jews of East European origin certainly continued, however, to dominate the Association.¹⁷⁷

Zionist activity during the Boer War period culminated in the opening of the Zionist Hall in Paruk's Building, Commercial Road, on May 25, 1902.¹⁷⁸ The Hall, which was in fact the sample room of a business house,¹⁷⁹ was opened with considerable ceremony which included toasts, addresses in English and Yiddish, and the presentation to the Association by Messrs. Panovka Brothers, L. Shapiro and M. Kahn of the blue and white Zionist flag.¹⁸⁰ The opening of the hall was a clear indication of the strides which Zionism had, within a relatively short time, made in Durban.

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷See The Natal Mercury, May 27, 1902, p. 11.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., May 23, 1902, p. 6.

¹⁷⁹Marcia Gitlin, The Vision Amazing, p. 63.

¹⁸⁰The Natal Mercury, May 27, 1902, p. 11.

Although Johannesburg was occupied by the British on May 31, 1900, the return of refugees of the Transvaal was strictly controlled by permits, which were at first granted only to those whose services were needed for running the gold mines and the essential services. Many of the Jewish refugees in Durban were therefore unable to return to their homes immediately. Durban Jews were consequently obliged to continue with the relief work which they had undertaken at the commencement of hostilities.¹⁸¹

By the end of 1900 the situation in Natal was gradually returning to normal, although the end of the war was still not in sight. Attention now came to be directed to matters away from the battlefield.

For many refugees 1901 was to be a year of gladness in consequence of their being permitted to return to the Transvaal. For Natal and the Empire, however, the year began with sadness at the passing of Queen Victoria. When news of the Queen's illness was first received in Durban¹⁸² special services were arranged, for January 23, to pray for her recovery. The Christian service organised by the Durban Church Council in the Town Hall, and the special service arranged by the Durban Hebrew Congregation in the Masonic Hall, Smith Street,¹⁸³ had

¹⁸¹See above p. 174.

¹⁸²The Natal Mercury, January 21, 1901, p. 9.

¹⁸³Ibid., January 23, 1901, p. 3.

to be cancelled when news of the Queen's death, on January 22, reached Durban.

In tribute to the late Queen, Messrs. B.C. Myers, J.H. Isaacs, A. Simon and Ernest Lezard opened subscription lists at their stores, in order to collect funds to enable a wreath from Durban Jewish residents to be placed on the Queen's tomb.¹⁸⁴ The response to this idea was most favourable and resulted in twenty five guineas being cabled to the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Adler, who, in the name of the Jewish community of Durban sought the necessary permission to place the wreath on the Queen's grave.¹⁸⁵ Messages of sympathy from the Durban Hebrew Congregation,¹⁸⁶ the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society¹⁸⁷ and the Jewish Girls' Patriotic League¹⁸⁸ were amongst the many that were sent from Durban to the King and the Royal Family. On the first Sabbath after the Queen's death special prayers were recited in the synagogue for the dead Queen and for her family.¹⁸⁹ The Queen's funeral was held at Windsor on Saturday, February 2. On the orders of the Governor this day was observed in Natal as a public fast day. At the memorial service held around the Queen's statue in

¹⁸⁴Ibid., January 25, 1901, p. 4.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., February 2, 1901, p. 7.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., January 5, 1901, p. 3.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., January 26, 1901, p. 9.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., January 30, 1901, p. 7.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., January 26, 1901, p. 5.

the Town Gardens wreaths were sent from numerous organisations and individuals including the Durban Hebrew Congregation, the Jewish Girls' Patriotic League and Mr. P. Lazarus, the hon. secretary of the Durban Hebrew Congregation.¹⁹⁰ A special memorial service was also held in the synagogue at the conclusion of the ordinary service.¹⁹¹

As a lasting memorial to the Queen, the women of Durban resolved to donate a portrait of the Queen to the Municipal Art Gallery. The committee formed to carry out this project included Miss Millie Goldberg,¹⁹² who together with Miss Nicol, the Mayor's daughter, collected £200 towards the £572 raised for the memorial portrait.¹⁹³ A committee in London, which included Alfred de Pass, placed the commission in the hands of Prof. Hubert **Herkomer** R.A.¹⁹⁴ The completed portrait was unveiled in the Art Gallery on January 17, 1903 by the Governor Sir Henry McCullum.¹⁹⁵

In 1901 Jews once again participated in municipal affairs by signing the requisitions of various candidates.¹⁹⁶ Jewish names were also to be found on

¹⁹⁰Ibid., February 4, 1901, p. 7.

¹⁹¹Ibid.

¹⁹²Ibid., February 27, 1901, p. 4.

¹⁹³London Jewish Chronicle, February 27, 1903, p. 24.

¹⁹⁴The Natal Mercury, May 31, 1901, p. 4.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., January 19, 1903, p. 11.

¹⁹⁶See Ibid., July 9, 1901, p. 5, and December 16,

requisitions addressed to candidates who stood for election to the Legislative Assembly.¹⁹⁷

Members of the Jewish community were also to be found on the committee which arranged a ball, held on June 28, 1901, in the Town Hall in aid of the Nazareth House.¹⁹⁸ At the ball, which was a highlight of the social season Jewish residents of the town were amongst those who presented their cards on the night of the ball.¹⁹⁹ Interestingly many prominent leaders of the Jewish community attended this Friday evening function. An equally important social event was the first "At Home" given by Lady McCullum, the wife of the Governor. Mrs. Harry Goldberg, Miss Millie Goldberg, Mr. and Mrs. F.C. Hollander, Mr. and Mrs. Henochsberg and Mrs. B. Lipinski were amongst those who had the honour of being received by the hostess.²⁰⁰

The most significant social event of the year was the visit to Durban, on August 13, of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, Prince George and Princess Mary. In connection with the Royal Visit Rabbi Dr. J. H. Hertz travelled from Johannesburg to Durban. Upon his

¹⁹⁷See Ibid., September 16, 1901, p. 10.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., June 29, 1901, p. 11.

¹⁹⁹Ibid.

²⁰⁰Ibid., July 6, 1901, p. 10.

arrival he was met by representatives of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, the Durban Jewish Relief Committee and the Durban Zionist Association, the latter two institutions presenting him with an address of welcome.²⁰¹ At a Sabbath service held in the synagogue on August 10, Rabbi Hertz, taking loyalty as his theme, preached before a packed congregation, which also joined in a special invocation recited by the Rev. Pincus in memory of the Empress Fredrick (Victoria, Dowager Empress of Germany, and sister of Edward VII) who had died on August 5.²⁰² The Durban Zionist Association held a social gathering at the Masonic Hall, Point Road, on August 11 in honour of Rabbi Hertz, who during the course of the evening was presented with a gold medal to commemorate his having become a life member of the Association.²⁰³ On the following evening Rabbi Hertz was the guest of honour at a complimentary dinner given by the Durban Hebrew Congregation in The Princess Cafe.²⁰⁴

On August 13, stands along the route which the Duke and Duchess were to take, from the bay to Albert Park, were filled by school children. One hundred and fifty

²⁰¹London Jewish Chronicle, September 20, 1901, p. 20.

²⁰²The Natal Mercury, August 12, 1901, p. 9.

²⁰³Ibid., p. 8.

²⁰⁴Ibid., August 13, 1901, p. 9.

from the Synagogue, under their superintendent Mr. P. Wartski, were placed on the stands set aside for pupils of Durban and Coast Sunday Schools.²⁰⁵ At Albert Park the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York were the recipients of several illuminated addresses including one signed by B.C. Myers, on behalf of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, Joseph H. Hertz, on behalf of the Witwatersrand Congregation and B. Lipinski on behalf of the Bloemfontein Congregation,²⁰⁶ which was described as, "one of the most attractive addresses".²⁰⁷ During the course of the day the Duchess received members of the Loyal Women's Guild, including Miss Leah Hyams, the former hon. secretary of the Jewish Girls' Patriotic League, in the Drawing Room of the Royal Hotel.²⁰⁸ From Durban the Royal party proceeded to Pietermaritzburg where, on August 14, a reception was held at Government House. It was attended by over one thousand five hundred guests²⁰⁹ including Mr. B.C. Myers (President of the Durban Hebrew Congregation) and Mrs. Myers and Mr. and Mrs. B. Lipinski, all of whom had the honour of being presented to the Royal visitors.²¹⁰

²⁰⁵Ibid., August 14, 1901, p. 8.

²⁰⁶London Jewish Chronicle, September 27, 1901, p. 23.

²⁰⁷The Natal Mercury, August 14, 1901, p. 8.

²⁰⁸London Jewish Chronicle, September 20, 1901, p. 20.

²⁰⁹The Natal Mercury, August 16, 1901, p. 7.

²¹⁰London Jewish Chronicle, September 20, 1901.

On March 26, 1902, only a few weeks before his dream of South Africa under the British flag became a reality, Cecil John Rhodes died at Groote Skuur. Whilst on March 30, a special reference was made to the deceased Statesman, during the Sabbath service,²¹¹ no similar references were reported to have been made in the local churches during their Sunday services.

By the conclusion of the Peace of Vereeniging, signed on May 31, 1902, Rhodes' dream was realised and peace was restored to South Africa. At a special synagogue service held to mark the restoration of peace, the Rev. W. Kantrovitch expressed the sentiments of all the Jews of Durban when he concluded his sermon by saying:

Our recent antagonists and present fellow subjects will be treated with respect and generosity; thus will the embers of strife be extinguished. Our late foes will thus be converted to loyal friends, and both races will work together for the advancement and welfare of their common country. Such is the hope of everyone, and of none more than of the members of the Jewish race, who have ever been loyal citizens of this realm, and sincerely rejoice with their fellow citizens of other denominations on this happy event.²¹²

²¹¹The Natal Mercury, March 26, 1902, p. 9.

²¹²Ibid., June 3, 1902, p. 7.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN DURBAN IN THE POST WAR PERIOD(1902 - 1914)

The presence of a large number of Jews in Durban during the Anglo-Boer War and the decision of the majority of these refugees to settle in Natal¹ made it necessary for the authorities of the Durban Hebrew Congregation to contemplate erecting a newer and larger synagogue. Even before the cessation of hostilities, steps had been taken in order to raise funds for the

¹London Jewish Chronicle, August 29, 1902, p. 17.

construction of a new house of worship. On September 24, 1901, a meeting was held in the Masonic Hall, under the patronage of the Governor and Lady McCullum, in order to promote the funds of the Congregation's Building Fund. At the gathering, which was presided over by the Mayor, Mr. E.L. Acutt, it was resolved that a Ball should be held in the Town Hall.² The Dance Committee which was instrumental in making the ball, held on October 9, such a success included the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Chief Magistrate and members of the Congregation.³

THE MINISTRY OF THE REV. A. LEVY.

Sensing a need for an English speaking and English trained minister who could serve as a preacher and teacher and would work in co-operation with Rev. S. Pincus, the augmented congregation issued a call for the Rev. Levy, who in the course of a distinguished academic career had held several important scholarships, and

²The Natal Mercury, September 25, 1901, p. 9.

³Ibid., October 10, 1901, p. 7.

was also experienced in educational matters. Before his departure for South Africa Levy had held educational appointments at Berner St. School and Baker St. School and had also served as a lecturer attending the Toynbee Hall Hebrew and Religion Classes. He had been Hebrew Superintendent of St. Stephen's Church School, which was attended by more than four hundred Jewish children. For over a year the Rev. Levy had acted as a visiting minister to the Aldershot Congregation and had frequently occupied the pulpit and officiated at some of the principle London synagogues.⁴ Rev. Levy's training and experience therefore made him admirably suited for his new post with the Durban Hebrew Congregation.

The Congregation's new minister arrived in Durban, on board the Kildonian Castle, on July 28, 1903, and Mr. P. Lazarus and Mr. R. Levisohn went across the bar to the ship, to welcome him. Upon his arrival at the jetty Rev. Mr. Levy was received by a deputation from the Hebrew Congregation who presented him with an address of welcome, which was signed by P. Wartski, president; B. Lipinski, treasurer; and R. Levisohn, hon. secretary.⁵ More than three hundred Jews and a number of Christian clergymen attended a reception given by the Durban Hebrew

⁴London Jewish Chronicle, June 26, 1903, p. 22.

⁵The Natal Mercury, July 30, 1903, p. 11.

Congregation on August 6, in the Masonic Hall, Smith Street, in Rev. Levy's honour.⁶

The Rev. Levy endeared himself to the Congregation and his effect on the religious life of Durban Jewry was almost immediately discernable. His introduction of a sermon each Friday evening became a popular feature of the service,⁷ whilst his institution of a special children's service every Sabbath afternoon proved to be extremely popular amongst the children who attended in large numbers.⁸ Interest in religious matters was certainly heightened in this period, as is indicated by a meeting called to discuss the construction of a mikvah.⁹

Among the innovations for which Rev. Levy appears to have been responsible was the introduction of a mixed choir into the synagogue. The first occasion on which the choir participated in a service was on the eve of Chanukah, in December 1903.¹⁰ On this occasion a Gentile organist, Mr. Ferguson Brown¹¹ accompanied the choir and the soloist Mrs. Jessie Rosenthal.

⁶Ibid., August 7, 1903, p. 9.

⁷London Jewish Chronicle, September 25, 1903, p. 24.

⁸Ibid., October 2, 1903, p. 21.

⁹The Natal Mercury, October 20, 1903, p. 9.

¹⁰London Jewish Chronicle, January 15, 1904, p. 12.

¹¹The Natal Mercury, December 11, 1903, p. 5.

Having had considerable experience in educational matters Rev. Levy took a keen interest in the classes which were conducted for the children at the synagogue by Rev. S. Pincus. Shortly after his arrival in Durban it was reported that the new minister had thoroughly reorganised the classes which had, prior to his arrival, catered for only seventy children.¹²

The problems created by inadequate teaching facilities appear to have been appreciated by the members of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, for in planning of the new synagogue the congregation made provision at the rear of the building for the construction of a school house.¹³ The impetus for the establishment of a Jewish Day School in Durban appears to have come from the Rev. Levy. Similar schools had long been established in Cape Town¹⁴ and Johannesburg,¹⁵ and an attempt by the Durban Zionist Association, during the Anglo-Boer War, to establish a similar school in Durban, although enthusiastically received had failed to materialise.¹⁶

¹²London Jewish Chronicle, September 11, 1903, p. 20.

¹³Ibid., November 13, 1903, p. 23.

¹⁴See Israel Abrahams, "Western Province Jewry, 1870 - 1902", in The Jews in South Africa A History, ed. Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz, (London, 1955), pp. 26. and 33-34.

¹⁵See Dora L. Sowden, "In the Transvaal till 1899", in The Jews in South Africa, p. 160.

¹⁶See above p. 204.

Whilst the failure to establish a Jewish Day School in Durban during the Boer War period may be attributed to the unsettled state of affairs that prevailed, the failure of the Congregation to establish such a school prior to the war is possibly attributable to the lack of interest on the part of the Congregation in educational matters, and the absence of a persuasive personality who could win the Congregation over to the idea of maintaining a Jewish Day School. In Rev. Levy it would seem that the concept of a Jewish Day School found a persuasive propagandist, whilst in Mr. B. Shlom, the president of the Durban Zionist Association, and the members of the Association the proposal to establish a Jewish Day School found untiring workers.¹⁷

An Education Committee was formed to assist Rev. Levy in his plans for the new school.¹⁸ At a meeting on April 24, 1904, the Committee unanimously resolved to establish a Jewish Day School in Durban.¹⁹ A public meeting of the Jewish residents of Durban, called to consider the proposed school's financial basis, was held in the New Synagogue Chambers, St. Andrew's Street on May 1.²⁰ On the motion of the Rev. Levy the meeting

¹⁷London Jewish Chronicle, July 22, 1904, p. 21.

¹⁸Ibid., September 11, 1903, p. 20.

¹⁹The Natal Mercury, April 30, 1904, p. 9.

²⁰Ibid.

unanimously resolved to open a yearly subscription list to help defray expenditure involved in the upkeep of the Jewish Day School. The subscriptions, together with the promise of a liberal Government allowance, ensured that the school would commence on a firm financial basis.²¹

The steps taken towards the creation of a Jewish Day School appear to have failed to bear fruit, and in view of the support which the scheme appears to have gained, this may very well have been due to the financial depression which set in over South Africa in 1904. Hebrew and Religion classes nevertheless continued to be conducted at the synagogue. In October 1904 Rev. Levy initiated a Hebrew class for boys, which was held at the synagogue each evening from five o'clock to seven o'clock.²²

An examination of the children attending the Hebrew and Religion Classes of the Congregation was held on March 26, 1905, and a week later the school's first prize distribution was held in the school room of the synagogue. The report of the examiners, the Rev. S. Pincus and Mr. F.C. Hollander, extolled the work of Rev. A. Levy, who in his report outlined the difficulties under which the classes had to labour, especially the

²¹London Jewish Chronicle, July 22, 1904, p. 21.

²²The Natal Mercury, October 27, 1904, p. 8.

lack of competent voluntary assistants capable of conducting classes in religion. As an inducement to the pupils, Mr. C.P. Robinson announced his intention to award an annual prize of five guineas to the boy or girl who, in Rev. Levy's opinion, proved most deserving of it in the ensuing year.²³

Undaunted by the setback to his plans to establish a Jewish Day School, the Rev. Levy decided to open a Jewish Boarding School for children of both sexes. At moderate terms he offered to take Jewish children into his home and to supervise their Hebrew and Religious instruction, whilst arranging for their secular education at the best Durban schools.²⁴ Unfortunately no reports regarding this school appear to exist so that it is not possible to determine whether this venture was at all successful.

In August 1906 the children who attended the Durban Hebrew and Religion Classes were examined by Rabbi Dr. Hertz. In his report, in which he praised the efforts of the Rev. Levy, Rabbi Hertz, "gave it as his opinion that the classes were in point of excellence of teaching and ground covered second to none in South Africa".²⁵

²³Ibid., April 4, 1905, p. 7. and London Jewish Chronicle, May 12, 1905, p. 34.

²⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, September 8, 1905, p. 475.

²⁵Ibid., September 28, 1906, p. 378.

The public distribution of prizes, held on September 9, was presided over by Councillor F.C. Hollander. In the course of his address the chairman, "expressed the hope that before long Durban might be able to boast the possession of a Jewish day school".²⁶ The sentiments expressed by Mr. Hollander would seem to indicate that the proposal to establish a Jewish Day School in Durban had not been discarded. In fact at the prize distribution in connection with the Classes in January 1908, Mr. Hollander referred once again to the project of a Jewish Day School, and expressed the opinion that when the financial depression passed the Day School envisaged by Levy would find favour.²⁷

At the same ceremony, Rev. Levy, in presenting his report, outlined the progress which had been made by the various classes. He proudly announced that the senior pupils had not only extensively studied the Book of Genesis, both Hebrew and English texts, but that they could also correctly intone any Haftorah. The increased enrollment in the classes was reflected in Mr. Hollander's announcement that the Education Committee had sanctioned the appointment of a paid assistant to Rev. Levy.²⁸

²⁶London Jewish Chronicle, October 12, 1906, p. 17.

²⁷Ibid., February 28, 1908, p. 12.

²⁸Ibid.

Despite Levy's achievements in the field of education, his proposal to establish a Jewish Day School in Durban never materialised, possibly because as the financial depression in South Africa was lifting, the Durban Hebrew Congregation was seriously weakened by a split and by Levy's subsequent resignation.²⁹

Rev. Levy's interest in the religious life of his congregation extended to matters related to Kashrut. Upon his arrival in Durban it appears that the only Kosher meat butchery in the town was run by the Durban Fresh Meat and Supply Company at Stalls 10 and 11 in the Borough Market House.³⁰ Contracts for the sole right of purveying kosher meat to the Durban Jewish community were awarded by the Congregation, though there is later evidence to suggest that kosher meat was also obtainable at butcheries which had not been contracted to supply the congregation with meat.³¹

On April 1, 1906, at the quarterly meeting of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, Rev. A. Levy, together with Rev. S. Pincus and Messrs. I. Zeffert, M. Ruben and J. Solomon, was elected to serve on the newly formed Shechita Board.³² At the meeting it was decided to

²⁹See below pp. 247 and 256.

³⁰The Natal Mercury, March 21, 1904, p. 4.

³¹Ibid., November 1, 1910, p. 6.

³²South African Jewish Chronicle, April 13, 1906, p. 410.

give the contract for the supply of Kosher meat, which had been secured in 1905 by The Durban Fresh and Frozen Meat Company,³³ to the Federal Cold Storage and Supply Company, Ltd., which occupied Stall No. 9 at the Borough Market House.³⁴ It is interesting to note that although the stall was under the supervision of the Rev. Pincus³⁵ and was managed by a Jewish butcher, Mr. Phil Hyams, it nevertheless openly conducted business on Saturdays.³⁶

Lionel Hart, the hon. secretary of the Congregation, advertised in October 1908 for tenders for the sole right to supply the Congregation with Kosher meat.³⁷ This contract was awarded to Mr. S.J. Stein who ran a butchery at the corner of Field and Victoria Streets.³⁸ A year later the Congregation's contract for the supply of Kosher meat appears to have been given to the same gentleman.³⁹

As minister of the Jewish community Rev. Levy played a leading role in all communal organisations. Within a short while after his arrival in Durban Rev. Levy

³³The Natal Mercury, February 9, 1905, p. 5.

³⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, April 13, 1906, p. 410.

³⁵Ibid., August 17, 1906, p. 168.

³⁶The Natal Mercury, June 12, 1906, p. 11.

³⁷Ibid., October 28, 1908, p. 6.

³⁸Ibid., November 10, 1908, p. 6.

³⁹Ibid., November 1, 1910, p. 6.

actively identified himself with the work of the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society.⁴⁰ During 1904 Rev. Levy assisted the Society by supervising each case which came before the committee, and at the annual meeting of the Society, held in December 1904, he was elected to the Society's committee.⁴¹ By his participation in the work of the Society Rev. Levy helped to strengthen the close bond which had always existed between the Synagogue and the Benevolent Society. This bond was demonstrated by the Society's use of the synagogue as a forum for meetings,⁴² and by the concert, held in 1906 to raise funds for the Synagogue and the Benevolent Society.⁴³

When in 1906 the effect of the post war depression came to be keenly felt in Durban, and the resources of the Benevolent Society were extremely hard pressed, Rev. Levy strove to form a Gemiluth Chessed Society. At a meeting held at the Synagogue Chambers on November 18, the Society was created to assist those who required small interest free loans. Over two hundred members drawn from every section of the Jewish community enrolled as members of the organisation, of which Mr. Louis

⁴⁰London Jewish Chronicle, December 11, 1903, p.23.

⁴¹Ibid., February 3, 1905, p.25.

⁴²See Ibid., December 5, 1902, p.23., December 11, 1903, p.23. and The Natal Mercury, October 10, 1907, p.6.

⁴³The Natal Mercury, December 21, 1906, p.9.

Goldberg was elected president, Rev. Levy, honorary treasurer and secretary, and Messrs H. Brodie, P. Patz, J. Solomon, J. Bingish and A. Benson, committee.⁴⁴

Rev. Levy was also the driving force behind the creation of the Holy Vestment Society, which was established at a meeting held in March 1904.⁴⁵ The Society, which amalgamated with the Ladies' Guild,⁴⁶ not only assumed responsibility for supplying and maintaining the synagogue vestments, but also proved to be invaluable in raising funds for the Synagogue.⁴⁷

The Zionist Association and the Durban Hebrew Congregation had always worked in close co-operation. Members of the Durban Zionist Association had rendered assistance to the Congregation during the Boer War period, particularly with regard to the organisation of High Festival services.⁴⁸ The Association extended this service to the community once again in 1902⁴⁹ and for the last time in 1903.⁵⁰ The reason for the discontinuation of the services organised by the Durban

⁴⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, November 30, 1906, p.597.

⁴⁵London Jewish Chronicle, April 15, 1904, p. 24.

⁴⁶For a fuller account see below pp.282-283.

⁴⁷See below pp.286-287.

⁴⁸See above p.189.

⁴⁹London Jewish Chronicle, November 14, 1902, p. 23.

⁵⁰The Natal Mercury, October 2, 1903, p. 9.

Zionist Association was not, as one author has suggested, due to a conflict between the Synagogue and the Association,⁵¹ but rather because by 1904 a new synagogue capable of seating all those who wished to attend the High Festival services had been opened, and overflow services were therefore no longer necessary.

Upon his arrival in the town Rev. Levy joined the Durban Zionist Association, and he served the Association as a lecturer at many public meetings.⁵² He also secured high office in the Association,⁵³ and in 1905 and 1906 represented the Association at the South African Zionist Conferences in Johannesburg.⁵⁴ In 1909 the Association appointed Rev. Levy and his colleague Rev. Pincus ex officio members of the committee.⁵⁵ Rev. Levy's active identification with the work of the Durban Zionist Association ensured that the spirit of co-operation which had always dominated relations between the Association and the Congregation continued

⁵¹ See Marcia Gitlin, The Vision Amazing, (Johannesburg, 1950), p. 64.

⁵² London Jewish Chronicle, January 15, 1904, p. 12. and The Natal Mercury, December 18, 1903, p. 6., May 13, 1904, p. 6., March 24, 1906, p. 8.

⁵³ The Natal Mercury, May 11, 1905, p. 9. and June 2, 1908, p. 7.

⁵⁴ Ibid., July 5, 1905, p. 9. and South African Jewish Chronicle, December 7, 1906, p. 615.

⁵⁵ London Jewish Chronicle, June 4, 1909, p. 10.

during his ministry. Evidence of this co-operation between the Durban Hebrew Congregation and the Durban Zionist Association was a memorial service for Dr. Herzl in the synagogue in July 1904,⁵⁶ and an address by Rabbi Dr. J.L. Landau to the Zionist Association which was given in the synagogue.⁵⁷

Rev. Levy's interest in Zionism prompted him to begin a Juvenile Zionist Society in Durban in June 1907.⁵⁸ The spirit of co-operation which existed between the Juvenile Zionists and the Durban Hebrew Congregation, and which was reflected in a concert held by the Juvenile Zionists partly in and of the Synagogue Building Fund,⁵⁹ may in no small measure have been due to the influence of Rev. Levy.

Since the Durban Hebrew Congregation had by the time of Levy's arrival in South Africa become a member of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal,⁶⁰ it is not surprising that the spiritual leader of the congregation should have involved himself in the work of the Board.⁶¹ It was during Levy's ministry that

⁵⁶The Natal Mercury, July 9, 1904, p. 12.

⁵⁷Ibid., July 30, 1904, p. 10.

⁵⁸Ibid., June 3, 1907, p. 5.

⁵⁹Ibid., November 30, 1907, p. 11.

⁶⁰See below p. 325.

⁶¹London Jewish Chronicle, April 15, 1904, p. 23.

the Congregation decided to withdraw from the Board of Deputies,⁶² and it was not until 1912 that the Congregation re-involved itself in the work of the Board.⁶³

Notwithstanding his commitments to his congregation and to the Zionist Association, Rev. Levy found time to act as president of the Jewish Social Union,⁶⁴ and of the Durban Jewish Social and Literary Society.⁶⁵ The influence of the Rev. Levy on the Society may possibly be reflected in the dances given in August 1905, the proceeds of which went to the Synagogue.⁶⁶ Rev. Levy also closely identified himself with the work of the Jewish Communal League, which not only sought to raise funds for the Synagogue but also served as a venue for social and literary intercourse.⁶⁷

During Rev. Levy's ministry in Durban a number of special services and noteworthy events took place. In 1904 Bernhard Lipinski, who left Durban on an extended

⁶²See below p. 329.

⁶³See below p. 359.

⁶⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, June 23, 1905, p. 199.

⁶⁵London Jewish Chronicle, September 1, 1905, p. 13.

⁶⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, September 8, 1905, p. 489.

⁶⁷See below pp. 314-315.

trip to England and the Continent, was honoured by the Congregation which presented him with an illuminated address.⁶⁸ A similar presentation was made to Mr. and Mrs. Lipinski on behalf of the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society at a Purim Ball held in aid of the Synagogue Building Fund.⁶⁹ In the following year the Congregation honoured Philip Wartski who was presented with a silver tea service by the newly elected President of the Congregation, Mr. C.P. Robinson.⁷⁰

An event which gave cause for much celebration within the Jewish community was Rev. Levy's engagement⁷¹ and subsequent marriage to a Durban girl, Miss Fanny Morris. The marriage service in the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue on April 5, 1905, was attended by a representative crowd, including a number of Christian clergymen. Rabbi Dr. Hertz journeyed specially from Johannesburg to officiate at the ceremony, which was followed by a reception at the home of the bride's parents.⁷²

Among the more noteworthy services which were held during Levy's ministry were a service held in July 1904

⁶⁸The Natal Mercury, February 25, 1904, p. 10.

⁶⁹Ibid., March 3, 1904, p. 12.

⁷⁰Ibid., November 2, 1905, p. 10.

⁷¹London Jewish Chronicle, April 15, 1904, p. 23.

⁷²The Natal Mercury, April 6, 1905, p. 9.

on the death of Theodor Herzl,⁷³ a service at which Rev. Dr. Jackson preached in German,⁷⁴ and a service held in memory of the Jews massacred in Russia in 1905.⁷⁵ In connection with the pogroms in Russia Rev. Levy convened a meeting of Christian clergymen to express their sympathy with the Jewish communities of South Russia.⁷⁶ In May 1905 the Rev. Levy consecrated the new Jewish cemetery at Stellawood.⁷⁷ A most unique service was held in the synagogue on December 27, 1905, when Rev. Levy officiated at the marriage of two brothers and sisters who were Sephardim.⁷⁸

In this period the Congregation was saddened by the death of Milly Goldberg, in London, in February 1906.⁷⁹ Whilst resident in Durban Miss Goldberg had helped to establish the Durban Hebrew and Religion Classes on a firm basis and during the Boer War had served as Hon. President of the Durban Jewish Girls' Patriotic League.⁸⁰ A few months later the death of Bernhard

⁷³Ibid., July 9, 1904, p. 12.

⁷⁴Ibid., April 15, 1905, p. 7.

⁷⁵Ibid., November 27, 1905, p. 5.

⁷⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, December 22, 1905, p. 840.

⁷⁷The Natal Mercury, May 29, 1905, p. 9.

⁷⁸London Jewish Chronicle, February 12, 1906, p. 18.

⁷⁹The Natal Mercury, March 15, 1906, p. 6.

⁸⁰London Jewish Chronicle, April 20, 1906, p. 18.

Lipinski, the founder and first president of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, plunged the whole community into mourning.⁸¹ In January 1909 the Congregation mourned the passing of Isadore Lee who had taken a leading and active part in synagogue affairs, and who had been among the founders of the Durban Hebrew Congregation.⁸²

At the same time the Congregation had cause for gladness too. In this period two leading members of the congregation, Messrs. F.C. Hollander and C.P. Robinson were elected to positions of public office. In 1905 Hollander was elected to the Town Council⁸³ and he served as a councillor until his retirement in 1914.⁸⁴ C.P. Robinson, who had been elected president of the Durban Hebrew Congregation in 1905,⁸⁵ was chosen in 1906 as a representative in the Legislative Assembly of Durban County.⁸⁶ In 1907 Sir Matthew Nathan was appointed Governor of Natal. He delighted the Congregation by agreeing to serve as its' Hon. President, reaffirming his gratitude for this honour at a ceremony held in March 1908, when he accepted an address of

⁸¹The Natal Mercury, January 30, 1907, p. 8.

⁸²Ibid., January 11, 1909, p. 5.

⁸³Ibid., August 3, 1905, p. 7.

⁸⁴Ibid., March 25, 1914, p. 5.

⁸⁵London Jewish Chronicle, October 27, 1905, p. 18.

⁸⁶The Natal Mercury, September 19, 1906, p. 7.

welcome, presented by Rev. A. Levy on behalf of the Congregation.⁸⁷

In the Rev. Levy the Congregation had a leader who could be looked upon by the general public as a spokesman and representative of the entire Jewish community. As a representative of the congregation Levy attended the funeral of Sir John Robinson, the first Prime Minister of Natal, who died on November 5, 1903.⁸⁸ He also ably defended the honour of Jewry by writing to the press, in January 1904, in an attempt to counter an anti Semitic outburst.⁸⁹ When on May 31, 1905, Durban was struck by a terrible gale and storm⁹⁰ the Mayor, Mr. J. Ellis Brown, called a meeting to consider relief for the victims of the storm and Rev. Levy was amongst those who were invited to be present.⁹¹

Three months later Rev. Levy was among the speakers at a social gathering held in the West Street Wesleyan Church in honour of Miss Agnes Slack, the Hon. Secretary of the World's Women's Christian Temperance Union.⁹²

⁸⁷Ibid., March 21, 1908, p. 9.

⁸⁸Ibid., November 7, 1903, p. 13.

⁸⁹Ibid., January 15, 1904, p. 8.

⁹⁰Ibid., June 2, 1905, p. 5.

⁹¹Ibid., June 8, 1905, p. 10.

⁹²South African Jewish Chronicle, August 25, 1905, p. 433.

When the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and Princess Patricia arrived in Durban on February 27, 1906, Rev. Levy was amongst the dignitaries assembled on the station platform to welcome the Royal Visitors.⁹³ The Rev. Levy was also among the guests invited to the first "At Home" given at King's House by Sir Matthew Nathan in March 1908.⁹⁴

Whilst Rev. Levy's achievements certainly justified the hopes which the Congregation had placed in him, it is not of place to ask what type of community he was called upon to lead.

The total Jewish population of Durban in 1903, the year of Levy's arrival in the town, was estimated to be about eight hundred souls.⁹⁵ The Government Census of April 1904 indicates that in the Colony of Natal there were nine hundred and sixty three male Jews, of whom two were classified as being of mixed or other parentage, and five hundred and thirty one Jewesses, of whom only one was not classified as white.⁹⁶ If the estimated Jewish population of Durban is accurate then out of a total of one thousand four hundred and ninety six Jews

⁹³The Natal Mercury, February 28, 1906, p. 9.

⁹⁴Ibid., March 11, 1908, p. 6.

⁹⁵London Jewish Chronicle, September 11, 1903, p. 20.

⁹⁶Colony of Natal Statistical Year Book for the Year 1904, (Pietermaritzburg, 1905), p. 20.

who resided in the Colony more than half were resident in Durban. Owing to a lack of information it is not possible to determine how many of those Jews who were resident in Durban in particular and the Colony in general were involved in any aspect of Jewish life.

The Congregation, of which Levy was the spiritual head, was predominantly English in origin and leadership, although within its' ranks there were a large number of Jews of East European origin. Whilst the English Jews are stereotyped as being modernist in outlook and the East European Jews are characterised as being traditionalist, until the split in the Congregation⁹⁷ there is little evidence to suggest that there was any open clash between these two elements within the Jewish community. The East European Jews remained attached to the synagogue maintained by the Durban Hebrew Congregation and appear to have made no effort to establish even a small Chevrah. This may be attributable to their inferior numbers, or may possibly have been due to their unfavourable financial status which mitigated against them establishing a separate congregation in the early period of Levy's ministry.

The dominance of the English element within the congregation is reflected in the appointment of an English speaking and English trained minister, and their

⁹⁷ See below p.247.

acceptance of such innovations as a mixed choir.⁹⁸ The modernist outlook of the Synagogue's leadership is also reflected in the opposition of many Jewish shopkeepers, who were also leaders of the Congregation, to the Closing of Shops Regulation Bill, which sought to have Saturday declared a half holiday.⁹⁹ The matter having been brought before the Natal Parliament, the necessary legislation was enacted laying down that from January 1, 1906, all shops would remain open until 5.30 p.m. on Mondays to Thursdays, until 10 p.m. on Fridays and 2 p.m. on Saturdays.¹⁰⁰ The effect of the Act was to reduce the Synagogue's Sabbath attendance, "so that on ordinary Fridays and Saturdays the attendance is scant indeed".¹⁰¹

Within the English section of the congregation there were those who were concerned with matters related to Jews and Judaism. This is reflected, for example, in the publication of the South African Jewish Standard which first appeared in Durban on June 26, 1903, and which sought, "to further the interests of the Jewish Community in South Africa by the knowledge of Jewish

⁹⁸ See above p.218.

⁹⁹ The Natal Mercury, October 20, 1904, p. 10., October 29, 1904, p. 15., November 8, 1904, p. 10. and November 26, 1904, p. 16.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., August 4, 1905, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ London Jewish Chronicle, March 30, 1906, p. 341.

history and to encourage the Jewish youth to take an interest in matters appertaining to the Jewish religion".¹⁰² The first edition of this Jewish newspaper published in Durban, was dated Tamus 1 5663 and was largely taken up with a speech on Zionism which had been delivered by Israel Zangwill.¹⁰³ The South African Jewish Standard does not appear to have existed for very long and there are no further references to this newspaper in either the general or the Jewish press.

Whilst the impression created by the Rev. Levy on the religious life of the Jews of the town was significant, equally significant are the number of cases of mixed marriage which are to be found recorded in the local press. Whilst mixed marriage was not a new phenomenon in Durban it is interesting to note that the public announcement of such marriages appear far more frequently in this period. Although this might suggest an increase in the number of such marriages, it could also be attributable to there being less secrecy attached to such unions, or the increase may simply have corresponded with the increase in the size of the Jewish population of Durban. A case of mixed marriage recorded in 1904 was that of Rachel Olga Isidore, whose marriage to A.M. Paruk, a Muslim dealer, ended in a long and bitter

¹⁰²The Natal Mercury, June 27, 1903, p.12.

¹⁰³Ibid.

divorce case.¹⁰⁴ Most cases of mixed marriage, however, appear to have been contracted with Christian partners. In 1905 reference can be found to the marriage of Isidore Cohen and Elizabeth Cousins who were married by the Rev. J. Collingham,¹⁰⁵ Philip Albert Hayman and Annie Hilton who married in the Wesleyan Church,¹⁰⁶ and Herbert H. Kent and Ethel M. Cohen whose marriage was solemnised by Rev. A.S. MacPhee.¹⁰⁷

Although mixed marriage may possibly have resulted from the disparity in the number of Jewish men and women in the Colony,¹⁰⁸ this trend may also be a reflection on the low level of personal observance amongst Durban Jews in general. Since facilities for conversion were available in Durban¹⁰⁹ it may also indicate a lack of concern on the part of the Jewish parties for the persuance of Judaism in their homes. Not all those who married out of their faith, however, renounced their Judaism entirely as is illustrated by the case of Elias Belcher who was buried in the Jewish cemetery in May 1905,¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴Ibid., February 22, 1904, p.9., July 21, 1904, p.10., July 22, 1904, p.5., September 26, 1905, p.7., September 27, 1905, p.7., October 25, 1905, p.7., See also April 3, 1913, p.7., and April 9, 1913, p.8.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., January 12, 1905, p.8.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., October 30, 1905, p.4.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., December 18, 1905, p.4.

¹⁰⁸See above p.235.

¹⁰⁹Cf. case of Mrs F.C. Hollander who converted to Judaism before her marriage in 1899.

¹¹⁰The Natal Mercury, May 15, 1905, p.4.

whilst a few months later his infant son was interred in the Church of England cemetery.¹¹¹ This type of identification with Judaism after mixed marriage did not always apply and there were Jews who upon marrying out of their faith severed their link with Judaism.¹¹² Mixed marriage does not appear to have been a cause in itself for cutting oneself off from Judaism, as is evident from the case of Theo Schloss who, although married out of the Jewish faith was a life long member of the synagogue.¹¹³

FROM GREY STREET TO ST. ANDREW'S STREET

Undoubtedly the most striking reflection of the physical development of the Durban Hebrew Congregation during the tenure of the Rev. Abraham Levy was the relocation of the Synagogue. Prior to Levy's arrival in Durban in order to meet the needs of the community, whose numbers had been swelled by former Transvaal refugees, the synagogue authorities selected a suitable site in St. Andrew's Street upon which to erect a new house of worship.

¹¹¹Ibid., March 17, 1906, p.8.

¹¹²See Ibid., November 14, 1904, p.6. Alexander Lazarus buried in the Roman Catholic Cemetery.

¹¹³From the personal recollections of Otto Ballin in the Archives of the Council of Natal Jewry.

A call for donations for the purpose of purchasing the piece of ground and erecting the new synagogue building was made in May 1902 by the wardens and committee of the Durban Hebrew Congregation.¹¹⁴ The first list of acknowledgements in the press recorded, among others donations of £25 from E.L. Acutt, the Mayor of Durban, Sir Benjamin Greenacre, S. Butcher & Sons, George Payne M.L.A., Randles Bros. & Hudson, Chas. G. Smith M.L.A., and E. Snell & Co.¹¹⁵ When the second list was published in October 1902 donations totalled £1400 7s 9d, and amongst the donations which were acknowledged were those of The African Boating Co., A.M. Campbell M.L.C., J. Noble & Co. and P. Gillespie.¹¹⁶

Whilst the synagogue in St. Andrew's Street was under construction services for those unable to acquire seats in the synagogue in Grey Street were held under the auspices of the Durban Hebrew Congregation and the Durban Zionist Association. In 1902 the overflow service was held at the Masonic Hall, Smith Street,¹¹⁷ and in 1903 the overflow services were conducted at the Masonic and Mutual Halls.¹¹⁸

For the Durban Hebrew Congregation the most important event of 1903 was the laying of the foundation stone

¹¹⁴The Natal Mercury, May 14, 1902, p.9.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid., October 9, 1902, p.7

¹¹⁷Ibid., September 8, 1902, p.6.

¹¹⁸Ibid., September 25, 1903, p.9.

of the new synagogue, on Monday, October 26. Among the visitors who attended the service were the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr. and Mrs J. Ellis Brown, Sir John Robinson, Sir Benjamin Greenacre, Sir David Hunter, Mr. W. Mc Larty M.L.A., The Revs. J. Collingham, Oxly Oxland, W.H. Mann and A. May and Councillors H.K. Cullins and E.L. Houghty.¹¹⁹

During the service, which was conducted by the Revs. A. Levy and S. Pincus, Messrs. B. Lipinski and P. Wartski laid the foundation and commemoration stones respectively, and were each presented with silver trowels as mementoes of the occasion. The ceremony concluded with refreshments and speeches from a number of those who were present.¹²⁰

The interest and excitement which had been generated by the laying of the foundation stone and by the commencement of the building operations engendered fresh enthusiasm for the Synagogue and motivated the presentation of gifts to the Durban Hebrew Congregation.

In a ceremony held at her home on March 6, 1904, Mrs Hannah Sandeman presented silver bells, a breastplate and pointer for a Sepher Torah. In expressing the Congregation's thanks for the gift Mr. Levy expressed the hope that, "the gift of that day would be but the forerunner of many similar ones".¹²¹

¹¹⁹Ibid., October 27, 1903, p.10.

¹²⁰London Jewish Chronicle, November 27, 1903, p.26.

¹²¹Ibid., April 15, 1904, p.23.

The hopes expressed by Rev. Levy were realised in the presentation of a set of silver for a Sepher Torah by the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild, and by Mrs M. Lipinski's gift of brocaded Ark curtains, reading desk and pulpit covers, Mr L. Goldberg's donation of a silver Kiddush cup, spice box, and Chanukah lamp and a white satin scroll mantle which was the contribution of Mrs Brooks.¹²²

For the Jewish community of Durban the highlight of 1904 was the consecration on July 26 of the new synagogue.

Situated in St. Andrew's Street, the edifice is a handsome and worthy one, and has in all involved a cost of about £8,000. It is of red brick and was erected by Messrs Quayle and Mc Neill from plans prepared by Messrs. Henry and Hill, and in style architecture is Byzantine. The exterior if not highly decorative is quietly attractive. The interior has been elaborately decorated by Mr. A. Knox and the architectural features properly preserved. The ark, in front of which burns the eternal light is flanked by two columns bearing lily work, net work and pomegranate, representing the columns at the entrance to King Solomon's Temple...The almema in the centre is of accepted form. The seating accommodation...is 780, so that room has been provided for further extention of the Hebrew congregation...¹²³

The opening ceremony was performed by the Administrator Sir Henry Bale in the presence of a large and representative gathering which included the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr. and Mrs J. Ellis Brown, Sir Benjamin and Lady Greenacre, Sir David Hunter, Lady Robinson, Mrs H. Escombe and Members of the Legislative Assembly

¹²² Ibid., January 6, 1905, p.16.

¹²³ The Natal Advertiser, July 27, 1904, p.5.

and Town Council. Upon his arrival at the Synagogue Sir Henry was met by the officiating clergy, Rabbi Dr. J. Landau of Johannesburg and Revs. A. Levy and S. Pincus, and was presented with a gold key with which he opened the door of the building.

In the course of the consecration service an address was given by Rev. Levy who spoke of the persecution to which the Jews had been subjected throughout their history, and of their preservation as a people because of their faith. In a speech which he made from the head of the synagogue Sir Henry Bale acknowledged the services which the Jews had rendered to civilization.¹²⁴ The service, which featured a choir composed of male and female members of the congregation who were accompanied by the organ playing of Mr. R.H. MacDonald, the Borough organist, was followed by a reception at the Masonic Hall, Smith Street.¹²⁵

Not only was the opening of the new synagogue the subject of an editorial in The Natal Mercury,¹²⁶ but photographs of the building and of the clergy were also contained in a supplement included in the Weekly Edition of the newspaper.¹²⁷

Accompanied by his wife, Sir Henry Bale paid an

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵London Jewish Chronicle, September 2, 1904, p.17.

¹²⁶The Natal Mercury, July 28, 1904, p.7.

¹²⁷Ibid., August 4, 1904, p.8.

informal visit to the synagogue on August 12, and after being received by the committee of the Congregation, was guided around the building by the Rev. Levy who explained the different features found in the synagogue.¹²⁸

The use of a mixed choir and of a Gentile organist at the consecration service, whilst not alien to the Jews of English origin, was no doubt strange for those of more traditional upbringing. Nevertheless the fact that such innovations were accepted by the Durban Hebrew Congregation indicates that the influence of the English element was strongest. But, as we shall see,¹²⁹ such differences in attitude to form of worship eventually contributed to a split in the Congregation.

However at the time, the dissatisfaction took no tangible form and the community remained united in its efforts to defray the costs of the new Synagogue. In 1908, for example, the Durban Jewish Communal League organised an exhibition and fete at the Town Hall to raise funds for the Synagogue. The bazaar was opened on the first day by Sir Mathew Nathan, the Governor of Natal and Hon. President of the Durban Hebrew Congregation and on the second day by Mr. Walter Greenacre, the Deputy Mayor of the town.¹³⁰

¹²⁸Ibid., August 13, 1904, p.12.

¹²⁹See below p.247.

¹³⁰London Jewish Chronicle, August 7, 1908, p.9.
On the Communal League see below pp.314-315.

On February 21, 1909, the Congregation celebrated its twenty fifth anniversary by holding a special service at the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue.¹³¹ Two nights later the Durban Jewish Communal League held a celebration, at the Invincible Tea Rooms, Cuthbert's Buildings, in honour of the occasion. At the celebration, which took the form of a social evening, Mr. F.C. Hollander proposed the principal toast to the original founders of the Congregation, to which Mr. P. Wartski responded.¹³²

THE SPLIT IN THE CONGREGATION

From the newspaper reports of the period one is impressed by the apparent cohesiveness and unity of the congregation. Indeed, in 1904, the London Jewish Chronicle had noted this phenomenon:

...It is a well worn truism that where Jews assemble two congregations are but natural and therefore indispensable. But Durban affords a pleasing exception to this rule; there exists but one synagogue in Durban, and there is no likelihood of a second being built. The membership roll is being daily added to and there is no doubt that Durban Jews will afford to the world at large the pleasing spectacle of a united congregation...¹³³

¹³¹The Natal Mercury, February 20, 1909, p.8. and London Jewish Chronicle, April 9, 1909, pp.10-11.

¹³²The Natal Mercury, February 22, 1909, p.4. and London Jewish Chronicle, April 9, 1909, pp.10-11.

¹³³London Jewish Chronicle, February 12, 1904, p.18.

However - in 1909 - the Silver Jubilee year of the Congregation - the underlying tensions to which allusion has already been made,¹³⁴ erupted into an open split. In that year the Durban Hebrew Congregation was seriously weakened by the resignation of forty three members who formed their own congregation, the Durban New Hebrew Congregation, which was destined to remain an independent congregation for the next twenty five years. Whilst their disapproval of the reappointment of the Rev. Levy, whose contract with the congregation had expired, was given as the reason for their resignation,¹³⁵ the cause of these members' defection went deeper than this. The Durban Hebrew Congregation had always been associated with English Jewry and its leadership was largely in the hands of Jews of English origin. Hence its services reflected this influence. The acceptance by the congregation of such innovations as mixed choirs and women soloists in services was both strange and unacceptable to the Jews of East European origin, whose approach to Judaism was far more traditionalist. In addition the East European Jews had long been dissatisfied with the Hebrew and Religious education which the Congregation provided for its members' children,¹³⁶ favouring instead the establishment of a Talmud Torah

¹³⁴See above p.245.

¹³⁵From a personal interview with Mr. H. Lionel Magid, June 1975.

¹³⁶The Natal Mercury, January 13, 1910, p.6.

school free from congregational control. Furthermore the East European dissenters wanted the Chevra Kadisha to be an independent body.¹³⁷ Since for these East European Jews, towards whom certain English Jews felt hostility, the Durban Hebrew Congregation fell below the standard which they demanded, like Jews of East European descent in other parts of South Africa,¹³⁸ they felt the need to establish their own synagogue which would comply more closely with their own standards.

Despite the split in the Congregation, relations between the members of the two congregations remained cordial. It should be noted that although the Durban New Hebrew Congregation was largely made up of East European Jews, there were also English Jews who became members of the new congregation, just as there were Jews of East European origin who chose to remain members of the Durban Hebrew Congregation.¹³⁹

Upon their resignation the seceding members, and a few sympathisers held a meeting at which it was decided to form a separate congregation. During the meeting a committee was elected with Mr. H. Brodie, chairman; Mr H. Solomon, treasurer; Mr C.A. Levy, secretary and

¹³⁷ South African Jewish Chronicle, February 4, 1910, p.451.

¹³⁸ A similar incident which occurred in Cape Town is described in Israel Abrahams, "Western Province Jewry, 1870-1902", in The Jews in South Africa, pp.39-40.

¹³⁹ From a personal interview with Mr. Harry Levy, June 1975.

Mr. I. Rosenbach, trustee.¹⁴⁰ The Durban New Hebrew Congregation hired a hall and negotiations were entered into with Rev. A.S. Hoffenberg of Cape Town.¹⁴¹ At a meeting of the new congregation held on Sunday January 30, 1910, at Union Buildings, West and Pine Streets¹⁴² bye laws were passed and Rev. Hoffenberg elected Chazan, Shochet and Mohel. In view of the call made by the Durban New Hebrew Congregation for separate tenders for the supply of Kosher meat,¹⁴³ it would appear that Rev. Hoffenberg was called upon to practice shechita for his community. The Rev. Mr. Hoffenberg arrived in Durban on February 16,¹⁴⁴ and during his first Sabbath in Durban conducted Friday night and Saturday morning services at the Alexandra Hall.¹⁴⁵

Since their dissatisfaction with the educational facilities provided by the Durban Hebrew Congregation had been one of the reasons which motivated the members of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation to establish their own congregation, the new congregation lost no time in establishing a Jewish Education Board. The Hebrew and

¹⁴⁰Durban Hebrew Congregation Golden Jubilee Brochure 1884-1934, 5644-5694, (Durban, 1934) p.29.

¹⁴¹South African Jewish Chronicle, February 4, 1910, p.451.

¹⁴²The Natal Mercury, January 29, 1910, p.8.

¹⁴³Ibid., October 24, 1910, p.4.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., February 17, 1910, p.6.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., February 17, 1910, p.4.

Religious classes provided by the Board commenced on February 6.¹⁴⁶ At a general meeting of the congregation held on February 23, a resolution calling for the establishment of a Talmud Torah was unanimously adopted and a committee led by Mr. E. Magid, president; Mr. I. Rosenbach, treasurer and Mr. S. Faberlan, secretary, was elected.¹⁴⁷ Whilst the Congregation did set up a Talmud Torah, which held its first examinations in October 1910,¹⁴⁸ it was not free from congregational control. This was probably due to the numerically small congregation being unable to finance such a Talmud Torah.

The educational needs of the adult members of the community were catered for by the establishment of a Talmudical Society. At a meeting held in March 1910 in the Congregation's hall in Union Buildings the election of officials for the ensuing year resulted in Mr. E. Magid being chosen as president, Mr. I. Rosenbach as treasurer and Mr. D. Harris as secretary. G. Levin was appointed principal instructor of Mishnah and D. Harris principal instructor of Talmud. After the meeting a banquet was held at which speeches were delivered by Messrs E. Magid, I. Rosenbach, J. Solomon, D. Harris, S. Goldberg, M. Gevisser and Mashalowitz.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶Ibid., February 5, 1910, p.6.

¹⁴⁷London Jewish Chronicle, April 1, 1910, p.10.

¹⁴⁸The Natal Mercury, October 1, 1910, p.4.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., March 29, 1910, p.7.

The founding, by the Durban New Hebrew Congregation, of a Talmudical Society followed the pattern laid out by East European immigrants in other parts of South Africa. Prior to the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War the Beth Hamedrash Orthodox Congregation of Johannesburg had instituted a Chevra Mishnah u' Gemorrah, which was revived upon the cessation of hostilities.¹⁵⁰

The formation of a Talmudical Society was not the only reflection of the predominantly East European composition of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation. On February 20, 1910, the Congregation held a special memorial service, at the Alexandra Hall, for the Chief Rabbi of Russia, Zim Hirsh Rabinovitch.¹⁵¹

The new congregation also formed an entertainment committee which arranged a concert and ball in the Alexandra Hall on March 28.¹⁵² Spurred on no doubt by the success of its first function, the entertainment committee was particularly active in 1910. Among the functions held under the auspices of the committee were a social and dance held at the Drumcree Hotel on April 18,¹⁵³ a social and dance held on May 20,¹⁵⁴ a grand social and dance held on June 14 in the Good

¹⁵⁰Dora L. Sowden, "Transvaal Jewry, 1902-1910", in The Jews in South Africa, p.221.

¹⁵¹The Natal Mercury, February 19, 1910, p.6.

¹⁵²Ibid., March 29, 1910, p.8.

¹⁵³Ibid., April 21, 1910, p.6.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., June 4, 1910, p.11.

Templar's Hall,¹⁵⁵ a Grand Concert and Ball held in the Masonic Hall on July 7,¹⁵⁶ and a Cinderella Dance held on August 2 in the Alexandra Hall.¹⁵⁷

By May 1910 the Durban New Hebrew Congregation had acquired the synagogue in Grey Street which had been formerly utilised by the Durban Hebrew Congregation. On May 29, Rev. Hoffenberg, in the presence of a large congregation, conducted the consecration service, which included the offering of prayers for the King and the Royal Family, and for the Governor, Lord Methuen.¹⁵⁸

Although the consecration service was possibly the highlight of Rev. Hoffenberg's ministry, whilst minister of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation he also officiated at a number of other important services.

Only a few days before the re-consecration of the synagogue in Grey Street, Rev. Hoffenberg had conducted a special memorial service, in Union Buildings, in honour of King Edward VII. In his sermon the minister had dwelt upon, "the great kindness shown towards the Jews and the freedom given to them in the British Empire".¹⁵⁹

On July 15, 1910, Rev. Hoffenberg officiated at a Friday evening service which was attended by the Jewish

¹⁵⁵Ibid., June 14, 1910, p.4.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., July 8, 1910, p.10.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., August 2, 1910, p.8.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., May 30, 1910, p.6.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., May 23, 1910, p.6.

children who had been sent on holiday to Durban by the Transvaal Leaders' Children's Seaside Fund. After the service the children were entertained to tea by Mr. and Mrs J. Solomon, and were addressed by Mr. H. Brodie.¹⁶⁰

Rev. A.S. Hoffenberg and the choir conducted a special memorial service on June 22, 1911, to mark the Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary.¹⁶¹ A month later a service of a different nature was held to mark the passing of the Very Rev. Dr. Herman Adler, Chief Rabbi of the British Empire.¹⁶²

The last major service conducted by the Rev. Hoffenberg was held on Saturday, December 16, 1911, to celebrate the festival of Chanukah.¹⁶³ In connection with the Chanukah festival a picnic was held at Amanzimtoti on December 17 by the Durban Hebrew Social Society, which was under the auspices of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation.¹⁶⁴ About one hundred and fifty men, women and children journeyed by special train to Amanzimtoti, where, following a picnic lunch, sports were arranged for the children.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰Ibid., July 19, 1910, p.7.

¹⁶¹Ibid., June 24, 1911, p.11.

¹⁶²Ibid., July 21, 1911, p.6.

¹⁶³Ibid., December 15, 1911, p.8.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., December 12, 1911, p.6.

¹⁶⁵The Natal Advertiser, December 19, 1911, p.8.

In 1912 Rev. Hoffenberg was succeeded by the Rev. J.J. Rosin¹⁶⁶ who had formerly served as a minister in Wolverhampton, England.¹⁶⁷ The new minister arrived in Durban on the Durban Castle, shortly before the High Festivals in September. On Saturday September 7 he conducted his first service in Durban.¹⁶⁸ In the weeks immediately following his arrival in Durban Rev. Rosin was kept busy preaching at the services held on Rosh Hashanah,¹⁶⁹ Yom Kippur¹⁷⁰ and Succot.¹⁷¹

In consequence of an extraordinary general meeting held on September 3,¹⁷² a grand ball under the auspices of the congregation was held in the Masonic Hall, Smith Street, on October 7 to mark the festival of Simchat Torah.¹⁷³ Part of the proceeds were put towards the Congregation's building fund,¹⁷⁴ and a part of the proceeds were set aside for the Annual Chanukah Picnic and Sports,¹⁷⁵ which was held at Amanzimtoti on

¹⁶⁶Also spelt Rosen see The Natal Mercury, August 24, 1912, p.8., September 20, 1912, p.6.

¹⁶⁷London Jewish Chronicle, November 15, 1912, p.18.

¹⁶⁸The Natal Mercury, September 7, 1912, p.8.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., September 11, 1912, p.6.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., September 20, 1912, p.6.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²Ibid., September 3, 1912, p.8.

¹⁷³Ibid., October 7, 1912, p.8.

¹⁷⁴London Jewish Chronicle, November 15, 1912, p.18.

¹⁷⁵The Natal Mercury, October 8, 1912, p.10.

December 16.¹⁷⁶ In 1912 Chanukah was observed at the Synagogue in Grey Street, by a service for the children on December 6, and for the community in general on December 8.¹⁷⁷

Like Rev. Hoffenberg, Rev. Rosin assumed responsibility for the shechita of his congregation. When in 1913 the Congregation awarded its contract for the supply of Kosher meat to the Union Fresh Meat & Ice Works Ltd., which opened its shop on the corner of Park and West Streets on February 2,¹⁷⁸ Rev Rosin personally supervised the butchery's kashrut.¹⁷⁹

Whilst minister of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation Rev. Rosin closely identified himself with the communal organisations maintained by the Jewish community. Not very long after his arrival in Durban he attended the annual general meeting of the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society.¹⁸⁰ By 1913 he had become active within the Durban Zionist Association and on March 9 Rev. Rosin took part in a debate with Morris Kentridge in the St. George's Hall on the subject "Zionism versus Assimilation".¹⁸¹ In 1913 on the ninth anniversary of

¹⁷⁶Ibid., November 30, 1912, p.10. and South African Jewish Chronicle, December 27, 1912, p.423.

¹⁷⁷The Natal Mercury, December 6, 1912, p.8.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., January 28, 1913, p.6.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., February 22, 1913, p.7.

¹⁸⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, October 18, 1912, p.253.

¹⁸¹The Natal Mercury, February 24, 1913, p.9.

the death of Theodor Herzl Rev. Rosin conducted a memorial service, which was held under the auspices of the Durban Zionist Association, at the Synagogue in Grey Street.¹⁸² At a mass meeting held on August 3, which was addressed by Mr. S.J. Goldreich and M.I. Genussow the extent of Rev. Rosin's involvement in the Association was reflected in his taking the chair for the meeting.¹⁸³

Rev. Rosin who left the congregation to minister in Rhodesia,¹⁸⁴ was succeeded in 1913 by the Rev. Heyman Rubin, who had served as the first minister to the Jewish community in Salisbury, Rhodesia, before accepting the call to Durban.¹⁸⁵ Rev. Rubin served the Durban Jewish community for a period of twenty six years, until his death in 1939.

Following the split in the Durban Hebrew Congregation the Rev. A. Levy, notwithstanding his re-election as minister, decided to resign, "as he felt that the depletion in the membership was such as to render a reduction in the congregation's expenditure desirable".¹⁸⁶

¹⁸²Ibid., July 26, 1913, p.10.

¹⁸³Ibid., August 4, 1913, p.8.

¹⁸⁴From a personal interview with Mr. H. Lionel Magid, June 1975.

¹⁸⁵Rev. Rubin was born in Minsk, Lithuania in 1875. He married Miss Gia Licht in Neustadt, Lithuania, in 1896 and seven years later they immigrated to Rhodesia. (Information supplied in a letter from Mrs N. Solomon, one of Rev. Rubin's daughters.)

¹⁸⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, February 4, 1910, p.451.

His decision was universally regretted and prior to his departure for England, on February 24, 1910, he and Mrs Levy were the recipients of numerous presentations and expressions of good will.

At a gathering held at the Clarendon Hotel, Durban's only Kosher hotel,¹⁸⁷ Mr. Hollander, in the course of an eloquent address, spoke of the respect and esteem which Rev. Levy had won for himself during his sojourn in the town. In concluding his speech Mr. Hollander asked Rev. Levy to accept a purse of sovereigns as a token of the congregation's appreciation of his services and regret at his departure. After Rev. Levy's reply Mrs Wartski, the president of the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild presented Mrs Levy with a silver bag which had been subscribed to by the members of the Guild, with which Mrs Levy had been prominently connected.¹⁸⁸

On the following evening there was another large gathering at the Clarendon Hotel, when Rev. Levy was presented with addresses by the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society and the Durban Jewish Social and Literary Society.¹⁸⁹

That same evening at a special general meeting called by the Durban New Hebrew Congregation, at Union Buildings, Pine and West Streets, Rev. Levy took leave of the members of the congregation. After Rev. Levy's address speeches

¹⁸⁷The Natal Mercury, April 22, 1910, p.2.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., February 23, 1910, p.9.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., February 24, 1910, p.7.

were made by the Congregation's president, Mr. H. Brodie; treasurer, Mr. J. Solomon, and hon. secretary, Mr. C.A. Levy, who all spoke highly of the services which Rev. Levy had rendered to the community, and joined in wishing him success in his future undertakings.¹⁹⁰

Upon his return to Britain Rev. Levy accepted an invitation to become minister of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.¹⁹¹ After spending three years in Australia, Levy and his family returned to South Africa en route to England. The cordial welcome which Rev. Levy and his family received from the Durban community during their visit to the town reflected the deep seated affection which they still felt for their former minister.

When Rev. Levy arrived in Durban on June 6, 1913, he was met by Messrs P. Wartski, S. Bloom and S. Morris, representing the Durban Hebrew Congregation, and Messrs L. Hart, M. Levy, M. Genusou, M. Lewis and S. Abrahams, representing the Durban Zionist Association.¹⁹² At the invitation of the wardens of the Durban Hebrew Congregation Rev. Levy delivered a sermon in the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue on the eve of the Festival

¹⁹⁰Ibid.

¹⁹¹London Jewish Chronicle, April 9, 1910, p.10.

¹⁹²South African Jewish Chronicle, June 27, 1913, p.415.

of Shavuot.¹⁹³ Whilst in Durban Rev. Levy attended a meeting held under the auspices of the Durban Zionist Association¹⁹⁴ and was also present at the Association's annual general meeting.¹⁹⁵ During his visit to the town Rev. Levy was a guest at the annual July Ball, held on July 8 in the Town Hall, under the auspices of the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild.¹⁹⁶

Whilst in South Africa Rev. Levy was urged to accept a ministerial post in Port Elizabeth¹⁹⁷ where he ministered until his retirement in 1954.

The void created upon the Rev. Levy's departure in 1910 could not be easily filled, and the Durban Hebrew Congregation therefore warmly welcomed visiting ministers who were willing to preach in the synagogue. These included Rev. Mr. Woolf of the Witwatersrand Old Hebrew Congregation,¹⁹⁸ the Rev. Mr. Hirschowitz,¹⁹⁹ Rev. S. Manne,²⁰⁰ Rabbi Dr. J.H. Hertz, who in August 1911 was making a farewell visit to Durban prior to leaving

¹⁹³The Natal Mercury, June 9, 1913, p.8.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., June 12, 1913, p.13.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., July 12, 1913, p.8.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., July 9, 1913, p.10.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., September 13, 1913, p.13.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., August 5, 1910, p.6.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., July 21, 1911, p.6.

²⁰⁰Ibid., July 27, 1911, p.8.

South Africa,²⁰¹ and Rev. A.P. Bender of Cape Town, who preached at Sabbath services in August 1912²⁰² and June 1914.²⁰³

It was when services of extreme importance and of a public nature had to be held that the loss of Rev. Levy was most keenly felt by the Durban Hebrew Congregation. To overcome this difficulty when Mr. Hollander was elected Mayor in 1910, and re-elected to that office in 1911 and 1912²⁰⁴ preachers from other communities had to be invited to officiate at the Corporation Sunday Services. On August 21, 1910, at the first Corporation Sunday Service to be held in a Jewish place of worship in Durban Rabbi Dr. Hertz delivered an impressive sermon on the principles of government, before a congregation made up of members of all denominations.²⁰⁵ An almost identical service was held on Corporation Sunday 1911 when the preacher was again Rabbi Dr. Hertz.²⁰⁶ The sermon at Hollander's third Corporation Sunday service, held on August 25, 1912, was preached by the Rev. A.P. Bender of Cape Town who chose as his text

²⁰¹Ibid., August 24, 1911, p.6.

²⁰²Ibid., August 23, 1912, p.6.

²⁰³Ibid., June 11, 1914, p.8.

²⁰⁴See below pp.357 and 360.

²⁰⁵The Natal Mercury, August 22, 1910, p.8.

²⁰⁶Ibid., August 28, 1911, p.8. and August 29, 1911, p.10.

Isaiah XXVI 1-4.²⁰⁷

In the meantime the Durban Hebrew Congregation had continued to enjoy the services of Rev. Pincus, who, with the assistance of the synagogue officials ably officiated at a number of special services. The first of these was the service held on May 20, 1910, in memory of King Edward VII.²⁰⁸ Rev. Pincus also conducted the Sabbath service held on July 8, 1910, which was attended by the Jewish children who had been taken on holiday to Durban by the Transvaal Leaders' Childrens' Seaside Fund.²⁰⁹ On June 22, 1911, Rev. Pincus officiated at the service held in connection with the Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary.²¹⁰ A month later he led the congregation in prayer at a service held in memory of the Very Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler, Chief Rabbi of the British Empire.²¹¹ Like the clergy of other denominations in Durban, on the Sabbath following the sinking of the White Star Liner The Titanic, Rev. Pincus devoted his sermon to the tragedy and offered prayers for those who had perished.²¹²

²⁰⁷ Ibid., August 26, 1912, p.9. and August 28, 1912, p.9.

²⁰⁸ South African Jewish Chronicle, June 3, 1910, p.817.

²⁰⁹ The Natal Mercury, July 19, 1910, p.7.

²¹⁰ Ibid., June 24, 1911, p.11.

²¹¹ Ibid., July 24, 1911, p.3.

²¹² Ibid., April 27, 1911, p.9.

An especially moving service was that held on Chanukah in December 1911. During the service, which was held under the auspices of the Durban Hebrew Congregation and the Durban Zionist Association, occasion was taken to unveil two memorial tablets which were presented to the synagogue by Mr. and Mrs L. Goldberg in memory of their daughter Milly.²¹³ The tablets which were inscribed with the prayer for the King and the Royal Family, one in Hebrew and one in English, were fixed to the wall on either side of the Ark. The unveiling ceremony, performed by Mr. F.C. Hollander, was preceeded by a speech by Mr. Louis Goldberg, who presented the tablets to the congregation on behalf of his parents.²¹⁴

In 1912 the Congregation relieved Rev. Pincus of a portion of his duties by appointing the Rev. Marcus Kay as first Reader. Rev. Kay came to South Africa from London early in 1912, and before assuming office with the Durban Hebrew Congregation took up an appointment in the Cape.²¹⁵ The competent manner in which the Rev. Kay conducted the High Festival services²¹⁶ and the Chanukah service²¹⁷ no doubt impressed the congregation,

²¹³On Milly Goldberg see above p.232.

²¹⁴The Natal Advertiser, December 18, 1911, p.6.

²¹⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, September 20, 1912, p.199.

²¹⁶Ibid., October 18, 1912, p.253.

²¹⁷Ibid. December 27, 1912, p.427.

for at a general meeting of the congregation Rev. Kay's appointment, "was enthusiastically approved".²¹⁸ As first chazan Rev. Kay also assumed responsibility for the musical training of the children who attended the Hebrew school,²¹⁹ and like other ministers became involved in the communal life of his community.²²⁰

Upon the split in the Durban Hebrew Congregation each congregation awarded its own contract for the purveying of Kosher meat for its members, and each congregation's minister assumed responsibility for the shechita for his congregation. In 1910 the Durban Hebrew Congregation called for tenders for the supply of Kosher meat,²²¹ and the contract was eventually awarded to A. Wolf and S. Dedinsky of 557 West Street.²²² However, as Stein Brothers, who had formerly been the suppliers of Kosher meat to the Durban Hebrew Congregation, continued to advertise the availability of Kosher meat at their premises 146 Field Street,²²³ and the Durban New Hebrew Congregation had its own supplier,²²⁴ more than one

²¹⁸London Jewish Chronicle, January 24, 1913, p.17.

²¹⁹Ibid., January 23, 1914, p.16.

²²⁰Cf. Rev. Kay on Committee of Ladies' Guild July Ball 1914. The Natal Mercury, July 18, 1914, p.15.

²²¹Ibid., October 11, 1910, p.6.

²²²Ibid., November 1, 1910, p.6.

²²³Ibid.

²²⁴Ibid., October 24, 1910, p.4.

outlet for Kosher meat obviously existed in Durban, although only one butchery was contracted to supply each congregation.

In 1911 an attempt was made by the two congregations to find a single supplier of Kosher meat for the whole Jewish community, and particulars regarding the Kosher meat tender were available from a representative of each congregation.²²⁵ Whilst it is unclear as to whether or not this attempt at co-operation was successful, by 1913 such a scheme had obviously proved unworkable for we find each congregation granting its contract for the supply of Kosher meat to different suppliers.²²⁶

With Rev. Levy's departure in 1910 the education of the children of the Durban Hebrew Congregation came to be neglected, and the need to engage a teacher in order to remedy this fault was raised at a quarterly meeting of the Congregation in February 1911. At the meeting the proposal, submitted by Mr. M. Stiller, calling for the formation of a sub-committee of three members to investigate the financial implications of such an appointment was accepted.²²⁷ Within a few months the

²²⁵Ibid., September 13, 1911, p.4.

²²⁶The Durban Hebrew Congregation's contract was awarded to Mr. S. Cohen of No.12. Stall, Market House. (Ibid., January 28, 1913, p.4.) The Durban New Hebrew Congregation's contract was awarded to The Union Fresh Meat & Ice Works Ltd. (Ibid., January 28, 1913, p.6.)

²²⁷South African Jewish Chronicle, February 24, 1911, p.331.

position of head teacher was assumed by the Rev. Mr. M. Diamond.²²⁸ In his teaching duties Rev. Diamond was assisted by Miss Augusta Sytner and the Rev. S. Pincus.²²⁹ Upon his appointment as first Reader, Rev. Kay also assisted at the school by training the children in singing.²³⁰

The first prize distribution in which Rev. Diamond participated, was held in the presence of the Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor and Mrs F.C. Hollander, on November 19, 1911.²³¹ In presenting his report the head teacher showed that whereas in July 1911 there had been a daily attendance of about thirty five at the school, this number had by November decreased to an average of twenty six.²³² Whilst this state of affairs was attributed to an alteration in the day school hours, it is clear that even when attendance was at its highest, the classes were not being patronised by a considerable portion of the congregation's youth, a fact that was emphasised by the chairman of the Talmud Torah, Mr. M. Stiller.²³³ In his report Rev. Diamond spoke of the emphasis which the teachers placed on reading,

²²⁸First reference to Diamond is in The Natal Mercury, May 11, 1911, p.5.

²²⁹Ibid., November 20, 1911, p.8.

²³⁰London Jewish Chronicle, January 23, 1914, p.16.

²³¹The Natal Mercury, November 20, 1911, p.8.

²³²South African Jewish Chronicle, December 1, 1911, p.1006.

²³³Ibid.

and proudly claimed that nearly every child could read, and that in addition the children received instruction in Scripture and religion.²³⁴

The idea of replacing the schools, which ever since the split in the congregation had been maintained by each congregation for the exclusive benefit of its members' children, with an independent, self supporting Talmud Torah School for the use of the whole community, was raised by Mr. M. Stiller at a general meeting called for that purpose in the St. George's Hall on November 24, 1912.²³⁵ At the meeting, which was attended by prominent members of both Hebrew congregations, the obvious benefits which would accrue from the establishment of such an institution were pointed out to the large audience. Mr. Stiller expressed his concern at the fact that less than a dozen young girls, the future Jewish mothers of the town, were receiving a Jewish education. The proposition to establish an independent Talmud Torah School for the whole of Durban was carried and a committee consisting of Mr. M. Stiller, chairman, Mr. A.S. Goldberg, vice chairman, and hon. treasurer; Mr Percy Simmonds, hon. secretary, and Messrs Mosekolowitz, A. Simmons, S. Abrahams, H. Ellis, J. Rothstein, A.J. Cohen and S. Danziger, committee, was elected, with Messrs S. Lyons and Selig Morris being

²³⁴Ibid.

²³⁵The Natal Mercury, November 20, 1912, p.6.

appointed auditors.²³⁶

In December 1912 the position of headmaster of the Talmud Torah School was advertised in the Jewish press,²³⁷ and in February 1914 Mr. Mendell Jacobson arrived in Durban to take up his duties as headmaster, having occupied a similar position in Liverpool, England.²³⁸ Until Mr. Jackson's arrival in Durban it would seem that the school maintained by the Durban Hebrew Congregation continued to operate, and in December 1913 the school advertised its first annual picnic, at the Fairy Dene Hotel Sarnia, to which all the Jewish children of Durban were invited.²³⁹

Mr. Jacobson was met upon his arrival in Durban, on February 1, 1913, by a deputation of the Talmud Torah School's committee.²⁴⁰ On the first Saturday after his arrival in Durban Mr. Jacobson addressed the Jewish children of Durban at the synagogue in St. Andrew's Street,²⁴¹ and on the following evening, February 8, a social evening, arranged by the School's committee, was held at the Masonic Hall to enable the Jewish community

²³⁶Ibid., November 25, 1912, p.7. and South African Jewish Chronicle, December 27, 1912, p.418.

²³⁷South African Jewish Chronicle, December 6, 1912, p.377.

²³⁸The Natal Mercury, February 2, 1914, p.9.

²³⁹Ibid., December 24, 1913, p.8.

²⁴⁰Ibid., February 2, 1914, p.9.

²⁴¹Ibid.

to meet the new headmaster.²⁴²

Although members of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation had participated in the general meeting on November 24, 1912, which had led to the establishment of the Talmud Torah School, the Durban New Hebrew Congregation does not appear to have associated itself with the independent Talmud Torah School, and in September 1914 an examination of the pupils of the Congregation's Hebrew classes was held at the synagogue in Grey Street.²⁴³

Whilst the attempt to establish an independent Talmud Torah School appears to have failed, the Durban Hebrew School under Mr. Jacobson although closely attached to the Durban Hebrew Congregation and largely dependent upon the Congregation for financial support, appears to have remained separate from the Congregation.²⁴⁴ Apart from subscriptions and the financial support of the Durban Hebrew Congregation the school also received a grant from the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild.²⁴⁵ Its funds were further augmented by a concert and dance held on May 14, 1914 in the Masonic Hall.²⁴⁶

²⁴²Ibid., February 6, 1914, p.6.

²⁴³Ibid., September 2, 1914, p.6.

²⁴⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, March 3, 1916, p.787.

²⁴⁵Ibid., April 18, 1913, p.254.

²⁴⁶The Natal Mercury, May 13, 1914, p.6.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CONGREGATIONS

Whilst the two congregations could not agree to a unitary shechita arrangement²⁴⁷ nor co-operate in establishing an independent Talmud Torah School,²⁴⁸ they did work together with the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society and the Durban Zionist Association in forming the Durban Jewish Immigration Board.²⁴⁹

Although attempts were made in 1911 and 1912 to reconcile the two congregations and to bring about an amalgamation,²⁵⁰ these moves were rejected by the members of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation who did not wish to be swamped by the superior numbers of the Durban Hebrew Congregation.²⁵¹ Nevertheless relations between individual members of the two congregations remained most cordial. Upon the death of Mr. P. Patz, a prominent member of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation who was buried on July 16, 1911,²⁵² the quarterly and special general meeting of the Durban Hebrew

²⁴⁷ See above p.264.

²⁴⁸ See above p.268.

²⁴⁹ South African Jewish Chronicle, February 23, 1912, p.123. On the Board see below pp.358-359.

²⁵⁰ Address delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the Durban Hebrew Congregation September 23, 1925, by F.C. Hollander Esq., J.P., p.6. Archives of the Council of Natal Jewry. See also South African Jewish Chronicle, April 7, 1911, p.447.

²⁵¹ From a personal interview with Mr. H. Lionel Magid, June 1975.

²⁵² Mr. P. Patz.

Congregation, scheduled for July 16, were postponed until the following Sunday²⁵³ to enable members of the Durban Hebrew Congregation to attend the funeral.

Members of both congregations also worked harmoniously together on various communal organisations. The leadership of the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society was drawn from both congregations,²⁵⁴ and even when the president of the Society was a member of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation, meetings continued to be held at the Synagogue Chambers, St. Andrew's Street.²⁵⁵ Since the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society provided relief for the needy regardless of congregational affiliation, fund raising events such as the balls held in 1912 and 1913²⁵⁶ enjoyed the support of the entire community, rather than of one congregation.

Similarly the Durban Zionist Association drew its

²⁵³Ibid., July 21, 1911, p.6.

²⁵⁴The Society's committee elected in 1911 included Messrs H. Brodie, Goldberg, Rosenbach and Levy of the New Hebrew Congregation and Messrs B. Smolensky, S. Lyons, Rothstein, Berman and Bloom of the Durban Hebrew Congregation. (Ibid., October 31, 1911, p.9.) In 1912 Mr. Brodie of the New Hebrew Congregation was president and Messrs Smolensky and S. Morris of the Durban Hebrew Congregation were hon. treasurers. (South African Jewish Chronicle, October 18, 1912, p.253). The committee chosen in 1913 included S. Goldberg and L. Magid of the New Hebrew Congregation and S. Lyons and B. Smolensky of the Durban Hebrew Congregation. (The Natal Mercury, October 25, 1913, p.9.)

²⁵⁵See South African Jewish Chronicle, November 3, 1911, p.945. and October 18, 1912, p.253.

²⁵⁶The Natal Mercury, August 9, 1912, p.8. and August 29, 1913, p.8.

support from members of both congregations, and thus it is not strange to find Rev. Rosin and Mr. M. Kentridge participating, in March 1913, in a debate held under the Socceity's auspices.²⁵⁷

Further evidence of this co-operation between the members of the two congregations is demonstrated by the active involvement of Mr. and Mrs. C.A. Levy, both members of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation, in the work of the Chevra Kadisha.²⁵⁸ Although the Burial Board had always been associated with the Durban Hebrew Congregation, it appears that after the split in the Congregation the Board catered for the needs of both congregations, and that no second Burial Board was formed.

CHEVRA KADISHA

In 1902 the Chevra Kadisha of the Durban Hebrew Congregation made application to the Town Council for a new burial site, since the cemetery at the corner of Brook and Queen Streets was almost full. At the annual general meeting of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, held on October 5, 1902, Mr. Phineas Lazarus, the president of the Burial Board, informed the meeting that a new

²⁵⁷Ibid., February 24, 1913, p.9.

²⁵⁸From a personal interview with Mr. Harry Levy, June 1975.

site had been secured for a burial ground.²⁵⁹

The matter of a Jewish cemetery site was taken up by the Town Council in July 1903, and the whole Council Committee's recommendation that a portion of the newly laid Umbilo cemetery be sold to the Jewish community, subject to the usual cemetery regulations, was agreed to by the Councillors.²⁶⁰ A few weeks later the Town Lands' Committee recommended that two and a half acres of land be allotted to the Jewish community, and that the allotting of sites to other denominations be deferred until the roads to the area were laid out and the ground prepared.²⁶¹ By June 1904 the road from Umbilo road had been completed, thereby rendering available the portion of the cemetery allocated to the Jews.²⁶² On August 16, together with the Cemetery Committee and representatives of local undertakers, Messrs Wartski and Hanson, representing the Durban Jewish community, visited the proposed new cemetery.²⁶³ At a Town Council meeting, held on September 7, the chairman of the Cemetery Committee reported that in view of their being space for only one more internment in the Jewish cemetery in town, the community's need was urgent, and

²⁵⁹London Jewish Chronicle, November 14, 1902, p.23.

²⁶⁰The Natal Mercury, July 7, 1903, p.12.

²⁶¹Ibid., July 28, 1903, p.10.

²⁶²Ibid., June 28, 1904, p.10.

²⁶³Ibid., September 9, 1904, p.8.

that the site recommended by the committee had been accepted by representatives of the Synagogue, who agreed to have it enclosed at their own cost.²⁶⁴

The costs of clearing the bush land, fencing the cemetery and erecting the gates were borne by voluntary offerings of the community, whilst Mr. Julius Wartski prepared the plan free.²⁶⁵ The cemetery, which had been acquired by the Jewish community on lease hold, was solemnly consecrated on May 28, 1905, during a service conducted by the Revs. S. Pincus and A. Levy.²⁶⁶ At the conclusion of Rev. Levy's address a number of disused prayer books were ceremonially buried.²⁶⁷

In 1908 the Jewish Burial Board applied to the Town Council for a reduction in the rent of the cemetery. On the recommendation of the Town Lands' Committee the Sanitary Committee moved that the Board's tenency be terminated, and that in future the Board be made to pay for each burial site as required, in the same manner as other denominations.²⁶⁸

The necessary funds having been secured, the foundation stone of the Receiving Hall at the Stellawood Cemetery was laid after a short service on January 13,

²⁶⁴Ibid.

²⁶⁵Durban Hebrew Congregation Golden Jubilee Brochure 1884-1934, 5644-5694, p.21.

²⁶⁶The Natal Mercury, May 29, 1905, p.9.

²⁶⁷London Jewish Chronicle, July 14, 1905, p.20.

²⁶⁸The Natal Mercury, August 5, 1908, p.10.

1909, by Mr. F.C. Hollander, the Deputy Mayor of Durban and President of the Congregation.²⁶⁹

In the following year, under the guidance of Rev. S. Pincus, the first women's committee of the Chevra Kadisha was formed.²⁷⁰

On May 3, 1914, the Jewish community gathered at the cemetery to witness the unveiling, in the Receiving Hall, of two marble tablets, inscribed with the burial prayers, which were presented to the Congregation by Mr. B. Smolensky, the chairman of the Burial Board, in memory of his parents. Another tablet, inscribed with the prayer recited on entering the cemetery was presented by Mr. F.C. Hollander and erected at the entrance to the cemetery. During the service, conducted by Revs. S. Pincus and M. Kay, Mr. Hollander unveiled the memorials presented by Mr. Smolensky, and Mr. L. Hart accepted, on behalf of the Congregation, the memorial presented by Mr. Hollander.²⁷¹

It is interesting to note that at this time preparations for a funeral and the funeral itself began from the home of the deceased or from the hospital in which he had passed away, the coffin being transported by a horse drawn hearse.²⁷² In December 1916 the

²⁶⁹Ibid., January 14, 1909, p.4.

²⁷⁰Durban Jewish Women's Guild, Souvenir Brochure 1953, (Durban, 1953), p.17.

²⁷¹South African Jewish Chronicle, May 8, 1914, p.499.

²⁷²From a personal interview with Mr. Harry Levy, June 1975.

the Chevra Kadisha acquired a hearse, the money for which had been subscribed by the Jewish public. The hearse was first used to carry a coffin containing disused prayer books, which were duly buried at the Stellawood cemetery.²⁷³

²⁷³South African Jewish Chronicle, December 15, 1916, p.602.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GROWTH OF JEWISH WELFARE, ZIONISM AND
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SOCIETIES IN DURBAN
(1902 - 1914)

JEWISH WELFARE

THE DURBAN JEWISH BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

In the wake of the Peace of Vereeniging the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society was hard pressed to provide assistance, not only for refugees who wished to return to their homes, but also for immigrants, who upon the cessation of hostilities arrived in Durban in ever increasing numbers. From the reports which the Society's president, Mr. Louis Goldberg, submitted at the annual general meetings of 1902, 1903 and 1904, it is evident

that the increase in immigration corresponded with an increase in the number of calls made to the society for assistance.¹ In the course of its work the Society not only assisted many of the poorer immigrants who arrived in Durban without sufficient means to maintain themselves, but also aided those immigrants who wished to proceed to the Transvaal.²

In 1906 the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society decided to re-organise and to become properly constituted. This step, taken largely at the instigation of Rev. A. Levy,³ who from the time of his arrival in Durban had identified himself with the work of the Society,⁴ resulted in the membership increasing in only one year from twenty three to two hundred and ten.⁵ At the reconstituted Society's first annual general meeting, held in October 1907, it was also reported that during that year the Society had dealt with thirty five cases of distress entailing an expenditure of over £106, and that loans to the value of £31 10s had been granted.⁶ Whilst the financial year had closed with a balance in

¹The Natal Mercury, November 15, 1902, p.13., London Jewish Chronicle, December 11, 1903, p.23. and February 3, 1905, p.25.

²London Jewish Chronicle, December 11, 1903, p.23. and February 3, 1905, p.25.

³South African Jewish Chronicle, March 4, 1910, p.540.

⁴London Jewish Chronicle, December 11, 1903, p.23.

⁵Ibid., November 15, 1907, p.12.

⁶The Natal Mercury, October 10, 1907, p.6.

hand of £75, which included a donation of £10 from the Governor Sir Matthew Nathan,⁷ the increase in the number of calls on the Society had, in the course of the year, compelled the Society to seek ways by which to augment its funds. In November 1906 a meeting was held to discuss the advisability of holding a concert and dance in aid of the funds of the Benevolent Society and the Synagogue.⁸ This resulted in a highly successful concert being held in the Masonic Hall on December 20, 1906.⁹ Eight months later the Benevolent Society held a most successful ball in the Masonic Hall.¹⁰

The additional subscriptions gained as a result of the increase in membership in 1906-1907 could not provide sufficient funds for the Society, which in 1908 found itself being increasingly called upon for assistance as South Africa underwent a serious economic depression. In an attempt to augment the Society's funds a concert featuring local artistes, both Jewish and Gentile, was held at the Theatre Royal on April 11, 1908, under the patronage of the Mayor, Mr. Charlie Henwood, and Town Councillors.¹¹

⁷Ibid.

⁸South African Jewish Chronicle, November 30, 1906, p.597.

⁹The Natal Mercury, December 21, 1906, p.9.

¹⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, September 6, 1907, p.214.

¹¹The Natal Mercury, April 14, 1908, p.6.

The effect of the depression was reflected in the annual report of the Society for 1908, where it was recorded that assistance to the extent of £200 had been provided to applicants.¹² Although the report indicated that the Society still showed a credit balance and assets amounting to £124 8s 11½d,¹³ the need for additional funds was ever present. Aware of this fact the Society's president, Mr. H. Brodie, took advantage of the presence in his home of between eighty and one hundred guests, who had gathered to celebrate the bris milah of his infant son, to take a collection for the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society which yielded £12 12s.¹⁴

By 1909 the Benevolent Society had acquired a membership of three hundred.¹⁵ However just as its numbers had increased so had the calls which were made upon it, and in 1908-1909 the Society's expenditure exceeded £277.¹⁶

The increasingly numerous demands on the Society led to the members meeting once again in August 1910, just as they had done in 1906, to conceive of a way in which

¹²London Jewish Chronicle, December 4, 1908, p.12.

¹³The Natal Mercury, October 27, 1908, p.5.

¹⁴Ibid., January 26, 1909, p.8.

¹⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, October 29, 1909, p.164.

¹⁶The Natal Mercury, October 11, 1909, p.6.

to augment the Society's funds.¹⁷ At the meeting it was decided to organise a social function. This took the form of a Simchat Torah Ball which was held in the Masonic Hall on October 27, 1910, under the distinguished patronage of Mr. C.J. Smythe, the Administrator of Natal, and the Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor and Mrs F.C. Hollander.¹⁸ Similar balls, under equally distinguished patronage, were held in aid of the Society's funds in 1912¹⁹ and 1913.²⁰

By 1910 the depression had started to wane and this was reflected in the decrease in the number of calls which were made on the Society's resources.²¹ In tribute to Mr. H. Brodie who, as president, had guided the Society through the economic depression, Mr. Morris Kantrovitch, in a short ceremony which preceeded the annual general meeting on June 3, 1911, presented Mr. Brodie with an illuminated address on behalf of the Society.²² In the same month the Society benefited from a bequest of £150 which had been made in the will of Sir Benjamin Greenacre.²³ Sir Benjamin who died

¹⁷Ibid., August 19, 1910, p.8.

¹⁸Ibid., October 28, 1910, p.6.

¹⁹Ibid., August 9, 1912, p.8.

²⁰Ibid., August 29, 1913, p.8.

²¹Ibid., November 1, 1910, p.7.

²²South African Jewish Chronicle, June 30, 1911, p.648.

²³Ibid.

on April 22, 1911,²⁴ had throughout his public life shown himself to be a friend of the Jews. Upon his death the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society had held a special meeting at which a resolution of condolence with Lady Greenacre and her family had been unanimously carried.²⁵ When Sir Benjamin's widow passed away in 1915 her will also provided for a bequest to the Society's funds.²⁶

In 1912 Mr. Sam Lyons was presented with an illuminated address in recognition of the services which he had rendered as hon. secretary of the Society.²⁷ At the annual general meeting in 1913 the Society honoured its treasurer Mr. Barnett Smolensky by presenting him with an illuminated address.²⁸

An extraordinary general meeting was called in July 1914,²⁹ no doubt to discuss arrangements for the ball, which, as in previous years, should have been held in August. The outbreak of war, however, necessitated the cancellation of the ball, as the members of the Society concerned themselves with assisting in the war effort.

²⁴The Natal Mercury, April 24, 1911, p.11.

²⁵Ibid., April 27, 1911, p.8.

²⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, May 28, 1915, p.337.

²⁷Ibid., October 18, 1912, p.253.

²⁸The Natal Mercury, October 25, 1913, p.9.

²⁹Ibid., July 27, 1914, p.6.

THE DURBAN JEWISH LADIES' GUILD

Although it was only in 1903 that the Jewish women of Durban formed their own Benevolent Society, that year does not mark their first entry into the sphere of Jewish welfare work. It will be recalled that in 1891 the ladies had resolved to establish a Ladies' Jewish Benevolent Society,³⁰ and that during the Anglo-Boer War the women had played their part on the Jewish Relief Committee, which had assisted the refugees who had fled to Durban.³¹ Upon the restoration of peace women of the community assisted the men in the work of the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society.³² Nevertheless at the Society's annual general meeting in 1902 Mr. Louis Goldberg bemoaned the lack of interest on the part of the women generally in the welfare of the less fortunate of their sex, and expressed the hope that, "the Jewish ladies may take some concerted action in forming a committee to assist in sickness".³³

On July 16, 1903, Mr. Goldberg in his capacity as president of the Benevolent Society, called a meeting of the Jewish ladies at the Synagogue Chambers. About sixty ladies assembled for the meeting which was also

³⁰See above p.159.

³¹See above pp.169-171.

³²The Natal Mercury, November 5, 1902, p.13.

³³Ibid.

attended by Mr. P. Wartski, president of the Congregation; Mr. H. Lipinski, hon. secretary of the Benevolent Society: and Mr. R. Levisohn, hon. secretary of the Congregation. Messrs. Goldberg and Wartski opened the meeting by calling for the formation of a Ladies' Benevolent Society, and this received unanimous approval, the Society being given the designation Jewish Ladies' Helping Hand Society.

The election of an executive for the new Society resulted in the appointment of Mrs P. Wartski, president; Mrs B. Lipinski, treasurer, Mrs Hanreck and Miss Morris, joint hon. secretaries, Mesdames Kaplan, L. Raphaely, P. Lazarus, M. Aaronstein, H.A. Hanson, Solomon, Mitchell, Abrahams and R. Levisohn, committee.³⁴

A few months later, on March 16, 1904, a meeting of the Jewish women of Durban was convened by the Rev. A. Levy at the synagogue in St. Andrew's Street. This meeting which followed upon Rev. Levy's request to the Jewish ladies of Durban to forward their addresses to the synagogue,³⁵ was called for the purpose of establishing a Holy Vestment Society.³⁶ Rev. Levy, supported by Mr. Louis Goldberg and Mr. Julius Benjamin, the hon. secretary of the congregation, explained the

³⁴Ibid., July 17, 1903, p.8.

³⁵Ibid., February 9, 1904, p.4.

³⁶London Jewish Chronicle, April 15, 1904, p.24.

scope of the new Society, which it was hoped would assist the Synagogue by raising funds and caring for the Holy Vestments. This scheme met with an enthusiastic response, and as a result of this meeting the Helping Hand Society was extended to become, as well, the Holy Vestment Society.³⁷ Mrs P. Wartski assumed the presidency of the Society and served in that capacity until 1913.³⁸ At the end of 1904 the Society changed its name to the Durban Jewish Ladies Guild.³⁹

Initially the Guild, which to start numbered fourteen members, met at the synagogue. At first meetings were held fortnightly and later once a month, and the membership subscription of one shilling a month was collected monthly. From 1908 the Guild conducted its meetings in a room in the Town Hall.⁴⁰

In July 1904, the London Jewish Chronicle reported that, "Durban has now three distinct Jewish charitable organisations, the Benevolent Society, the Ladies Zionist Association, and the Ladies' Holy Vestment Society. The latter is of recent formation but it is more than justifying its existence".⁴¹

³⁷Durban Jewish Women's Guild, Souvenir Golden Jubilee Brochure 1953 (Durban, 1953), p.16.

³⁸The Natal Mercury, November 4, 1913, p.9.

³⁹Durban Jewish Women's Guild, Souvenir Golden Jubilee Brochure, p.16.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp.16-17.

⁴¹London Jewish Chronicle, July 22, 1904, p.21.

There appears to have been no rivalry between the three charitable organisations, and the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild worked in co-operation with both the Ladies' Zionist Association and the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society. The harmony which governed relations between the Ladies Guild and the Ladies' Zionist Association was reflected by a Simchat Torah Ball held on October 4, 1904, under the auspices of the Durban Ladies' Zionist Association in aid of its own funds and those of the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild.⁴² The Ladies' Guild also worked in close harmony with the Benevolent Society. Members of the Guild assisted at functions arranged by the Benevolent Society⁴³ and the Guild supported the Benevolent Society with monetary donations.⁴⁴ In her presidential report at the annual general meeting of the Ladies' Guild in 1911, Mrs Wartski in fact expressed the hope that, "the same cordial relations will ever exist between the two Societies".⁴⁵

The Guild, whilst undertaking all female cases of relief,⁴⁶ was assisted in its benevolent work by the

⁴²The Natal Mercury, October 5, 1904, p.10.

⁴³See Ibid., December 21, 1906, p.9. and London Jewish Chronicle, September 27, 1907, p.12.

⁴⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, April 6, 1906, p.375.

⁴⁵Ibid., April 7, 1911, p.447.

⁴⁶Ibid., April 6, 1906, p.375.

men's Benevolent Society,⁴⁷ and was thus free to concentrate its efforts on raising funds for the synagogue and providing holy vestments.

The first dance organised by the Ladies' Guild to raise funds for the synagogue was held in July 1904.⁴⁸ Thereafter the July Ball became an annual event, and one of the highlights of the Durban season. In July 1905 the ball was held under the patronage of the Governor, Sir Henry McCullum, and the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr. and Mrs J. Ellis Brown.⁴⁹ This was the first dance in Durban to have been attended by the Governor,⁵⁰ who in 1906 again graced the function with his presence.⁵¹ The pattern set by Sir Henry and Lady McCullum was continued after their departure from the Colony, and each subsequent ball came to be held under most distinguished patronage.⁵²

Whilst the July Ball remained the principal feature of the Guild's calendar, the Guild also raised money by

⁴⁷Ibid., April 7, 1911, p.447.

⁴⁸Durban Jewish Women's Guild, Souvenir Golden Jubilee Brochure, p.16.

⁴⁹The Natal Mercury, July 5, 1905, p.6.

⁵⁰London Jewish Chronicle, August 18, 1905, p.14.

⁵¹The Natal Mercury, July 11, 1906, p.8.

⁵²See The Natal Mercury, July 13, 1907, p.10., July 10, 1908, p.10. The Natal Advertiser, July 16, 1909, p.7., The Natal Mercury, July 7, 1910, p.10., July 1, 1911, p.10., July 2, 1912, p.8., July 9, 1913, p.10. and July 18, 1914, p.15.

organising dances,⁵³ Simchat Torah and Purim balls,⁵⁴ concerts⁵⁵ and bridge drives⁵⁶ and was thus able to make substantial monetary donations to the Synagogue.⁵⁷

In its capacity as Holy Vestment Society the Guild provided the Synagogue with numerous gifts including a set of silver for the Sepher Torah,⁵⁸ a red velvet Ark curtain,⁵⁹ a marriage canopy⁶⁰ and Sepher Torah mantles and wraps.⁶¹ The Guild also assumed responsibility for decorating the synagogue on Shavuot, and for decorating and providing the refreshments for the Succah.⁶²

⁵³The Natal Mercury, May 13, 1905, p.7., and London Jewish Chronicle, December 25, 1908, p.10. and South African Jewish Chronicle, December 27, 1912, p.423.

⁵⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, September 8, 1905, p.489. The Natal Mercury, March 22, 1910, p.7., November 4, 1913, p.9., and March 18, 1914, p.8.

⁵⁵The Natal Mercury, October 22, 1909, p.6. and October 23, 1909, p.6. and October 23, 1909, p.13.

⁵⁶Ibid., June 8, 1907, p.8. and December 11, 1913, p.7.

⁵⁷In 1905 the Guild's donation to the synagogue amounted to £110. (South African Jewish Chronicle, April 6, 1906, p.375), in 1911, £150. (Ibid., April 7, 1911, p.447) and in 1913, £153. (Ibid., April 18, 1913, p.254.)

⁵⁸London Jewish Chronicle, January 6, 1905, p.16.

⁵⁹South African Jewish Chronicle, April 6, 1906, p.375.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., October 29, 1909, p.164.

⁶²Ibid., April 6, 1906, p.375., April 7, 1911, p.447. and April 18, 1913, p.254.

On August 27, 1912, the Rev. A.P. Bender of Cape Town, who came to Durban to officiate at Mr. F.C. Hollander's third Corporation Sunday service,⁶³ was welcomed at an "At Home", given by the president and members of the Guild at the Clarendon Hotel.⁶⁴

Four months later, at the conclusion of the Chanukah service, held on December 8, the Guild provided light refreshments for the children.⁶⁵ The Guild's interest in the children of the congregation was reflected in its decision to make an annual grant to the Durban Talmud Torah School.⁶⁶ The interest which the Guild took in children was further demonstrated by the hospitality which it extended to the children who visited Durban under the auspices of the Transvaal Leaders' Children's Seaside Fund.⁶⁷

The Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild also undertook the visiting of hospitals and arrangements were made with the matron to ensure that the Guild was immediately informed of the admission of a Jewish patient.⁶⁸

A sign of the public recognition of the work undertaken by the Guild, which by 1911 had a

⁶³See above pp.260-261.

⁶⁴The Natal Mercury, August 28, 1912, p.13.

⁶⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, December 27, 1912, p.423.

⁶⁶Ibid., April 18, 1913, p.254.

⁶⁷Ibid., and April 7, 1911, p.447.

⁶⁸Ibid., April 7, 1911, p.447.

membership of fifty two,⁶⁹ was the bequests which were made to the Guild by Sir Benjamin and Lady Greenacre.⁷⁰

When in 1914, only a few weeks after the annual July ball, war broke out in Europe, the members of the Guild, like the citizens of the Empire at large, ensured that they made their maximum contribution to the war effort.

ZIONIST ACTIVITY

In an article published shortly after the Anglo-Boer War, the London Jewish Chronicle reported that:

One fact is noticable in Durban, it is the strong adherence to the Zionist cause...The Durban Zionist Association, with a membership of fully three hundred, is an excellent institution. It has a large hall, which is open daily, a library composed of English, Hebrew and Jargon books, besides a weekly supply of English and Jargon periodicals. A series of weekly lectures has been recently instituted, and everything that can possibly be done for the intellectual benefit of members has been established...⁷¹

The strides which the Zionist Association had made from the time of its inception in Durban, and which had culminated in the opening of a Zionist Hall,⁷² set the pace for post war Zionist activity. Membership of the

⁶⁹Durban Jewish Women's Guild, Souvenir Golden Jubilee Brochure, p.17.

⁷⁰The Natal Mercury, July 18, 1914, p.15.

⁷¹London Jewish Chronicle, August 29, 1902, p.17.

⁷²The Natal Mercury, May 27, 1902, p.11.

Association increased considerably in 1902, in consequence of the decision of the Jewish community of Pietermaritzburg to become a branch of the Durban Zionist Association.⁷³ The ranks of the Association were further swelled by the formation of a Ladies' Zionist Association on January 11, 1903.⁷⁴ Whilst an attempt made in 1901 to establish such a society⁷⁵ had come to nought the Ladies' Association created in January 1903, initially fared far better. Under Mrs H. Levinson, the Association's first president, and largely through the efforts of her daughter Miss Esther Levinson, the Ladies' Zionist Association, which began with fourteen members, within five weeks increased its membership to seventy.⁷⁶ Four months later the Ladies' Zionist Association held its first dance, in honour of Shavuot, for which it was warmly commended.⁷⁷

On April 26, 1903, the Durban Zionist Association held its annual general meeting at the Zionist Hall, and the retiring president, Mr. Louis Goldberg, could justifiably reflect with pride on the progress which the Association had made under his direction. Not only had the Association striven to advance the cause of

⁷³London Jewish Chronicle, August 29, 1902, p.17.

⁷⁴The Natal Mercury, January 10, 1903, p.13.

⁷⁵Ibid., August 20, 1901, p.9.

⁷⁶Ibid., February 18, 1903, p.13.

⁷⁷The Natal Advertiser, June 10, 1903, p.6.

Zionism in Durban, it had also taken a keen and sympathetic interest in the plight of those Jews who had, upon the outbreak of the war in 1899, found refuge in Durban, where they had been amongst the Association's foremost supporters. In January 1903, the Association undertook to assist those refugees who had applied for permits to return to the Transvaal and Orange River Colony and had not obtained them.⁷⁸ The Zionist Association's concern for the refugees extended to assisting those who were expelled from the Transvaal for failing to obtain the necessary permits, and who, upon their entry into Natal, faced prosecution under the Colony's Immigration Restriction Act.⁷⁹

In his address to the annual general meeting Mr. Goldberg also laid stress upon the fact that more than £700 had been collected by the Association, which had in the course of the year made many grants to deserving Jewish institutions outside the sphere of Zionism.⁸⁰

The meeting held on August 5, 1903, which was addressed by Samuel Goldreich, president of the South African Zionist Federation, was not only the first Zionist function over which Benjamin Shlom, in his capacity as president of the Association, was called upon

⁷⁸The Natal Mercury, January 31, 1903, p.10.

⁷⁹Ibid., March 31, 1903, p.11.

⁸⁰Ibid., April 28, 1903, p.10.

to preside, but it was also the first Zionist activity in which the Rev. A. Levy participated in the town.⁸¹

Levy's participation at the meeting heralded the start of his involvement in the work of the Durban Zionist Association, and his services as a speaker came to be frequently enlisted by the Zionists.⁸² The close bond between the minister of the Durban Hebrew Congregation and the Durban Zionist Association strengthened the ties between the Congregation and the Association. At a meeting of the Zionist Association held on January 3, 1904, a resolution to support the new synagogue, in St. Andrew's Street, was unanimously adopted,⁸³ thereby indicating the allegiance of the members of the Association to the Congregation. This bond of co-operation was typified by the overflow services which were organised by the two bodies over the High Holy Day period in 1903,⁸⁴ and the address which Rabbi Dr. Landau gave to the Zionists in the synagogue on July 31, 1904.⁸⁵ The Simchat Torah ball organised

⁸¹Ibid., August 7, 1903, p.8.

⁸²On November 30, 1903, Levy lectured on Menasseh ben Israel, (London Jewish Chronicle, January 15, 1904, p.12.), on December 20, 1903, he spoke at the Association's Chanukah Concert, (South African Jewish Chronicle, February 12, 1904, p.18.). In November 1904 he lectured on The Messiah and False Messiahs, (The Natal Mercury, November 25, 1904, p.6.).

⁸³London Jewish Chronicle, February 12, 1904, p.18.

⁸⁴The Natal Mercury, October 2, 1903, p.9.

⁸⁵London Jewish Chronicle, September 2, 1904, p.17.

by the Ladies Zionist Association, for the benefit of its own funds and those of the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild,⁸⁶ was yet a further indication of the amiable relations which Rev. Levy's involvement in the Durban Zionist Association helped to establish between the Zionists and those concerned with synagogal matters.

On August 22, 1903, not long after Samuel Goldreich's visit to Durban, the members of the Durban Zionist Association met at the Mutual Hall, Moore Road, to celebrate the opening of the sixth World Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland.⁸⁷ The storm which arose at the Congress over the British Government's offer to permit the establishment of a Jewish settlement in Uganda was not without repercussions in Zionist circles throughout the world, and Durban was no exception.⁸⁸ At a meeting held on August 30 Durban Zionists received the divergent views of Mr. B. Shlom, Rabbi J. Hertz, Rev. A. Levy, Mr. P. Wartski and Mr. Max Langermann.⁸⁹ Langermann, who was president of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal, was in Durban at the time of the offer of Uganda and he gave the scheme his whole hearted support, going so far as to volunteer his services for the purpose of

⁸⁶The Natal Mercury, October 5, 1904, p.10.

⁸⁷Ibid., August 25, 1903, p.11.

⁸⁸On the Uganda Question See Walter Laqueur, A History of Zionism, (New York, 1976), pp.122-124.

⁸⁹London Jewish Chronicle, October 2, 1903, p.21.

visiting East Africa on behalf of the Zionist Movement. At the meeting it was unanimously resolved to uphold the decision of the Zionist Congress,⁹⁰ which had decided by a small margin to send a commission to East Africa to investigate the proposal. The Uganda project led to violent controversy amongst Zionists the majority of whom, mainly from Russia, rejected any colonisation outside Palestine. So angered were the Russian Zionists by the action of Herzl and the decision of the Congress that at their conference in Kharkov they passed a resolution accusing Herzl of having violated the Basle programme, and called on him to promise not to ask Congress to support settlement projects outside Palestine.⁹¹ The Durban Zionist Association remained loyal to the leader of the movement. At a general meeting held on February 21, 1904, a resolution expressing disapproval of the resolution carried at the Kharkov Conference was unanimously passed, and the confidence of the Association in Herzl and his colleagues was reaffirmed.⁹²

Whilst the Zionist movement was weakened from differences within its ranks, the Durban Zionist Association was strong and its strength was clearly demonstrated by its decision to move into a larger hall

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Walter Laqueur, A History of Zionism, p.130.

⁹²London Jewish Chronicle, April 15, 1904, p.24.

at the corner of Smith and Aliwal Streets.⁹³

In the midst of the controversy Herzl died on July 3, 1904, in Vienna, and the Durban Zionist Association which had remained faithful to him was deeply shocked and saddened by his death. The Association paid tribute to Herzl in a lengthy obituary which was published in the press.⁹⁴ On the day of his funeral a memorial service was held in the Grey Street Synagogue, which proved to be too small to seat all those who wished to attend.⁹⁵

Discussion concerning Uganda continued after Herzl's death and the issue also came under debate at the first South African Zionist Conference, held in Johannesburg from July 9-11, 1905. Rev. Levy, who had been elected vice president of the Durban Zionist Association at the annual general meeting in May 1905,⁹⁶ represented the Association at the conference.⁹⁷ Mr. B. Shlom and Rev. A. Levy were amongst the twelve country members elected at the conference to the Central Council of the South African Zionist Federation.⁹⁸

The opening of the seventh World Zionist Congress

⁹³The Natal Mercury, January 1, 1904, p.6.

⁹⁴Ibid., July 7, 1904, p.10.

⁹⁵Ibid., July 9, 1904, p.12.

⁹⁶Ibid., May 11, 1905, p.9.

⁹⁷Ibid., July 5, 1905, p.9.

⁹⁸London Jewish Chronicle, August 11, 1905, p.16.

in Basle, at which the Uganda scheme was officially rejected, was marked in Durban by a concert, held in the Zionist Hall on August 13, 1905.⁹⁹ In consequence of the rejection by Congress of the Uganda scheme, a group of Zionists, who were not adverse to Jewish colonies being set up in places other than Palestine, under the leadership of Israel Zangwill, founded the Jewish Territorial Organisation. Whilst Territorialism found some support in South Africa and branches of the organisation were opened in several South African towns,¹⁰⁰ Territorialism appears to have failed to gain sufficient support in Durban to have warranted the opening of a branch of the organisation in the town.

At a general meeting held on March 25, 1906, after a short address by the Rev. Levy on "Judas Maccabeus an ancient De Wet", the Durban Zionist Association affirmed its loyalty to the Zionist movement and its rejection of Territorialism.¹⁰¹ At the meeting Rev. Levy moved:

That this meeting of Durban Zionists affirms its steadfast loyalty to the Basle Programme, viz - the acquisition of a legally secured home in Palestine, and rejects unconditionally all the temporising schemes which may appear to possess for the time being, an element of salvation.¹⁰²

Mr. Lionel Goldsmid, the editor of the South African

⁹⁹The Natal Mercury, August 16, 1905, p.7.

¹⁰⁰Jack Alexander, "South African Zionism", in The Jews in South Africa A History, ed. Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz (London, 1955), p.277.

¹⁰¹South African Jewish Chronicle, March 30, 1906, p.339.

¹⁰²Ibid.

Jewish Chronicle, who came specially from Johannesburg to address the meeting moved:

That this meeting whilst fully realising the hold that the territorial idea has secured upon Jews the world throughout, and whilst appreciating the services which it has rendered by drawing universal attention to the condition of affairs in Eastern Europe, protests against the association of Territorialism with Zionism.¹⁰³

Whilst both resolutions were adopted, the discussion which they aroused indicated a certain sympathy with the Territorial Organisation.¹⁰⁴ The attraction which Territorialism had for certain members of the Durban Zionist Association was one of the factors to which Mr. B. Shlom attributed the decline in the support which the Association experienced in the town during 1905.¹⁰⁵ In his report to the annual general meeting Mr. Shlom intimated that the unsatisfactory condition of Zionism in Durban was also largely the fault of the South African Zionist Federation, which had failed to fulfill its promise to send prominent speakers to Durban, and of the financial depression which was prevailing in South Africa.¹⁰⁶ The decline in the strength of the movement in Durban was signified by the apparent closure of the Zionist Hall in late 1906.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³London Jewish Chronicle, April 27, 1906, p.27.

¹⁰⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, March 30, 1906, p.339.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., June 8, 1906, p.625.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷The last reference to a meeting in the Zionist Hall is the report of the annual general meeting in 1906. Ibid.

Shlom's assertion at the annual general meeting, that, "the vital spark can be ignited in Zionism's dry bones only through the magnetism and enthusiasm thrown off by recognised leaders",¹⁰⁸ proved to be correct, for in consequence of David Wolffsohn's visit to Durban the local Zionist Association was re-organised.¹⁰⁹

David Wolffsohn, the president of the Zionist Organisation, who, accompanied by his wife, was taking a recuperative voyage round Africa, arrived in Durban on November 25, 1906, on board the Armadale Castle. Upon their arrival at the port the Wolffsohns were greeted by a large crowd of Jewish townsmen and were received by Rev. A. Levy, Mr. C.P. Robinson, Mr and Mrs Henochsberg and Mr. and Mrs Hart, representing the Durban Hebrew Congregation, and by Mesdames Abrahams, Isaacs, Faberlan and Sugarman and Miss Simons representing the Ladies' Zionist Association.¹¹⁰

At a reception in their honour, held that afternoon at the Alexandra Hall, Mr. Wolffsohn was presented with an illuminated address by the Durban Hebrew Congregation, the Durban Zionist Association, the Ladies' Zionist Association and the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society.¹¹¹ The visit of the Zionist leader to Durban attracted considerable public interest. In an interview with a

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹London Jewish Chronicle, January 18, 1907, p.15.

¹¹⁰The Natal Mercury, November 26, 1906, p.5.

¹¹¹Ibid.

representative of The Natal Mercury Mr. Wolffsohn outlined the Zionist programme and answered questions regarding the Uganda scheme, which owing to its association with the British Government had aroused general interest in Durban.¹¹²

From Durban Mr. and Mrs Wolffsohn journeyed to Johannesburg where they attended the opening of the second South African Zionist Conference, which was held from November 29-30, 1906. Rev. A. Levy, who accompanied the Wolffsohns to Johannesburg, was the delegate of the Durban Zionist Association, whilst the Ladies' Zionist Association was represented at the conference by Mrs Landau.¹¹³ During the elections, which preceded the conclusion of the conference, the Rev. Levy was elected the District Councillor for Natal,¹¹⁴ which secured for him a place on the Federation's executive.

The interest aroused by Wolffsohn's visit to Durban resulted in the Zionist Association being entirely re-organised. At a general meeting convened on December 16, 1906, an election of office bearers was held and resulted in the appointment of Messrs L. Goldberg, president; P. Wartski, vice-president; Rev. A. Levy, treasurer; Mr. H. Patz, secretary;

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³South African Jewish Chronicle, December 7, 1906, p.615.

¹¹⁴Ibid., March 13, 1908, p.429.

Messrs B. Smolensky, L. Hammerstein, W. Senior, H. Ellis, S. Abrahams, S. Bass and J. Samuels, committee.¹¹⁵

The first function arranged by the re-organised Zionist Association was a meeting, held on December 30, 1906, at which the Rev. Levy presented his delegates' report on the South African Zionist Conference.¹¹⁶ On the following evening Mr. Samuel Goldreich, the president of the South African Zionist Federation addressed a mass meeting at the synagogue chambers.¹¹⁷

Despite these meetings, which marked the re-emergence of the Association, Zionist activity in Durban during 1907 was dominated by the work of the Juvenile Zionist Society. Although the first reference to the formation of the Juvenile Zionist Society dates from December 1906,¹¹⁸ the Society, which was formed under the guidance of the Rev. Levy, was only inaugurated at a meeting on June 2, 1907.¹¹⁹ At the inaugural meeting, which was attended by representatives of the Ladies' Zionist Association and the Durban Zionist Association, Rev. Levy addressed the children and outlined the aims

¹¹⁵London Jewish Chronicle, January 18, 1907, p.15.

¹¹⁶Ibid., February 1, 1907, p.16.

¹¹⁷The Natal Mercury, January 1, 1907, p.5.

¹¹⁸South African Jewish Chronicle, December 21, 1906, p.667.

¹¹⁹The Natal Mercury, June 3, 1907, p.5.

and objects of the Society. The result of the election of officers was Master S. Faberlan, president; Miss A. Sytner and Master E. Henochsberg, vice-presidents, Miss E. Isaacs, Miss M. Samuels and Master R. Lazarus, secretaries; Misses P. Wartski, L. Samuels, F. Lazarus, E. Rothstein, M. Hart and M. Bloomfield, and Masters A. Benson, B. Kahn, W. Tobias, A. Morrison, J. Leaman and B. Hanreck, committee.¹²⁰

On July 25 the Society held its first concert in the Alexandra Hall, under the patronage of Mrs Samuel Marks, the wife of the Transvaal industrialist. The function which featured the members of the Society in a programme of singing, music and play reading was regarded as an "immense success", by one newspaper reporter.¹²¹

The Society's inaugural social was held at the synagogue chambers on August 4, 1907, and featured the musical talents of Misses E. and R. Reuben, Master W. Tobias, Miss E. Isaacs, Miss P. Wartski and Mr. L. Wartski.¹²² Under the patronage of Mr. and Mrs C.P. Robinson and Mr. and Mrs F.C. Hollander the Juvenile Zionists presented a grand concert and play at the Masonic Hall on December 3, 1907.¹²³ Half the proceeds of this highly successful function were donated

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Ibid., July 26, 1907, p.7.

¹²²Ibid., August 6, 1907, p.8.

¹²³Ibid., November 30, 1907, p.11.

to the Synagogue Building Fund.¹²⁴

Notwithstanding the enthusiasm which had marked the Durban Zionist Association's re-organisation, 1907 appears to have been one of inactivity for the Association. Nevertheless, at the eighth World Zionist Congress at the Hague in 1907, the Durban Zionist Association was represented by Frl. H. Flaum (Delegate) and Dr. A. Friedman (Alternate).¹²⁵

At a well attended meeting held on March 4, 1908, which was addressed by Mr. Lennox Loewe, the Chief Commissioner of the Jewish Colonial Trust, Rev. Levy acknowledged that the Association had sunk into a decline, but he optimistically forecast, "the restoration of the Durban Zionist Association to its once flourishing condition."¹²⁶

A correspondent, in a lengthy and strongly worded critic of Durban Jewry, in the first instance laid the blame for the unsatisfactory position of Zionism in the town on the division between the Anglicised Jews and those from Eastern Europe. The East European Jews felt that their English co-religionists were bent on hampering any activity undertaken in the interest of Zionism, whilst the English Jews in turn felt that their East European brothers were unaware of the obligations

¹²⁴The Natal Advertiser, December 4, 1907, p.3.

¹²⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, August 16, 1907, p.139.

¹²⁶Ibid., March 6, 1908, p.412.

and the correct mode of conduct which befitted their newly acquired status in a country which did not discriminate against them. The correspondent furthermore asserted that the unfavourable state of Zionism in Durban was in no small measure the fault of the weak and ineffective leaders of the Durban Zionist Association, an exception being made of the Rev. Levy. The opposition to Zionism in certain circles in Durban was, as the correspondent indicated, no where more clearly illustrated than in the disbandment of the once active Juvenile Zionist Society. Parents opposed to the participation of their children in Zionist activity had simply withdrawn their children from the Society.¹²⁷

After talks with Mr. Lennox Loewe the Zionists in Durban sought to revitalise the Zionist Association in the town. Those sympathetic to Zionism were canvassed¹²⁸ and a general meeting was held at the chambers of the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue on May 31, 1908. The officers elected to serve during 1908-1909 were Rev. A. Levy, president; Mr. M. Kantrovitch, treasurer; Mr. M.F. Freedman, secretary; Mr. H. Patz, assistant secretary; Messrs Goldberg, Ellis, Abrahams, Friedman, Sevel, Hoffenberg and Herman, committee.¹²⁹ A programme of lectures, debates and social evenings was drawn up by the committee who invited Mr. B. Shacksnovis

¹²⁷Ibid., March 13, 1908, p.429.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹The Natal Mercury, June 2, 1908, p. 7

of Johannesburg to initiate the programme by addressing a meeting on June 7.¹³⁰

During Levy's presidency the members of the Association heard lectures by Dr. Haggan M.L.A.,¹³¹ Mr. Joseph Heymann of Johannesburg,¹³² and Dr. H. Goodman, an Executive member of the South African Zionist Federation.¹³³ In this period the Durban Zionist Association was represented at the third South African Conference which was held in Johannesburg from January 3-4, 1909. Sam Abrahams was elected one of the non resident members of the Executive,¹³⁴ and as such was District Councillor for Durban.

Before the expiry of his term of office, Rev. Levy presided on January 31, 1909, at a meeting addressed by Mr. Lennox Loewe, who whilst on a visit to London had been entrusted with a message from Max Nordau to the South African Zionists.¹³⁵

Upon relinquishing the presidency Rev. Levy and his

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid., June 20, 1908, p.8.

¹³²Ibid., July 14, 1908, p.6.

¹³³Ibid., August 17, 1908, p.5.

¹³⁴Jack Alexander, "South African Zionism", in The South African Jewish Year Book Directory of Jewish Organisations and Who's Who in South African Jewry 1929, 5689-90. Edited by Morris de Saxe, Associate Editor I.M. Goodman, Published by the South African Jewish Historical Society, P.O. Box 2711, Johannesburg (Johannesburg, 1929), p.185.

¹³⁵The Natal Mercury, February 3, 1909, p.11.

fellow minister the Rev. Pincus were appointed ex-officio members of the local committee which came to be lead by Morris Kantrovitch.¹³⁶ Rev. Levy had as president of the Association ensured that regular activities were arranged, and in this way had, whilst advancing the cause of Zionism, provided a meeting place for those who, in view of the non-existence of a Social and Literary Society, had no forum for cultural and social pursuits.¹³⁷

The opening of the new session of the Durban Zionist Association was marked in May 1909 by a lecture on Zionism, which was given by the Rev. A. Levy.¹³⁸ Rev. Levy's good wishes to the Association upon its entry into a new era¹³⁹ appear to have been premature, for 1909 was marked by a decline in Zionist activity. This was largely attributed to the departure of many of the original members from Durban,¹⁴⁰ although this may also have been due, as was the case in 1907,¹⁴¹ to a lack of diligence on the part of officials. This unsatisfactory state of affairs was no doubt aggravated still further by the departure from Durban, in February

¹³⁶London Jewish Chronicle, June 4, 1909, p.10.

¹³⁷The Natal Mercury, August 17, 1908, p.5.

¹³⁸Ibid., May 7, 1909, p.4.

¹³⁹Ibid., May 11, 1909, p.6.

¹⁴⁰Marcia Gitlin, The Vision Amazing (Johannesburg, 1950), p.64.

¹⁴¹South African Jewish Chronicle, March 13, 1908, p.429.

1910, of the Rev. A. Levy,¹⁴² who, throughout his ministry in the town had been in the forefront of Zionist work.

Even the visit to Durban in August 1910 of Madame Bella Pevsner,¹⁴³ who came to South Africa from May 1910 - January 1911, primarily in the interests of the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts in Jerusalem,¹⁴⁴ failed to evoke a resurgence of Zionist activity.

Although Zionism had by 1911 reached such a low ebb in Durban that not even a single shekel was sold during that year,¹⁴⁵ the Durban Zionists were nevertheless represented at the fourth South African Zionist Conference. At the conference, which met in Kimberley from July 16-17, 1911, Mr. P. Wartski was elected district councillor for Durban.¹⁴⁶

The stimulus provided by the conference and by a visit to Durban by Samuel Goldreich¹⁴⁷ no doubt helped the Durban Zionist Association to overcome the lethargy into which it had sunk. At a meeting held in the Alexandra Hall on October 29, 1911, the Zionist Association was revived and a committee was formed led

¹⁴²Ibid., March 4, 1910, p.540.

¹⁴³Ibid., August 12, 1910, p.997.

¹⁴⁴Jack Alexander, "South African Zionism", in The South African Jewish Year Book - Directory of Jewish Organisations and Who's Who in South African Jewry 1929, 5689-90, p.279.

¹⁴⁵Marcia Gitlin, The Vision Amazing, p.64.

¹⁴⁶The Natal Mercury, July 18, 1911, p.8.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., August 1, 1911, p.2.

by Mr. S. Goldreich, president; Mr. Lionel Hart, vice-president; Mr. M. Stiller, treasurer; and Mr. W. Israel, hon. secretary.¹⁴⁸ The inaugural function of the Association took the form of a social and dance, which was held on November 18.¹⁴⁹ Four nights later, under the auspices of the Durban Zionist Association, Mr. Morris Alexander M.L.A. of Cape Town, addressed a meeting, on the subject of Zionism, at the synagogue chambers.¹⁵⁰

The increase in the size of the Association's membership must have been considerable for on March 4, 1912, a Zionist Hall, at 32 Park Street, was opened by Mr. L. Hart, the Association's vice-president.¹⁵¹ However as there are no records of any activity being held in the hall in 1912,¹⁵² it would appear that the Association rented the hall for only a short while.

Although the apparent vacation of the Zionist Hall by the Association may appear to be an unfavourable reflection on the condition of Zionism in Durban, the Association continued to function. In August 1912

¹⁴⁸ South African Jewish Chronicle, November 3, 1911, p.945.

¹⁴⁹ The Natal Mercury, November 23, 1911, p.7.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p.8.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., March 5, 1912, p.8.

¹⁵² And functions arranged by the Association in 1913 were held in the Alexandra Hall (Ibid., February 18, 1913, p.6., April 10, 1913, p.8., June 21, 1913, p.10.) and the St. George's Hall (Ibid., June 7, 1913, p.10., July 12, 1913, p.8., August 2, 1913, p.8.)

Mr. Lionel Hart was elected to the Executive of the newly formed South African Jewish Board of Deputies,¹⁵³ thereby no doubt enhancing the status of the Association in the eyes of those who still chose to remain aloof from Zionist activity in Durban.

At the fifth South African Zionist Conference which was held in Cape Town from December 29-31, 1912, Lionel Hart was elected district councillor for Durban.¹⁵⁴ The Durban Zionist Association was represented at the conference by Mr. Morris Kentridge.¹⁵⁵

The numerous activities which the Association organised in 1913 reflected the tempo and spirit which had formerly been synonymous with its name. These activities included a social and calico dance,¹⁵⁶ Cinderella dances,¹⁵⁷ an address by Pastor Johnson,¹⁵⁸ a memorial service for Dr. Herzl at the synagogue of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation¹⁵⁹ and a mass meeting

¹⁵³Gustav Saron, "The Long Road to Unity" in The Jews in South Africa, p.268.

¹⁵⁴Jack Alexander, "South African Zionism", in The South African Jewish Year Book - Directory of Jewish Organisations and Who's Who in South African Jewry 1929, 5689-90, p.186.

¹⁵⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, December 27, 1912, p.423.

¹⁵⁶The Natal Mercury, February 24, 1913, p.9.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., April 11, 1913, p.5. and June 28, 1913, p.13.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., June 12, 1913, p.13.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., July 26, 1913, p.10.

addressed by Messrs S. Goldreich and M.L. Genussow.¹⁶⁰
 In the course of the year the Association also extended its hospitality to its former president Rev. A. Levy, who, whilst en route to England spent a short while in Durban. During his stay in Durban the Rev. Levy attended a lecture which was given under the auspices of the Association¹⁶¹ and also participated in the Association's annual general meeting which was held on July 13, in the St. George's Hall.¹⁶²

The visit to Durban of Dr. Kretzmar Israeli in May 1914 completely overshadowed the numerous activities of the previous year. Dr. Kretzmar Israeli came to South Africa to collect money for the Central (Cultural) Fund of the Zionist Organisation, and also conducted a campaign for the purchase of shares in the Palestine Land Development Company.¹⁶³ The work of the Zionist movement and the progress which was being made by Jewish settlers in Palestine provided the basis for a lengthy interview which the Zionist leader granted to the press during his visit to Durban.¹⁶⁴

Dr Kretzmar Israeli was the guest of honour at a

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., August 4, 1913, p.8.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., June 12, 1913, p.13.

¹⁶² Ibid., July 12, 1913, p.8.

¹⁶³ Jack Alexander, "South African Zionism", in The South African Jewish Year Book - Directory of Jewish Organisations and Who's Who in South African Jewry 1929, 5689-90, p.186.

¹⁶⁴ The Natal Mercury, May 16, 1914, p.12.

reception held by the Durban Zionist Association at St. Georges Hall on May 18.¹⁶⁵ On May 20 he addressed a mass meeting at the Alexandra Hall on the subject, "Zionist Cultural and Agricultural Work in Palestine".¹⁶⁶

As if in a final burst of pleasure before the long war which was to soon erupt in Europe, the Durban Zionist Association held a dance in the Alexandra Hall on August 6, 1914.¹⁶⁷

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SOCIETIES

The need which was felt in certain quarters of the Jewish community for a social forum was reflected in the meeting held in late 1903 at which a working committee was chosen to form a Jewish Social Club.¹⁶⁸ On February 14, 1904, a further meeting of the gentlemen interested in forming a Jewish Social Club was held at the proposed club premises, top floor, Davis' Buildings, Field Street.¹⁶⁹ Whatever the outcome of this meeting may have been, there is no evidence to suggest that a

¹⁶⁵Ibid., May 19, 1914, p.9.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., May 21, 1914, p.9.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., August 1, 1914, p.10.

¹⁶⁸London Jewish Chronicle, December 11, 1903, p.23.

¹⁶⁹The Natal Mercury, February 11, 1904, p.7.

Jewish Social Club was in fact constituted.

It was not until June 1905 that a Jewish Social Union came into existence. Under its president the Rev. A. Levy the Union's membership rapidly rose to seventy and new members were daily enlisted.¹⁷⁰ A picnic at Amanzimtoti marked the opening of the Social Union's activities. This was followed by a social evening in the Town Hall on June 22.¹⁷¹ On July 20 Rev. W. Tees lectured the Union on his trip to Palestine.¹⁷²

By August 1905 the Union was known as the Durban Jewish Social and Literary Society.¹⁷³ The Society drew up a comprehensive programme which reflects a desire to cater for the varied interests of its members. On August 3 a debate between Rev. A. Levy and Mr. L. Lazarus was held under the Society's auspices, and Rev. Levy's proposition, "that the restriction of Jewish alien immigration into England would be detrimental to the welfare of England", was carried after much discussion.¹⁷⁴ The Society's inaugural ball was held on August 17,¹⁷⁵ and as in the case of the dance which

¹⁷⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, June 23, 1905, p.199.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²The Natal Mercury, July 22, 1905, p.11.

¹⁷³The earliest reference to the Society is Ibid., August 28, 1905, p.7.

¹⁷⁴London Jewish Chronicle, September 1, 1905, p.13.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., September 15, 1905, p.19.

was given by the Society on August 28, the proceeds were donated to the Synagogue.¹⁷⁶ The Rev. Levy also presided at a concert which the Society held in the Good Templar's Hall on August 24.¹⁷⁷

Only four months after its establishment it was said of the Society that, "it is daily becoming more evident that a serious communal deficiency has been well supplied".¹⁷⁸ Yet apart from a reference to a forthcoming lecture by the Rev. J. Aldridge,¹⁷⁹ there is no indication of the Society having continued to function beyond September 1905.

Just as 1905 saw the end of the Durban Jewish Social and Literary Society 1906 witnessed the establishment of the Masonic Lodge of Israel. Durban Jews had long been associated with the Freemasons¹⁸⁰ and their decision to establish an essentially Jewish lodge found support not only amongst Jewish Masons but also amongst Gentile brethren within the order.¹⁸¹ On August 25 the Lodge of Israel was consecrated in the Addington Masonic Hall. D.N. Henochsberg was installed as Master

¹⁷⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, September 8, 1905, p.489.

¹⁷⁷The Natal Mercury, August 28, 1905, p.7.

¹⁷⁸London Jewish Chronicle, September 15, 1905, p.19.

¹⁷⁹South African Jewish Chronicle, September 8, 1905, p.489.

¹⁸⁰See above pp.80, 82, 86, 89, 92, 96, 109, and 114.

¹⁸¹South African Jewish Chronicle, April 6, 1906, p.375.

of the Lodge, E.R. Robinson as Senior Warden and P. Wartski as Director of Ceremonies.¹⁸² This lodge has continued to function up until the present time.

Whilst no direct reference to the Durban Jewish Dramatic Club is available, mention is made of the Club having participated at a complimentary concert tendered to Misses Esther and Rebecca Reuben on December 12, 1907.¹⁸³ A further reference to the Club is made in connection with its participation at a Grand Exhibition and Fête held under the auspices of the Durban Jewish Communal League on July 6, 1908.¹⁸⁴ From the cast list at these two functions Messrs J. Tobias, H. Patz, P. Tobias, S. Morris, S. Farrars, L. Fienberg and V. Wartski, and Misses E. Franklin, M. Benson, R. Reuben, E. Reuben, T. Tobias, J.T. Belman and P. Abrahams appear to have been members of the Club.¹⁸⁵ Although in March 1908 there was a report of the Club having, "become ship wrecked on the rock of cliques",¹⁸⁶ the members of the Club appear to have continued to perform together. In October 1909 they appeared in a one act comedietta, though no longer under the designation of Durban Jewish

¹⁸²Ibid., August 31, 1906, p.213.

¹⁸³The Natal Mercury, December 10, 1907, p.6.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., July 6, 1908, p.6.

¹⁸⁵The Natal Advertiser, December 13, 1907, p.5. and The Natal Mercury, July 7, 1908, p.10.

¹⁸⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, March 13, 1908, p.429.

Dramatic Club.¹⁸⁷

The Durban Jewish Communal League was formed under the leadership of Mr. C.P. Robinson in 1907 to help relieve the financial stress in which the Congregation found itself at that time.¹⁸⁸ In pursuit of this objective the League organised a Grand Exhibition and Fête which took place in the Town Hall on July 6 and 7 1908.¹⁸⁹ The programme which the committee¹⁹⁰ drew up for the first day of the fête featured an organ recital by Mr. Proudman, the Borough Organist, a musical programme by the band of the Third King's Own Hussars, and a presentation by the Durban Jewish Dramatic Club.¹⁹¹ In the presence of a representative crowd which included Sir Benjamin Greenacre, Sir David Hunter, the Mayor of Durban Councillor C. Henwood and the Mayor of Pietermaritzburg Councillor Kershaw the first day's proceedings were opened by the Governor, Sir Matthew

¹⁸⁷The Natal Mercury, October 22, 1909, p.6.

¹⁸⁸The Durban Hebrew Congregation. Fiftieth Anniversary 1884-1934, 5644-5694, (Durban, 1934) p.9.

¹⁸⁹The Natal Mercury, June 20, 1908, p.8.

¹⁹⁰The committee consisted of Mr. C.P. Robinson, president; Mr. J. da Costa, chairman, Mr. H. Lipinski, treasurer; Mr. D. Newmark, hon. secretary; Messrs H. Cohen, S. Freedman, B. Goodman, J. Lyons, S. Morris, A. Rittenberg, B. Rothstein, A.J. Scott, I.G. Scott and B. Smolensky, Mesdames J.T. Belman, L. Hart, I. Kahn, E.L. Lazarus, A. Levy and S. Sugarman, Misses S. Freedman, A. Rubens, R. Simon and R. Wartski. (Ibid., July 7, 1908, p.10.)

¹⁹¹Ibid., July 6, 1908, p.6.

Nathan.¹⁹² The bazaar was opened on the second day by Mr. Walter Greenacre, the Deputy Mayor of Durban.¹⁹³

Apart from the Exhibition and Fête the League was also responsible for organising a social evening at which Rev. Levy spoke on Jewish statesmen,¹⁹⁴ a calico ball¹⁹⁵ and a dance.¹⁹⁶

Since in a report regarding its first annual meeting the League is described as "having been established for social and literary intercourse",¹⁹⁷ this may possibly be a sign that the League took on a new direction, taking up from where the earlier Social and Literary Society had ended off. A reference to monthly dances held under the auspices of the League would seem to add weight to this suggestion.¹⁹⁸ Whatever its direction the League under a committee led by F.C. Hollander, president; L. Hart, chairman; J. Lyons, treasurer; and S. Morris, secretary,¹⁹⁹ remained closely attached to the Synagogue as is indicated by its arranging a social evening, which was held in connection with

¹⁹²Ibid., July 7, 1908, p.10.

¹⁹³Ibid., July 9, 1908, p.8.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., January 10, 1908, p.6.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., February 25, 1908, p.6.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., August 6, 1908, p.6.

¹⁹⁷London Jewish Chronicle, December 25, 1908, p.10.

¹⁹⁸The Natal Mercury, June 19, 1909, p.10.

¹⁹⁹London Jewish Chronicle, December 25, 1908, p.10.

Congregation's Silver Jubilee celebrations.²⁰⁰

The social evening to mark the Congregation's twenty fifth anniversary signals the end of the League's activities. Less than a month later the Durban Jewish Social and Literary Society held its first debate.²⁰¹ Since F.C. Hollander and S. Morris, who had been office bearers of the League, were on the executive of the new Society,²⁰² there appears to have been a certain continuity between the League and the Social and Literary Society. Under these circumstances, and in view of an earlier report which suggested that the League had been established for social and literary intercourse²⁰³ the announcement in regard to the formation of a Social and Literary Society may suggest a change in name rather than in essence.

The Durban Jewish Social and Literary Society organised a whist drive,²⁰⁴ an address by the Rev. Pedr. Williams²⁰⁵ and a lecture by Rabbi Dr. Hertz.²⁰⁶ However with Rabbi Hertz's lecture on "The Bible as a

²⁰⁰The Natal Mercury, February 22, 1909, p.4.

²⁰¹South African Jewish Chronicle, April 1, 1910, p.628.

²⁰²Ibid., May 6, 1910, p.11.

²⁰³London Jewish Chronicle, December 15, 1910, p.10.

²⁰⁴The Natal Mercury, May 25, 1910, p.6.

²⁰⁵Ibid., June 6, 1910, p.6.

²⁰⁶Ibid., August 23, 1910, p.6.

Book", the activities of the Society came to an end until the outbreak of war in 1914 functions such as dances and talks were organised by the Durban Zionist Association.²⁰⁷

Since L. Hart and M. Kantrovitch, who had served on the executive of the League and the Society respectively,²⁰⁸ were both leading members of the Durban Zionist Association²⁰⁹ it would appear that the failure of the Social and Literary Society cannot be blamed on rivalry between the two organisations. In addition the fact that C.P. Robinson, the first president of the Durban Jewish Communal League,²¹⁰ and F.C. Hollander, who had led the Social and Literary Society,²¹¹ were men who generally remained aloof from Zionist affairs, indicates that the League and the Social and Literary Society were able to attract men uncommitted to Zionist work. Yet, although it would seem that the Society had every reason to succeed, in the period 1902-1914 two attempts to maintain a Social and Literary Society in Durban were ineffectual.

²⁰⁷ See Ibid., November 23, 1911, p.7., February 24, 1913, p.9., April 11, 1913, p.5., June 12, 1913, p.13., June 28, 1913, p.13. and August 6, 1914, p.10.

²⁰⁸ London Jewish Chronicle, December 25, 1908, p.10. and South African Jewish Chronicle, May 6, 1910, p.11.

²⁰⁹ See for example The Natal Mercury, March 5, 1912, p.8.

²¹⁰ Ibid., July 7, 1908, p.10.

²¹¹ South African Jewish Chronicle, May 6, 1910, p.11.

Perhaps this failure of the Social and Literary Society in 1905 and 1910 was owing to the fact that whilst men like Hollander and Robinson, who were not Zionistically inclined, were attracted to positions of leadership the Society's membership was largely drawn from members of the Durban Zionist Association for whom similar functions to those arranged by the Social and Literary Society were provided by the Zionist Association, thereby making a Social and Literary Society redundant. However if this were the case then the question arises as to why the Social and Literary Society should have been revived in 1910. Perhaps the Society's revival lies in the decline which the Durban Zionist Association experienced at this time. In this period 1910-1911 Zionist activity in Durban was practically at a standstill.²¹² If Zionism's decline accounted for the re-emergence of the Social and Literary Society then the question as to why the Society should have ceased to function after the talk by Rabbi Hertz remains unanswered. In the final analysis perhaps the general apathy of Durban Jewry, which had been the subject of a newspaper report in 1908,²¹³ provides the reason for the Society, notwithstanding the role which it had to play in Durban, being forced into inactivity in 1910.

²¹² See above pp.305-307.

²¹³ South African Jewish Chronicle, March 13, 1908, p.429.

A further organisation which emerged just before the outbreak of war was the Durban Jewish Girls' Association. The Association which sought to organise social functions for young Jews and to raise money for charity,²¹⁴ was formed after a meeting held in the synagogue chambers on May 10, 1914.²¹⁵ Known initially as the Durban Jewish Young Ladies' Helpers' League,²¹⁶ the Association's first, and apparently only function before the commencement of hostilities, was a Cinderella dance, held in the Alexandra Hall on June 30.²¹⁷

²¹⁴Ibid., February 4, 1916, p.709.

²¹⁵Ibid., May 15, 1914, p.514.

²¹⁶The Natal Mercury, June 27, 1914, p.8.

²¹⁷Ibid.

CHAPTER IX

BETWEEN THE WARS: JEWISH PARTICIPATION
IN THE GENERAL LIFE OF DURBAN
(1902 - 1914)

With the conclusion of the Peace of Vereeniging the residents of Natal, like the citizens of the Empire at large, were able to direct their attention towards the forthcoming Coronation of King Edward VII, which was scheduled for June 26. In anticipation of the event a Celebrations Committee, which included Messrs B. Lipinski and F.C. Hollander, had been formed even before hostilities had ended.¹ However on June 25 Durban received the news of the King's illness and the postponement of the Coronation. All activities connected with the Coronation celebrations, including

¹The Natal Mercury, May 22, 1902, p.10.

the special synagogue service which had been set for June 29,² had to be cancelled, whilst the general Thanksgiving Service was made a Service of Intercession. A Jewish service of intercession was arranged by Mr. Louis Goldberg, the president of the Durban Zionist Association, in the Zionist Hall on June 26 and was conducted by Rev. Pincus and leading officials of the Association.³

The Coronation finally took place on Saturday August 9, and the local festivities offered the people of Durban a brief respite from the post war economic and social difficulties. On the day of the Coronation Rev. S. Pincus included in the regular Sabbath service a special commemoration service which was identical to that drawn up by the Chief Rabbi in England.⁴ The local celebrations included a luncheon given by the Mayor, Mr. J. Ellis Brown, to which Messrs B. Lipinski and F.C. Hollander were invited,⁵ as well as sports meetings, a country fair and a pyrotechnic display. A combined Masonic Service was held in the Town Hall on August 10, and amongst the officials complimented on the success of the ceremony were W. Bros. S. Solomon, P. Wartski and F.C. Hollander.⁶

²Ibid., June 26, 1902, p.9.

³Ibid., June 27, 1902, p.7.

⁴Ibid., August 11, 1902, p.9.

⁵Ibid., p.12.

⁶Ibid., p.6

A few months later the visit to the town by Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Mrs Chamberlain, afforded the residents of Durban another brief opportunity to forget the post war problems. When it had first become known that Chamberlain's trip to South Africa was to include a visit to Durban, the Town Council had set up a Committee consisting of the Mayor, the Council and a number of prominent citizens, including Mr. F.C. Hollander, to make all the necessary preparations.⁷ The Secretary of State for the Colonies and Mrs Chamberlain arrived in Durban on December 26, 1902. After being presented with an Address of Welcome from the Mayor and Town Council Mr. Chamberlain was the guest of honour at a public luncheon at the Marine Hotel, at which the company included a number of Jewish residents of the town.⁸ On the following evening at a reception given by the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr. and Mrs J. Ellis Brown, at their residence "Kinnoul" in Ridge Road, Mr. and Mrs Isaacs, Mr. and Mrs Israel, Mr. and Mrs B. Lipinski and Mr. and Mrs P. Wartski were amongst the guests who left their cards.⁹

Whilst Durban had been concerning itself with the visit of Chamberlain, in the Cape the Government had

⁷Ibid., November 7, 1902, p.7.

⁸Ibid., December 27, 1902, p.12.

⁹Ibid., December 29, 1902, p.10.

enacted the Cape Immigration Restriction Act (Act No.47 of 1902), in terms of which the definition of a prohibited immigrant came to include:

- a) Any person who when asked to do so by any duly authorised officer, shall be unable through deficient education to himself write out and sign, in the characters of some European language, an application to the satisfaction of the Minister.¹⁰

In consequence the status of Yiddish was brought into question, and only through the efforts of Rev. A.P. Bender and leading Jewish personalities in Cape Town and London were the Cape authorities persuaded to recognise Yiddish as a European language.¹¹

This Act was of importance to Durban Jewry since the new Immigration Restriction Act enacted in Natal, and published in September 1903, incorporated the educational requirement of the Cape Act.¹² During the Second Reading of the proposed Act the suggestion of Mr. Ancketill, a member for Durban, that Yiddish should be recognised as a European language, was passed over by the Colonial Secretary.¹³ When the Bill was taken into Committee Mr. Ancketill again requested that Yiddish be

¹⁰ Cited in Gustav Saron, "Jewish Immigration 1880-1913", in The Jews in South Africa A History, ed, Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz, (London, 1955), p.92.

¹¹ For a fuller account see Ibid., pp92-94.

¹² Acts of the Parliament of the Colony of Natal, Passed in the First Session of the Fourth Colonial Parliament 1903, Published by Times Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., (Pietermaritzburg, 1903), p.87.

¹³ The Natal Mercury, June 25, 1903, p.15.

recognised as a European language.¹⁴ He was supported by another member for Durban, Mr. Maydon, who, in an interview with Messrs P. Wartski, B. Shlom and S. Cohen had promised his support to obtain the recognition of Yiddish as a European language.¹⁵ Maydon's proposal that both the Yiddish and Finnish languages should be recognised as European languages was rejected by the House, as was the proposal by Mr. Schofield M.L.A. to include only Yiddish as an exception in the language clause, and the Bill was passed into law.¹⁶ The debate over Yiddish in the Legislative Assembly led to an exchange of ideas in the local press, in which both support and opposition to the recognition of Yiddish was expressed.¹⁷

The problems raised by the immigration acts, particularly in Natal, and other problems such as the difficulties encountered by East European immigrants in acquiring British citizenship, led to a realisation of the need for a Jewish representative body which could serve as spokesman for the Jewish community. On April 5, 1903, at the suggestion of Rabbi Hertz, a Board of Deputies, modelled on the London Committee of Deputies of British Jews was formed.¹⁸ At the Board's

¹⁴Ibid., June 27, 1903, p.14.

¹⁵London Jewish Chronicle, February 19, 1904, p.7.

¹⁶The Natal Mercury, June 27, 1903, p.14.

¹⁷See Ibid., July 1, 1903, p.13. and July 15, 1903, p.13.

¹⁸Gustav Saron, "The Long Road to Unity", in The Jews in South Africa, p.231.

first meeting it was agreed that the Board of Deputies should not be limited to Johannesburg, and it was decided to form a Jewish Board of Deputies of the Transvaal. When, a few weeks later, the Durban Hebrew Congregation and the Durban Zionist Association joined the Board of Deputies, the name was altered to that of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal. It is likely that since their own efforts to have Yiddish expressly recognised in the law were unsuccessful the Jews in Durban hoped to achieve a more positive response by working through the newly formed Board of Deputies. A constitution was drafted and the Durban Hebrew Congregation and the Durban Zionist Association, each with one delegate, were included amongst the eight institutions which were founder members of the Board. In about May 1903, it was arranged that S. Nathan of Pietermaritzburg, and P. Wartski and B. Shlom of Durban would form a sub-committee for Natal affairs.¹⁹

The Natal Board, of which P. Wartski was president and R. Levinsohn, hon. secretary,²⁰ concerned itself with the struggle to secure recognition of Yiddish as a European language. By constant agitation and repeated interviews²¹ Messrs P. Wartski and B. Shlom unsuccessfully sought to bring about a change in the status of Yiddish.

¹⁹For a fuller account see Ibid., pp.227-236.

²⁰The Natal Mercury, May 21, 1903, p.10.

²¹London Jewish Chronicle, February 19, 1904, p.7.

With the change in Government in Natal, and the appointment of Maydon as Colonial Secretary, it was hoped that some relief would be obtained for Yiddish speaking immigrants, who, owing to the severity of the Act and the uncompromising attitude of the Landing Officers, had been prevented from entering the Colony. However, apart from assurances of sympathy, Maydon only made vague promises to the two Jewish representatives.²²

In February 1904 Yiddish was recognised as a European language, and the events leading up to the change in attitude on the part of the authorities in Natal were recorded as follows

At the end of August 1903, the Rev. Dr. J. Hertz and Mr. H. Freeman Cohen met a number of Durban Jewish gentlemen in order to receive the report of an interview between Mr. Maydon the Natal Colonial Secretary and Messrs Wartski, Solomon and Sam Nathan. These gentlemen, representatives of Jewish interests in Natal, had been received with great courtesy by the Natal Minister, who admitted that difficulties then existed between the Landing Officer and Jewish emigrants. Those difficulties, the Colonial Secretary thought, were not so serious as to give rise to public agitation. He was satisfied that Yiddish was a European language, and he stated that information and instructions to that effect had been transmitted to the Landing Officer. The Colonial Secretary suggested that two Jewish representatives should be appointed with a view to assisting the Port officials in regard to cases of Jewish immigrants, and to give an assurance that any Jew wishing to land would become good citizens of the Colony of Natal, thus preventing the landing of undesirables (criminals). The Governor of Natal (Sir Henry Mc Cullum) also granted the Board's representatives an audience. Sir Henry practically reiterated the views made by the Colonial Secretary, and added that Yiddish had not been declared a non European language, and if the Board were prepared to take the necessary responsibility, the Landing Officer was instructed to assist as much as possible.

²²Ibid.

Eventually, Messrs Wartski and Shlom, of Durban, were appointed to superintend the landing of Jewish immigrants, and Mr. Sam Nathan was selected the Natal representative of the Board, with power to consult with Messrs Wartski and Shlom should occasion demand it. With the action of the Natal Government the last restrictions on immigration have been swept away...²³

The newspaper also explained the conditions which regulated the landing of aliens:

...Every immigrant must have the sum of five pounds in his possession, he must be able to read and write a European language (and the Jargon is recognised as such), and he must be possessed of good credentials. The presence of relatives in the Colonies, who are in fairly good circumstances, frequently dispenses with the last condition... The Rev. A. Levy has unrestricted access to every ship of that class arriving at the Port of Natal, and Mr. Shlom of Durban, is always ready to attend, whenever his assistance is required. No objection has been raised by the Landing Officer to either of those two gentlemen being present... It was on one occasion and one occasion only, that Jewish representatives were at first refused permission to board a vessel containing Jewish immigrants. A number of Jewish aliens had been declined permission to land at Cape Town, and, in consequence of this refusal, the captain was not allowed to land these people at Natal, whither the vessel had proceeded. It is but fair to mention that immigrants who are considered and treated as undesirables at Cape Town are classed as such in Durban also. Eventually however the Rev. A. Levy received permission to board this steamer and he had thus an opportunity to do what he could for our co-religionists...²⁴

The fact that the Natal authorities agreed to recognise Yiddish when approached by the Board of Deputies, whereas earlier they had refused a similar request, indicates one of the advantages that accrued from this organised reaction on the part of the Jews in Natal and the Transvaal.

²³Ibid., February 12, 1904, p.28.

²⁴Ibid., April 15, 1904, p.23.

The importance of the role played by the Board of Deputies in securing the recognition of Yiddish as a European language in Natal, was the subject of a rather protracted correspondence in the London Chronicle, between the newspaper's correspondent and Mr. Samuel Cohen, a former secretary of the Durban Zionist Association. Mr. Cohen argued that the Board of Deputies had by its interference in the question of immigration in Natal hindered rather than helped those in Natal, who had been working to secure the recognition of Yiddish as a European language. Furthermore he asserted that it was owing to the Board's interference that Colonial Secretary Maydon had initially acted in the non committal manner which he had.²⁵ Despite the correspondent's claim that his reports regarding the Board's activities had been confirmed by Mr. Wartski, and had been based on information from leading authorities in Natal and the Transvaal,²⁶ Mr. Cohen continued to deprecate the part played by the Board of Deputies.²⁷ This correspondence not only reflected differing views regarding the Board's role and importance, but through Cohen's attack on the Board, which he believed had been founded by those wishing "to overthrow the South African Zionist Federation",²⁸

²⁵Ibid., February 19, 1904, p.7.

²⁶Ibid., April 15, 1904, p.23.

²⁷Ibid., April 22, 1904, p.16.

²⁸Ibid.

and the correspondent's praise for the Board's achievements,²⁹ it highlighted the antagonism which initially existed amongst certain South African Zionists towards the Board.³⁰

This initial antagonism gradually died down, and in the case of Durban Jewry, it was the Durban Zionist Association which served as the link between the Board and Durban after the decision of the Hebrew Congregation to withdraw in 1905. The reason for the Durban Hebrew Congregation's decision to disassociate itself from the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal is unclear. It may possibly have been decided by the congregation to withdraw from the Board of Deputies once the refugee problem had been overcome and the status of Yiddish as a European language had been secured. The Congregation had been primarily concerned with the solution of these problems. Since, moreover the activities of the Board of Deputies were centred in the Transvaal, the Congregation might also have felt that its continued affiliation to the Board of Deputies was of little importance. Furthermore, at the second annual general meeting of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal, in July 1905 it was admitted that the organisation had not taken root and was receiving little support from the handful of

²⁹Ibid., July 8, 1904, p.32.

³⁰See also Gustav Saron, "The Long Road to Unity", in The Jews in South Africa, pp.231-234.

organisations of which it was composed.³¹

Whilst the Jews in Natal were experiencing difficulties with regard to the Immigration Restriction Act, their hardships were minimal when compared to the suffering of their Russian co-religionists. In 1903 Russia experienced a recrudescence of anti Semitism which culminated in the Kishineff pogrom.³² Stirred by the outrage committed against the Jews of Kishineff The Natal Mercury published a strongly worded editorial,³³ and protests were lodged by British Jews and the Anglo Jewish Association.³⁴

Durban Zionists expressed their indignation at the recurrence of anti Semitism in Russia at a meeting, held on June 7, in the Zionist Hall.³⁵ Two days later the Association issued an appeal, on behalf of the nationwide Kishineff Relief Fund, for donations towards relieving the victims of the anti Jewish riots.³⁶ Support for the fund was reflected in letters sent to the press by Jewish and Gentile correspondents,³⁷ and in the long list of subscribers, whose contributions ranged from one

³¹Ibid., p.243.

³²The Natal Mercury, May 18, 1903, p.4.

³³Ibid., May 20, 1903, p.9.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵London Jewish Chronicle, July 17, 1903, p.23.

³⁶The Natal Mercury, June 9, 1903, p.8.

³⁷Ibid., June 9, 1903, p.11 and June 22, 1903, p.10.

shilling to ten guineas.³⁸

In 1903 Jewish names were again found on requisitions addressed to candidates in the municipal elections.³⁹ Two years later Jews were afforded an opportunity to nominate a co-religionist as a candidate for election to the Town Council.⁴⁰ In winning the election in Ward 4, with a majority of thirty six,⁴¹ F.C. Hollander⁴² became the first Jew to serve on the Durban Town Council. He continued to represent this Ward until 1914. As a Town Councillor Hollander participated in the activities held in connection with visits to the town by prominent personalities. The first of these was Lord Selborne, the High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony who visited Durban in October 1905.⁴³ On February 27, 1906, the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and Princess Patricia paid a brief visit to Durban, and Councillor Hollander was among the dignitaries who waited on the railway station platform to meet the Royal Visitors.⁴⁴ The Duke, who was the

³⁸Ibid., August 8, 1903, p.13.

³⁹Ibid., August 1, 1903, p.8. and August 4, 1903, p.5.

⁴⁰See Hollander's requisition Ibid., July 17, 1905, p.3.

⁴¹Ibid., August 3, 1905, p.7.

⁴²See above p.113.

⁴³The Natal Mercury, October 15, 1905, p.5.

⁴⁴Ibid., February 28, 1906, p.2.

personal aide-de-camp to the King and Inspector General of the Forces, during his visit laid the foundation stone of the new Town Hall. Councillor Hollander was not only present at the Mayoral luncheon given in honour of the King's brother, but was also present at the "At Home" given by the Durban Light Infantry in honour of the Duke, who was the regiment's Colonel in Chief.⁴⁵ With the visit to the town on August 24, 1907 of the Crown Prince of Portugal, Don Luiz Filippe, Duke of Braganza, Hollander and his fellow Councillors found themselves occupied by the processions and luncheon which were held in honour of the Royal Visitor.⁴⁶

Whilst in Durban a Jew was enjoying the freedom offered under the British Crown, and was playing a part in the public life of the town, Hollander's co-religionists in Russia were once again suffering at the hands of anti Semitic mobs. The first reports of anti Jewish riots in 1905 told of bloodshed in Bialystok and Kishineff.⁴⁷ Later Jew baiting and murder spread to other towns in south and central Russia, but no where was it more terrible than in Odessa, where despite Jewish resistance,⁴⁸ large numbers were killed and wounded at the hands of hooligans and police who led the anti-Jewish

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., August 26, 1907, p.5.

⁴⁷Ibid., September 8, 1905, p.5.

⁴⁸Ibid., November 3, 1905, p.5.

and anti liberal riots.⁴⁹ As details of the extent of the pogroms became known⁵⁰ Jews at various centres in South Africa organised protest meetings⁵¹ and established branches of the relief fund which had been formed in London.⁵² Whilst the Jews of Cape Town, East London, Bloemfontein and the Rand were protesting against the Russian atrocities,⁵³ reports of renewed outbreaks of anti Jewish rioting continued to be received.⁵⁴

In Durban the Committee of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, at a meeting held on November 14, unanimously resolved to open subscription lists and to canvass the town for donations towards the relief fund.⁵⁵ The Natal Mercury not only encouraged its readers to aid the relief fund, it also agreed to receive subscriptions and to acknowledge all donations in its columns.⁵⁶ Within one week Mr. D.N. Henochsberg, the hon. treasurer of the Durban Russian Jewish Fund, was able to report

⁴⁹Ibid., November 6, 1905, p.5.

⁵⁰See Ibid., and November 7, 1905, p.7. and November 9, 1905, p.9.

⁵¹Ibid., November 14, 1905, p.7.

⁵²Ibid., November 8, 1905, p.9.

⁵³Ibid., November 14, 1905, p.7.

⁵⁴Ibid., November 17, 1905, p.5., November 22, 1905, p.7. and November 28, 1905, p.7.

⁵⁵Ibid., November 15, 1905, p.9.

⁵⁶Ibid., November 17, 1905, p.5. and November 18, 1905, p.9.

that £131 16s had been collected by the Durban Hebrew Congregation.⁵⁷ By November 30, when subscription lists were closed, the Durban Hebrew Congregation had collected an amount of £274 4s 3d, which included donations through the columns of The Natal Mercury.⁵⁸

The Mayor of Durban, Mr. Charlie Henwood, in compliance with a requisition requesting the use of the Town Hall for the purpose of a meeting to express sympathy with the Russian people, convened a public meeting of burgesses on Monday November 20 at 8 p.m.⁵⁹ The meeting was however abandoned in response to a second requisition which was prepared in the course of the day on which the meeting was to be held. The cancellation of the meeting was due to the disapproval by certain of the original requisitionists of one of the resolutions which was to be submitted to the meeting.⁶⁰ Those who brought about the cancellation were men who were opposed to a resolution submitted by the Durban Socialists,⁶¹ and were not members of the Jewish community, who had raised no objection to a resolution of sympathy for the Jewish victims of the Russian excesses being submitted after a resolution of sympathy

⁵⁷Ibid., November 22, 1905, p.7.

⁵⁸Ibid., December 13, 1905, p.8.

⁵⁹Ibid., November 18, 1905, p.5.

⁶⁰Ibid., November 21, 1905, p.7.

⁶¹South African Jewish Chronicle, November 24, 1905, p.760.

for the Russian people who had suffered during the unrest.⁶²

In consequence of the cancellation of the public meeting the Socialists, on the evening of November 20, organised an open air meeting before the Queen's Statue in the Town Gardens. At the meeting a resolution was adopted protesting against the action of the Mayor.⁶³

A public meeting arranged by the Socialists on December 6, in the Town Hall, for the purpose of expressing sympathy with the Russian people and the Jewish people of Russia had to be adjourned due to the poor attendance which was blamed on the unpropitious weather.⁶⁴ On December 21 the adjourned meeting was held in the Town Gardens, and resolutions expressing sympathy with the Russian people and indignation at the massacre of the Jews in Russia were unanimously carried.⁶⁵

On November 26, 1905, a service in memory of the Jews who lost their lives in the Russian unrest was held at the synagogue in St. Andrew's Street. Among those who thronged the synagogue for the service were Mr. Percy Binns, Chief Magistrate of Durban, representing the Prime Minister; the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr. and Mrs Charlie Henwood, representing the Borough; Sir David Hunter, Manager of the Natal Government Railways, the

⁶²The Natal Advertiser, November 21, 1905, p.5.

⁶³The Natal Mercury, November 21, 1905, p.7.

⁶⁴Ibid., December 7, 1905, p.7.

⁶⁵Ibid., December 23, 1905, p.15.

Rev. G.J. Aldridge and Rev. Alexander Francis (of St. Petersburg).

Upon the conclusion of the afternoon service, the recitation of the prayer for the King and Royal Family and the Haskarot in memory of the dead, Rev. Levy delivered an address, taking as his text Lamentations 1:12, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me".⁶⁶

At a meeting of Christian clergymen of Durban, convened by the Rev. A. Levy and chaired by Archdeacon Hammick, the clergy of the Christian denominations in Durban gave their unanimous support to a resolution expressing grief and horror at the outrages perpetrated on the Jewish communities of South Russia and the indiscriminate massacre of Jews of both sexes. They also appealed to the Metropolitans of the Russian Orthodox Church to bring the influence of their office to bear upon their clergy and congregations with a view to ending the outrages and preventing any recurrence of them. The churchmen of Durban not only resolved to forward copies of their resolutions to the Metropolitans of the Orthodox Church in Russia, but also agreed to send a letter to Father John of Cronstadt, the most powerful and influential man in Russia, asking him to intercede with the Russian people on the Jews' behalf. In accordance with a further resolution adopted at their meeting the clergymen decided to send letters to the

⁶⁶Ibid., November 27, 1905, p.5. and South African

three principal St. Petersburg newspapers asking them to publicise the meeting and urging them to insert articles sympathetic to the Jews. The clergymen also resolved that Rev. A. Levy should communicate the resolutions adopted at the meeting to the Jewish ministers in South Africa, so that similar meetings could be arranged throughout the country.⁶⁷

Whilst sympathy on the part of Christian ministers for the plight of Jews in Russia was manifest in the support given by the ministers of various Churches in Pretoria to the appeal of the Russian Massacre Relief Committee,⁶⁸ and in the participation of Bishop McSherry, Lord Bishop of the Diocese of Port Elizabeth, in a large protest meeting,⁶⁹ the meeting of clergymen in Durban seems to have been unique in that it was a meeting exclusively of Christian ministers. There is also no evidence to suggest that a similar meeting was convened elsewhere in South Africa.

Anti Jewish atrocities recurred in Russia in June 1906. Beginning in Bialystok⁷⁰ they spread to Odessa⁷¹ and Warsaw,⁷² and culminated in an appalling massacre

⁶⁷South African Jewish Chronicle, December 22, 1905, p.840.

⁶⁸The Natal Mercury, November 13, 1905, p.5.

⁶⁹Abraham Addleson, "In the Eastern Province", in The Jews in South Africa, p.309.

⁷⁰The Natal Mercury, June 18, 1906, p.7.

⁷¹Ibid., July 26, 1906, p.8.

⁷²Ibid., August 10, 1906, p.10.

at Siedlce.⁷³ To help those who were orphaned by the massacres a Russian Massacre Orphan Committee was set up in Johannesburg. An appeal for funds by the Committee's president, Alice Langermann, and treasurer, Samuel Goldreich, was directed to all the residents of Durban.⁷⁴

At the same time as Jews in Russia were dying for their faith, in Natal a Jew died for his country, in helping to quell the Bambata Rebellion which erupted in 1906. The rebellion, led by a minor chief, Bambata, was a manifestation of Zulu discontent over Natal's Native policy. The rebellion culminated on June 10, 1906, in a battle at Mome Gordge at which Bambata was killed and his men were defeated.⁷⁵ Among those who were wounded at the battle was Lieutenant Cyril George Marsden of Royston's Horse.⁷⁶ Marsden, the son of Rudolph Marsden of London, came to South Africa with the 1st Middlesex Scottish Horse Volunteers during the Anglo Boer War. Upon the conclusion of hostilities he returned to England but later decided to settle in South Africa.⁷⁷ Upon moving to Durban he

⁷³Ibid., September 12, 1906, p.7.

⁷⁴Ibid., September 10, 1906, p.6.

⁷⁵For a fuller account see Shula Marks, Reluctant Rebellion The 1906-1908 Disturbances in Natal (O.U.P., 1970).

⁷⁶The Natal Mercury, June 11, 1906, p.5.

⁷⁷Ibid., July 24, 1906, p.7.

became partner in the Post Office Hosiery and Supply Co. in Henwood's Arcade.⁷⁸ When the trouble arose in Natal, Marsden, a distinguished soldier who held the Queen's medal and four clasps and the King's medal and two clasps,⁷⁹ formed a troop and communicated with Colonel Royston, subsequently joining Royston's Horse and obtaining a commission.⁸⁰

First reports from Eshowe hospital, to which Marsden had been conveyed, led to hopes being entertained for his recovery.⁸¹ However Marsden's condition gradually deteriorated and on June 17, shortly after being transferred to the Addington Hospital in Durban, Marsden succumbed to his injuries.⁸² His death came as a shock to the residents of the town, and his impressive military funeral on June 18, was described, "as the most imposing that Durban has witnessed".⁸³ Large crowds congregated at principal points along the route which the funeral procession took on its way from the hospital to the Stellawood cemetery, and many business houses lowered their flags to half mast in tribute to the deceased.

⁷⁸South African Jewish Chronicle, June 22, 1906, p.671.

⁷⁹The Natal Mercury, June 18, 1906, p.9.

⁸⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, June 22, 1906, p.671.

⁸¹The Natal Mercury, June 15, 1906, p.8.

⁸²Ibid., June 18, 1906, p.9.

⁸³South African Jewish Chronicle, July 6, 1906, p.10.

The funeral service was conducted by the Rev. A. Levy in the presence of a large gathering which included Messrs P. Wartski, L. Goldberg, R. Goodman and R. Hanson who attended on behalf of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, Mr. S. Goldreich (of Johannesburg) and H. Lipinski, who represented the South African Zionist Federation, and Mr. P. Lazarus who represented the Durban Jewish Burial Board.⁸⁴

Less than a year later Rev. S. Pincus officiated at a service in connection with the unveiling of the memorial stone, erected by the Scottish Horse Volunteers Transvaal, in memory of Lieutenant Marsden. In the presence of the deceased brother, Mr. Claude E. Marsden, representatives of the Borough, the Volunteers, the Durban Hebrew Congregation and the Durban Jewish Burial Board the marble stone, surmounted by an urn encircled with flowers, was unveiled by Mr. P. Lazarus.⁸⁵

Further evidence of the increasingly active role which the Jewish community was coming to play in the public life of Durban in the post war period was demonstrated by the decision of C.P. Robinson,⁸⁶ in August 1906, to stand as a candidate in the General Elections for Durban County.⁸⁷ On August 30 Robinson

⁸⁴Ibid., The Natal Mercury, June 19, 1906, p.7. and The Natal Advertiser, June 19, 1906, p.5.

⁸⁵The Natal Mercury, April 18, 1907, p.7.

⁸⁶See above p.115.

⁸⁷The Natal Mercury, August 24, 1906, p.9.

addressed the electors at the first of a series of public meetings held at Bowkers.⁸⁸ This was followed by meetings at Sydenham on August 31, Malvern on September 1, Hillary on September 3, Bellair on September 4 and Pinetown and New Germany on September 5.⁸⁹ In his electoral speech at Bellair Robinson indicated that he regarded the problems of unification, redistribution of seats, the native question, finance and the agricultural and industrial development of the Colony as the principal matters of importance.⁹⁰ As the first step in the direction of federation in South Africa Robinson strongly favoured the amalgamation of Natal with the Transvaal, believing that such a step would have great benefits for both Colonies.⁹¹ In the two weeks immediately prior to election day Mr. Robinson addressed public meetings at Isipingo, Sea View, Sydenham and Krantz Kloof,⁹² and also attended a political demonstration in support of his candidature which took the form of a garden party at the South Coast junction home of Dr. Ross.⁹³ On September 18 Mr. Robinson, who received the highest number of votes was elected to the Legislative Assembly

⁸⁸Ibid., August 30, 1906, p.12.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid., September 5, 1906, p.9.

⁹¹Ibid. See also Ibid., September 6, 1906, p.9.

⁹²Ibid., September 6, 1906, p.3.

⁹³Ibid., September 17, 1906, p.5.

as one of the three members for Durban County.⁹⁴ He thereby became the second Jew to sit in the Legislative Assembly of Natal, the first having been Jonas Bergtheil almost fifty years earlier.⁹⁵

The General Election of 1906 also found a number of Jews actively engaged in seeking to secure the election of Mr. J.G. Maydon as a representative of the Borough. To this end committees, which included Jewish voters, were set up in different parts of the town, controlled by an Executive Committee which included Messrs B. Lipinski and F.C. Hollander.⁹⁶

The part played by Jews in the public life of this period was climaxed in 1907 by the appointment of Sir Matthew Nathan as Governor of Natal. He succeeded Sir Henry McCullum, who left the Colony in June 1907 to take up the post of Governor of Ceylon.

Matthew Nathan came from a distinguished Anglo-Jewish family. He and his brothers Frederick Louis and Nathaniel had earned knighthoods in the public service.⁹⁷ He was born in England in 1862. In 1880 he joined the Royal Engineers and served in the Nile Expedition, the Sudan and elsewhere. Ten years later he was made an officer responsible for administering the Government of

⁹⁴Ibid., September 19, 1906, p.7.

⁹⁵See above pp.36-39.

⁹⁶The Natal Mercury, September 8, 1906, p.5.

⁹⁷Ibid., January 19, 1907, p.6.

Sierra Leone, and in 1895 was appointed Secretary of the Colonial Defense Committee. Nathan was appointed Governor of the Gold Coast in 1900 and in 1903 was made Governor of Hong Kong.⁹⁸

Sir Matthew Nathan's appointment as Governor of Natal, was, on the whole widely acclaimed, although it did lead to an isolated anti Semitic outburst on the part of a resident of Estcourt who felt that the appointment of a Jew as Governor of a professedly Christian Colony was an insult to the Christian religion.⁹⁹

Upon his arrival in Durban on September 1, 1907, Sir Matthew Nathan was met at the jetty, which was specially decorated for the occasion, by a representative attendance of the people of the Colony. Among those who assembled at the quay were the Mayor of Durban, the Deputy Mayor, Town Councillors, including Mr. F.C. Hollander, Government representatives, members of the public service, representatives of the various consular services, leading citizens and Mr. C.P. Robinson, Mr. D.N. Henochsberg, Revs. S. Pincus and A. Levy, Mr. L. Hart and Mr. P. Wartski who represented the Durban Hebrew Congregation. Prior to his departure for Pietermaritzburg Sir Matthew Nathan was presented with a civic address by the Mayor of Durban,

⁹⁸From the personal recollections of Otto Ballin, in the Archives of the Council of Natal Jewry.

⁹⁹London Jewish Chronicle, May 31, 1907, p.22.

Mr Charlie Henwood.¹⁰⁰

On March 19, 1908, almost six months after the Governor's arrival, a deputation of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, consisting of the Revs. A. Levy and S. Pincus, Mr C.P. Robinson, president; Mr. D.N. Henochsberg, treasurer; Mr. L. Hart, secretary; Messrs P. Wartski and A. Simon, trustees; Messrs F.C. Hollander, R. Goodman, C. Sandemann, C.H. Blumenfeld and H. Brodie, committee; Messrs P. Lazarus and J. da Costa, president and treasurer respectively of the Burial Board; Messrs M. Hanreck and S. Lyons, treasurer and secretary of the Benevolent Society, attended at Kings House in order to present an address of welcome to Sir Matthew Nathan.

In presenting the address Rev. A. Levy described it as, "a humble tribute to the honour conferred and lustre shed upon the Jewish name by your elevation to the Governorship of this Colony of Natal".¹⁰¹ In his reply Sir Matthew apologised for having been unable to receive the address at an earlier date and extended his thanks for having been made the hon. president of the Durban Hebrew Congregation upon his arrival.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ The Natal Mercury, September 2, 1907, p.5. and South African Jewish Chronicle, September 6, 1907, 201-204.

¹⁰¹ London Jewish Chronicle, April 17, 1908, pp.9-10.

¹⁰² For a fuller account of the presentation see The Natal Mercury, March 21, 1908, p.9.

Whilst Jews were admirably fulfilling their public duties, antagonism towards Jews, even at the highest level, did not disappear entirely and was in fact demonstrated in the Legislative Assembly. During the second reading of the Indian Licences Stoppage Bill, Mr. Wylie, a member for Durban Borough, in declaring his support for the Bill urged that it be extended to include, "Polish and other low class Jews", who, in his opinion were, "just as undesirable as Indians and Asiatics".¹⁰³ He was supported by Mr. O'Meara, a member for Pietermaritzburg County, who wanted to see the Bill extended, "to include such people as Peruvian Jews, who were the most undesirable class of people".¹⁰⁴ Both men were castigated for their statements by the public, which regarded them as out of keeping with the British ideal of liberty.¹⁰⁵

The ill feelings which such statements must have created were more than adequately offset by the elevation of F.C. Hollander to the position of Deputy Mayor. At the Council Elections, held on August 8, 1908, Mr. R. Jameson, in moving that Councillor Hollander be appointed as deputy mayor described Hollander as, "a man who had come to be recognised as one of singular

¹⁰³Ibid., July 16, 1908, p.9.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., July 23, 1908, p.11. and July 30, 1908, p.11.

activity".¹⁰⁶ His words were echoed by Mr. Walter Greenacre who seconded Hollander's appointment.¹⁰⁷

In his new office Hollander helped to entertain the delegates who gathered in Durban, in October 1908, to participate in the first session of the National Convention, which culminated two years later in the Union of South Africa. At the opening of the National Convention in the Town Hall, on October 12, Sir Matthew Nathan addressed the delegates and welcomed them on behalf of the Government of Natal. In his short speech he outlined the scheme which South Africa was looking to the Convention to devise and he left them to their deliberations, "in the profound hope that, under Divine Guidance, they will lead to the creation of a great United South Africa and thereby add strength and lustre to the British Empire".¹⁰⁸

Among the social activities which coincided with the Convention was a garden party given by the Governor at Kings House on October 15, in honour of the members of the National Convention, and of Sir Percy Scott and the officers of the naval squadron which had journeyed from Britain to Durban in honour of the event. At the same time the "At Home" afforded the residents of the town an opportunity to meet Lord Selborne, the High Commissioner for South Africa, who was a guest of Sir Matthew. A

¹⁰⁶Ibid., August 10, 1908, p.5.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., October 13, 1908, p.8.

number of Jews were amongst the many townsmen who made up what was estimated to be the largest gathering ever seen at a Kings House "At Home".¹⁰⁹ Councillor Hollander was also present at Sir Matthew's unveiling of the memorial to Sir John Robinson, Natal's first Prime Minister, in the Town Gardens,¹¹⁰ on October 17.

After the deliberations at the National Convention were concluded there were still those who were in favour of Natal remaining outside the Union. Others, opposed to this idea, and in support of the Draft Act, formed themselves into the Durban Closer Union Society. Of the one hundred and ninety three members of the General Committee of the Society, C.P. Robinson, M.L.A., K. Gundelfinger, B.G. Goldberg, P. Wartski, H. Lipinski, Z. Meyers, L. Goldberg and M. Kantrovitch were drawn from the Jewish community.¹¹¹ The work of the Society reached a satisfactory conclusion when the voters of Natal accepted Union.

In August 1909 notification of Sir Matthew Nathan's appointment as Secretary to the Post Office was received in Durban,¹¹² and the impending departure of the Governor saddened all the residents of the Colony especially the Jewish community with which he had constantly identified. Sir Matthew Nathan had not

¹⁰⁹Ibid., October 16, 1908, p.6.

¹¹⁰Ibid., October 18, 1908, p.8.

¹¹¹Ibid., June 7, 1909, p.6.

¹¹²Ibid., August 18, 1909, p.6.

only served as the hon. president of the Durban Hebrew Congregation but had also over the Festivals attended services at the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue. It is interesting to note that because of the distance from Kings House to the synagogue he used to travel by carriage, alighting about a mile from St. Andrew's Street and walking the rest of the distance.¹¹³ Sir Matthew Nathan had contributed to the funds of the Synagogue, the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society and the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild.¹¹⁴ He had also extended his patronage to the July Balls arranged by the Ladies' Guild in 1908 and 1909.¹¹⁵ In 1908 he had opened the Grand Exhibition and Fête held under the auspices of the Durban Jewish Communal League.¹¹⁶

The first Mayoral function given in the new art gallery, in the as yet uncompleted Town Hall, was a social evening held on November 30, 1909, in honour of the Governor. Those who were invited by the Mayor, Mr. Walter Greenacre, including Mr. and Miss Ebstein, Mr. and Mrs F.C. Hollander, Rev. and Mrs A. Levy, Mr. and Mrs C.P. Robinson and Miss Stern, were afforded an opportunity of bidding Sir Matthew farewell, and of

¹¹³From the file on F.C. Hollander Archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

¹¹⁴London Jewish Chronicle, November 15, 1907, p.12.

¹¹⁵The Natal Mercury, July 10, 1908, p.10. and July 7, 1909, p.8.

¹¹⁶Ibid., July 7, 1908, p.10.

examining the various galleries and displays.¹¹⁷

On December 22 at a public meeting, which was held around the Queen's Statue, a farewell address, signed by the Mayor and Town Clerk, was presented on behalf of the residents of Durban to the retiring Governor, who was soon to leave Natal.¹¹⁸ After the civic function at the Town Gardens Sir Matthew Nathan proceeded to the Council Chamber in the new Municipal Buildings. After participating in a function in connection with the Durban branch of the Loyal Women's Guild he was the recipient of an illuminated address from the Guild.¹¹⁹ A further presentation was made on the same day at the Marine Hotel. Representatives of the Durban Church Council called on Sir Matthew to accept a letter of farewell from the Council.¹²⁰ The feelings of the people of Durban towards the Governor were summed up by the editor of The Natal Mercury who noted that, "we are one and all sincerely sorry to have to say good-bye to Sir Matthew Nathan".¹²¹

The first public duty performed in Durban by Lord Methuen, the successor to Sir Matthew Nathan and the last Governor of Natal, was the opening of the new Town

¹¹⁷Ibid., December 1, 1909, p.10.

¹¹⁸Ibid., December 23, 1909, p.11.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Ibid., p.9.

Hall. Among those invited to be present during the opening ceremony on April 12, 1910, were a number of prominent Jewish townsmen. Mr. P. Wartski, who interestingly was an official representative of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, K. Gundelfinger, C.P. Robinson and Councillor F.C. Hollander were amongst the guests invited to the official luncheon held after the ceremony in the new Public Library Rooms.¹²²

The anticipation and excitement which preceeded Union Day was dampened by the news of the illness and subsequent death of Edward VII on May 6.¹²³ When on May 7, news of the King's passing was received at the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue the usual Sabbath morning service was amplified to include a special prayer for the deceased monarch and the ordinary prayer for the Royal Family was altered to include the new Sovereign.¹²⁴ The Durban New Hebrew Congregation, after a special committee meeting at which a resolution expressing the sympathy of the Congregation was unanimously adopted, held a special memorial service at which memorial prayers were offered for the late king.¹²⁵ The members of the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society at their Society's half yearly meeting on May 8, unanimously

¹²²Ibid., April 13, 1910, p.9.

¹²³Ibid., May 7, 1910, p.9. and May 9, 1910, p.7.

¹²⁴Ibid., May 10, 1910, p.6.

¹²⁵Ibid.

resolved to send a separate message of sympathy to the bereaved Royal Family.¹²⁶ As plans were laid for services to be held on May 20, to coincide with the funeral at Windsor, all entertainment and public activity in Durban including a lecture by the Rev. Pedr. Williams to the Durban Jewish Social and Literary Society, was cancelled.¹²⁷ Whilst services were arranged in the local Anglican churches, at Lords' Ground and in the Town Hall, the two congregations of the Jewish community of Durban organised special memorial services. The Durban New Hebrew Congregation held a service at the temporary synagogue in Union Buildings, West and Pine Streets, at which Rev. Hoffenberg's sermon dwelt upon the great kindness shown towards the Jews by the late monarch.¹²⁸ At a similar service held by the Durban Hebrew Congregation in the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue the Rev. S. Pincus read special prayers and delivered an appropriate sermon and Councillor Hollander recited a special prayer and the prayer for the Royal Family.¹²⁹

However not even the mourning for the King could dampen the enthusiasm with which the Union of South

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid., p.4.

¹²⁸Ibid., May 23, 1910, p.6.

¹²⁹South African Jewish Chronicle, June 3, 1910, p.817.

Africa was welcomed on May 31. In the immediate post Union period one finds much political activity in which Jews were active at all levels.

At the annual Council elections on August 6, 1910, Councillor F.C. Hollander was unanimously elected to the position of Mayor of Durban.¹³⁰ In extending congratulatory wishes the editor of The Natal Mercury noted that, "...Mr. Hollander has earned the distinction conferred upon him by able, zealous, and conscientious work as a Councillor..."¹³¹

The Corporation Sunday service held on August 21, 1910, in the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue was the first mayoral service to have been held in a Jewish place of worship. Rabbi Dr. J.H. Hertz who had journeyed from Johannesburg specially for the occasion, by the inspiring sermon which he delivered ensured that the service was of a most impressive character.¹³²

On September 15, less than a month after Hollander's appointment as Mayor, C.P. Robinson, who stood for the Unionist Party in the Umbilo Division of Durban, was elected as a member of the first Union Parliament.¹³³ Robinson's campaign in furtherance of his candidature had begun as early as June 1910.¹³⁴ Although hampered

¹³⁰The Natal Mercury, August 8, 1910, p.7.

¹³¹Ibid., p.6.

¹³²Ibid., August 22, 1910, p.8.

¹³³Ibid., September 16, 1910, p.5.

¹³⁴Ibid., June 4, 1910, p.8.

by serious illness, by early September Robinson had gained sufficient strength to resume his campaign. His recovery and his suitability for the position had also been the subject of a lengthy newspaper editorial,¹³⁵ and his election was widely welcomed.

A few days after Robinson's victory in Umbilo, a young Jewish lawyer, Morris Kantrovitch¹³⁶ began his campaign on behalf of the Unionist Party, in the hope that he would be elected to the Provincial Council for the West Street Division.¹³⁷ Morris Kantrovitch was unsuccessful in his first bid to achieve public office, and on October 2, his rival, Mr. J.R. Whyte, was elected by a majority of three hundred and fifty.¹³⁸

As the Mayor of Durban F.C. Hollander was called upon to entertain the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and

¹³⁵Ibid., September 3, 1910, p.9.

¹³⁶Born in Russia in 1881 Kantrovitch had been raised in Sunderland, England, where his parents had settled when he was a child. After his studies at St. Andrew's University he had sought to follow his parents to South Africa, where his father had become minister to the Jewish community of Vryheid. Arriving in Cape Town in 1900 Kantrovitch had been prevented by the war from proceeding northwards, and had been forced to return to England. Towards the end of the war he had managed to journey to Durban. (From the file on Morris Kentridge. Archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.) Upon his arrival in the town he immediately became active within the Jewish community, and more particularly in the work of the Durban Zionist Association. (See above

¹³⁷The Natal Mercury, September 23, 1910, p.6.

¹³⁸Ibid., October 3, 1910, p.6.

Strathearn and Princess Patricia, who came to South Africa to officiate at the formal opening of the first Union Parliament on November 4, 1910. Copies of the medal which was struck by command of the King to commemorate the opening of the Union Parliament by the Duke were later presented to Mr. and Mrs F.C. Hollander.¹³⁹

When news was first received of the proposed Royal Visit to Durban on December 2 and 3 a call was made for subscriptions to pay for street decorations. Many Jewish business houses were amongst those who responded to this appeal.¹⁴⁰ Members of the Jewish community took a prominent part in the festivities connected with the visit. Not only were they amongst those favoured at the ceremony in the Town Hall with seats on the reserved platform, they were also represented at the official luncheon held at the Marine Hotel,¹⁴¹ and were amongst those invited to the reception given by the Durban Light Infantry in honour of the visitors.¹⁴² At the official dinner given by the Duke of Connaught on the Balmoral Castle, Councillor Hollander was presented by the Duke with a souvenir of the Royal Visit in the form of a suitably engraved loving cup.¹⁴³

¹³⁹Ibid., December 6, 1910, p.7.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., November 25, 1910, p.6.

¹⁴¹London Jewish Chronicle, January 6, 1911, p.9.

¹⁴²The Natal Mercury, December 3, 1910, p.12.

¹⁴³Ibid., December 6, 1910, p.7.

The Mayor was also responsible for arranging the celebrations held in Durban in connection with the Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary, on June 22, 1911. The celebrations, which extended over two days, included a military exhibition for the Native population, a military tournament at Lord's Grounds, a Children's Demonstration and Thanksgiving Services in the various churches, as well as at the two synagogues. The service at the Durban New Hebrew Congregation's synagogue in Grey Street was conducted by the Rev. Hoffenberg, who preached the Coronation Day sermon.¹⁴⁴ At the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue the Rev. Mr. Pincus of the Durban Hebrew Congregation conducted the service, which was identical to that drawn up by the Chief Rabbi Dr. Adler.¹⁴⁵

The Coronation celebrations brought Hollander into conflict with the Indian community which was refused permission to participate freely in the public activities. The Indians insisted that the long established tradition of allowing their community to participate in public functions such as those held on June 22 was being breached by Hollander. The Mayor in turn argued that he could not allow the Indians the unmolested right of entry and participation in all the European functions.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴Ibid., June 24, 1911, p.11.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., June 23, 1911, p.9., June 24, 1911, p.10. and June 27, 1911, p.9.

In a letter to the press, in which he sought to justify his actions, Hollander explained that the Indians had rejected his proposals by which he had hoped to avert a dispute. He continued by suggesting that his action, in denying the Indians unrestricted participation in all the European functions, would "have the approval and support of the entire white community of the town".¹⁴⁷ Hollander appears to have been incorrect in his assumption, for in an editorial which was published in The Natal Mercury, he and the Municipal authorities were taken to task for their treatment of the Indian community.¹⁴⁸

Hollander was further criticised following the publication of an editorial in the London Jewish Chronicle. In the editorial, which dealt with cruelty towards the negroes in Rhodesia and America, a call was made on the Jews, who were themselves familiar with discrimination and cruelty, to be amongst the first to protest against the persecution of other races.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷Ibid., June 24, 1911, p.10.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., June 12, 1911, p.10.

¹⁴⁹London Jewish Chronicle, August 25, 1911, p.6.

This editorial prompted Mr. Henry S.L. Polak¹⁵⁰ to relate the treatment which Mr. Hollander had meted out to the Indian community who had wished to participate in the Coronation celebrations, and to describe the participation of Jews in the anti Indian agitation in South Africa.¹⁵¹ Polak was taken to task for his outspoken criticism of the attitude of certain Jews towards the Indian population,¹⁵² and this led to a rather protracted correspondence between Polak and his critic D. Greenberg.¹⁵³

In 1911 F.C. Hollander was not only returned unopposed as a councillor for Ward IV,¹⁵⁴ but was also re-elected Mayor of Durban.¹⁵⁵ On August 21, 1911 Corporation Sunday service was conducted before a large

¹⁵⁰Polak, who had settled in South Africa in 1903, came to be actively involved in the campaign to secure rights for Indians domiciled in South Africa. As Mahatma Gandhi's secretary he was closely connected with the passive resistance movement. In the interest of the movement, and the Indians of South Africa he travelled widely (Ibid., September 5, 1913, p.4.) Until he left South Africa, in 1916, Polak remained a dedicated worker in the cause of Indian rights. He was a leading personality in the 1913 passive resistance campaign against the Immigration Act, and was in fact charged with inciting Indians to break the law. (The Natal Mercury, November 12, 1913, p.7., November 18, 1913, p.13. and November 24, 1913, p.11.)

¹⁵¹London Jewish Chronicle, September 1, 1911, p.21.

¹⁵²Ibid., September 8, 1911, p.20.

¹⁵³Ibid., September 22, 1911, p.28., October 6, 1911, p.19., October 19., October 13, 1911, p.24. and October 20, 1911, p.24.

¹⁵⁴The Natal Mercury, July 25, 1911, p.6.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., August 7, 1911, p.8.

and representative congregation in the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue. Rabbi Dr. Hertz delivered the sermon, taking as his text Deuteronomy XVI:18-20, "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in thy gates..." and XVII:14-20.¹⁵⁶ The high esteem in which Hollander was held by his fellow councillors was reflected in a framed and illuminated resolution which was presented to him, on September 7, as a token of the Town Council's appreciation of his services as mayor.¹⁵⁷

A less successful aspirant for municipal honours was Morris Kantrovitch who stood as a Labour Party candidate in Ward 1, in the Municipal Elections of 1912.¹⁵⁸ Although Kantrovitch was not elected to the Town Council,¹⁵⁹ he was appointed chairman of the Durban Jewish Immigration Board.¹⁶⁰ In 1911 the Government had set about drafting uniform legislation for the whole country, to replace the separate laws of the different provinces. Jewish dissatisfaction with the 1911 Immigrants Restriction Bill and the revised Bill of 1912, particularly the exclusion of a clause acknowledging Yiddish to be a European language,

¹⁵⁶Ibid., August 29, 1911, p.10.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., September 8, 1911, p.7.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., July 16, 1912, p.8.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., August 8, 1912, p.9.

¹⁶⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, February 23, 1912, p.123.

prompted Jews in different parts of South Africa to urge the Government to change the Bill. The Board, which was formed in 1911,¹⁶¹ consisting of representatives of the Durban and Durban New Hebrew Congregations, the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society and the Durban Zionist Association served as the mouthpiece for Durban Jewry in matters relating to immigration. In 1912, for example, the Board forwarded a resolution to the Government urging that Yiddish be expressly recognised as a European language in the Immigration Bill.¹⁶²

The need for united action on the part of all South African Jewry in dealing with objectionable aspects of the Immigration Bills no doubt prompted the Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal and the Cape Board of Deputies to agree to a meeting in Bloemfontein on August 6-12, 1912. From this meeting emerged the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. At the meeting two of the forty five Hebrew congregations that were represented were from Natal.¹⁶³ It would seem therefore that the question of immigration restriction had prompted the Durban Hebrew Congregation to reaffiliate itself to the Board of Deputies. At the meeting in Bloemfontein Messrs M. Langermann and H.J. Brook served

¹⁶¹Ibid., June 30, 1911, p.648.

¹⁶²Ibid., February 23, 1912, p.123.

¹⁶³Gustav Saron, "The Long Road to Unity", in The Jews in South Africa, p.264.

as the Congregation's delegates.¹⁶⁴ Messrs F.C. Hollander and L. Hart were chosen at the meeting to serve on the Board's Executive Council and to look after the interests of Natal.¹⁶⁵

When, in 1913 the Government brought forward a revised Immigration Bill, which was enacted into law, an education test which expressly recognised Yiddish as a European language was included in the Act.¹⁶⁶ The inclusion of Yiddish in the Act was welcomed by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, and by the members of the different organisations in Durban which had prior to the Board's foundation worked through the Durban Jewish Immigration Board to achieve the same objective.

In August 1912 Hollander was unanimously re-elected Mayor for a third term of office.¹⁶⁷ For the third successive year the synagogue in St. Andrew's Street was the venue of a Corporation Sunday service at which the Rev. A.P. Bender of Cape Town delivered the sermon.¹⁶⁸ When, at the end of his Mayoralty, Hollander presented his last Mayor's Minute, great tribute was paid to him for the manner in which he had carried out his numerous

¹⁶⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, August 9, 1912, p.89.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., August 23, 1912, p.119.

¹⁶⁶The Natal Mercury, April 9, 1913, p.8.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., August 12, 1912, p.8.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., August 26, 1912, p.9.

duties.¹⁶⁹ Upon handing the Mayoralty over to Mr. William Holmes, Hollander did not withdraw from public life. He continued to serve his ward, to which he had been returned unopposed in July 1913.¹⁷⁰ As president of the United Municipal Association of South Africa he presided at the annual meeting of the Association which was held in Bloemfontein on November 17.¹⁷¹ In 1914 F.C. Hollander was elected unopposed as the Provincial Councillor for the Florida Division.¹⁷² At the opening session of the Provincial Council, on March 11, Hollander was elected to the Executive Committee of the Council.¹⁷³ In consequence Hollander reluctantly submitted his resignation to the Town Council.¹⁷⁴ Upon his resignation from the Town Council Hollander could reflect with pride on his nine years of office in the Town Council. During that period he had held the chair of some of the most important committees including the Finance, Electricity and Beach and Musical Committees, and as Mayor had presided over many historic occasions.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁹Ibid., August 6, 1913, p.9.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., July 29, 1913, p.8.

¹⁷¹Ibid., November 18, 1913, p.8.

¹⁷²Ibid., February 3, 1914, p.7.

¹⁷³Ibid., March 12, 1914, p.7.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., March 25, 1914, p.5.

¹⁷⁵From the file of F.C. Hollander, Archives of South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

The elections for the Provincial Council saw another Jew, in the person of Mr. Karl Gundelfinger,¹⁷⁶ elected as representative for Congella. His campaign in the Congella division began in July 1913.¹⁷⁷ Believing that Provincial Councillors should have no connection with party politics Gundelfinger stood as an independent. At the first meeting called by supporters of his candidature he justified his independent stand and his opposition to bilingual teaching in Natal, and called for the construction and maintenance of roads in the province.¹⁷⁸ Karl Gundelfinger was elected a member of the Provincial Council on February 19, 1914,¹⁷⁹ in what must have been one of the first electoral campaigns in Natal to be marked by extensive press advertising and the use of eye catching slogans.¹⁸⁰ Morris Kentridge was a third member of the Jewish community to be elected to the Provincial Council. Under the name Kantrovitch, which he changed by deed poll in 1912¹⁸¹ Kentridge had, in 1910, unsuccessfully sought election, as a Unionist

¹⁷⁶Gundelfinger who was born in Germany in 1873 came to South Africa in 1888, and became a prominent Durban businessman. (From the personal recollections of Otto Ballin, Archives of the Council of Natal Jewry.)

¹⁷⁷The Natal Mercury, July 25, 1913, p.6.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., July 29, 1913, p.12.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., February 20, 1914, p.10.

¹⁸⁰See Ibid., February 4, 1914, p.6., February 13, 1914, p.6. and February 17, 1914, p.6.

¹⁸¹Ibid., October 22, 1912, p.6.

candidate, for the Provincial Council.¹⁸² In 1914, as a candidate for the Labour Party, Kentridge won election in the Greyville division, defeating his Unionist rival by seventy three votes.¹⁸³

Kentridge and Gundelfinger soon came to clash in a Parliamentary bye-election, held in consequence of the death of Sir David Hunter, the Member of Parliament for Durban Central. The election was fought between the Unionist candidate, Mr. Johnstone, the Labour candidate, Kentridge, and Gundelfinger, who stood as an independent. Gundelfinger, campaigning on a moderate ticket, in his manifesto called for a coalition of moderates, combining the best elements of the British and Dutch races in the Union.¹⁸⁴ Kentridge, on the other hand, stood as an opponent of the Government's policy, which he believed was embodied in the platform of the Unionist and Independent candidates.¹⁸⁵ The election was hard fought and resulted in Kentridge being elected the Member of Parliament for Durban Central.¹⁸⁶ On the same day as the election Austria declared war on Serbia,¹⁸⁷ thereby precipitating the outbreak of the First World War.

¹⁸²See above p.353.

¹⁸³The Natal Mercury, February 20, 1914, p.10.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., July 1, 1914, p.7.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., July 15, 1914, p.12.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., July 29, 1914, p.11.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., p.9.

CHAPTER X

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND THE WAR EFFORT

Even before Britain's entry into the war a letter appeared in the press seeking to cast doubt on Jewish loyalty and patriotism.¹ Whilst letters from a number of Jewish townsmen affirmed the Jews' loyalty to the cause of the Empire,² the active part which Durban Jewry played in every branch of the war effort was no doubt the clearest indication of its loyalty and patriotism.

The declaration of war between Germany and England having been formally announced,³ a Great Patriotic Meeting organised by a number of prominent citizens was

¹The Natal Mercury, August 5, 1914, p.7.

²Ibid., August 6, 1914, p.9., August 8, 1914, p.11. and August 13, 1914, p.7.

³Ibid., August 6, 1914, p.7.

convened in the Town Hall on August 15. C.P. Robinson, one of the convenors of the meeting, was also the sponsor of a resolution which pledged Durban's support for any action undertaken for the safety and welfare of the people of the Empire.⁴

In the weeks immediately following the outbreak of war numerous funds were launched to prepare for the war effort. One of the first of those funds was the Mayor's War Relief Fund. Opened on August 13, it attracted support from all sectors of the population. Many individual Jews made their contribution to the Fund,⁵ which also benefitted from donations from the Durban Hebrew School⁶ and from a collection held after the Chanukah service at the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue.⁷ Part of the proceeds of the Ladies' Guild's 1915 July Ball were also donated to the Mayor's War Relief Fund.⁸ The appeal for funds for the Natal Light Horse met with an equally generous response from members of the Jewish community.⁹

⁴Ibid., August 17, 1914, p.7.

⁵Ibid., and August 19, 1914, p.5., August 20, 1914, p.7., August 21, 1914, p.5., August 22, 1914, p.9., August 24, 1914, p.7., August 25, 1914, p.9., August 28, 1914, p.6., August 29, 1914, p.11. and September 17, 1914, p.5.

⁶Ibid., September 9, 1914, p.7.

⁷South African Jewish Chronicle, January 29, 1915, p.70.

⁸The Natal Mercury, July 16, 1915, p.8.

⁹Ibid., August 24, 1914, p.7., August 28, 1914, p.5., August 29, 1914, p.4.

Upon the invasion of Union territory by troops from German South West Africa soldiers throughout South Africa were mobilised to repulse the enemy. Members of the 1st Brigade of the Durban Light Infantry were amongst the first to be called up for service.¹⁰ Included in their ranks were I. Hanreck¹¹ and D. Kentridge.¹² Cyril Lazarus of B. Squadron, Natal Light Horse was injured during the engagement at Keimoes.¹³ Other Durban Jews who are known to have participated in the fighting in South West Africa, which ended with the German Act of Surrender on July 9, 1915,¹⁴ were S.C. Lazarus,¹⁵ and L. Lynes¹⁶ who fought with the 2nd Battalion of the Durban Light Infantry, W. Israel¹⁷ and A. Isaacs.¹⁸

Whilst some Durban Jews were participating in the conquest of South West Africa, others, wishing to contribute to the civil defence of the town, met in the Alexandra Hall on October 20, 1914, to form the

¹⁰Ibid., August 22, 1914, p.9.

¹¹Ibid., December 4, 1915, p.13.

¹²Ibid., September 30, 1915, p.10.

¹³Ibid., October 27, 1914, p.8.

¹⁴Ibid., July 12, 1915, p.7.

¹⁵Ibid., July 20, 1916, p.5.

¹⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, July 23, 1915, p.142.

¹⁷Ibid., April 30, 1915, p.289.

¹⁸The Natal Mercury, April 26, 1918, p.10.

Durban Jewish Rifle Corps.¹⁹ Mr. M. Kentridge in opening the meeting explained that, "the proposal to have a Jewish corps arose in order to prevent Jews having to drill and shoot on certain days".²⁰ At the conclusion of the meeting ninety five men enrolled in the corps of which Mr. M. Kentridge was appointed chairman, Mr. Lionel Hart, treasurer; Mr. Mendell Jacobson, secretary; Messrs George Hollander, Harry Lipinski, H.T. Turner, H. Blumenfeld, Marcus Stiller, M. Lewis and Samuel Lyons, committee.²¹ Under their leader Louis Emanuel the Corps held parades on Monday and Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings.²² Having achieved proficiency in marching and batallion drill the Corps was permitted to fall in with the Natal Coast Batallion on December 10, 1914.²³

To stimulate interest in the Corps, which after only two months had a strength of one hundred and fifteen,²⁴ the committee arranged a smoking concert at the Royal Hotel on January 9, 1915.²⁵ At the concert which was attended by several military officers, Mr. C.P. Robinson

¹⁹Ibid., October 20, 1914, p.4.

²⁰Ibid., October 21, 1914, p.9.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., November 18, 1914, p.7. and November 25, 1914, p.5.

²³Ibid., December 7, 1914, p.10.

²⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, January 15, 1915, p.44.

²⁵...

and the Revs. Kay, Pincus and Rubin, a number of toasts were submitted and entertainment was provided by many local artistes.²⁶

In June 1915 the Durban Jewish Rifle Corps was accorded Government recognition by the announcement that as Defence Rifle Association No.744 it was to be allotted to the Berea Commando. Louis Emanuel was appointed Field Cornet of the Jewish Rifle Association and Mendell Jacobson and Charles Meyer were made assistant field cornets.²⁷

The war in South West Africa having been brought to a successful conclusion, attention now came to be directed to the fighting in Europe and German East Africa. On August 14, 1915, a meeting was held at the Town Hall to foster recruiting in Durban for the South African Overseas Expeditionary Force. Mr. F.C. Hollander was among the dignitaries who attended the meeting, and who were given special seats on the platform.²⁸

In response to the call for volunteers large numbers of young men presented themselves at the recruiting office. Among those selected for service were B.L. Emanuel, E.S. Henochsberg, E. Kahn and J.B. Lewin,²⁹

²⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, January 15, 1914, p.44.

²⁷The Natal Mercury, June 3, 1915, p.4.

²⁸Ibid., August 16, 1915, p.5.

²⁹Ibid., August 18, 1915, p.9.

M. Saphir,³⁰ S.D. Benson, I. Hanreck, J. Levy,³¹ J. Emanuel, N.R. Tait,³² Gower and Lotz.³³ Of the above mentioned Second Lieutenant Max Saphir, whose gallantry won him the Military Cross, died in action on March 28, 1918,³⁴ whilst I. Hanreck was injured in battle³⁵ and J. Emanuel was interned as a prisoner of war.³⁶

To stimulate interest in the Overseas Contingent meetings were held on November 23, 25, 26 and 29.³⁷ As a result of these meetings additional troops were recruited including E. Glazer, H.J. Hahn, S.J. Harris, A. Schafer, V.J. Wartski, D. Sandler³⁸ and L. Gothel.³⁹ As the recruiting campaign, in which Hollander played a prominent part, progressed,⁴⁰ so the number of Durban volunteers increased. Before the end of the year

³⁰Ibid., August 19, 1915, p.10.

³¹Ibid., August 21, 1915, p.11.

³²Ibid., August 23, 1915, p.9.

³³Ibid., November 19, 1915, p.10.

³⁴Ibid., April 18, 1918, p.8.

³⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, April 27, 1917, p.278.

³⁶The Natal Mercury, August 22, 1916, p.5.

³⁷Ibid., November 20, 1915, p.8. and November 25, 1915, p.6.

³⁸Ibid., November 26, 1915, p.10.

³⁹South African Jewish Chronicle, November 26, 1915, p.506.

⁴⁰Ibid., December 10, 1915, p.551.

J. Phillips, P.M. Hyams and E. Tayfield had signed up for service.⁴¹ Private Emanuel Tayfield was later wounded in battle,⁴² whilst his colleague P.M. Hyams died in September 1917 from wounds received at Flanders.⁴³

As recruiting was under way in Durban news was received from England that J.G. Aronson of Durban, who had been in a training college at Cheltenham, had been granted a commission in the Flying Corps.⁴⁴

In January 1916 B.S. Wartski, who had served through the Boer War and had been injured in the armoured train disaster at Chiveley,⁴⁵ left Durban to join up with the 11th Infantry Brigade at Potchefstroom.⁴⁶ Not long after Messrs A. Defries and W. Israel also journeyed to Potchefstroom to join the Motor Cycle Corps.⁴⁷

As the ranks of the Overseas Contingent were being swelled by volunteers from all parts of South Africa, so pressure was exerted on Parliament to raise the pay of the Overseas Contingent to Defence Force rates. Mr. M. Kentridge circulated a petition to this effect,

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²The Natal Mercury, October 30, 1916, p.5.

⁴³South African Jewish Chronicle, October 5, 1917, p.845.

⁴⁴Ibid., December 3, 1915, p.522.

⁴⁵See above p.178.

⁴⁶The Natal Mercury, January 12, 1916, p.10.

⁴⁷South African Jewish Chronicle, February 4, 1916, p.709.

and having obtained many signatures called for a meeting to press for an increase in Overseas Contingent pay.⁴⁸

At the meeting which was convened in the Town Hall, the Mayor, Councillor Joseph Nicolson presided over an attendance of three hundred. Among those on the platform supporting the Mayor were Messrs M. Kentridge and L. Hart.⁴⁹ The question of the pay of the Overseas Contingent remained a subject of heated debate. When a meeting convened for October 11, 1906, was postponed by the Mayor, at the request of Prime Minister, Botha, F.C. Hollander called a meeting to review the situation.⁵⁰ A week later Hollander and C.P. Robinson joined other prominent townsmen at a meeting in the Town Hall which was called to support an increase in the Overseas Contingent Pay.⁵¹ In consequence of this public agitation, which took place throughout the country, it was not long before this matter was settled by the Government.

The question of pay did not however deter those who wished to serve in the armed forces. In May 1916, two sons of Mr. P. Tobias joined the army. The eldest, Isaac, joined the Maxim Gun Section in German East Africa, whilst his brother, Walter, proceeded to London to fight

⁴⁸Ibid., February 25, 1916, p.769.

⁴⁹Ibid., March 24, 1916, p.845.

⁵⁰Ibid., October 20, 1916, p.431.

⁵¹The Natal Mercury, October 20, 1916, p.7.

with the Honourable Artillery Company (Territorial Force).⁵² In May 1916 Durban Jewry learnt with regret of the illness of Private H. Rubens 7th South African Infantry in East Africa⁵³ and joined with Mr. Harry Goldberg in mourning the death of his son Corporal Gordon Goldberg, who was killed whilst on outpost duty in France on May 29.⁵⁴

The intensification of the war effort in France in July 1916 and the suffering which resulted therefrom, did not leave Durban Jewry unscathed. Four of the sons of Mrs. R. Lazarus of Essenwood Road were engaged in the fighting in Europe. Privates S.C. Lazarus and J. Lazarus sustained injuries in the action in the Bernafay Wood.⁵⁵ Having recovered from his injuries Joe Lazarus fought at Delville Wood, where he was wounded by the Germans.⁵⁶ A year later he succumbed to injuries received in France.⁵⁷ Cyril Lazarus, whose death was reported in the local press,⁵⁸ in fact sustained serious injuries in battle⁵⁹ and was

⁵²Ibid., May 10, 1916, p.7.

⁵³South African Jewish Chronicle, May 26, 1916, p.1051.

⁵⁴The Natal Mercury, July 11, 1916, p.6.

⁵⁵Ibid., October 20, 1916, p.5.

⁵⁶Ibid., July 28, 1916, p.7.

⁵⁷South African Jewish Chronicle, May 25, 1917, p.382.

⁵⁸The Natal Mercury, October 19, 1916, p.4.

⁵⁹Ibid., October 26, 1916, p.5.

hospitalised at the same time as his brother Raymond, who was slightly wounded on October 12, 1916.⁶⁰ In March 1917 Cyril Lazarus was decorated with the Military Medal.⁶¹

Among those who made the supreme sacrifice at Delville Wood were Arthur Jacobs, who was killed on July 15, 1916,⁶² Private H.C. Raphael who was killed on July 18, and his brother Sergeant S.F. Raphael who died from his injuries on July 19.⁶³ C. Scott was among the many who were wounded during the battle.⁶⁴ S. Lipman who was one of the soldiers to be listed as missing, was later reported to be a prisoner of war.⁶⁵

Notwithstanding their participation in the war effort, the Jews, and particularly those from Russia, became the target of vehement criticism for their apparent failure to enlist in the armed services. Whilst aliens of all races were criticised for their absence from the war front,⁶⁶ this correspondence in the press came to be directed primarily at the Jews.⁶⁷

⁶⁰Ibid., October 23, 1916, p.5.

⁶¹South African Jewish Chronicle, March 9, 1917, p.130.

⁶²The Natal Mercury, August 4, 1916, p.4.

⁶³Ibid., July 18, 1917, p.4.

⁶⁴Ibid., July 31, 1916, p.9.

⁶⁵Ibid., September 8, 1916, p.7.

⁶⁶The Natal Advertiser, August 22, 1916, p.3. and August 24, 1916, p.1.

⁶⁷Ibid., August 28, 1916, p.1., August 31, 1916, p.2.

Accordingly Morris Kentridge directed the attention of the various correspondents to the extent of Jewish participation in the armed forces and to the fact that a community could not be judged on the faults of a few individuals.⁶⁸

The return of troops from East Africa and Europe gave cause for much rejoicing. Among those whom the Jewish community had the pleasure of welcoming home were Driver J. Cohen, Driver B. Myers, Private V. Henochsberg⁶⁹ and Sergeant R.A. Youngelson.⁷⁰

Recruiting however continued and W.E. Hart and E.V. Gower were two of the young men of Durban who volunteered for service with the 1st Infantry Brigade.⁷¹ Whilst reports from the Rand indicated that many Johannesburg Jews had failed to join the army, an article in The Natal Mercury showed that in contrast the Jewish community of Durban had responded wholeheartedly to the call for service.⁷² From an interview with Mr. P. Wartski the newspaper revealed that, in addition to those soldiers to whom reference has already been made, Messrs M. Hanreck, Solomon, H. Goodman, Ellison, Hotz, B. Bloom, M. Israel,

⁶⁸Ibid., September 7, 1916, p.4.

⁶⁹South African Jewish Chronicle, December 15, 1916, p.602.

⁷⁰Ibid., March 23, 1917, p.172.

⁷¹The Natal Mercury, March 26, 1917, p.5.

⁷²Ibid., June 4, 1917, p.5.

B. Hanreck, Alf Benson, I. Angel, D.B. Aaron, S. Super, R. Banks (killed in action), J. Banks and M. Rosenberg⁷³ were among the members of the local community who were known to have enlisted. In response to an intensification of the recruiting programme in 1917, the following young Durban Jews are known to have volunteered their services - F. Hack,⁷⁴ I.S. Abrahams,⁷⁵ G.A. Hart,⁷⁶ F.W. Goldstone,⁷⁷ B. Hoffenberg⁷⁸ and H. Aaron.⁷⁹

In December 1917 a meeting was held in the Town Hall to form an association of returned soldiers and sailors. The draft rules and regulations of the proposed association were introduced to the notice of the meeting by Mr. D.L. Kahn. He had been a driving force behind the efforts to establish the association, which was named the South African League of Returned Soldiers and Sailors.⁸⁰

Whilst those who had completed their military service were banding together to form an association,

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., June 16, 1917, p.7.

⁷⁵Ibid., June 27, 1917, p.5.

⁷⁶Ibid., July 5, 1917, p.7.

⁷⁷Ibid., July 9, 1917, p.5.

⁷⁸Ibid., July 11, 1917, p.5.

⁷⁹Ibid., November 14, 1917, p.5.

⁸⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, December 7, 1917, p.1083.

those who were able continued to come foreward to join the volunteers. In January 1918 D.T. Isaacs and J. Wolpert enlisted with the 1st South African Infantry Brigade.⁸¹ Four months later a patriotic gesture which received wide acclaim was the decision taken by a number of young Durban men who had already served in the armed forces, to return to England at their own expense in order to enlist. A.J. Isaacs and D.L. Kahn were just two of the men who were willing to pay their passage in order to serve in the army.⁸² After having served in East Africa for twenty months in May 1918 R. Emanuel received permission to rejoin his battery in Egypt.⁸³

In the closing months of the war the residents of Durban learnt of the death of Private Oscar Cohen.⁸⁴ Cohen's death did not deter those who wished to serve their country and Durban Jewry followed with interest the progress of Gunner A.L. Norden,⁸⁵ Seaman Isidore Simon,⁸⁶ Air force cadet Max Wolpert⁸⁷ and G.J. Cohen⁸⁸ and B. Moshal⁸⁹ of the South African Medical Corps.

⁸¹The Natal Mercury, January 31, 1918, p.7.

⁸²Ibid., April 27, 1918, p.7.

⁸³Ibid., May 20, 1918, p.5.

⁸⁴Ibid., July 5, 1918, p.4.

⁸⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, August 30, 1918, p.801.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid., September 13, 1918, p.849.

⁸⁸The Natal Mercury, September 17, 1918, p.7.

⁸⁹Leon Feldberg, (ed.), South African Jewry 1967-1968

Allied soldiers passing through Durban en route to Europe or on their return journey home were always assured of a warm welcome by the residents of the town. The local residents either individually or through different organisations sought whenever possible to entertain the visiting members of the armed forces, and members of the Jewish community were equally active in this regard. As it was not always possible for the community to obtain information regarding the religious affiliation of members of the units which passed through Durban, the Jews of Durban were not able to make an organised effort to look after their co-religionists.⁹⁰ Nevertheless whenever they learnt of the presence of Jewish soldiers in the town the Jews of Durban went out of their way to be of service and assistance. This fact was most clearly illustrated during the visit to the town of Captain Levinsohn, the Jewish chaplain to the forces in German East Africa. Whilst in Durban Captain Levinsohn expressed a desire to take several small parcels to the Jewish troops in hospital in East Africa. In consequence a meeting of the heads of the Jewish societies in Durban was convened by Mr. Hollander, the president of the Durban Hebrew Congregation. At the meeting a sum of £30 was voted for the purchase of the necessary requirements, which the chaplain took with him upon his departure for East Africa.⁹¹

⁹⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, December 8, 1916, p.577.

⁹¹Ibid February 2, 1917, p.47

In February 1917 a group of young Jewish men led by Mr. V.J. Goldberg arranged a function in honour of a group of Jewish soldiers who stopped in Durban en route to India. In the course of the evening the visitors were each presented with five shillings by the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild and with cigarettes and other small gifts which had been donated by local Jewish merchants. This function reflected once again the interest which the entire Jewish community took in the Jewish soldiers who visited the town.⁹²

Whilst some of their menfolk were directly involved in the battles in Africa and Europe, the women of Durban made their own particular contribution to the war effort.

Shortly after the declaration of war the Mayoress, Mrs W. Holmes, called a meeting of the women of Durban to consider proposals for a united effort on the part of the women of the town in rendering assistance to the forces on active service. Eighteen women's societies including the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild and the Durban Jewish Girls' Association were represented at the meeting, which concluded with the establishment of the Durban Women's Patriotic League.⁹³

The first fund raising activity organised by the

⁹²Ibid., March 9, 1917, p.130. and The Natal Mercury, March 29, 1917, p.5.

⁹³The Natal Mercury, September 3, 1914, p.5.

League was a Novelty Sale, which was held in the Town Hall on November 4, 1914. The two shilling stall run by Mesdames Henochsberg, Kahn, Hart, Levine, Sugarman, Danziger, Feinberg, Hirschfield, Isaacs, J.H. Isaacs, Rothstein and Messrs Sher and Shapley on behalf of the Jewish Ladies' Guild⁹⁴ raised £83 1s Od,⁹⁵ which was the largest amount to be raised by any stall. Misses Harris, Kirkley, Isaacs, Harris, M. Lazarus, Sher, Leaman, Abrahams, Banks, Steinberg and Gardee who worked at the Jewish Girls' Association's Miscellaneous Stall⁹⁶ added £34 12s 9d to the day's takings.⁹⁷ Mesdames C.P. Robinson, Victor Robinson and L. Jacobs assisted at the stall run by the Women's Unionist Association.⁹⁸

The Jewish members of the Women's Unionist Association participated in the Patriotic League's fund raising activities connected with May Day 1915.⁹⁹ They also assisted at the cake sale organised by the Greyville branch of the Association in aid of the League's funds.¹⁰⁰

During a visit to the town by the Governor General

⁹⁴Ibid., November 5, 1914, p.10.

⁹⁵Ibid., November 18, 1914, p.5.

⁹⁶Ibid., November 5, 1914, p.10.

⁹⁷Ibid., November 18, 1914, p.5.

⁹⁸Ibid., November 5, 1914, p.10.

⁹⁹Ibid., May 3, 1915, p.9.

¹⁰⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, March 24, 1916, p.845.

and his family in July 1915, the Durban Women's Patriotic League held a social function in the grounds of Caister House, Musgrave Road, in honour of Viscountess Buxton and her daughter the Hon. Phyllis Buxton. Among those who were presented to the Viscountess were Mrs V. Robinson, representing the Women's Unionist Association, Mrs Henochsberg, representing the Jewish Ladies' Guild and Miss Lazarus, representing the Jewish Girls' Association.¹⁰¹

Whilst affiliated to the Durban Women's Patriotic League the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild carried on its own programme of war work. The involvement of the Guild in the war effort dated from the first weeks of the war when a special general meeting in connection with the War Fund had been held at the residence of Mrs Kahn.¹⁰² The Guild's interest in the War Fund was reflected in its decision to donate part of the proceeds of the 1915 July Ball to the Mayor's War Relief Fund.¹⁰³ The ball, held on July 15 in the Town Hall, proved to be an unqualified success and resulted in £70 being added to the War Relief Fund.¹⁰⁴

Being affiliated to the Red Cross Society the Guild took a keen interest in the work of the Society,

¹⁰¹The Natal Mercury, July 14, 1915, p.5.

¹⁰²Ibid., August 28, 1914, p.4.

¹⁰³Ibid., May 29, 1915, p.11.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., August 26, 1915, p.10.

particularly when Mrs L. Hart, the Guild's representative on the Society, became Hon. Secretary of the Red Cross.¹⁰⁵ On June 26, 1917 the Guild held a social and dance in aid of Red Cross Funds,¹⁰⁶ which, in consequence of the Guild's efforts, were swelled by £94.¹⁰⁷ A year later the committee of the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild conducted a house to house call on behalf of the Red Cross Society thereby raising a further £200.¹⁰⁸

A highlight of the Guild's war work was the presentation of an ambulance to the V.A.D. Hospice at Congella. Money for this project was raised by a calico dance which the Guild held in the Town Hall on November 20, 1917.¹⁰⁹ The balance needed to make up the requisite sum was collected amongst the Jewish community.¹¹⁰ Having obtained more money than was needed for the purchase of the ambulance the Ladies' Guild donated £50 to the Hospice for the purchase of two cots.¹¹¹ The Hospice was officially opened on Saturday December 29, 1917, before a large and

¹⁰⁵Durban Jewish Women's Guild Souvenir Golden Jubilee Brochure 1953 (Durban, 1953), p.17.

¹⁰⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, July 6, 1917, p.529.

¹⁰⁷The Natal Mercury, July 11, 1917, p.5.

¹⁰⁸South African Jewish Chronicle, May 24, 1918, p.487.

¹⁰⁹The Natal Mercury, November 21, 1917, p.8., November 22, 1917, p.7., and December 4, 1917, p.8.

¹¹⁰Ibid., December 12, 1917, p.8.

¹¹¹Ibid., December 19, 1917, p.7.

representative gathering, which interestingly included most of the committee of the Guild.¹¹²

On March 19, 1918, Mrs I. Kahn the president of the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild on behalf of its members, formally presented the ambulance which bore a star of David and the inscription, "Presented by the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild", to the V.A.D. Hospice. Together with the vehicle the Guild handed over a sum of £21 towards the upkeep of the ambulance.¹¹³

To raise money for the Our Day Fund the Jewish Ladies' Guild not only ran the egg, butter and cheese stall at the Great War Market held on October 4, 1918,¹¹⁴ but four days later also organised a bring and buy sale at the home of Mrs Lionel Jacobs.¹¹⁵

The younger members of the Jewish community also played a part in the war effort. Through the Durban Jewish Girls' Association many young Jewish ladies came to be involved in the work of the Durban Women's Patriotic League. At the same time the Association aided the Mayor's War Relief Fund by arranging a highly successful

¹¹²South African Jewish Chronicle, January 4, 1918, p.13.

¹¹³The Natal Mercury, March 20, 1918, p.10. and South African Jewish Chronicle, April 5, 1918, p.329.

¹¹⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, October 11, 1918, p.933.

¹¹⁵The Natal Mercury, October 9, 1918, p.6.

Cinderella dance, which was held in the Masonic Hall on September 12, 1914.¹¹⁶ The Jewish Girls' Association also contributed to the funds of the Red Cross Society.¹¹⁷ A number of young Jewish boys attending the Durban Hebrew School formed themselves into the Durban Jewish Lads' Social League and by saving their pocket money and doing small jobs were able to contribute to different war funds.¹¹⁸

The local Jewish contribution to the war effort was not however limited to the war work undertaken by the different organisations, and Jewish individuals were closely associated with many of the other projects launched during the war.

Miss Rosa Goldstein, who from her appearance at a concert on September 4, 1914,¹¹⁹ gained a reputation as a singer of patriotic songs, appeared frequently in patriotic concerts¹²⁰ and sang for wounded soldiers.¹²¹ Together with Ruby Jacobson, Fanny Lurie and Bernhard Kahn, Miss Goldstein gave her services at a shilling concert held in aid of the Queen Elizabeth of the

¹¹⁶Ibid., September 14, 1914, p.6.

¹¹⁷Ibid., July 26, 1915, p.10.

¹¹⁸South African Jewish Chronicle, November 16, 1917, p.1013. and The Natal Mercury, June 8, 1918, p.7.

¹¹⁹The Natal Mercury, September 4, 1914, p.4.

¹²⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, July 30, 1915, p.152. and December 15, 1915, p.571.

¹²¹Ibid., April 20, 1916, p.945.

Belgians Hospital Fund.¹²² She also appeared with Isa Stalis and Bernhard Kahn in a concert in aid of the Navy League.¹²³ Other Jews who gave of their services during the war included Lew James, a Jewish Comedian, who devoted the proceeds of his shows to the Durban Contingent for Europe Fund,¹²⁴ Isidore Rothstein, who participated in a concert held to raise funds for the Durban Light Infantry,¹²⁵ and Master David Cohen and Miss Clara Isaacs, who appeared in a concert in aid of the Delville Wood Boys.¹²⁶ In November 1916 Miss Florrie Linder appeared with Mr. Meyer Sandwick in a concert organised on behalf of the fund for Christmas gifts for members of the Overseas Contingent.¹²⁷ A few months later those two artistes performed in a concert for soldiers at the Beach Y.M.C.A.¹²⁸

In October 1915 a number of Jewish ladies helped to collect money for the Our Day Fund.¹²⁹ In 1917 and 1918 this fund received generous financial support from the Jewish men of the town.¹³⁰ Mr. L. Jacobs' contribution

¹²²Ibid., May 26, 1916, p.1051.

¹²³Ibid., August 11, 1916, p.217.

¹²⁴The Natal Mercury, July 21, 1915, p.6.

¹²⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, May 19, 1916, p.1028.

¹²⁶Ibid., December 1, 1916, p.553.

¹²⁷Ibid., November 10, 1916, p.498.

¹²⁸Ibid., April 13, 1917, p.232.

¹²⁹Ibid., October 29, 1915, p.423.

¹³⁰The Natal Mercury, October 19, 1917, p.7. and

to the Our Day Fund in 1918 took the form of a gold casket which upon being auctioned realised the sum of £176.¹³¹

The Jewish men and women of Durban were equally generous in their support for the 1916 and 1917 Navy Day,¹³² whereby money was collected for the dependents of the sailors of the British Navy.

Messrs Walter Greenacre, F.C. Hollander and W. Holmes, the three ex Mayors of Durban during the Union period, organised a war fund collection on August 5, 1916, which was known as Mayors' Day. This fundraising venture resulted in over £4,000 being collected by the many women, including Mesdames Hollander, Jacobs and Kahn, who positioned themselves at key points throughout the town.¹³³

In order to raise money for the Governor General's Fund the Durban Retailers Council organised a Grand War Fair which was held in the Town Hall on September 26 and 27, 1916. Many of the Jewish ladies of the town helped at the different stalls thereby contributing to the success of the fair which raised over £10,000 for the Governor General's Fund.¹³⁴ When an Allies Bazaar organised by the Sportsmen's Contribution to the

¹³¹South African Jewish Chronicle, September 27, 1918, p.889. and December 20, 1918, p.1134.

¹³²Ibid., March 24, 1916, p.845. and December 7, 1917, p.1083.

¹³³The Natal Mercury, August 5, 1916, p.13.

¹³⁴Ibid., September 26, 1916, p.10. and South African Jewish Chronicle, October 6, 1916, p.383.

Governor General's Fund was held in July 1917 Jewish ladies were again in attendance at the various stalls.¹³⁵

The Jewish community in general and the Jewish women in particular displayed a keen interest in the work of the Red Cross Society. Mr. and Mrs F.C. Hollander were members of the committee set up to organise the Red Cross Auction Sale, which was held in the Town Hall in July 1915.¹³⁶ The Jews of Durban responded generously to the committee's appeal for cash and gifts¹³⁷ and the auction proved to be a most profitable venture. After the sale in the Town Hall had ended, Mr. Ernest Lezard organised an auction sale in aid of the Red Cross at the Marine Hotel, thereby adding a further £32 to the Society's funds.¹³⁸

On December 17, 1915, the Town Hall was the venue of a unique Toy Sale in aid of the Red Cross Society. Mrs D. Henochsberg, the organiser; Mrs J.H. Isaacs, the treasurer; and the committee comprising Mesdames Oldfield, Kent and Grainger had in September of that year addressed an appeal to the children of the town, asking them to help raise funds for the Red Cross by

¹³⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, July 20, 1917, p.581.

¹³⁶The Natal Mercury, June 26, 1915, p.13.

¹³⁷Ibid., July 21, 1915, p.7., July 22, 1915, p.8., July 23, 1915, p.9., July 27, 1915, p.7. and July 28, 1915, p.5.

¹³⁸South African Jewish Chronicle, August 6, 1915, p.168.

contributing all the toys that they could spare.¹³⁹

The response to this original and practical idea proved to be most gratifying with the result that the Toy Sale, opened by the Deputy Mayor Mr. Mark Miller, was an unqualified success.¹⁴⁰ During the toy sale

Mrs Henochsberg was in charge of one of the toy stalls, and Mrs J.H. Isaacs of another, whilst the Jewish Ladies' Guild, under the supervision of Mrs I. Kahn, was in charge of the cake stall and of the catering.¹⁴¹

One of the many women who devoted their energies to the cause of the Red Cross Society was Mrs F.C. Hollander. Not only did Mrs Hollander serve on the Red Cross Auction Sale Committee¹⁴² but she also organised a golf competition in aid of the Society¹⁴³ and assisted in street collections held for the Society's benefit.¹⁴⁴ As a member of the committee of the Durban branch of the Red Cross Society Mrs Hollander had the honour of being invited to an "At Home" given by Viscountess Buxton, the wife of the Governor General, at King's House in July 1916.¹⁴⁵ The numerous services which Mrs

¹³⁹The Natal Mercury, September 15, 1915, p.8.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., December 18, 1915, p.14.

¹⁴¹South African Jewish Chronicle, December 24, 1915, p.587.

¹⁴²The Natal Mercury, July 13, 1915, p.8.

¹⁴³South African Jewish Chronicle, August 6, 1915, p.168.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., August 6, 1915, p.168.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., July 28, 1916, p.177.

Hollander rendered in connection with the Red Cross did not pass unnoticed and in October 1918 she was made a member of the Order of the British Empire.¹⁴⁶

The huts which were set up for the convenience of soldiers in Durban received the support and assistance of the Jews of the town. A number of Jewish entertainers gave of their services at the concerts which the Y.M.C.A. organised to entertain the troops. They included Misses P. Solomon,¹⁴⁷ R. Goldstein¹⁴⁸ P. Hyams¹⁴⁹ F. Linder¹⁵⁰ and Mr. Myer Sandwick.¹⁵¹ At the same time Messrs B. Jackson and L. Hart¹⁵² and Mrs F.C. Hollander and Miss Joel¹⁵³ were among the volunteers who assisted the Y.M.C.A. in running the huts.

Recognising the work of the Durban Huts and the manner in which hospitality was extended to all visiting troops irrespective of denomination, the executives of the Jewish societies of Durban met to arrange a collection amongst the Jewish community for the benefit of the huts. The committee of the Durban Jewish

¹⁴⁶The Natal Mercury, October 5, 1918, p.11.

¹⁴⁷South African Jewish Chronicle, January 19, 1917, p.705.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., and February 2, 1917, p.17.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., February 16, 1917, p.57.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., April 13, 1917, p.232.

¹⁵¹Ibid., February 16, 1917, p.57 and April 13, 1917, p.232.

¹⁵²Ibid., December 8, 1916, p.577.

¹⁵³

Ladies' Guild however felt that as the ladies were constantly contributing to the huts, the proposed collection should not take place amongst them. They therefore decided not to participate in the collection. This decision prompted the Guild's president, Mrs I. Kahn, to tender her resignation.¹⁵⁴ Notwithstanding the Guild's non-participation in the collection the Jewish community collected £246 16s. This amount they forewarded to the Mayor who divided the money amongst the Y.M.C.A. Huts in West Street, Wesley Hall, Ocean Beach and Congella, and the V.A.D. Hut at Congella.¹⁵⁵

Whilst involved in general war work, the Jews of Durban sought to help alleviate the suffering of their co-religionists who in consequence of the war were displaced or reduced to poverty. When in November 1914 accounts of the suffering of Jews in Poland reached Durban¹⁵⁶ steps were taken to set up a relief fund similar to that which had been created in London under the direction of Mr. Leopold de Rothschild. By March 1915 the Russian Jewish War Relief Fund in Durban had collected £200.¹⁵⁷ This money, raised principally

¹⁵⁴Ibid., May 25, 1917, p.382.

¹⁵⁵The Natal Mercury, June 9, 1917, p.5.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., November 22, 1914, p.6.

¹⁵⁷South African Jewish Chronicle, March 12, 1915, p.164.

through donations and by functions such as the concert presented in December 1914,¹⁵⁸ was forwarded to the Chief Rabbi in London as Durban's first contribution towards the relief of Russian Jews.¹⁵⁹

As, in consequence of the German advance, the plight of Russian Jewry worsened, a mass meeting of all Jews resident in Durban was called for October 3, 1915.¹⁶⁰ After addresses by Hollander, Robinson and Kentridge the meeting resolved to strengthen the existing relief committee and to canvass the community for monthly subscriptions.¹⁶¹ At a meeting of the committee of the relief fund held on October 12 Mr. F.C. Hollander was appointed chairman of the Fund; Mr. B. Smolensky, treasurer, and Messrs A. Cohen and W. Israel, secretaries. Messrs Wartski, Smolensky, Blumenfeld, Berman, Nathanson and Fine were appointed to act as official canvassers.¹⁶²

In response to a cable received from the Central Committee of the Russian Jewish War Relief Fund, Mr. Hollander convened a meeting in the Empire Bioscope, Gardiner Street, on October 31, 1915.¹⁶³ At the meeting which was held to coincide with similar meetings

¹⁵⁸The Natal Mercury, December 8, 1914, p.7.

¹⁵⁹South African Jewish Chronicle, March 12, 1915, p.164.

¹⁶⁰The Natal Mercury, September 29, 1915, p.6.

¹⁶¹The Natal Advertiser, October 4, 1915, p.1.

¹⁶²The Natal Mercury, October 16, 1915, p.10.

¹⁶³Ibid., October 28, 1915, p.6.

that were being held throughout the Empire, Mr. Hollander announced that in response to the appeal for funds, made at the meeting on October 3, over £300 had been collected.¹⁶⁴

The suffering of Russian Jewry aroused the compassion of all members of the population as was evident from the fund's list of donors and subscribers which were first published in November 1915,¹⁶⁵ and at irregular intervals thereafter.¹⁶⁶

Sympathy with the objects of the fund was reflected in the concert given by Miss Esther Franklin¹⁶⁷ and by the variety show presented by Miss Florence Perry at the Theatre Royal on November 13, 1915.¹⁶⁸ Money for the fund was also raised by a donation from the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society;¹⁶⁹ by a collection at the conclusion of the Chanukah service in St. Andrew's Street Synagogue;¹⁷⁰ by an "At Home" given by Mrs Lipinski,¹⁷¹ and by a raffle organised by

¹⁶⁴Ibid., November 2, 1915, p.7.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., November 17, 1915, p.8. and November 19, 1915, p.10.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., December 17, 1915, p.7., January 7, 1916, p.6., January 28, 1916, p.7., June 15, 1916, p.6., October 12, 1916, p.5., May 5, 1917, p.8., June 8, 1917, p.5., July 10, 1917, p.8.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., November 10, 1915, p.7.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., November 15, 1915, p.8.

¹⁶⁹South African Jewish Chronicle, October 29, 1915, p.423.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., December 10, 1915, p.551.

¹⁷¹Ibid., March 31, 1916, p.270.

Miss M. Sher.¹⁷² It also became customary amongst the Jewish community when celebrating a wedding or bris milah to hold a collection in aid of the Russian Jewish War Relief Fund.¹⁷³ In March 1916 the fund benefitted from the presentation of a Yiddish play,¹⁷⁴ whilst the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild assisted the fund by arranging two dances.¹⁷⁵

At a meeting of the Russian Jewish War Relief Fund Committee on February 23, 1916, plans were laid for a street collection¹⁷⁶ which was fixed for April 20. On March 29, in order to make arrangements for the Russian Day collection the Mayor, Mr. J.H. Nicolson, called a meeting of all interested parties.¹⁷⁷ On the recommendation of the Mayor, those present at the meeting agreed to form a committee to carry out the necessary arrangements. The meeting then elected an executive committee consisting of the Mayor and Mayoress, Messrs. F.C. Hollander, Wallis Short, M. Kentridge, J.N. Noble, G. Halle, Max Robinson,

¹⁷²The Natal Mercury, September 13, 1916, p.9.

¹⁷³South African Jewish Chronicle, May 4, 1917, p.307., November 16, 1917, p.1013, and November 30, 1917, p.1061.

¹⁷⁴The Natal Mercury, March 15, 1916, p.6.

¹⁷⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, September 8, 1915, p.302. and The Natal Mercury, August 26, 1916, p.6.

¹⁷⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, March 3, 1916, p.787.

¹⁷⁷The Natal Mercury, March 28, 1916, p.4.

A. Cohen, B. Smolensky, Mesdames F. C. Hollander, Kahn, Wylie, Hart, W. Greenacre, Chappe, Mackeurtan, W. Holmes, Davis, Geo. Payne, J.H. Isaacs, Woolf, L. Feinberg and Miss Butcher.¹⁷⁸

The Natal Mercury in urging support for the Russian Day collection, saw in the collection, "an opportunity of testifying to the admiration in which our Russian Allies are held, and displaying philanthropy in a cause of which the claims are exceptionally urgent".¹⁷⁹

The collection, carried out by groups of ladies stationed at key points throughout the town¹⁸⁰ and by collectors in the country districts,¹⁸¹ was generously supported and a sum of £875 1s 4d was raised for the relief of Russian Jews.¹⁸²

In response to an appeal by Leopold de Rothschild, Chief Rabbi Hertz, Dr. Gaster and Lord Swaythling the Russian Jewish War Relief Fund Committee, at a meeting held on February 24, 1917, decided to hold a second street collection on the day before Good Friday.¹⁸³ This collection held on April 5 to assist Jewish victims of the war in Russia and Roumania realised

¹⁷⁸Ibid., March 30, 1916, p.6.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., April 20, 1916, p.6.

¹⁸⁰The Natal Advertiser, April 20, 1916, p.3.

¹⁸¹The Natal Mercury, April 21, 1916, p.3.

¹⁸²Ibid., May 8, 1916, p.5.

¹⁸³South African Jewish Chronicle, March 2, 1917, p.105.

£1062 19s 6d.¹⁸⁴

From a balance sheet which was presented to the committee of the Fund on August 14, it was revealed that in the period October 1, 1915 - June 30, 1916, the sum of £5,200 had been remitted to the Central Committee in London.¹⁸⁵ Refusing to be lulled by this achievement into a sense of complacency the Committee continued its work on behalf of Russian Jewry. In consequence of the dissention caused by the Bolshevik uprising and Lenin's decision to sue for an armistice the name of the fund was changed to the Jewish War Victims Relief Fund.¹⁸⁶

This step was not taken without just cause, for the Russo-German armistice created ill feeling amongst certain classes towards the Jews. In consequence a resident of the town felt prompted to write to the press to remind the people of Durban that not all Jews were Russians, and to urge them to remember the contribution which local Jewry had made to the war effort.¹⁸⁷ The first response to this letter was a bitter attack on the Jews by "A True Russian", who accused the Jews of pro German sympathy and blamed them for the Communist

¹⁸⁴Ibid., April 27, 1917, p.278.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., August 24, 1917, p.695.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., December 21, 1917, p.1133.

¹⁸⁷The Natal Advertiser, March 7, 1918, p.12.

take over in Russia.¹⁸⁸ Members of the Jewish community swiftly reacted to the allegations made against them.¹⁸⁹ Correspondence which this anti Semitic outburst evoked indicated that whilst there were one or two correspondents who shared the sentiments expressed by "A True" Russian,¹⁹⁰ such anti Jewish sentiments enjoyed little sympathy amongst the local townsmen.¹⁹¹ In his official capacity as the Acting Mayor of Durban Councillor C.S. Jameson in fact protested at the publication of such a letter.¹⁹² In his reply the editor asserted that whilst he did not necessarily agree with the sentiments expressed by "A True Russian", the newspaper upheld the right of its readers to express their opinions in its columns.¹⁹³ The correspondence, which had evoked widespread interest, was finally brought to a close by the editor.

Whilst seeking to relieve the suffering of their

¹⁸⁸Ibid., March 11, 1918, p.4. Further correspondence from a True Russian appeared in March 16, 1918, p.12, and March 19, 1918, p.5.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., March 13, 1918, p.15., March 16, 1918, p.12., March 18, 1918, p.11., March 20, 1918, p.11., March 21, 1918, p.11., March 22, 1918, p.4. and March 25, 1918, p.12.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., March 22, 1918, p.4., March 23, 1918, p.6. and March 25, 1918, p.12.

¹⁹¹Ibid., March 14, 1918, p.4., March 23, 1918, p.6. and March 25, 1918, p.12.

¹⁹²Ibid., March 15, 1918, p.6.

¹⁹³Ibid., p.8.

co-religionists the Jews of Durban, following with a keen interest the British advance on Palestine, strove to provide relief for the Jews of the Holy Land. As the British moved north from Sinai the Turks forcibly evacuated the Jewish inhabitants of Tel-Aviv thereby causing great suffering and starvation.¹⁹⁴ Similar reports of the ill treatment of Jews were received from settlements in Judea, Jerusalem and the Galilee.¹⁹⁵ On June 4, 1917, a mass meeting of the Jewish community of Durban was held in the St. George's Hall to consider what action should be taken in regard to the disasters in Palestine.¹⁹⁶ Mr. Hollander in calling on the meeting for funds referred to General Smuts, through whose good offices the transmission of relief through neutral countries had become possible. A committee consisting of Messrs. Hollander, Wartski, M. Fine, Nathanson, S. Lutrin, Mrs L. Davis, Miss Glazer, Messrs Hackner, L. Gordon, S. Goldberg, L. Ditz, H. Mindel, Mrs Ehlers, Mrs A. Berman and Messrs Moshalowitz and A. Cohen was set up at the meeting to supervise the creation of a relief fund for Palestine Jews.¹⁹⁷ The committee successfully canvassed the town thereby raising more than £750 for the fund.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴The Natal Mercury, May 10, 1917, p.6.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., May 22, 1917, p.6.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., June 2, 1917, p.6.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., June 5, 1917, p.5.

¹⁹⁸South African Jewish Chronicle, February 15, 1918.

The fund, supported by subscriptions, also benefitted from the proceeds of a dance given in the Town Hall on July 26, 1917, by the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild.¹⁹⁹ In 1917 the Guild's efforts on behalf of the fund realised the sum of £190.²⁰⁰

The Jewish community followed General Allenby's campaign in Palestine with great interest, welcoming the fall of Beersheva,²⁰¹ Gaza²⁰² and Jaffa²⁰³ to the British forces. The surrender of Jerusalem on December 9, 1917²⁰⁴ was marked with a concert and dance held on December 18 in St. George's Hall.²⁰⁵

Only a few days after the 1916 Russian Day collection a South African Jewish Congress convened by a joint executive representing the South African Zionist Federation and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies was held in Johannesburg. The congress, which followed similar congresses in Britain and Canada was called, "in order that the Jews in South Africa, through their chosen representatives might voice a general opinion as to the claims of our nation whenever the

¹⁹⁹The Natal Mercury, July 24, 1917, p.4.

²⁰⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, September 28, 1917, p.837.

²⁰¹The Natal Mercury, November 3, 1917, p.7.

²⁰²Ibid., November 10, 1917, p.8.

²⁰³Ibid., November 20, 1917, p.7.

²⁰⁴Ibid., December 11, 1917, p.7.

Peace Conference shall sit to decide the terms upon which the present regrettable war shall cease".²⁰⁶ On April 28 representatives of Jewish congregations, societies and institutions in South Africa, Rhodesia and the Congo, including Messrs P. Wartski, M. Stiller and S. Bloom, who represented the Durban Hebrew Congregation,²⁰⁷ and Mesdames L. Hart and I. Kahn who represented the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild,²⁰⁸ met in the Selbourne Hall.

The Congress which re-affirmed the loyalty of South African Jewry to the King and their hope of an Allied victory, adopted a resolution which was moved by Max Langermann calling for steps to be taken, "to get the Peace Conference to ensure the absolute right of Jews now residing in the Holy Land or who may settle there subsequently to develop that land without any unjust discrimination or hinderances".²⁰⁹ The delegates to the Congress also gave their support to a resolution which urged that in the event of the future of Palestine coming under discussion the historic claims of the Jewish nation should be taken into consideration.²¹⁰ A committee which the Congress appointed to endeavour to give effect to the resolutions included Messrs

²⁰⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, May 5, 1916, p.982.

²⁰⁷Ibid., April 20, 1916, p.945.

²⁰⁸Ibid., May 12, 1916, p.1009.

²⁰⁹The Natal Mercury, April 29, 1916, p.7.

²¹⁰Ibid.

F.C. Hollander and P. Wartski.²¹¹

Like the individuals who constituted their membership, the Durban Hebrew Congregation and the Durban New Hebrew Congregation sought to play their part in the war effort. The war contribution of the congregations' largely took the form of special services, which punctuated the four years of hostility.

During the war the services held to mark the festival of Chanukah took on a military connotation. Accordingly in 1914 and 1917 the Durban Hebrew Congregation extended an invitation to all Jewish troops to attend the Chanukah services held in the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue.²¹² The congregation was in fact always willing to extend its hospitality to the Jewish troops and to ensure that the Jewish soldiers and sailors who visited Durban were suitably entertained by various congregants.²¹³

Throughout the Empire it became customary to observe the first Sunday of the New Year as a Day of Intercession. The first Intercessory service held under the auspices of the Durban Hebrew Congregation

²¹¹South African Jewish Chronicle, May 5, 1916, p.982.

²¹²The Natal Mercury, December 23, 1914, p.6. and South African Jewish Chronicle, January 5, 1917, p.561.

²¹³South African Jewish Chronicle, January 19, 1917, p.705., April 13, 1917, p.232. and January 11, 1918, p.44.

took place on Saturday January 2, 1915.²¹⁴ However similar services conducted in 1916²¹⁵ and 1918²¹⁶ were held to coincide with services of intercession in the various local churches. The Durban New Hebrew Congregation held Intercessory Services in the Synagogue in Grey Street in 1915²¹⁷ and 1918.²¹⁸

Whilst the Town Council organised a general Thanksgiving Service on July 9, 1915, to mark the German surrender in South West Africa, the Durban Hebrew Congregation celebrated the conclusion of the South West campaign by including special thanksgiving prayers in the regular Saturday morning service.²¹⁹

The Jews of Durban joined with the Empire in mourning the passing of Earl Kitchner, who died when H.M.S. Hampshire was sunk whilst on a journey to Russia. At both the St. Andrew's Street and the Grey Street Synagogues special memorial prayers were recited during the Shavuot service, and intercessory prayers for the success of the Allies were offered.²²⁰

Although intercessory services had been arranged

²¹⁴The Natal Mercury, January 4, 1915, p.5.

²¹⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, January 7, 1916, p.622.

²¹⁶The Natal Mercury, January 9, 1918, p.6.

²¹⁷Ibid., January 1, 1915, p.6.

²¹⁸Ibid., January 8, 1918, p.5.

²¹⁹Ibid., July 12, 1915, p.10.

²²⁰Ibid., June 8, 1916, p.5. and June 9, 1916, p.6.

annually by the Borough and the local churches to mark the anniversary of the declaration of the war, it was only on the third anniversary in 1917 that the Durban Hebrew Congregation organised a special intercessory service in the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue.²²¹ A similar service was held on August 4, 1918, the fourth anniversary of the declaration of war, at which a collection was taken for St. Dunstan's Home for Blinded Soldiers and Sailors.²²² During the service Mr. F.C. Hollander and the Rev. S. Pincus unveiled a marble memorial tablet erected by Mr. J.H. Isaacs in memory of his parents, on which was engraved the prayer for those who fell in battle.²²³

As the people of Durban rejoiced at the signing of the armistice, the different religious denominations in the town held services of thanksgiving in their respective places of worship. The Jews of Durban joined with their townsmen in welcoming the return of peace and the thanksgiving services in the St. Andrew's Street and Grey Street Synagogues were conducted on November 15, 1918, during the Friday night Sabbath service.²²⁴

²²¹Ibid., August 6, 1917, p.7.

²²²Ibid., August 1, 1918, p.6.

²²³The Natal Advertiser, August 2, 1918, p.7. and August 5, 1918, p.5.

²²⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, November 22, 1918, p.1055.

CHAPTER XI

JEWISH LIFE IN DURBAN 1914 - 1918

JEWS AND THE GENERAL LIFE

Whilst any anti Jewish sentiment which manifested itself in Durban during the war was limited to rhetoric, the same was not true of anti German feeling, which following the sinking of the Lusitania on May 8, 1915, erupted into large scale riots, not only in Durban but also in other centres of South Africa and in a number of cities in Great Britain. In consequence of the riots in Durban on May 31 and the deliberate destruction which resulted therefrom the businesses owned by German residents of the town were sacked and burnt. The greatest damage was done to the premises of Karl Gundelfinger in Smith Street, although the stores owned by Messrs S. Lowenthal and Theo. Schloss also suffered

considerable damage.¹ Fear of their businesses suffering a similar fate prompted such people as I. Kahn, A.J. Feinberg, Ch. Blumenfeld, J. Moshalowitz, M. Gevisser and I. Gevisser, whose origins were made suspect by certain ill disposed persons, to publicly declare their nationality in the hope that they would thereby divert the attention of the anti German populace.²

Although the riots may have been a factor behind Karl Gundelfinger's decision to resign from the Provincial Council in November 1915,³ they certainly did not curtail the political activity of other Durban Jews who had no ties with Germany.

In May 1915 Mr. C.P. Robinson received five numerously signed requisitions from electors of Umbilo asking him to accept nomination for the Assembly. In accepting the requisitions Mr. Robinson, whilst affirming his loyalty to the Unionist Party pledged to support General Botha for the duration of the war.⁴ Mr. Robinson's campaign opened on August 24 at South Coast Junction.⁵ This was followed by a number of public meetings⁶

¹The Natal Mercury, May 14, 1915, p.6.

²Ibid., May 15, 1915, p.6. and May 17, 1915, p.4.

³South African Jewish Chronicle, November 19, 1915, p.486.

⁴The Natal Mercury, May 7, 1915, p.4.

⁵Ibid., August 25, 1915, p.11.

⁶Ibid., September 18, 1915, p.8., September 29, 1915, p.6., October 2, 1915, p.8. and October 9, 1915, p.8.

which culminated in a Unionist Rally in the Alexandra Hall on October 14.⁷ With the help of a committee which included Messrs Louis Emanuel, G. Myers, S. Rosenbloom and E. Defries,⁸ Mr. Robinson was re-elected to the Assembly by a majority of three hundred and seventy seven.⁹

The General Election of October 1915 also found Morris Kentridge seeking re-election in the Durban Central constituency on a Labour Party ticket. Kentridge's election campaign was opened by a meeting in the Alexandra Hall on August 26, 1915.¹⁰ Despite having engaged in a hard fought campaign entailing numerous public addresses,¹¹ Morris Kentridge lost to the Unionist candidate Charlie Henwood by three hundred and forty six votes.¹²

Mr. C.P. Robinson M.L.A. was subsequently one of the four members of the Union Parliament who at the invitation of the Imperial Government was selected to accompany the party of thirty eight representatives of the Dominion Legislatures to Great Britain.

⁷Ibid., October 14, 1915, p.6.

⁸South African Jewish Chronicle, September 24, 1915, p.311.

⁹The Natal Mercury, October 20, 1915, p.7.

¹⁰Ibid., August 10, 1915, p.7.

¹¹Ibid., September 6, 1915, p.6., September 14, 1915, p.6., September 24, 1915, p.4., October 2, 1915, p.8. and October 8, 1915, p.6.

¹²Ibid., October 20, 1915, p.7.

Mr. Robinson returned to Durban in September 1916 after an absence of two and a half months. Whilst abroad he and other Dominion delegates had travelled extensively through Great Britain and France. They had also visited the war front and North Sea Fleet and had been entertained by the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace and by Queen Alexandra at Marlborough House.¹³ On October 4, at a reception given in his honour by the Unionist Party of South Africa, Mr. Robinson gave an account of his visit to France and the North Sea Fleet.¹⁴ Robinson delivered the same address in the Masonic Hall on October 18 in aid of the Sportsmen's Contribution to the Governor General's Fund.¹⁵

After losing his seat in the Assembly Morris Kentridge remained actively involved in the work of the South African Labour Party.¹⁶ It was therefore with deep regret that the Durban branch of the party learnt in March 1917 of his decision to settle in Johannesburg. Before his departure Mr. Kentridge was presented with an illuminated address by the Durban Committee of the Labour Party¹⁷ and was the recipient of a similar token

¹³Ibid., September 19, 1916, p.6.

¹⁴Ibid., October 5, 1916, p.6.

¹⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, November 3, 1916, p.474.

¹⁶See Ibid., August 20, 1915, p.215. and October 13, 1916, p.410.

¹⁷The Natal Mercury, March 26, 1917, p.4.

of esteem from the local Zionist Association.¹⁸

The interest which Jews in Durban had always taken in municipal affairs was unaffected by the war. In 1916 members of the Jewish community were once again signatories to a requisition, in this instance requesting Councillor Hatton to stand for the Town Council in Ward 1.¹⁹ The unopposed re-election to the Provincial Council of F.C. Hollander was a matter of deep satisfaction to his community in which he played a leading part.²⁰ In December 1916 the Jewish community had been equally delighted by Hollander's installation as Grand Master of Scottish Freemasonry in Natal.²¹

An event of great social importance was the visit to Durban of the Right Hon. W.M. Hughes, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia in July 1916. Among those who received the distinguished visitor at the railway station were Messrs F.C. Hollander and M. Kentridge.²²

As social activity was considerably curtailed in consequence of the war, invitations to those social events which did take place were all the more eagerly sought after. The "At Home" given each year in the

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., July 8, 1916, p.3.

²⁰Ibid., April 4, 1917, p.5.

²¹Ibid., December 19, 1916, p.10.

²²South African Jewish Chronicle, July 28, 1916, p.177.

grounds of King's House by the Governor General and Viscountess Buxton remained a highlight of the social calendar. During the war years the names of members of the Jewish community continued to feature on the guest lists.²³

JEWISH INSTITUTIONAL LIFE

THE HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

Although the war made demands upon the two Hebrew congregations in Durban,²⁴ they nevertheless appear to have maintained a vigorous congregational life. This would seem to indicate that the internal affairs of the congregations were not significantly disrupted by the absence of members on military service, or by the generally unsettled conditions which prevailed.

On January 24, 1915, at a quarterly meeting of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, the members of the Congregation having elected Mr. A. Simon an honorary life member, turned to the issue of the re-election of the Congregation's ministers. The meeting resolved to

²³Ibid., July 30, 1915, p.152., August 11, 1916, p.217, and August 24, 1917, p.695.

²⁴See above pp.399-401.

re-engage the Rev. S. Pincus for a further three years. However it was unable to arrive at a decision regarding Rev. Kay, whom the committee had recommended should be re-elected to serve as a minister and as a teacher in the Durban Hebrew School.²⁵ Accordingly the meeting was adjourned until January 31, when after much discussion, the majority of members present voted against the re-engagement of Rev. Kay. In accordance with this decision the Durban Hebrew Congregation notified the Rev. Kay of its inability to renew his contract upon the expiry of his term on July 31.²⁶

Rev. Kay's impending departure prompted Mr. A.J. Cohen to propose at a meeting of the Congregation held on March 28, 1915, that,

...the Committee be instructed to consider such arrangements as may be deemed necessary for the engagement of a Chazan or Minister, at the termination of the present Chazan's agreement and to report such arrangements as soon as possible for the consideration of the members of a Special General Meeting to be convened for that purpose.²⁷

The special meeting called for the purpose of considering the Committee's recommendations was held on June 28. Mr. Hollander explained that as the annual general meeting was to be held in September and his committee did not wish to pledge their successors to any lengthy agreement they proposed that the Rev. Kay should be

²⁵South African Jewish Chronicle, January 29, 1915, p.70.

²⁶Ibid., February 5, 1915, p.87.

²⁷Ibid., April 2, 1915, p.218.

re-engaged for a period of six months.²⁸ After much discussion the voting was adjourned until the following Sunday. However in order to allow the excitement which the issue had generated to subside the committee decided that, "it would be in the best interests of the congregation to abandon the adjourned general meeting and to postpone the consideration of the re-engagement or otherwise of the Rev. M. Kay until the annual general meeting".²⁹ The Rev. Kay whilst deprecating the treatment to which he was subjected by the congregation nevertheless agreed to continue serving the congregation until the end of September. He thereby ensured that the congregation was not without a chazan for the High Festival period.

The annual general meeting of the Durban Hebrew Congregation held on September 19 was attended by a large gathering, the majority of whom voted against the proposition that Rev. M. Kay be re-engaged for a further two years.³⁰ Although Rev. Kay's opponents claimed to be motivated by a desire for economy it would seem that much of their dissatisfaction stemmed from their refusal to distinguish between the services of a minister and chazan, and their insistence that the congregation's chazan be equally proficient in all duties associated

²⁸Ibid., July 2, 1915, p.88.

²⁹Ibid., July 9, 1915, p.103.

³⁰Ibid., September 24, 1915, pp.311 and 313.

with a minister.³¹

Notwithstanding the termination of his services with the congregation the Rev. Kay appears to have remained in Durban for over a year. During that period Rev. Kay was invited by the Durban New Hebrew Congregation to conduct the seventh day Pesach services in the Grey Street Synagogue³² and was engaged by the Braamfontein Hebrew Congregation to conduct the High Festival services.³³ Receiving a call from Nairobi Rev. Kay left Durban on November 30, 1916, to take charge of the Nairobi Hebrew Congregation.³⁴

Although the Congregation had chosen not to re-engage the Rev. Kay its need for a minister and teacher remained. Accordingly at the half yearly meeting of the Congregation in May 1917 Mr. S. Bloom moved a resolution calling on the Committee to, "immediately advertise for a minister and teacher combined, at a salary of £360 per annum",³⁵ thereby raising considerable discussion which necessitated the adjournment of the meeting. The Congregation first advertised for a minister and teacher in South Africa,³⁶ and later in English and American Jewish newspapers.³⁷

³¹Ibid., July 9, 1915, p.103.

³²Ibid., May 5, 1916, p.990.

³³Ibid., October 20, 1916, p.431.

³⁴Ibid., December 1, 1916, p.553.

³⁵Ibid., May 11, 1917, p.339.

³⁶Ibid., November 30, 1917, p.1034.

³⁷Ibid., May 3, 1918, p.436.

When no suitable applicant was forthcoming the Congregation was reduced to seeking the services of a Baal Tephilla to officiate during the High Festivals and Succot.³⁸ Mr. Levine of Johannesburg was ultimately selected to officiate at the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue in this capacity.³⁹

At the adjourned half yearly meeting which had been called to resume the discussion on Mr. Bloom's motion, the matter of a minister and teacher was completely overshadowed by a motion proposed by Mr. L. Davis which called for the amalgamation of the Durban Hebrew Congregation with the Durban New Hebrew Congregation. The meeting supported the motion by a majority of one vote, and Mr. Davis was invited to nominate a sub committee of five for the purpose of approaching the New Hebrew Congregation.⁴⁰ The committee appointed by the Durban Hebrew Congregation met with the representatives of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation at the Synagogue Chambers St. Andrew's Street on June 3, 1917. Both committees unanimously passed the following conditions:

1. We the Sub-Committees, suggest that we take over Revd. Mr. Rubin as an Assistant Shochet and Hebrew teacher for a period of six (6) months on trial, at £20 per month.
2. If the amalgamation is successfully carried out, the members of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation who are in arrears on the 3rd June, 1917 (accounts from that date shall not be

³⁸Ibid., May 31, 1918, p.534.

³⁹Ibid., August 30, 1918, p.801.

⁴⁰Ibid., May 25, 1917, p.382

compromised and no accounts shall be written off,) shall pay all arrears up to the end of the financial year to the Durban Hebrew Congregation.

3. All members of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation and their wives to take the available vacant seats at the same fee as our members. No holders of seats in the Durban Hebrew Congregation shall be moved from the seats at present occupied by them or their wives.
4. The books of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation shall be handed over to us on completion of the amalgamation.
5. It must be understood that all the members of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation in amalgamating with us will conform to all our standing rules.
6. In the event of amalgamation no General Meeting shall take place for the election of officers until our Annual Meeting.
7. All suggestions and arrangements put forward by the two Sub-Committees will have to be approved by both Congregations at General Meetings to be held for this purpose.⁴¹

Although the recommendations of the two congregation's representatives favoured the Durban Hebrew Congregation, the members of the Congregation at a special general meeting held on August 19 rejected the proposed amalgamation by thirty two votes to twenty nine.⁴² Those who favoured amalgamation were desirous of seeing a united Jewry in Durban. Others opposed to the proposition believed like Mr. M. Stiller, that amalgamation would precipitate another split in the congregation. There were also those who shared the

⁴¹Ibid., August 24, 1917, p.695.

⁴²Ibid.

sentiments expressed by Mr. N. Hillman who asserted that, as the two congregations represented two schools of thought the Durban Hebrew Congregation and the Durban New Hebrew Congregation should be kept apart and should instead of working for amalgamation rather seek a basis for co-operation.⁴³ Although the matter of amalgamation was of a most serious nature and would have had far reaching consequences only a third of the members of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, which had a membership roll of one hundred and ninety,⁴⁴ appear to have been sufficiently concerned to register their votes at the special general meeting.

Members of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation, at a mass meeting held on August 26 to consider the position and welfare of their congregation, sharply criticised the Durban Hebrew Congregation for casting aside the proposal of amalgamation.⁴⁵ Consequently they went ahead with plans for the erection of a larger synagogue. The Grey Street Synagogue's inability to meet the needs of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation over the High Festival period was reflected in the fact that in 1917 services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur were conducted in the St. George's Hall.⁴⁶ In January 1918 the Building Committee of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., September 7, 1917, p.745.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶The Natal Mercury, September 1, 1917, p.6.

proudly announced the purchase of a site at 66 Russell Street for the proposed new synagogue.⁴⁷ A few months later the block of land and buildings which included the Grey Street Synagogue was sold by public auction and purchased by Mr. L. Jacobson.⁴⁸

In a further attempt to bring about amalgamation the two congregations convened special meetings on August 11, 1918, to discuss this question. Whilst a large majority of the members of the Durban Hebrew Congregation supported this step, apparently so as to secure the services of the minister of the New Hebrew Congregation, the members of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation rejected amalgamation.⁴⁹ A fortnight later members of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation who were dissatisfied with the decision succeeded in convening a meeting in the hope of reversing the decision. By an even greater majority the members of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation again rejected any amalgamation proposals.⁵⁰

Any attempt by the two Hebrew congregations to arrive at a unitary shechita arrangement also proved to be unsuccessful. At a meeting of the Durban Hebrew Congregation on January 24, 1915, the members approved

⁴⁷ Ibid., January 19, 1918, p.6.

⁴⁸ South African Jewish Chronicle, October 11, 1918, p.933.

⁴⁹ Ibid., August 16, 1918, p.765.

⁵⁰ Ibid., August 30, 1918, p.801.

the recommendation that Rev. Rubin of the New Hebrew Congregation be permitted to assist Rev. Pincus as shochet.⁵¹ However this step did not signal the start of co-operation between the two congregations in regard to the purveying of Kosher meat to the Jewish community. In fact two years later the Durban Hebrew Congregation advertised for tenders for the supply of Kosher meat to its members.⁵² The contract was awarded to Mr. S. Cohen whose business at the corner of Park and West Streets was transferred to Moore Road in September 1917.⁵³

In March 1918 an attempt was made to achieve co-operation in this sphere.⁵⁴ The newly formed Durban Board of the Affairs of Shechita called for tenders for the supply of Kosher meat to the Jewish community of Durban.⁵⁵ The Board, made up of representatives of the Durban Hebrew Congregation and the Durban New Hebrew Congregation, recommended the acceptance of a tender from Mr. S. Deen. The acceptance of the tender was ratified by the Durban New Hebrew Congregation. The Executive of the Durban Hebrew Congregation was unable to recommend the acceptance of the tender and placed the whole matter before the half annual general meeting of the Congregation on May 28. A number of members

⁵¹Ibid., January 29, 1915, p.70.

⁵²The Natal Mercury, January 24, 1917, p.6.

⁵³Ibid., September 25, 1917, p.4.

⁵⁴On an earlier unsuccessful attempt see below p.264.

⁵⁵The Natal Mercury, March 4, 1918, p.4.

favoured granting the tender to Mr. S. Cohen, whose tender had been rejected by the Board of Affairs of Shechita in preference to that submitted by Mr. S. Deen. Others, willing to overlook the fact that Mr. S. Deen had once had the contract and had kept it for two weeks, and that whilst seeking the Kosher meat contract publicly violated the Sabbath, gave their support to Mr. Deen, accusing Mr. Cohen of being unbusinesslike in his methods and of working on the Sabbath in his butchery. Aware of the shortcomings of both prospective butchers the members of the Durban Hebrew Congregation voted in favour of awarding the meat contract to Mr. Cohen.⁵⁶

In consequence of the decision taken at the annual general meeting of the Durban Hebrew Congregation the attempt to find a single supplier of Kosher meat for the entire Jewish community came to nought, and each congregation awarded its own contract for the supply of meat to its members.⁵⁷

In the concluding months of 1918 the Durban Hebrew Congregation witnessed the erection of a new succah in the grounds of the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue.

⁵⁶ South African Jewish Chronicle, May 3, 1918, p.436.

⁵⁷ The Durban New Hebrew Congregation awarded its contract to Mr. S. Deen (The Natal Mercury, April 16, 1918, p.6.) and the Durban Hebrew Congregation granted its contract to Mr. S. Cohen (South African Jewish Chronicle, June 7, 1918, p.551).

Built through the initiative of Messrs B. Smolensky and L. Davis, who raised the necessary funds from the members of the Congregation, the succah was designed to serve as a venue for meetings of the Committee.⁵⁸

Mr. F.C. Hollander, the president of the Congregation indicated in his eleventh presidential report that he would not stand for re-election.⁵⁹ Accordingly on September 11, at the annual general meeting, the members elected Mr. C.P. Robinson as his successor.⁶⁰ At the adjourned annual general meeting of the congregation held in the new succah on September 24 Mr. F.C. Hollander was presented with a writing desk and chair to which the Congregation had subscribed.⁶¹

THE DURBAN HEBREW SCHOOL

At the annual prize distribution of the Durban Hebrew School in January 1915, Mr. Mendell Jacobson in presenting his first headmaster's report showed that the average daily attendance of children was forty five.⁶² When one recalls that in 1911 the school maintained by the

⁵⁸South African Jewish Chronicle, August 16, 1918, p.765.

⁵⁹Ibid., September 13, 1918, p.849.

⁶⁰Ibid., September 27, 1918, p.889.

⁶¹Ibid., October 11, 1918, p.933.

⁶²Ibid., January 15, 1915, p.44.

Durban Hebrew Congregation enjoyed an average attendance of twenty six,⁶³ it is evident that there was a significant increase in the number of children who were enrolled in Hebrew school. This may in no small measure have been due to Mr. Jacobson. Besides his duties as headmaster Mendell Jacobson served as an assistant field cornet of the Durban Jewish Rifle Association⁶⁴ and also gained recognition for his public lectures.⁶⁵ In May 1915 he was complimented on the fine performance of "Queen Esther", which was presented under his direction in the Masonic Hall by the pupils of the Durban Hebrew School.⁶⁶ Notwithstanding Mr. Jacobson's apparent suitability for the post of headmaster, in 1916 he was not immediately reappointed to the position. One of those who came to Durban as a candidate for the headmastership of the school was Mr. S. Harris of Johannesburg. On January 8 Mr. Harris delivered a special address to the children at the conclusion of the Sabbath service in the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue.⁶⁷ The committee of the Hebrew School, no doubt unable to find a more suitable candidate re-elected Mr. Jacobson as headmaster for a

⁶³Ibid., December 1, 1911, p.1006.

⁶⁴The Natal Mercury, June 3, 1915, p.4.

⁶⁵Ibid., June 10, 1916, p.6. and South African Jewish Chronicle, October 6, 1916, p.383.

⁶⁶The Natal Mercury, May 3, 1915, p.10.

⁶⁷Ibid., January 7, 1916, p.4.

further term of two years.⁶⁸

Mr. M. Stiller, the chairman of the Durban Hebrew School, in presenting his report to the annual general meeting in June 1916 thanked the Durban Hebrew Congregation for the support which it gave the school.⁶⁹ This support was reflected in an increased grant of £150.⁷⁰ However it did not meet with the approval of all the members of the Congregation and there were those who were against any grant to the school, since they believed that the Congregation should take over the school itself.⁷¹ Despite sentiments of this nature the Congregation as a whole continued to support the school. Ministerial candidates were always required to be teachers as well.⁷² Thus the Congregation played its part in ensuring that the school was staffed by competent teachers.

The school also received financial assistance from the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild⁷³ and benefitted from a dance given by the Durban Jewish Girls' Association on August 10, 1915.⁷⁴ Together with the Russian Jewish

⁶⁸South African Jewish Chronicle, February 11, 1916, p.733.

⁶⁹The Natal Mercury, June 21, 1916, p.10.

⁷⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, March 3, 1916, p.787.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., May 11, 1917, p.339. and November 30, 1917, p.1034.

⁷³Ibid., October 8, 1915, p.359, September 28, 1917, p.837, and September 27, 1918, p.889.

⁷⁴Ibid., August 20, 1915, p.215.

War Relief Fund the School received part of the proceeds of a dance which was organised on May 9, 1916, by a special committee headed by Mr. S. Lyons.⁷⁵ The school's funds were further augmented by the proceeds of a concert given by the pupils on July 15, at the Masonic Hall.⁷⁶

By October 1917 Mr. Jacobson's association with the school had come to an end. In that month Mr. Jacobson, under the name Jackson by which he was equally well known,⁷⁷ advertised private Hebrew lessons at 21 St. Andrew's Street.⁷⁸ The fee at Mr. Jackson's Durban Hebrew Classes was from five shillings a month.⁷⁹

At the annual prize distribution held in the synagogue chambers on December 16, 1917, tribute was paid to Mrs H. Wohlman, who had in the absence of a headmaster taken control of the school.⁸⁰ Since at the prize distribution Mr. L. Hart deplored the depleted attendance of children,⁸¹ it would appear that Mr Jacobson's departure from the school and his

⁷⁵Ibid., May 12, 1916, p.1009.

⁷⁶The Natal Mercury, July 18, 1916, p.3.

⁷⁷South African Jewish Chronicle, February 4, 1916, p.709, February 11, 1916, p.733. and June 21, 1916, p.10.

⁷⁸The Natal Mercury, October 27, 1917, p.6.

⁷⁹Ibid., February 9, 1918, p.6.

⁸⁰Ibid., December 21, 1917, p.11.

⁸¹South African Jewish Chronicle, December 21, 1917.

establishment of rival Hebrew classes did have a detrimental effect on the Durban Hebrew School.

Great hope was placed in Mr. Jacobson's successor Mr. I. Poliakoff of Potchefstroom,⁸² who commenced his duties with the Durban Hebrew School by addressing the children in the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue.⁸³ By June 1918 when the members of the Durban Hebrew School met for the annual general meeting the chairman Mr. J. Rothstein was able to refer to an average daily attendance of forty seven, whilst the treasurer's report showed a credit balance in the bank of £104 9s 6d.⁸⁴ The school thus went forward into the closing months of the war secure in its numbers and finances and under the supervision of a suitable headmaster.

THE DURBAN JEWISH BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

Upon the outbreak of war the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society promised the Mayor Mr. Holmes that it would not encroach on the Governor General's Fund for any destitute Jews.⁸⁵ In pursual of this promise it appears

⁸²Also spelt Polliacoff (The Natal Mercury, February 1, 1918, p.6.) and Polescoff (South African Jewish Chronicle, June 21, 1918, p.585.)

⁸³The Natal Mercury, December 25, 1917, p.4.

⁸⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, June 21, 1918, p.585.

⁸⁵The Natal Mercury, October 18, 1916, p.11.

that the Benevolent Society limited almost entirely the scope of its work during the period 1914-1918 to the care of its less fortunate co-religionists.

In the months immediately following the outbreak of war the number of calls made on the Society increased significantly.⁸⁶ This resulted in a decline in the Society's funds which was offset by the proceeds of a Grand Ball, held in the Masonic Hall on June 1, 1915.⁸⁷ Of the £394 14s 6d which the Society had in hand at the time its president presented his report to the annual general meeting in 1915,⁸⁸ the sum of £219 6s 11d was expended during the following financial year in providing relief to sixty four needy cases.⁸⁹ The Society's funds drawn largely from the members who paid a subscription of one shilling per month⁹⁰ and from fund raising ventures, also included donations from the Durban Jewish Ladies Guild,⁹¹ the Durban Jewish Girls' Association⁹² and the Durban Turf Club.⁹³

⁸⁶ See report to the half yearly meeting of the Society. (South African Jewish Chronicle, April 30, 1915, p.289.)

⁸⁷ The Natal Mercury, June 2, 1915, p.8.

⁸⁸ South African Jewish Chronicle, October 29, 1915, p.423.

⁸⁹ The Natal Mercury, October 18, 1916, p.11.

⁹⁰ South African Jewish Chronicle, May 5, 1916, p.990.

⁹¹ Ibid., October 8, 1915, p.359., The Natal Mercury, October 18, 1916, p.11. and October 30, 1918, p.11.

⁹² The Natal Mercury, October 18, 1916, p.11.

⁹³ Ibid., October 20, 1916, p.6., South African Jewish Chronicle, September 8, 1916, p.302., January 4.

On April 21, 1918, at the half yearly general meeting of the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society the members unanimously confirmed the conferring of a life governorship of the Society upon Mr. S. Lyons and Mr. B. Smolensky.⁹⁴

However the members showed a greater divergence of opinion with regard to the matters raised at the adjourned general meeting of the Society on May 5. A matter which raised considerable public interest was whether the authority to grant loans should be left in the hands of the three executive officers and two members of the committee, or whether requests for loans should come before the whole committee. Eventually it was decided to adopt the latter course. The meeting was then able to move on to the question of membership. Whereas membership of the Society had always been open to any Jew or Jewess, the meeting adopted the principle that this rule should only apply, where such Jews and Jewesses were married according to Jewish rites.⁹⁵ From the correspondent's report it would appear that this step had been necessitated by an increase in the number of mixed marriages.

In late October 1918 in his speech to the annual general meeting, the president of the Society bemoaned the continuation of the war,⁹⁶ little realising that a

⁹⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, April 26, 1918, p.417.

⁹⁵Ibid., May 17, 1918, p.487.

⁹⁶The Natal Mercury, October 30, 1918, p.11.

fortnight later the armistice would be signed and the Society would then have to prepare to meet the challenges of the post war period.

THE DURBAN JEWISH LADIES' GUILD

No other Jewish organisation in Durban made a contribution to the war effort which was in any way comparable to that of the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild.⁹⁷ Yet as involved as it was in general and Jewish war work the Guild continued to assist the Durban Hebrew School,⁹⁸ the South African Jewish Orphanage,⁹⁹ the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society¹⁰⁰ and the Durban Hebrew Congregation.¹⁰¹ In its capacity as Holy Vestment Society it also helped to furnish the permanent succah erected in the grounds of the St. Andrew's Street Synagogue in 1918.¹⁰² Ever in the forefront of charitable work the Guild helped entertain the children who were sent to Durban by the

⁹⁷ See above pp.380-382.

⁹⁸ The South African Jewish Chronicle, October 8, 1915, p.359. and September 27, 1918, p.889.

⁹⁹ Ibid., October 8, 1915, p.359.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., and April 26, 1918, p.417. and The Natal Mercury, October 18, 1916, p.11. and October 30, 1918, p.11.

¹⁰¹ South African Jewish Chronicle, October 8, 1915, p.359. and February 15, 1918, p.170.

¹⁰² ...

Star Seaside Fund,¹⁰³ providing a special luncheon at the synagogue in 1918 for those of the Jewish faith.¹⁰⁴

To fulfill these important duties the Guild raised funds by organising dances¹⁰⁵ and a bring and buy sale.¹⁰⁶ In July 1915 the annual ball was held in the Town Hall.¹⁰⁷ However in the following year the Guild decided to abandon this project,¹⁰⁸ and no further balls were held until the resumption of peace. Whilst in 1916 the demands made upon the Guild resulted in its expenditure exceeding its income¹⁰⁹ the Guild nevertheless continued with its various undertakings. A donation from the Durban Turf Club in 1917 reflected the public recognition of the services which it rendered.¹¹⁰

Long after the restoration of peace the Guild, by its continued record of service, retained the high esteem which it had earned in the eyes of all sectors of the population during the four years of war.

¹⁰³The Natal Mercury, August 26, 1915, p.10. and South African Jewish Chronicle, August 30, 1918, p.801.

¹⁰⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, August 30, 1918, p.801.

¹⁰⁵The Natal Mercury, December 12, 1914, p.10. and August 24, 1918, p.10.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., March 6, 1917, p.7.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., July 16, 1915, p.8.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., June 10, 1916, p.6.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., October 5, 1916, p.6.

¹¹⁰South African Jewish Chronicle, January 4, 1917, p.13. and The Natal Mercury, December 17, 1917, p.7.

THE DURBAN JEWISH GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

During the war the Durban Jewish Girls' Association achieved a fine reputation for service, not only in regard to the war effort¹¹¹ but also in respect to its service to the Jewish community and in particular for the assistance which it rendered to the Durban Hebrew School¹¹² and the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society.¹¹³ Nevertheless in January 1916 the president of the Association was forced to announce the closing of the Association owing to a decline in membership and to lack of support and co-operation.¹¹⁴ In reporting on the closure of the Durban Jewish Girls' Association one correspondent observed that the unmarried ladies of the town made no effort to become a force in the Durban Jewish Ladies' Guild. In view of the failure of the Jewish Girls' Association he urged the young ladies of the community to involve themselves in the affairs of the Guild.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹The Association contributed to the Mayor's War Relief Fund (The Natal Mercury, September 14, 1914, p.6.) and worked on the Women's Patriotic League (Ibid.)

¹¹²The Association held a dance on August 10, 1915, in aid of the school. (South African Jewish Chronicle, August 20, 1915, p.215.)

¹¹³Before it disbanded the Association made a monetary contribution to the Benevolent Society. (The Natal Mercury, October 18, 1916, p.11.)

¹¹⁴Ibid., January 28, 1916, p.6.

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THE DURBAN JEWISH LITERARY CLUB AND ZIONIST ASSOCIATION

The Durban Jewish Club which emerged not long after the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914¹¹⁶ came to play a leading role in the cultural and social life of the Jews of Durban. At its club room, which was at first located in St. George's Building corner of Smith and Park Streets¹¹⁷ and later at the Old Court House in Aliwal Street,¹¹⁸ a varied programme of lectures,¹¹⁹ debates,¹²⁰ dances¹²¹ and concerts¹²² was held for the benefit of members, thereby satisfying the need which existed within the community for such a forum. A variety of people including leading Jewish personalities were amongst those who gave of their services

¹¹⁶The actual day of its founding is unclear as the Club's second anniversary was celebrated in October 1916. (Ibid., November 3, 1916, p.474.) and its third anniversary was observed in August 1917. (The Natal Mercury, August 9, 1917, p.5.)

¹¹⁷The Natal Mercury, November 14, 1914, p.6.

¹¹⁸Ibid., March 20, 1915, p.6.

¹¹⁹Ibid., November 14, 1914, p.6., April 10, 1915, p.6., June 7, 1915, p.8., August 25, 1915, p.7., September 4, 1915, p.8., October 16, 1915, p.6. June 10, 1916, p.6., and June 24, 1916, p.8.

¹²⁰Ibid., March 27, 1915, p.11., June 10, 1916, p.6., June 17, 1916, p.6., and June 24, 1916, p.8.

¹²¹Ibid., July 28, 1915, p.10.

¹²²Ibid., May 15, 1915, p.6., July 1, 1916, p.6. and South African Jewish Chronicle, September 1, 1916, p.282.

to the Club.¹²³

On April 30, 1916, the Durban Jewish Club held its annual meeting. On the recommendation of the chairman Mr. M. Fine the members changed the name of the Club to the Durban Jewish Literary Club.¹²⁴ The election of officers resulted in the appointment of Mr. S.A. Nathanson, as president, Mr. M. Fine as vice president, Mr. C.H. Essus as treasurer and Mr. I. Rittenberg as hon. secretary.¹²⁵ In keeping with its newly adopted name, the Club held a memorial evening in honour of Shalom Aleichem at which Mr. S.A. Nathanson, the Revs. S. Pincus and H. Rubin and Messrs D. Harris and M. Kentridge paid tribute to the deceased Yiddish author.¹²⁶

At a mass meeting held on July 9, 1916, which was addressed by Messrs M.H. Genussow and T. Alexander of the Zionist Federation and Rev. E.S. Walt of Standerton,¹²⁷

¹²³ Among those who addressed the members of the Club were Mr. Olaf Weldergreen (The Natal Mercury, November 14, 1914, p.6.), Rev. H. Rubin, (Ibid., April 10, 1915, p.6., October 16, 1915, p.6. and South African Jewish Chronicle, June 2, 1916, p.7.), M. Kentridge (The Natal Mercury, June 7, 1915, p.8. and September 4, 1915, p.8.) Rabbi Dr. Landau (Ibid., August 25, 1915, p.7.), Rev. S. Pincus (South African Jewish Chronicle, June 2, 1916, p.7.) M. Jacobson, (Ibid., June 16, 1916, p.45.) and Rev. A.W. Jacobs (The Natal Mercury, June 24, 1916, p.8.)

¹²⁴ South African Jewish Chronicle, May 5, 1916, p.990.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., June 2, 1916, p.7.

¹²⁷ The Natal Mercury, July 8, 1916, p.8.

the members of the Durban Jewish Literary Club agreed to accept the Basle programme and to become affiliated to the Federation.¹²⁸ In consequence the name of the club was altered and became the Durban Jewish Literary Club and Zionist Association.¹²⁹

The decision of the Durban Jewish Literary Club to incorporate a Zionist plank in its programme was a most sound and practical step. In May 1916 a meeting of local Zionists and Mr. J. Janower the treasurer of the South African Zionist Federation had led to attempts to reorganise the local Zionist Association,¹³⁰ which apart from a successful shekel collection in 1915¹³¹ had, from the outbreak of the war, shown no sign of life. This attempt to revitalise the Durban Zionist Association was further encouraged by the public meeting of the Association, which was addressed by Messrs M.L. Genussow and B. Gordon of the South African Zionist Federation.¹³² Since earlier attempts by members of the community to maintain both an active Social and Literary Society and an equally active Zionist Association had always ended in failure,¹³³ this step taken by the Durban Jewish Literary Club may be regarded as an attempt to circumvent

¹²⁸South African Jewish Chronicle, July 14, 1916, p.139.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid., May 19, 1916, p.1028.

¹³¹Ibid., April 16, 1915, p.255.

¹³²The Natal Mercury, July 1, 1916, p.6.

¹³³See above pp.199-200 and 318.

the difficulties which had given rise to the former state of affairs. The successful pooling of both organisations' resources eliminated the rivalry and duplication which had formerly inhibited the Zionist and Social and Literary Societies in Durban and led to the presentation of a full and varied programme.

Following its first function which was a memorial service for the Zionist leader Dr. Herzl,¹³⁴ the Durban Jewish Literary Club and Zionist Association organised a series of lectures¹³⁵ at the club rooms in the Old Court House. The lectures together with the concerts and other functions¹³⁶ which the Association arranged set the pace for the Association's activities, which throughout the war maintained the momentum which had been characteristic of the activities of the Durban Jewish Literary Club.

¹³⁴The Natal Mercury, July 27, 1916, p.9. Similar memorial services were held in 1917. (Ibid., July 17, 1917, p.6.) and 1918. (Ibid., June 28, 1918, p.6.).

¹³⁵Among those who lectured to the Association were Rev. G.E. Walt of Standerton, (Ibid., July 29, 1916, p.6.), M. Kentridge (South African Jewish Chronicle, August 25, 1916, p.262.), Henry Ancketill (Ibid., September 15, 1916, p.315.), Mendell Jacobson, (Ibid., October 6, 1916, p.383.), S.A. Nathanson (Ibid., November 3, 1916, p.474.), and Benzion Hirsch (Ibid., November 24, 1916, p.532., December 1, 1916, p.553. and The Natal Mercury, November 18, 1916, p.6.).

¹³⁶The Association held a sacred concert on September 17, 1916. (South African Jewish Chronicle, September 22, 1916, p.335.) and a concert and a dance on October 31, 1916. (Ibid., November 10, 1916, p.498.).

Obligated to relinquish its club rooms in the Old Court House to the military authorities¹³⁷ the Durban Jewish Literary Club and Zionist Association secured new premises in Acutt's Arcade, Gardiner Street. The new club rooms were officially opened on February 4, 1917, by the president of the Association, Mr. S.A. Nathanson.¹³⁸ They served as the venue for a debate on Zionism¹³⁹ and a lecture by Mr. L.J. Johnsen¹⁴⁰ and Mrs Fredman of Pretoria.¹⁴¹

On March 25 a farewell concert under the auspices of the Association was given in the St. George's Hall in honour of Mr. Morris Kentridge, who was preparing to depart for Johannesburg. In the course of the evening he was presented with an elaborate illuminated address in appreciation of the valuable services which he had rendered to the Association.¹⁴²

The Durban Jewish Literary Club and Zionist Association held a special meeting on July 1, 1917, for the purpose of electing a chairman in place of Mr. S.A. Nathanson whose sudden illness had compelled him to resign.¹⁴³ Nathanson, whose popularity had

¹³⁷Ibid., January 5, 1917, p.561.

¹³⁸Ibid., February 16, 1917, p.57.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., March 23, 1917, p.172.

¹⁴¹Ibid., June 15, 1917, p.451.

¹⁴²The Natal Mercury, March 26, 1917, p.4.

¹⁴³Ibid., July 3, 1917, p.10.

been reflected in his being re-elected leader of the Association at the half yearly general meetings in November 1916¹⁴⁴ and May 1917,¹⁴⁵ was succeeded by Mr. S. Goldberg.¹⁴⁶ Mr. Goldberg proved to be a worthy successor and he matched the high standards which had been set for him by his predecessor. Apart from the numerous lectures¹⁴⁷ and concert¹⁴⁸ which were organised during Goldberg's presidency, the Association also arranged a meeting on December 2, 1917 to discuss the formation of a League of British Jews. The League had been formed at a meeting held at Lord Rothschild's office in London;

...with the object of uplifting the status of British subjects professing Judaism, also to resist the allegation that Jews constitute a separate political nationality, also to facilitate the settlement in Palestine of Jews who are inclined to migrate thither.¹⁴⁹

At the meeting of the Association many divergent views

¹⁴⁴South African Jewish Chronicle, November 24, 1916, p.532.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., May 11, 1917, p.339.

¹⁴⁶The Natal Mercury, July 3, 1917, p.10.

¹⁴⁷Lectures were given to the Association by Mr. D. Harris (Ibid., August 2, 1917, p.8.). Mr. Marcus Lewis (Ibid., August 22, 1917, p.7.), Mr. Jamieson (Ibid., August 28, 1917, p.7.), Mr. M. Levy, (Ibid., September 13, 1917, p.6.), Mr. Sam Lyons (South African Jewish Chronicle, October 26, 1917, p.965.), Councillor J.W. Coleman (The Natal Mercury, November 21, 1917, p.9.) and Mr. M.J. Shapiro of Salisbury (Ibid., January 24, 1918, p.6.).

¹⁴⁸Ibid., October 30, 1917, p.6.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., November 19, 1917, p.9.

were expressed by the speakers as to the advisability of such a League, the majority believing like Mr. E.B. Sandler that, "the formation of the League would not be inimical to Zionism".¹⁵⁰

Mr Goldberg's term of office ended on March 3, 1918 when at the half annual general meeting of the Association the members re-elected Mr. S.A. Nathanson.¹⁵¹ Under Mr. Nathanson the Association continued to arrange debates¹⁵² and lectures¹⁵³ on a variety of topics. However during the war the Durban Jewish Literary Club and Zionist Association not only served as a forum for social and cultural intercourse but also played its part in the general war effort.

Its principal contribution in this regard lay in the

¹⁵⁰Ibid., December 4, 1917, p.8.

¹⁵¹South African Jewish Chronicle, March 15, 1918, p.266.

¹⁵²A debate "Should Jews marry out of their faith", was held on March 24, 1918. (Ibid., April 5, 1918, p.329.) and a debate, "Is Zionism strengthening the Jewish Religion?" was held on April 14, 1918. (The Natal Mercury, April 13, 1918, p.6.)

¹⁵³On May 5 L. Goldsmid, editor of the South African Jewish Chronicle, lectured on, "Newspapers and their attitude to Zionists". (Ibid., May 3, 1918, p.6.) and on December 29, 1918, Rev. Rosenberg of Pretoria spoke on Zionism. (Ibid., December 27, 1918, p.6.). Other functions included an evenings recital from standard authors by Mr. T.A. Blakely (Ibid., June 21, 1914, p.4.), and a reading from The Conquering Jew. (South African Jewish Chronicle, September 27, 1918, p.889.).

concert and dance which the Association arranged in the Masonic Hall on October 31, 1916, in aid of the Governor General's Fund.¹⁵⁴ The affair, which was under the direction of Mr. J. Wolpert, featured a number of Jewish artistes, including Misses L. Sugarman, C. Rothstein, Rosa Goldstein and R. Wolpert¹⁵⁵ and realised £35.¹⁵⁶ The chairman and committee of the Association also lent their support to the organisers of the Durban War Fair, not only by urging the members of the Association to contribute to the Fair,¹⁵⁷ but also by agreeing to accept donations on behalf of the Fair Committee.¹⁵⁸ In 1917 all Jewish organisations in Durban apart from the Guild contributed to a gift for the soldiers' huts. The Durban Jewish Literary Club and Zionist Association played its part.¹⁵⁹

Being a Zionist Body it was only natural that the Association should have been concerned about events related to Palestine. When news of the disaster to the Jewish colonies and settlements in Palestine was received in Durban the Durban Jewish Literary Club and Zionist Association, in response to an appeal received

¹⁵⁴Ibid., November 10, 1916, p.498.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., November 24, 1916, p.532.

¹⁵⁷The Natal Mercury, September 22, 1916, p.6.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., September 26, 1917, p.10. Also see above

from London, called a mass meeting of all the members of the Jewish community.¹⁶⁰ At the meeting a relief fund was created and at the request of the Association Mr. F.C. Hollander acted as chairman of the relief fund committee, which raised £750 for the Jews of Palestine.¹⁶¹

The members of the Association, at a meeting on November 11, 1917, passed a resolution declaring, "that this meeting strongly and unanimously favours the reconstitution of Palestine as the National Home of the Jewish People" and also expressed the hope that, "His Majesty's Government will use its best influence and endeavours to achieve this object".¹⁶² In fact by the time this meeting was held the now famous Balfour Declaration which stated that, "...His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people...",¹⁶³ had been published in the British press. The response of Zionists throughout the world to the Balfour Declaration was one of immense relief and joy. At a meeting held in their rooms in Acutt's Arcade on November 25, 1917, the members of the Durban Jewish Literary Club and Zionist Association unanimously

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., June 5, 1917, p.5.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., September 26, 1917, p.10.

¹⁶² South African Jewish Chronicle, November 16, 1917, p.1013.

¹⁶³ Walter Laqueur, A History of Zionism (New York, 1976), p.198.

adopted a resolution moved by Mr. D. Gottlieb. The resolution stated:

That this meeting keenly appreciates the action of the British Government in declaring its sympathy with the principle of establishing in Palestine a national home for the Jewish people, and its intention to use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object. Further, that this meeting respectfully tenders to His Majesty's Government its grateful thanks for thus bringing nearer the consummation of the highest hopes of Jewry.¹⁶⁴

The enthusiasm which was generated by the Balfour Declaration was clearly reflected in the large attendance at a mass meeting of the Jewish community which was held on May 26, 1918 at His Majesty's Theatre. At the meeting Rev. M.I. Cohen of Bulawayo, Rhodesia, delivered an address on the restoration of Palestine and made a special appeal for funds. At the conclusion of the speakers' address a committee was appointed to canvass for subscriptions,¹⁶⁵ which a few months later amounted to over £650.¹⁶⁶

Interest in Palestine was also reflected in the numerous lectures related to the country which were delivered under the auspices of the Association. These included addresses by Dr Jacob Norman of the American Red Cross Commission to Palestine,¹⁶⁷ Prof. J. Alexander,¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴The Natal Mercury, November 27, 1917, p.7.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., May 27, 1918, p.6.

¹⁶⁶South African Jewish Chronicle, August 2, 1918, p.719.

¹⁶⁷The Natal Mercury, May 1, 1918, p.8.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., July 13, 1918, p.8.

Benzion Hirsch¹⁶⁹ and Mr. Rabinowitz of Pretoria.¹⁷⁰

On December 15, 1917 the Chanukah function of the Durban Jewish Literary Club and Zionist Association celebrated the fall of Jerusalem to the British.¹⁷¹ A year later its Chanukah function was dedicated to the redemption of Palestine.¹⁷² In a single year events of enormous consequence for Zionists in particular and world Jewry in general had taken place. As Zionists stood on the threshold of 1919 they faced the future with optimism.

¹⁶⁹South African Jewish Chronicle, August 2, 1918, p.719.

¹⁷⁰The Natal Mercury, December 21, 1918, p.8.

¹⁷¹Ibid., December 18, 1917, p.11.

¹⁷²Ibid., December 7, 1918, p.12.

CONCLUSION

The history of the Jews of Durban is contemporaneous with the history of European settlement in Natal, for ever since the time of Nathaniel Isaacs, who arrived in Port Natal in October 1825,¹ Jews have been associated with the town.² It is, therefore, all the more surprising that, notwithstanding this long association, it was not until 1883 that there was a sufficient number of Jews permanently resident in the town to warrant the establishment of a Hebrew congregation.³

Like the founders and original members of the Hebrew Congregation, Durban Jewry was, until the turn of the century, essentially Anglo-Jewish in background and culture. Therefore, except in matters related to their

¹See above pp.5-6.

²Among the most notable of the Jews associated with early Durban were Benjamin Norden, (See above pp.22-23.), George Britton (See above pp.24-25.), Jonas Bergtheil (See above pp.30-42.), and Daniel de Pass (See above pp.55-58.).

³Suggested reasons for this situation are advanced above pp.132-134.

faith, the Jews of Durban differed little from their fellow townsmen. Consequently one finds Jews involved in all aspects of public and general life, and in particular in the post Boer War period.⁴ The predominance of the Anglo-Jewish element within the community tended to inhibit the emergence of Jewish communal organisations. Upon the outbreak of hostilities, in 1899, the only other Jewish organisations in the town, apart from the Durban Hebrew Congregation, were the Durban Jewish Benevolent Society, founded in 1898, and an inactive Zionist Association.⁵

Being English in all but their religious affiliation the Jewish leadership of Durban did not feel the urge which their more observant and traditional East

⁴ Jonas Bergtheil was a member of the first Legislative Council (See above p.36.) and Jews showed a keen interest in elections at both government and municipal level. (See above pp.122, 331, 342.). Most notable among the Jews in public life were Mr. F.C. Hollander (See above pp.331, 345, 352.), Mr. C.P. Robinson (See above pp.340, 403.), Sir Matthew Nathan (See above pp.342-348.), Mr. M. Kentridge (Kantrovitch) (See above pp.353, 358, 362.), and Mr. Karl Gundelfinger (See above pp.362-363.). The Jewish community of Durban, in common with other sectors of the population observed milestones in the history of the Empire at specially organised services (See above pp.146, 253, 261.) and Jews played their part in the Anglo Boer War and World War I (See above Chapters 6 and 10.).

⁵ See above pp.155-160. Notwithstanding the relatively inactive communal life of the community, Durban Jewry was certainly not inhibited in its support for the Jews of Russia who were subject to great hardship in 1891 (See above p.125.), 1903 (See above p.330.), 1905 (See above p.332.) and 1906 (See above p.357.). During World War I a considerable amount was raised for The Russian Jewish Relief Fund (See above pp.390-394.). Concern for Palestine Jewry was reflected in 1892, in support for Shlom Jerusalem

European Jewish refugees during the Anglo Boer War, and in the waves of immigration which followed the restoration of peace, that organisations such as the Durban Zionist Association, the Durban Ladies' Zionist Association and the Durban Jewish Social and Literary Society were successfully established in the town.⁶ East European Jewry's most profound effect on Jewish life in the town was in the realm of synagogal affairs. Dissatisfaction with the level of orthodoxy and standard of Jewish education provided by the Congregation ultimately precipitated a split within the ranks of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, and witnessed the emergence of the Durban New Hebrew Congregation.⁷ In retrospect one can understand that the custom of employing a mixed choir in the synagogue, and of providing only the rudimentary elements of Jewish education for the children must have indeed been strange and unacceptable to people raised in the orthodox tradition of Eastern Europe. The Durban New Hebrew Congregation, which reasserted the traditional orthodox emphasis on education, not only pioneered the establishment of adult Jewish education,⁸ but also inspired a re-examination of the type of Hebrew education in the town. It certainly influenced the decision to create an

⁶See above pp.185-207.

⁷For a full account see above pp.247-248.

⁸See above p.250.

independent Talmud Torah School⁹ - the forerunner of the present Natal Hebrew Schools Association, with its network of day schools.

Although the history of Durban Jewry may create an impression of a community vastly different from its sister communities in other centres, in consequence of its dominant English tradition, the Jewish community was certainly not isolationist or exclusivist in outlook. When confronted by the arrival of large numbers of refugees, in 1899, the Jewish community responded whole heartedly to the task of alleviating the difficulties which were experienced by the Jews of the Transvaal and Orange Free State.¹⁰ In so doing Durban Jewry clearly demonstrated that in times of crisis the differences between Jews of English and East European origin were of little consequence. Although isolated by geographical factors Durban Jewry remained linked to communities in other parts of South Africa through affiliation to the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal,¹¹ and later the South African Jewish Board of Deputies,¹² and the South African Zionist Federation.¹³ Durban Jewry was also represented at the South African Jewish Congress, held in

⁹See above p.206.

¹⁰See above pp.169-174.

¹¹See above p.325.

¹²See above p.359.

¹³See above p.295.

Johannesburg in April 1916.¹⁴ It goes without saying that identifying Jews elsewhere in Natal looked upon the Durban Hebrew Congregation as the mother congregation, and felt free to call upon it on occasion for active assistance.¹⁵

At the end of 1918 Durban Jewry was divided in its congregational affiliation, but certainly not weak and inactive. It had had a long record of participation in the general life of the town, and it had rendered sterling service in the Great War. The community could be justifiably proud of its active Jewish Ladies' Guild, Benevolent Society, and Literary Club and Zionist Association. It could also look forward to even greater developments with the dawning of peace and a return to normalcy.

¹⁴See above pp.397-399.

¹⁵See above p.146.

APPENDIX

OFFICE BEARERS OF MAJOR INSTITUTIONS*

DURBAN HEBREW CONGREGATION

- 1883-1884 Mr. B. Lipinski, president; Mr. H. Heller,
hon. treasurer; Mr. M.H. Emanuel, hon.
secretary; Messrs D. Jacobs, D. Lipinski,
J. Granger and I. Goldberg, committee.
- 1884-1885 Mr. B. Lipinski, president; Mr. M.H.
Emanuel, hon. treasurer; Mr. D.M. Isaacs,
hon. secretary; Messrs E. Emanuel,
D. Granger, L. Goldberg and P. Wartski,
committee.
- 1885-1886 Mr. B. Lipinski, president.
- 1886-1887 Mr. B. Lipinski, president; and Mr. P.
Wartski, hon. treasurer.

*List incomplete because sources, as explained in the introduction, were themselves not complete.

- 1887-1888 Mr. B. Lipinski, president; Mr. H.J. Henochsberg, hon. treasurer; and Mr. V. Robinson, hon. secretary.
- 1888-1889 Mr. B. Lipinski, president; Mr. H.J. Henochsberg, hon. treasurer; and Mr. V. Robinson, hon. secretary.
- 1891-1892 Mr. J.H. Isaacs, president; Mr. A. Simon, hon. treasurer; Mr. S. Sprinz, hon. secretary; Messrs B. Lipinski and A. Simon, trustees; Messrs M. Heilbron, P. Wartski, B. Cinamon, M.A. Hart, and L. Hammerstein, committee.
- 1894-1895 Mr. D.N. Henochsberg, president; Mr. V. Robinson, hon. treasurer; and Mr. A.M. Goodman, hon. secretary.
- 1895-1896 Mr. D.N. Henochsberg, president; Mr. V. Robinson, hon. treasurer; Mr. A.M. Goodman, hon. secretary; Messrs B. Lipinski, J. Isaacs, A. Simon, I. Lee and R. Goodman, committee.
- 1898-1899 Mr. P. Wartski, president.
- 1899-1900 Mr. B. Lipinski, president; Mr. A. Simon, hon. treasurer; Mr. Holt, hon. secretary; Messrs F.C. Hollander, P. Lazarus, B.C. Myers, L. Goldberg and P. Wartski, committee.
- 1900-1901 Mr. B.C. Myers, president; and Mr. P. Lazarus, hon. secretary.
- 1901-1902 Mr. B. Lipinski, president;

- Mr. F.C. Hollander, hon. treasurer;
 Mr. H.D. Hanson, hon. secretary;
 (succeeded by Mr. H. Lipinski), Messrs
 P. Wartski, B.C. Myers, L. Goldberg,
 J. Kirsch and A.T. Alleson, committee.
- 1902-1903 Mr. P. Wartski, president; Mr. M. Lipinski,
 hon. treasurer; Mr. R. Levisohn, hon.
 secretary; Messrs F.C. Hollander,
 L. Goldberg, P. Lazarus, J. Lewis and
 B. Cinamon, committee.
- 1903-1904 Mr. P. Wartski, president; Mr. B. Lipinski,
 hon. treasurer; (succeeded by Mr. L.
 Goldberg), Mr. R. Levisohn, hon. secretary;
 (succeeded by Mr. B. Lazarus), Messrs
 N.D. Morris, F.C. Hollander, L. Goldberg,
 P. Lazarus and R. Goodman, committee.
- 1904-1905 Mr. P. Wartski, president, and
 J. Benjamin, hon. secretary.
- 1905-1906 Mr. C.P. Robinson, president; Mr. D.N.
 Henochsberg, hon. treasurer;
 Mr. A. Rittenberg, hon. secretary; Messrs
 B. Lipinski and A. Simon, trustees;
 Messrs P. Wartski, F.C. Hollander, B. Shlom,
 R. Goodman, H.D. Hanson, P. Lazarus and
 L. Hammerstein, committee.
- 1906-1907 Mr. C.P. Robinson, president; Mr. D.N.
 Henochsberg, hon. treasurer; Mr. L. Hart.
 hon. secretary; Messrs B. Lipinski and
 A. Simon, trustees; Messrs F.C. Hollander,

P. Wartski, R. Goodman, L. Hammerstein,
B. Smolensky, P. Lazarus and H. Lipinski,
committee.

1907-1908

Sir Matthew Nathan, hon. president;
Mr. C.P. Robinson, president; Mr. D.N.
Henochsberg, hon. treasurer; Mr. L. Hart,
hon. secretary; Messrs P. Wartski and
A. Simon, trustees; Messrs F.C. Hollander,
H. Lipinski, B. Smolensky, C. Blumenfeld,
G. Sandeman, R. Goodman and H. Brodie,
committee.

1908-1909

Sir Matthew Nathan, hon. president;
Mr. F.C. Hollander, president; Mr. H.
Lipinski, hon. treasurer and Mr. L. Hart,
hon. secretary.

1909-1910

Mr. F.C. Hollander, president; Mr. H.
Lipinski, hon. treasurer and Mr. C.M. Cohen,
hon. secretary.

1910-1911

Mr. F.C. Hollander, president; Mr. H.
Lipinski, hon. treasurer and Mr. C.M. Cohen,
hon. secretary.

1911-1912

Mr. F.C. Hollander, president; Mr. H.
Lipinski, hon. treasurer; Mr. J. Wartski,
hon. secretary and Messrs P. Wartski and
A. Simon, trustees.

1912-1913

Mr. F.C. Hollander, president; Mr. H.
Lipinski, hon. treasurer; (succeeded by
Mr. S. Bloom), Mr. S. Morris, hon.
secretary; Messrs P. Wartski and A. Simon,

- trustees; Messrs L. Goldberg, L. Hart, B. Smolensky, S. Bloom, P. Tobias, J. Rothstein and B. Berman, committee.
- 1913-1914 Mr. F.C. Hollander, president; Mr. S. Bloom, hon. treasurer; Mr. S. Morris, hon. secretary; (succeeded by Mr. M. Moss), Messrs P. Wartski and A. Simon, life trustees; Messrs H. Lipinski, L. Goldberg, L. Hart, B. Smolensky, J. Rothstein, B. Lurie and B. Berman, committee.
- 1914-1915 Mr. F.C. Hollander, president; Mr. M. Stiller, hon. treasurer; Mr. M. Moss, hon. secretary; Messrs P. Wartski and A. Simon, life trustees; Messrs J.H. Isaacs, B. Smolensky, H. Lipinski, L. Hart, S. Bloom, L. Rosen and J. Rothstein, committee.
- 1915-1916 Mr. F.C. Hollander, president; Mr. L. Goldberg, hon. treasurer; Mr. M. Moss, hon. secretary; Messrs P. Wartski and A. Simon, life trustees; Messrs H. Lipinski, I. Davis, B. Berman, B. Lurie, H. Ellis and S. Bloom, committee.
- 1916-1917 Mr. F.C. Hollander, president; Mr. M. Stiller, hon. treasurer; Mr. J. Leaman, hon. secretary; and Messrs P. Wartski and A. Simon, life trustees.
- 1917-1918 Mr. F.C. Hollander, president; Mr. M. Stiller, hon. treasurer; Mr. J. Leaman,

hon. secretary; and Messrs P. Wartski
and A. Simon, life trustees.

1918-1919

Mr. C.P. Robinson, president; Mr. A.J.
Cohen, hon. treasurer; Mr. J. Leaman,
hon. secretary; Messrs P. Wartski and
A. Simon, life trustees; Messrs F.C.
Hollander, B. Smolensky, L. Hart, L. Davis,
H. Lipinski, H. Hillman and B. Lurie,
committee.

DURBAN NEW HEBREW CONGREGATION

- 1909-1910 Mr. H. Brodie, president; Mr. H. Solomon, hon. treasurer; Mr. C.A. Levy, hon. secretary; and Mr. I. Rosenbach, trustee.
- 1911-1912 Mr. C.A. Levy, hon. secretary and Mr. I. Rosenbach, trustee.
- 1912-1913 Mr. C.A. Levy, hon. secretary and Mr. I. Rosenbach, trustee.
- 1913-1914 Mr. C.A. Levy, hon. secretary and Mr. I. Rosenbach, trustee.
- 1914-1915 Mr. S. Goldberg, president; Mr. D. Harris, hon. treasurer; Mr. H. Patz, hon. secretary and Mr. I. Rosenbach, trustee.
- 1915-1916 Mr. J. Solomon, hon. treasurer; Mr. M.K. Rosenbach, hon. secretary and Mr. I. Rosenbach, trustee.
- 1916-1917 Mr. C.H. Blumenfeld, president; Mr. I. Lurie, hon. treasurer; Mr. M.A. Solomon, hon. secretary; Mr. I. Rosenbach, trustee; Messrs J. Solomon, D. Harris, P. Ditz, H. Patz, W. Katz, M. Hackner, E. Magid, J.M. Shapiro, M.K. Rosenbach and J. Schaffer, committee.
- 1917-1918 Mr. C.H. Blumenfeld, president; Mr. I. Lurie, hon. treasurer; Mr. A. Solomon, hon. secretary and Mr. I. Rosenbach, trustee.

DURBAN JEWISH BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

- 1902-1903 Mr. L. Goldberg, president; Mr. H. Lipinski, hon. treasurer and hon. secretary; Rev. S. Pincus, Messrs B. Lipinski, A. Simon, H.L. Leaman, M. Ruben and H. Hirschfield, committee.
- 1903-1904 Mr. L. Goldberg, president; Mr. H. Lipinski, hon. treasurer and hon. secretary; Messrs B. Shlom, H. Ellis, L. Levinson, A. Bloomberg, H. Steinberg and F.C. Hollander, committee.
- 1904-1905 Mr. L. Goldberg, president; Mr. H. Lipinski, hon. treasurer and hon. secretary; Rev. A. Levy, Messrs B. Shlom, R. Levisohn, M. Ruben, B.L. Wides and H. Ellis, committee.
- 1906-1907 Mr. A. Benson, president; Mr. M. Hanreck, hon. treasurer and Mr. S.S. Freedman, hon. secretary.
- 1907-1908 Mr. A. Benson, president; Mr. M. Hanreck, hon. treasurer; Mr. S.S. Freedman, hon. secretary; Messrs P. Wartski, B. Smolensky, H. Brodie, B. Rothstein, A.G. Scott, B. Lurie, M. Steinberg, W. Katz, J. Janks and J. Solomon, committee.
- 1908-1909 Mr. H. Brodie, president; Mr. B. Smolensky, hon. treasurer; Mr. S. Lyons, hon. secretary; Messrs P. Wartski and

C.H. Blumenfeld, trustees; Messrs
M. Kantrovitch, E. Magid, M. Steinberg,
J. Janks, J. da Costa, P. Patz, J. Solomon,
S. Belman, B. Berman and H. Leaman,
committee.

1909-1910 Mr. H. Brodie, president; Mr. B. Smolensky,
hon. treasurer; Mr. S. Lyons, secretary;
Mr. S. Morris, assistant secretary and
treasurer; Messrs P. Wartski and
H. Lipinski, trustees; Messrs E. Magid,
M. Kantrovitch, B. Lurie, C.H. Blumenfeld,
B. Rothstein and M. Figenbaum, committee.

1910-1911 Mr. H. Brodie, president; Mr. B. Smolensky,
hon. treasurer; Mr. S. Lyons, hon.
secretary; Messrs J. Rothstein, E. Magid,
C.H. Blumenfeld, J. Solomon, J. Janks,
P. Patz, S. Sugarman, B. Berman, C.A. Levy,
and W. Katz, committee.

1911-1912 Mr. H. Brodie, president; Mr. B. Smolensky,
hon. treasurer; Mr. S. Lyons, hon.
secretary; Mr. S. Morris, assistant
treasurer; Messrs J. Rothstein, B. Berman,
S.S. Freedman, J. Solomon, Goldberg,
H. Ellis, Moshalowitz, Rosenbach, C.A. Levy
and S. Bloom, committee.

1912-1913 Mr. H. Brodie, president; Messrs B.
Smolensky and S. Morris joint hon.
treasurers, and Mr. S. Lyons, hon.
secretary.

- 1913-1914 Mr. S. Lyons, president; Mr. B. Smolensky, hon. treasurer; Mr. S. Morris, assistant treasurer; Mr. W. Israel, hon. secretary; Messrs C.H. Blumenfeld and H. Lipinski, trustees; Messrs J. Rothstein, B. Berman, M. Ellis, S. Abrahams, S. Sevel, L. Rosen, S. Goldberg, L. Magid, J. Moshalowitz and S. Danziger, committee.
- 1914-1915 Mr. S. Lyons, president and Mr. M. Miranda, hon. secretary.
- 1915-1916 Mr. S. Lyons, president; Mr. A. Berman, hon. treasurer; Mr. H. Miranda, hon. secretary; Messrs C.H. Blumenfeld and H. Lipinski, trustees; Messrs J. Rothstein, J. Moshalowitz, S. Sevel, H. Ellis, B. Smolensky, B. Berman, S. Danziger, B. Marcus, A.J. Cohen and E. Harris, committee.
- 1916-1917 Mr. S. Lyons, president; Mr. A. Berman, hon. treasurer; Mr. M. Moss, hon. secretary; Messrs C.H. Blumenfeld and J. Moshalowitz, trustees; Messrs B. Berman, A.J. Cohen, H. Ellis, M. Fine, M. Gevisser, E. Harris, B. Marcus, J. Rothstein, S. Sevel, and B. Smolensky, committee.
- 1917-1918 Mr. S. Bloom, president; Mr. A. Berman, hon. treasurer and Mr. M. Moss, hon. secretary.
- 1918-1919 Mr. S. Bloom, president; Mr. A. Berman,

hon. treasurer; Mr. M. Moss, hon.
secretary; Messrs C.H. Blumenfeld and
S. Sevel, trustees; Messrs A.J. Cohen,
M. Figenbaum, B. Marcus, I. Lurie,
A.T. Bloomberg, H. Ellis, A. Goldman,
J. Rothstein, E. Harris and E. Magid,
committee.

JEWISH LADIES HELPING HAND SOCIETY

1903 Mrs P. Wartski, president; Mrs B. Lipinski,
 hon. treasurer; Mrs Hanreck and Miss
 Morris, joint hon. secretaries;
 Mesdames Kaplan, L. Raphaely, P. Lazarus,
 M. Aaronstein, H.A. Hanson, Solomon,
 H. Mitchell, S. Abrahams and Levisohn,
 committee.

DURBAN JEWISH LADIES GUILD

1904-1905 Mrs P. Wartski, president; Mrs B. Lipinski,
 hon. treasurer and Mrs Hanreck and Miss
 Morris, joint hon. secretaries.

1905-1906 Mrs P. Wartski, president and Mrs D.N.
 Henochsberg, hon. secretary.

1906-1907 Mrs P. Wartski, president; Mrs A. Levy,
 hon. treasurer; Miss R. Simon, hon.
 secretary; Mesdames C.P. Robinson,
 V. Robinson, R. Goodman, L. Hammerstein
 and B. Lipinski, committee.

1907-1908 Mrs P. Wartski, president and Mrs A. Levy,
 hon. treasurer.

1908-1909 Mrs P. Wartski, president and Mrs A. Levy,
 hon. treasurer.

1909-1910 Mrs P. Wartski, president; Mrs A. Levy,
 hon. treasurer; (succeeded by Mrs I. Kahn)

- and Mrs E.L. Lazarus, hon. secretary.
- 1910-1911 Mrs P. Wartski, president; Mrs I. Kahn, hon. treasurer and Mrs E.L. Lazarus, hon. secretary.
- 1911-1912 Mrs P. Wartski, president; Mrs G. Kahn, hon. treasurer; Miss A. Shapiro, hon. secretary; Mesdames A. Stiller, N.D. Morris, R. Goodman, B. Smolensky, A. Rittenberg, C.A. Levy, A.J. Cohen, E.L. Lazarus, S. Sugarman and J. Rothstein, committee.
- 1912-1913 Mrs P. Wartski, president; Mrs I. Kahn, hon. treasurer and Mrs E.L. Lazarus, hon. secretary.
- 1913-1914 Mrs P. Wartski, president; (succeeded by Mrs D.N. Henochsberg), Mrs I. Kahn, hon. treasurer; (succeeded by Mrs L. Hart) Mrs S. Morris, hon. secretary; (succeeded by Mrs Fooke) Mesdames J. Isaacs, A. Stiller, S. Abrahams, J. Rothstein, B. Smolensky, R. Silva, M. Stiller, A.J. Cohen, M. Kay and A. Rittenberg, committee.
- 1914-1915 Mrs D.N. Henochsberg, president; Mrs L. Hart, hon. treasurer and Mrs Fooke, hon. secretary.
- 1915-1916 Mrs I. Kahn, president; Mrs L. Hart, hon. treasurer; Mrs M. Moss, hon. secretary (succeeded by Mrs F. Woolf), Mesdames S. Abrahams, A. Berman, S. Cohen, I. Davis, L. Davis, M. Franklin, L. Feinberg,

- J. Isaacs, A. Levine, M. Stiller,
J. Rothstein and S. Sugarman, committee.
- 1916-1917 Mrs I. Kahn, president; Mrs L. Hart,
hon. treasurer; Mrs F. Woolf, hon.
secretary; Mesdames J. Isaacs, L. Feinberg,
A.J. Cohen, L. Davis, I. Davis, Webb,
B. Smolensky, J. Rothstein, Hyams, Berman,
Geiser and A. Levine, committee.
- 1917-1918 Mrs I. Kahn, president, Mrs L. Hart, hon.
treasurer; Mrs F. Woolf, hon. secretary;
(succeeded by Mrs J. Kaplan) Mesdames
J. Isaacs, L. Feinberg, A.J. Cohen, L. Davis,
I. Davis, Webb, B. Smolensky, J. Rothstein,
Hyams, J.H. Isaacs, Geiser and A. Levine,
committee.
- 1918-1919 Mrs I. Kahn, president; Mrs L. Hart, hon.
treasurer; Mrs J. Kaplan, hon. secretary;
Mesdames L. Jacobs, J. Isaacs, A.J. Cohen,
L. Davis, Gevisser, Braham, J. Rothstein,
V. Robinson, A. Levine, S. Sugarman,
E. Harris, C.P. Robinson and L. Feinberg,
committee.

CHOVEVEI ZION

1891 Mr. P. Wartski, president; Mr. S. Sprinz, hon. treasurer and hon. secretary; Rev. S. Pincus, Messrs J.B. Cinamon, A. Simon and S. Sonnenfeld, committee.

DURBAN ZIONIST ASSOCIATION

April-July 1901 Mr. B. Nathanson, president; Mr. A. Abrahams, vice president; Mr. S. Berman, hon. treasurer; Messrs B.J. Chaimowitz and J. Rabinowitz, joint hon. secretaries; Messrs S. Gordon, H. Jacobson and M. Abraham, committee.

July-August 1901 Mr. B. Nathanson, president; Mr. A. Abrahams, vice president; Mr. J. Rabinowitz, hon. treasurer; Mr. R. Levisohn, hon. secretary; Messrs B.J. Chaimowitz, P. Gordon, J. Gould and J. Zousman, committee.

August-November 1901 Mr. L. Goldberg, president, Mr. H.D. Levisohn, vice president; Mr. J. Rabinowitz, hon. treasurer; Mr. B. Levisohn, hon. secretary; (succeeded by Mr. J. Zousman) Messrs P. Wartski, B.J. Chaimowitz, P. Gordon, I. Tobiansky, M. Abrahams, A. Abrahams and A. Bloomberg,

November
1901-April
1902

Mr. L. Goldberg, president; Mr. D. Levisohn, vice president; Mr. J. Rabinowitz, hon. treasurer; Mr. I. Levisohn, hon. secretary; (succeeded by Mr. S. Cohen) Messrs B.J. Chaimowitz and B. Nathanson, trustees; Messrs P. Wartski, P. Gordon, M. Abrahams, A. Abrahams, I. Tobiansky and A. Bloomberg, committee.

1902-1903

Mr. L. Goldberg, president; Mr. B. Shlom, vice president; Mr. J. Rabinowitz, hon. treasurer; Messrs S. Cohen and M. Kantrovitch, joint hon. secretaries; Rev. W. Kantrovitch, Messrs J. Chaimowitz, I. Tobiansky, P. Gordon, M. Abrahams, B. Cinamon, M. Shapiro and J. Silverman, committee.

1903-1904

Mr. B. Shlom, president; Mr. L. Goldberg, vice president; Mr. S. Cohen, hon. secretary; (succeeded by Mr. T. Cohen) Messrs B. Cinamon, H. Ellis, M. Panofka, S. Abrahams, W. Senior, S. Lutrin, S. Levisohn and S. Freeman, committee.

1904-1905

Mr. B. Shlom, president; Mr. P. Wartski, vice president; Mr. S. Shlom, hon. treasurer; Mr. S. Cohen, hon. secretary; (during whose absence in Europe Mr. T. Cohen, and later Mr. R. Lazarus, acted as hon. secretary). Messrs B.S. Cohen, J. Senior, A. Bloomberg, B. Silvermann,

- J.F. Shapiro, S. Lutrin and M. Steinberg,
committee.
- 1905-1906 Mr. B. Shlom, president; Rev. A. Levy,
vice president; Mr. S. Shlom, hon.
treasurer (succeeded by the Rev. A. Levy)
Mr. M. Gluckmann, hon. secretary; Messrs
B. Blumberg and T.S. Woolfson, trustees;
Rev. S. Pincus, Messrs P. Wartski,
W. Senior, I.M. Shapiro, H. Jacob,
L. Hammerstein and I. Moshalowitz,
committee.
- 1907-1908 Mr. L. Goldberg, president; Mr. P. Wartski,
vice president; Rev. A. Levy, hon.
treasurer, Mr. H. Patz, hon. secretary;
Messrs B. Smolensky, L. Hammerstein,
W. Senior, H. Ellis, S. Abrahams, S. Bass
and J. Samuels, committee.
- 1908-1909 Rev. A. Levy, president; Mr. M. Kantrovitch,
hon. treasurer; Mr. M. Freedman, hon.
secretary; (succeeded by Mr. M. Kantrovitch)
Mr. H. Patz, assistant hon. secretary;
Messrs L. Goldberg, H. Ellis, S. Abrahams,
Friedman, S. Sevel, Hoffenberg and Herman,
committee.
- 1909-1910 Mr. M. Kantrovitch, president; Mr. S.
Abrahams, hon. secretary and Revs. A. Levy
and S. Pincus ex officio committee members.
- 1911-1912 Mr. S. Goldreich, president; Mr. L. Hart,
vice president; Mr. M. Stiller, hon.

- treasurer; Mr. W. Israel, hon. secretary and a committee of ten.
- 1912-1913 Mr. S. Goldreich, president; Mr. L. Hart, vice president; Mr. M. Lewis, hon. treasurer and Mr. M. Levy, hon. secretary.
- 1913-1914 Mr. S. Goldreich, president; Mr. L. Hart, vice president, Mr. M. Lewis, hon. treasurer and Mr. M. Levy, hon. secretary.
- 1914 Mr. M. Kantrovitch, president.

DURBAN JEWISH CLUB AND DURBAN JEWISH LITERARY CLUB

- 1915-1916 Mr. M. Fine, president and Mr. A. Woolfson, hon. secretary.
- 1916 Mr. S.A. Nathanson, president; Mr. M. Fine, vice president; Mr. C.H. Essus, hon. treasurer and Mr. J. Rittenberg, hon. secretary.

In July 1916 it was decided to add 'Zionist Association' to the title of the Club.

DURBAN JEWISH LITERARY CLUB AND ZIONIST ASSOCIATION

- July-
November
1916 Mr. S.A. Nathanson, president; Mr. M. Fine, vice president; Mr. C.H. Essus, hon. treasurer and Mr. A. Woolfson, hon.

secretary.

November
1916-May
1917

Mr. S.A. Nathanson, president; Mr. M. Fine, vice president; Mr. A.T. Bloomberg, hon. treasurer; Mr. S. Lutrin, hon. secretary and a committee of nine.

May-July
1917

Mr. S.A. Nathanson, president; Mr. M. Fine, vice president; Mr. A.T. Bloomberg, hon. treasurer; Mr. S. Lutrin, hon. secretary and a committee of nine gentlemen and four ladies.

July-
September
1917

Mr. S. Goldberg, president; Rev. H. Rubin, vice president; Mr. A.T. Bloomberg, hon. treasurer; Mr. S. Lutrin, hon. secretary and a committee including Messrs M. Fine and M.A. Solomon.

September
1917-March
1918

Mr.S. Goldberg, president; Mr. M. Lewis, vice president; Mr. M. Fine, hon. treasurer, Mr. S. Lutrin, hon. secretary; Mr. A. Woolfson, assistant hon. secretary; Messrs L. Hart, S.A. Nathanson, I. Ditz, S. Shlom, Mesdames S. Lutrin, N. Lipinski, L. Gordon and Miss J. Woolfowitz, committee.

March-
September
1918

Mr. S.A. Nathanson, president; Mr. L. Hart, vice president; Mr. S. Shlom, hon. treasurer; Mr. M. Moss, hon. secretary; Messrs H. Ditz, E.B. Sandler, M. Fine, J. Fine, I. Strous, H. Mindel, M. Lewis, Mrs Lipinski and Miss J. Woolfowitz, committee.

September
1918

Mr. S.A. Nathanson, president; Mr. M. Lewis, vice president; Mr. S. Shlom, hon. treasurer; Mr. M. Moss, hon. secretary pro. tem. Messrs L. Hart, H. Ellis H. Ditz, H. Patz, B. Marcus, M. Fine, M. Stoker, M. Franklin, A. Woolfson, Mrs A. Woolfson and Miss J. Woolfowitz, committee.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Ashkenazi (pl. Ashkenazim) . Related to the generally Yiddish speaking Jews of Central and Eastern Europe.
- Baal Tephilla Reader, person who leads the prayers.
- Beth Hamedrash 'House of Study', also refers to a characteristically East European synagogue. It is also the name of an Orthodox Congregation in Johannesburg.
- Bris (Brit) Milah The covenant of circumcision. The ceremony is performed on the male child eight days after his birth.
- Chanukah 'Dedication' - The eight day festival of lights, beginning on the 25th of Kislev. The festival

commemorates the Maccabean victory over Antiouchus of Syria and the rededication of the Temple where oil sufficient for only one day in fact miraculously lasted for eight days.

<u>Chazan</u>	The cantor in the synagogue.
<u>Chevrah</u>	'Societies' - but more commonly used to denote a study group.
<u>Chevra Kadisha</u>	'Holy Society' - Jewish Burial Society.
<u>Chevra Mishna u' Gemorrah</u> ..	' <u>Mishnah</u> and <u>Gemarrah</u> Society' - Society or group set up for the purpose of studying the <u>Mishnah</u> and <u>Gemorrah</u> .
<u>Chovevei Zion</u>	'Lovers of Zion' - pre Herzlian Zionists.
<u>Gemiluth Chesed</u> Society	'Society which performs acts of charity' - a benevolent society principally for granting loans without interest.

- Gemorrah (Gemarah) Rabbinic commentary on the Mishnah.
- Haftorah (Haftara)..... A Biblical selection especially from the Book of the Prophets read in the synagogue immediately after the Torah portion on Sabbaths, festivals and fast days.
- X Haskarah (pl. Haskarot) 'Reminding' - prayer recited in memory of the departed.
- X Kashrut (Yiddish Kashrus) .. The state of being fit or proper according to Jewish dietary laws.
- Kiddush 'Santification' - a ceremony proclaiming the holiness of Sabbath or festival that consists of a benediction over wine. The Kiddush cup, is a special cup used to hold the wine during the ceremony.
- X Kosher 'Fit or proper' - Ritually fit, clean or prepared for use in accordance with Jewish religious law.

<u>Matza</u> (<u>matzah</u> pl. <u>matzot</u>) ..	Unleaven bread eaten during the eight days of the Passover festival.
<u>Mikvah</u>	A ritual bath.
X <u>Minyan</u>	'Number' - a quorum necessary for conducting public worship, consisting of not less than ten males above the age of thirteen.
<u>Mishnah</u>	'Instruction' - (from the Hebrew <u>shanah</u> , to repeat or study), The Oral Law.
<u>Mohel</u>	A person who performs the rite of circumcision in accordance with Jewish law.
X <u>Pesach</u>	'Passover' - A religious and spring agricultural festival which begins on the 14th <u>Nisan</u> and lasts for eight days. The festival commemorates the deliverance of the Children of Israel from Egypt.
X <u>Purim</u>	'Lots' - A festival celebrated on the 14th <u>Adar</u> to commemorate the deliverance

of the Jews from Haman who cast lots to decide on which day to destroy them.

Rosh Hashanah

'Beginning of the Year' - The Jewish New Year.

Seder

'Order' - Home or community service and dinner held on the first and second evenings of the festival of Passover, in commemoration of the exodus from Egypt.

Sephardi (pl. Sephardim)

Related to the Jews of Spanish and Portuguese origin.

Sepher Torah

'Book of the Law' - Parchment scroll on which the Pentateuch is hand written.

Shavuot

'Weeks' - Jewish festival held on the 6th and 7th Sivan, seven weeks after the second day of Passover, in commemoration of the Revelation at Sinai. It is also the Festival of the Wheat Harvest and the Festival of the First Fruit.

<u>Shechita</u>	'Slaughter' - The slaughtering of animals for food in accordance with Jewish law.
<u>Shechita Board</u>	A board which supervises all matters related to shechita.
<u>Shekel</u>	An annual fee paid by Zionists into the general fund of the World Zionist Organisation which entitled the payer to vote for delegates to the Zionist Congress.
<u>Shlom Jerusalem</u>	'Peace of Jerusalem' - A fund established to support and assist the poor Jews of Palestine.
<u>Shochet</u>	'Slaughter' - A person allowed by the rabbinic authorities to slaughter animals for food in accordance with Jewish law.
✓ <u>Shool (Shul)</u>	Yiddish for School - Synagogue.
<u>Simchat Torah</u>	'Rejoicing of the Law' - A Festival observed on the

23rd Tishri, on which date the annual cycle of Pentateuchal readings is concluded and immediately recommenced.

Succah

'Booth' - A temporary shelter with a roof of branches and leaves for the festival of Tabernacles. (Succot).

Succot

Festival of Booths, or Feast of Tabernacles, which begins on 15th Tishri. Commemorative of the temporary shelters of the Jews during the wandering of the Children of Israel in the desert.

Talmud

The authoritative body of Jewish law incorporating the Mishnah and Gemorrhah. One edition was completed in Palestine in the 4th century C.E. and the longer and more authoritative edition was completed in Babylon in the 5th century C.E.

- Talmudical Society Society for the study of
Talmud.
- ✓ Talmud Torah 'Study of Torah' - A
communal religious school
where Hebrew and Religion
classes are held for
children.
- Tikvath Israel 'Hope of Israel' - The
name adopted by the first
permanent Hebrew Congregation
in South Africa, which was
founded in Cape Town in
1841.
- Yom Kippur 'Day of Atonement' - A
twenty four hour fast held
on the 10th Tishri. The
fast is the culmination
of the days of penitence.

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