

**Anatomy of South African Antisemitism: Afrikaner
Nationalism, the Radical Right and South African
Jewry between the World Wars**

Michael Cohen BA (Hons.), B.Ed., Higher Ed. Dip.

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Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation

School of Philosophical, Historical and International Studies

Faculty of Arts

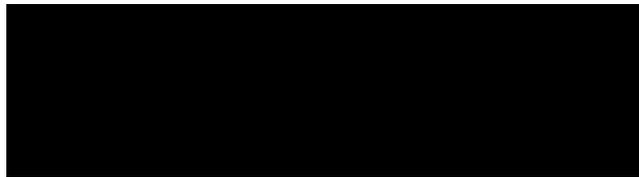
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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Prejudice against Jews was part of the political, cultural, economic and social landscape in the Union of South Africa long before Nazism made inroads into the country during the 1930s, at which stage Jews constituted approximately 4.5% of the country's white or European population. Racial discrimination in a country with diversified racial elements and intense political complexities was synonymous with life in the Union long before Apartheid, with its strictly enforced legal, political and economic segregation, became the country's official policy with the accession to power of the National Party under Prime Minister Dr Daniel François Malan in May 1948.

Although the Jews, while maintaining their own sub-cultural identity, were classified within the country's racial hierarchy as part of the privileged white minority, the emergence of recurrent anti-Jewish stereotypes and themes became manifest in a country permeated by the ideology of race and white superiority. This was exacerbated by the growth of a powerful Afrikaner nationalist movement, underpinned by conservative Calvinist theology. Fear of Communism in the aftermath of the 1917 Russian Revolution and the First World War; disquiet over the arrival of what was seen as disproportionately large numbers of Jewish immigrants during the 1920s; and the effects of the severe world-wide economic depression after the Wall Street stock market crash in October 1929, set the scene for an unprecedented period of antisemitic activity. This was reflected, in part, in legislation aimed at curbing Jewish immigration and the emergence of several antisemitic movements.

This dissertation, which covers the period between the First and Second World Wars, explores the perception that South African antisemitism was a foreign import. Based on an examination of archival sources and contemporary publications, the study concludes that prejudice against the Jews was evident in the *weltanschauung* of right-wing and extremist Afrikaner nationalists long before the influence of Nazism became apparent and was not dependent on the influence of Nazi propagandists in the country.

Aggressive Afrikaner nationalism along with economic antisemitism characterised the years between the end of the Great Depression and the outbreak of the Second World War. Antisemitism became a significant issue in elections and towards the end of the 1930s opposition to Jewish immigration was included as an official plank in the political platform of the opposition Purified National Party. Jews were also banned from party membership in the Transvaal, where most Jews resided. Attempts by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and its affiliates together with several non-Jewish organisations to counter the increasing influence of antisemitism, principally among the Right and Radical Right in the ranks of the Afrikaner nationalists, also marked the *inter bellum* period on which this study focuses.

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At a time when there were restrictions placed on large sections of the invaluable Morris Alexander Collection in Cape Town, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies granted me access to the entire collection, enabling me to spend many months, to say the least, working with the vast repository of documents. The Board's generosity is genuinely appreciated.

I am most grateful to a number of historians who have offered helpful advice during the course of my research, among them Professor Paul Bartrop and Professor Milton Shain, leading historian of South African Jewry. I am particularly indebted to the late Professor Maurice Boucher of the University of South Africa who, during the early years of my research, was extremely generous with his time, patience and scholarly insights. I also wish to express my thanks to Dr Karen Auerbach who served briefly as my joint supervisor before her departure from Melbourne to take up an academic appointment overseas. Her attention to detail and her constructive comments were most appreciated.

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I remain responsible for translations from Afrikaans to English which appear in the text of this thesis, unless otherwise indicated.

INTRODUCTION

Primary Contention

This thesis explores the contention that the antisemitism which proliferated in South Africa during the *inter bellum* years, primarily among Afrikaner nationalists of the Right and the Radical Right, was essentially a foreign import – ephemeral and confined to the period following the Nazis' accession to power in 1933. It also examines the view of those who have argued that antisemitism was not grounded in Afrikaner nationalism.

Related Key Research Questions

The thesis also seeks answers to a number of key research questions which frame the dissertation. Some of these questions challenge existing perceptions about the nature of antisemitic manifestations in South Africa during the second and particularly the third decades of the twentieth century, while others have not yet been addressed. It expands on representations of antisemitism in South Africa during the period under review and addresses gaps in the literature. It asks:

- To what extent was the affinity of leading Afrikaner nationalists with Nazi Germany and authoritarian philosophies a motivating factor in their anti-Jewish activities? To what extent did the notion of racial superiority which characterised right-wing Afrikaner nationalism and the Nazi concept of racial purity – the belief in the existence of a superior Aryan *Herrenvolk* – make Afrikaner nationalists and Nazis ideological bedfellows?
- To what extent was Dr D F Malan, a central figure in South African antisemitism in the 1930s, motivated by ideology as distinct from political opportunism – and what was the nature of his ideological motivation?
- What was the function of antisemitism during the *inter bellum* period?
- To what extent was antisemitism during the period under review underscored by the theology of the Dutch Reformed Church?

- How did Jews, conscious of the pervading antisemitism, respond as a community to the discrimination directed at non-whites?
- To what extent was there opposition to antisemitism in South Africa, particularly within the ranks of Afrikanerdom?
- How far – and for what reasons - was there a change in the intensity of antisemitism in South Africa in 1930, three years prior to the advent of Nazism?

Professor Milton Shain argues that the extent of conflict directed against Jews in South Africa has been minimised by some historians, when in fact there is considerable evidence to refute this contention. If life for Jews in South Africa was supposedly “so good”, he asks, why was it in reality “so bad”? He states in answer to his rhetorical question that memories “tend to filter realities,” thus “creating and perpetuating myths” which tend to distort reality. Shain refers to those who subscribe to the notion that the situation of the Jews in South Africa was not “so bad”¹ as historians of the ‘accommodationist’ or ‘hospitality’ school of South African Jewish historiography.² While he has not yet published a history of the Jewish experience in South Africa beyond 1930,³ in a brief concluding chapter to his 1994 study, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa*, he holds that it was “the pre-existing widely shared negative stereotype [of Jews] that prepared the way for popular outbursts and programmatic antisemitism in the 1930s and 1940s” during which time “an intensification of accumulated anti-Jewish sentiment” became widespread. As he notes, “antisemitism of a passive kind had a long tradition in South Africa.”⁴ The present thesis endorses this view, as yet unsubstantiated in a detailed exposition. It rejects those views held by the eminent South African historian, Eric Anderson

¹ M Shain, ‘If It Was So Good, Why Was It So Bad? The Memories and Realities of Anti-Semitism in South Africa, Past and Present’ in M Shain and R Mendelsohn (eds.), *Memories, Realities and Dreams: Aspects of the South African Jewish Experience* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, Johannesburg, 2002), p.78.

² M Shain, ‘Anti-Semitism and South African Society: Reappraising the 1930s and 1940s’, *South African Historical Journal*, 27:1, 1992 (UNISA Press, Pretoria), p.189.

³ Milton Shain proposes to publish a work on the 1930-1948 period. (Personal communication, 29.7.2013.)

⁴ M Shain, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa* (Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1994), pp.141-142. See also M Shain, ‘Antisemitism and the Far Right in South Africa, 1930-1994’ in M Baumgarten, et al (eds.), *Varieties of Antisemitism: History, Ideology, Discourse* (University of Delaware Press, Newark, 2009), p.278. Here Shain states, in similar vein, that “antisemitism was an important element in South African society long before 1930” and that “antisemitic manifestations in the 1930s and 1940s were related to a consistent and widespread Jewish stereotype, the roots of which were embedded in the South African experience.”

Walker, who maintained that antisemitism had not been a characteristic of the Afrikaners until the 1930s;⁵ political scientist, Newell Maynard Stultz, who held that the increase in anti-Jewish agitation in South Africa in the period prior to the Second World War was an alien phenomenon – “a response to currents of antisemitism sweeping Europe;”⁶ and historian Professor Phyllis Lewsen who claimed, with reference to the post-1933 period in South Africa, that

political antisemitism is not indigenous to South Africa – the influence of Nazi propaganda... has been clearly traced. But it appeared at a time when Jews, horrified at what was happening in Germany, were particularly sensitive to its manifestations.⁷

This thesis holds, further, that South African antisemitism, with roots in the pre-Nazi era, was an outgrowth of increasing militant Afrikaner nationalism, discernible at grassroots' level and beyond, and that while the impact of Nazi ideology and Nazi antisemitism fuelled the antisemitism of South Africa's Radical Right and while its effects on the Right were considerable,⁸ it was not the primary factor. Rather, antisemitism became increasingly prolific and blatant with the emergence of a powerful Afrikaner nationalist movement during the early decades of the twentieth century. It provided, *inter alia*, a “useful means of political mobilization for the Afrikaner right-wing,”⁹ regardless of Nazi influence, and served to bolster an intense nationalism which aimed to assert Afrikaner identity within South Africa's complex racial society - a nationalism sustained and nourished by long-held prejudices against outgroups.

Afrikaner nationalism has also been inextricably intertwined with Calvinist-based Dutch Reformed Church theology. Indeed, Akenson holds that covenantal theology

⁵ E A Walker, *A History of Southern Africa* (Longmans, Green, London, 1957), p. 655.

⁶ N M Stultz, *Afrikaner Politics in South Africa, 1934 – 1948* (University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1974), p. 45.

⁷ P Lewsen in G H Calpin (ed.), *The South African Way of Life* (William Heinemann Ltd, London, 1953), p.40.

⁸ The distinction between the Afrikaner Nationalist Right and the Radical Right extremists, while sometimes clear insofar as adherence to Nazi ideology was concerned, became increasingly blurred with respect to their antisemitic predilections. Often, there was little difference between the two. In this respect, see especially Chapter 12 of this study.

⁹ M Shain, cited by H Adam, 'Anti-Semitism and Anti-Black Racism: Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa' in F C DeCoste and B Schwartz (eds.), *The Holocaust's Ghost: Writings on Art, Politics, Law and Education* (University of Alberta Press, Edmonton, 2000), p. 244.

underscored the Afrikaners' exclusivist ideology,¹⁰ based largely on the conservative theological views of Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920). It was this theology, argues Susan Rennie Ritner, which served as the most “powerful formative influence in shaping the values, norms and institutions of the Afrikaner community.”¹¹ Lennart Henriksson affirms this, noting that the religious factor of ‘covenantal holiness’ was central to the development of Afrikaner nationalism. He quotes Dr DF Malan, ordained Dutch Reformed Minister and South Africa’s first Apartheid Prime Minister, who in 1938, at the time of the Afrikaners’ centennial celebrations of the 1838 Great Trek, said that the previous hundred years had witnessed a miracle behind which was surely a divine plan, adding that the Great Trek was proof that the Afrikaner people were God’s elect.¹² Henriksson adds that the concept of a covenant with God played an important role in strengthening Afrikaner identity and power in the 1930s.¹³

According to Ritner, the Church became identified with the National Party, and “increasingly, membership in the two institutions overlapped, gradually fusing the twin pillars of Volkskerk and Volksparty”— the church of the people and the party of the people - into “an organic Afrikanerdom.”¹⁴ Vatcher refers to the Dutch Reformed Church as the “backbone and heart of Afrikanerdom.”¹⁵ Dr Malan, ‘predikant’ (pastor) and politician, held that it was “the will of the Creator which justified the separation of ...races” in order to uphold “the law of self-preservation.”¹⁶ Resistance to what Steven Uran refers as denationalisation led the Afrikaners to aspire increasingly to restore their erstwhile republican independence. According to Uran, after the 1902 defeat of the Boers in the Anglo-Boer war, Afrikanerdom attempted to

¹⁰ D H Akenson, *God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel, and Ulster* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1992).*passim*.

¹¹ S R Ritner, ‘The Dutch Reformed Church and Apartheid’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Volume 2, No. 4, Church and Politics, October 1967 (Sage Publications, Ltd, Los Angeles), p.7.

¹² L A Henriksson, *Journey With A Status Confessionis: Analysis of an Apartheid Related Conflict between the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1982-1998*, (Studia Missionalia Svecana CIX, Lund University: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, Uppsala, Sweden, 2010), p.45. [Henriksson concurs here with views expressed by T Dunbar Moodie and Jonathan Neil Gerstner whose works he cites.]

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.48.

¹⁴ Ritner, ‘The Dutch Reformed Church and Apartheid’, pp. 20-21.

¹⁵ W H Vatcher, *White Laager: The Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism* (Pall Mall Press, London, 1965), p.112.

¹⁶ Cited (from *Hansard*, 24-25 January, 1947, col.11305) by H Simson in *The Social Origins of Afrikaner Fascism and its Apartheid Policy*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Uppsala Studies in Economic History 21 (Armqvist and Wiksell, Stockholm, 1980), p.186.

maintain its cultural and national distinctiveness as a separate entity within a heterogeneous South African society and, as a *volk*, to realise its national mission as a group apart from the rest of South African society.¹⁷ In a reference to the development of a national *weltanschauung* among the Afrikaners during the first half of the twentieth century, Uran writes that the national goals and perceptions of the Afrikaners were “increasingly articulated through a mystical nationalism in which the national history [of the Afrikaners] and Afrikaner republicanism were viewed in terms of a quasi-religious national eschatology.”¹⁸ This religio-nationalist ideology was to resonate in the antisemitic rhetoric of Malan and other Afrikaner nationalists during the years encompassed by this study – and beyond. Racial self-preservation and the concomitant ideology of racial separation, which was later to be formalised in the policies of Apartheid, underscored the theology of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, was a fundamental concern of the Afrikaners, and became part of the political ideology of the protagonists of antisemitism in South Africa. For them, total separation of the races, reinforced by guidance from Scripture, was normative.¹⁹ Because of their notion of the divine election of Afrikanerdom, anything threatening the identity of the Afrikaners, argues Moodie, “became demonic.”²⁰

While antisemitism was most prolific in South Africa during the 1930s, a period which coincided with the Great Depression and its aftermath and with the rise of Nazism in Germany, it also coincided with the impoverishment of the Afrikaners, the intensification of Afrikaner nationalism and ongoing discriminatory legislation against non-whites – officially classified variously as Bantu (Natives, Africans), Coloureds and Indians (Asiatics) since the first Union of South Africa census in 1911²¹. The coalescence of these factors and others witnessed an upsurge of popular antisemitism on an unprecedented scale, brought into sharp relief by the issue of

¹⁷ S Uran, ‘Afrikaner Fascism and National Socialism in South Africa: 1933-1945’ (MA, University of Wisconsin, 1975), pp. 367-368.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.14-15.

¹⁹ Ritner, ‘The Dutch Reformed Church and Apartheid’, pp.24. Ritner quotes the Reverend J D Strydom (not to be confused with J G Strydom, a future South African Prime Minister), who in 1939 said that by adhering to a policy of race-separation, “in the light of God’s Word and with God’s blessing...[there would be] deliverance from the dark danger of colour-mixing and bastardization.” p. 24. See also T D Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1975) on the relationship between Calvinist theology and Afrikaner nationalism.

²⁰ Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, p.15.

²¹ See A J Christopher, ‘The Union of South Africa censuses 1911-1960:An Incomplete Record’, *Historia*, Volume 56, Number 2 (University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal, Durban, 2011).

Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe during the 1920s and from Germany in the 1930s. Shain has demonstrated that antisemitism was not an alien phenomenon but a significant element in South African society prior to 1930, albeit not in an organised and politicised form.²² Its politicisation in South Africa, however, particularly after 1930, may be understood in light of the nativism and ethno-nationalism²³ among the Afrikaners, reflected in growing antagonism towards the non-whites, fear of Black nationalism, and Anglophobia – attempts to define Afrikaner identity and to comprehend it in terms of cultural unity, national roots, and opposition to foreigners.

Christoph Marx has observed correctly that radical nationalism in South Africa has its roots in times prior to the early 1930s and that the absorption of radical overseas "nationalist and fascist ideological tendencies and elements" must be understood "in the affirmative attitude which Afrikaner Nationalism took, from the 1930s onwards, towards urbanisation and modernisation, and also in its foundation on culture." One should thus be cautious, he argues, when referring to the "absorption of fascist ideas by an already radicalised nationalism." The adoption of fascist ideas should be seen, he adds, as a *result* rather than a *cause*:

If one narrowly concentrates on ideology there is always a danger of explaining radicalisation in terms of an 'importation' of radical ideas and ideologies... overlooked in the process are the existent social and institutional conditions. But it is the latter which make possible – and really explain – ideologies.²⁴

This thesis also aims to demonstrate that antisemitism, to some degree, served to blur class divisions and antagonisms within Afrikaner society and reinforce both the Afrikaners' sense of exclusivist nationalism and a powerful republicanism rooted in

²² Shain, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa, passim*. See also M Shain, 'Antisemitism and South African Historiography', *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXXIV: No.2. December 1992 (Maurice Freedman Research Trust Limited, London), pp.112-113.

²³ Walker Conner defines ethno-nationalism as a particular strain of nationalism marked by the desire of an ethnic community to have absolute authority over its own political, economic, and social affairs. Therefore, it denotes the pursuit of statehood on the part of an ethnic nation. Ethno-nationalist movements signify the perception among members of a particular ethnic group that the group's interests are not being served under the present political arrangements. See W Conner, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1994), *passim*. Paul Bullen discusses this phenomenon generally with respect to South Africa. See P Bullen, 'The Development of Afrikaner Solidarity, 1652-1986' (MA, University of Chicago, 1987): section of his thesis which focuses on the twentieth century.

²⁴ C Marx, 'The Ossewabrandwag as a Mass Movement, 1939-1941', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, June 1994, Vol.20, Issue 2 *Journal of Southern African Studies* (Routledge, United Kingdom, and published online by Taylor & Francis), p.3.

the notion of divine election, a theme which, as noted, resonated in the theology of the Dutch Reformed Church. Implicit in the thesis, too, is the leitmotif that the Afrikaners' perceived inferior status in white society during the early decades of the twentieth century can be explained in racial and national terms.²⁵ By employing the discourse of 'race' to exclude and denigrate Jews, the status of the Afrikaners as members of an exclusive nation was elevated.²⁶ Jan Hofmeyr, sometime Deputy Prime Minister of South Africa, expressed it pithily: "It is a fallacy in the attitude of mind", he maintained, which "seeks to secure the welfare of one's own section of the community" at the expense of others.²⁷ This fervent drive for national self-preservation was to characterise South African society, increasingly so with the passage of time during the inter-war years and reflected, *inter alia*, in antisemitic rhetoric from both the Right and from the extreme elements in the ranks of the Afrikaner nationalists. This in turn conjures up several imponderables which resonate intermittently in this thesis: How did this anti-Jewish rhetoric together with acts of prejudice differ from the rhetoric of racism directed by the whites against the non-white populations? How did the Afrikaner nationalists reconcile, if at all, the perception of the Jews as part of the white community whose contributions to the nation's professions, industry and business were disproportionately high, with their perception of the Jews as constituting an exclusive entity rather than as 'ware Suid-Afrikaners' – true South Africans? Answers to these questions, among those articulated earlier, perhaps lie in the confluence of racialism, an intense organic nationalism and Calvinist theology which are peculiar to the South African Afrikaners' experience.

In addition to this introductory chapter, which contextualises the thesis and which includes a review of some of the literature pertinent to this study, the thesis

²⁵ In a review of Marq de Villiers' *White Tribe Dreaming: Apartheid's Bitter Roots: As Witnessed by Eight Generations of an Afrikaner Family* (Penguin Books, New York, 1989), published in *The Fort Scott Tribune*, 18.5.1988, John Bausman of Associated Press writes that de Villiers sees Afrikaners not as Europeans living in Africa but as a 'White Tribe' reacting tribally to a sense of persecution and a strong identity with place.

²⁶ See M Shain in 'Ethnonationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Identity Politics: The North American and South African Experiences', in S L Gilman and M Shain (eds.), *Jewries at the Frontier: Accommodation, Identity, Conflict* (University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1999), pp. 342-343. Shain reiterates this contention in 'Antisemitism and the Far Right in South Africa, 1930-1994', in M Baumgarten, et al (eds.), *Varieties of Antisemitism*, p.281.

²⁷ J H Hofmeyr, *Christian Principles and Race Problems: Hoernlé Memorial Lecture 1945* (The Natal Witness Limited, Pietermaritzburg, 1945).p.20.

comprises ten further chapters, a concluding chapter and a comprehensive bibliography. The chapter which follows the introduction traces a brief exploration of different forms of antisemitic thought and the principal ways in which antisemitism is expressed, the objective of which is to determine a standard or typology against which to comprehend developments in South Africa during the *inter bellum* period. The next chapter traces the foundations of the South African Jewish community, the place of the Jews within the country's rigidly stratified and complex social and racial structure and their relationships with other groups, particularly the impermanent and fragile relationships with the Afrikaans-speaking section of the population. The chapter also focuses on early undercurrents of animosity towards the Jews, and tensions around issues of Jewish immigration.

The growth of Afrikaner nationalism and concomitant increasing antagonism towards the Jews in the period following World War One, the ramifications in South Africa of the communist victory in Russia and of the 1922 Rand Rebellion, political changes, and increasing antagonism towards Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe provide a prelude in Chapter Three to the 1930 Quota Act. Discussion and analysis of the implications of the latter piece of legislation, the role of Dr D F Malan and the National Party and the emergence of antisemitism as public policy form the focus of the next two chapters.

The sixth chapter of this study analyses the factors which triggered the further politicisation of antisemitism after 1933 – economic and political factors, theological and racial influences and the inroads of Nazism. The thesis argues throughout that, regardless of the influence of Nazi ideology and propaganda, antisemitism in South Africa was ingrained in the *weltanschauung* of the right-wing and extremist sections of the Afrikaner population.

The establishment and growth of organised antisemitic movements representing the Radical Right, a discussion of their aims and methods, official and unofficial responses to the overt antisemitism of these movements and particularly the ideology and activities of the Greyshirts, form part of the focus of the chapter which follows. This chapter, which includes an evaluation of the impact of the Shirt

movements, as they were called, concludes with the observation that by the end of 1936 antisemitism was a significant feature in South Africa.

The emergence of antisemitism as an official plank in the platform of the Purified (Gesuiwerde) National Party under Dr Malan, the potential rapprochement between Malan and the Greyshirt organisation, and Prime Minister J B M Hertzog's attitude towards the Jews as well as towards the Nazi government, are part of the discussion and analysis covered in Chapter Eight. The chapter also evaluates the responses of the Jewish community and other elements in South Africa to the antisemitism of the Afrikaner nationalists.

The chapters which follow, and which precede the conclusion to the thesis, investigate the intensification of Afrikaner nationalist antisemitism in the period prior to the promulgation of the 1937 Aliens Act, the adoption of blatant antisemitism by the Afrikaner Right in the aftermath of the 1937 immigration issue and in the period leading to the 1938 national elections, and the albeit failed attempt in 1939, in a private bill presented to Parliament, to enact specific anti-Jewish legislation. In the eleventh chapter, titled 'The Close of the Decade', brief reference is made to the establishment of two extremist Afrikaner nationalist organisations, both of which were intensely antisemitic, but which were active in the period after 1939 and thus beyond the period treated in this study. The chapter which follows, titled 'Perspectives: The Radical Right and the Right', precedes the conclusion to the thesis and comprises a critical analysis of the antisemitic discourse of extremist Afrikaner nationalist leaders.

In a brief article published in 1993, 'Towards an Appraisal of South African Jewish Historiography', John Simon ²⁸ provides a general overview of works hitherto written on South African Jewish history. Although he asserts that it is "presumptuous to speak of a South African Jewish historiography," ²⁹ there have in fact been some significant studies published, not all of which, however, are relevant to the present

²⁸ John Simon, a practicing attorney, was Chairman of the Cape Council of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (1975-1977).

²⁹ J Simon, 'Towards an Appraisal of South African Jewish Historiography' in P E Westra and B Warner (eds.), *Festschrift in Honour of Frank R Bradlow* (Friends of the South African Library, Cape Town, 1993), p.19.

thesis.³⁰ In his exposition of the principal published works on South African Jewish history, Simon makes reference firstly to the standard texts on the Jewish community's history, particularly the scholarly work by Dr Louis Herrman³¹ which, however, only recounts the history of the community to 1895. To this end, Herrman's work served only to provide background material for the present study. Simon also makes mention of what is by far the most comprehensive general work on South African Jewry, *The Jews in South Africa: A History*,³² edited by Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz, in which the authors trace the history of South African Jewry from the community's early beginnings to 1955. This proved a very useful secondary source for the present study, more so since Saron, a skilled lawyer and historian, played a pivotal role in South African Jewry's relationships with the wider community in his capacity as General Secretary of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies from 1937 to 1972. The present study, however, takes issue with some of the sanitised conclusions which Saron reached with respect to the nature and primary motivations of Afrikaner antisemitism. Surprisingly, Simon makes scant mention of the turbulent years of the 1930s (nor of the 1940s) in his examination of published secondary sources.

A number of secondary sources, to some of which Simon alludes, proved of considerable value for general information and historical background. These include Marcia Gitlin's *The Vision Amazing: The Story of South African Zionism*³³ and Enid Alexander's biography, *Morris Alexander*.³⁴ The latter work chronicles and documents the involvement of Morris Alexander in South African politics and his long-standing commitment to the country's Jewish community. A most extensive, well-researched and scholarly work is Milton Shain's *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa* which concludes, essentially, in 1930. Shain shows convincingly that antisemitism, reflected in Jewish stereotypes, had its early roots in white South

³⁰ For a general overview of three seminal published works on South African Jewish historiography, see R Mendelsohn and M Shain, 'Constructing a Usable Past: History, Memory and South African Jewry in an Age of Anxiety', *Jewish Culture and History*, Vol.9. 2-3, Autumn/Winter 2007 (Valentine-Mitchell, London, 2007). [Also published online: 31.5.2012.]

³¹ L Herrman, *The History of the Jews in South Africa, from the earlier times to 1895* (Victor Gollancz Ltd, London, 1930).

³² G Saron and L Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa: A History* (Oxford University Press, London, 1955).

³³ M Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing: The Story of South African Zionism* (Menorah Book Club, Johannesburg, 1950).

³⁴ E Alexander, *Morris Alexander* (Juta and Co Ltd, Cape Town, 1953).

Africa many decades before the period with which the present study is concerned, to which end it will be argued that the antisemitism which became apparent in the inter-war years was not a new phenomenon emerging contemporaneously with the rise of National Socialism in the 1930s and against the background of radical social and economic change. Gideon Shimoni's book, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience (1910-1967)*,³⁵ provided useful information, particularly on the relationship between the Jews and the rest of the white population, and on Jewish voting patterns.

The most recent published work on South African Jewish history is by co-authors Richard Mendelsohn and Milton Shain titled *The Jews in South Africa: An Illustrated History*.³⁶ The work covers a broad landscape, commencing with the early origins of Jewish life in the African sub-continent, the foundations of Jewish communal organisations, the challenges which South African Jewry confronted and the heterogeneous nature of the community with South Africa's complex ethnic structure. Divided into four broad chronological sections, this recent work primarily offers a chronicle of events, accompanied by illustrations and vignettes, *inter alia*. The second division of the text is titled 'the Age of the Litvaks' and covers the period 1880-1930. The section which follows – 'South African Jews' – focuses on the decades between 1930 and 1970. The illustrated text, the first comprehensive history of South African Jewry published since the 1950s, aims "to encompass a broad swathe of Jewish life, from the *bimah* [synagogue podium or dais] and the boardroom to the bowling green."³⁷ The narrative, which concludes with the collapse of the Apartheid regime in 1994, focuses only briefly on the period covered by the present study, offering a chronicle – a general overview of the history of the Jews in South Africa – rather than an analysis of the events. The antisemitism of the period in South African history which is the focus of the present thesis is touch upon in a mere handful of pages, most of which are taken up with illustrations.

³⁵ G Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience (1910-1967)* (Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1980). Shimoni's book replicates, in large measure, his doctoral thesis: G Shimoni, 'The Jewish Community And The Zionist Movement In South African Society (1910-1948)' (D Phil, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1974).

³⁶ R Mendelsohn and M Shain, *The Jews in South Africa: An Illustrated History* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, Pty., Ltd., 2008)

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.ix.

Of considerably greater value to this thesis, however, was Shain's *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa*. First published in 1994, the book is a well-researched, systematic investigation of the stereotypical foundations of antisemitism in South Africa through the prism of caricatures and various literary forms. Shain demonstrates, as noted earlier, that while organised political antisemitism was not in any way blatant in the period prior to the 1930s, it would not have been possible had the foundations for antipathy towards the Jews not have been firmly rooted in South Africa. His analysis is restricted to perceptions of the white population – understandably so – bolstering the conclusion reflected in this thesis that the non-white majority in South Africa did not hold any significant views or perceptions of the Jewish community or of Jews generally. As Shain has noted: “The majority black population – including the Coloureds and Indians – has never focussed specifically on the Jew when articulating grievances and aspirations.”³⁸

Several published sources focus on Nazi Germany's relationship with South Africa between 1933 and 1939 (and beyond), and provide details of the inroads of Nazism into South Africa. By far the most useful for the purposes of this thesis was Patrick J Furlong's *Between Swastika and Crown: The Impact of the Radical Right on the Afrikaner Nationalist Movement in the Fascist Era*. Furlong's work, which covers the period from 1933 to 1948, is well-researched and scholarly. Its stated aim was to examine the “dynamics of the relationship between Afrikaner nationalism and fascism” and “the possibility that mainstream Afrikaner nationalists had come under the spell of the fascists.”³⁹ Although the primary focus of the present study is the antisemitism of right-wing and extremist nationalists up to 1939, Furlong's work proved a useful source. His argument that Afrikaner nationalism was “pushed...into accommodating aspects of radical Right ideology”⁴⁰ is examined critically in some of the later discussion in this thesis, particularly with respect to the relationship between Dr D F Malan's nationalist followers and South African Jewry. What Furlong does not do, as Shain points out in a

³⁸ Shain, *Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa*, p.5.

³⁹ P J Furlong, *Between Swastika and Crown: The Impact of the Radical Right on the Afrikaner Nationalist Movement in the Fascist Era* (Wesleyan University Press, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1991), p.viii.

⁴⁰ P J Furlong, 'Apartheid, Afrikaner Nationalism and the Radical Right: Historical Revisionism in H Giliomee, 'The Afrikaners', the *South African Historical Journal*, 49:1, 2003 (UNISA Press, Pretoria), p.211.

review of *Between Swastika and Crown: The Impact of the Radical Right on the Afrikaner Nationalist Movement in the Fascist Era*, is to pay more than scant attention to “the function of antisemitism within Afrikaner society and its relationship to burgeoning Afrikaner nationalism.”⁴¹ The latter relationship is a central focus of this thesis.

While William Henry Vatcher (Jnr.), author of *White Laager: The Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism* (1965), focuses primarily on the influence of Nazi ideology on sections of the Afrikaner community, he provides a useful overview chapter entitled ‘The Impact of Nazism’. *The Rise of the South African Reich*⁴² by South African journalist, political activist and sometime-banned Communist (banned along with his book), Brian Percy Bunting, all but equates Afrikaner nationalism with Nazism. Chapters in the 1964 edition are prefaced with superscriptions from Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*.⁴³ Both Vatcher and Bunting cover a broad chronological canvas, focussing in particular on the post-Second World War period, especially the beginnings and subsequent development of Apartheid from 1948. Neither author ignores the manifestations of antisemitism. However, their primary concern is the impact of Nazism in South Africa and the relationship between Nazi ideology and Afrikaner nationalism, especially with respect to the Apartheid regime: they appear to sidestep or simply to ignore the notion that antisemitic manifestations occurred in South Africa prior to and independent of the emergence of Nazism, implying that Afrikaner nationalists were simply susceptible to fascism.

The value of Robert Citino’s *Germany and the Union of South African in the Nazi Period* (1991) lies in the use of unpublished primary German sources to examine German foreign policy towards South Africa between 1933 and 1939, with a particular focus on the views and policies of German diplomatic personnel in South Africa and the relationship between the two countries. The book’s relevance to the present thesis is

⁴¹ Shain, ‘Anti-Semitism and South African Society: Reappraising the 1930s and 1940s’, *South African Historical Journal*, 27:1, 1992, p.192.

⁴² B P Bunting, *The Rise of the South Africa Reich* (Penguin Books Limited, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1964; revised edition - 1969).

⁴³ References to antisemitism and to South African Jewry appear minimally in both the 1964 and 1969 editions. The focus of the work, as the publisher’s preface of the 1969 edition states, is the affinity between the National Party and Nazism and repressive rule by the Afrikaner nationalists under the Apartheid regime.

twofold: Citino not only details the extent of Nazi Germany's propaganda machine in South Africa and in South-West Africa, over which South Africa held a mandate after World War One, but also attempts to demonstrate how Afrikaners were exploited by the Nazis. However, as an historian of German diplomacy rather than a South African historian, he uses no South African sources and devotes comparatively little attention to what he terms the *Judenfrage* –South Africa's 'Jewish question', the first reference to which, he notes, only appeared in official German documents in late 1936, although it subsequently became a major focus of German interest in the African sub-continent.⁴⁴ Several South African Government reports into Nazi activities in South West Africa, together with a number of other sources, including *Die Dürckheim Rapport: Officiële Dokumente oor Nazi Komplot in die Unie*,⁴⁵ provided excellent material about the inroads of Nazism into South Africa between 1933 and the outbreak of World War Two in 1939. Albrecht Hagemann's meticulously crafted work⁴⁶ also included some useful information about Nazi influence in South Africa prior to 1939, although the English text focuses almost solely on the Second World War years and hence is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Different perspectives of the Afrikaner nationalist movement proved useful for this study. These include D.F. Malan's *Afrikaner – Volkseenheid en My Ervarings op die Pad Daarheen*⁴⁷ and DF du T Malherbe's *Afrikaner – Volkseenheid, Die Tweede Trek*.⁴⁸ T. Dunbar Moodie's analysis, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion*, is a fine scholarly work. Moodie, both a sociologist and theologian, seeks to comprehend rather than to pass judgement, although the present thesis takes issue with him over some of his conclusions, albeit brief and passing,

⁴⁴ See R Citino, *Germany and the Union of South African in the Nazi Period* (Greenwood Press, New York, 1991), p.71.

⁴⁵ *Die Dürckheim Rapport: Officiële Dokumente oor Nazi Komplot in die Unie*: (Unie - Eenheid - Waarheidsdiens, Johannesburg, c. 1943).

⁴⁶ A Hagemann, *Südafrika und das 'Dritte Reich': Rassenpolitische Affinität und machtpolitische Rivalität* [South Africa and the 'Third Reich': racial politics and affinity make political rivalry]. Campus Verlag [Publishing House], Campus Forschung [Research], Frankfurt/Main, New York, 1989). The latter text, published in 1989, stemmed from Hagemann's doctoral dissertation. References to an English chapter, A Hagemann, *Antisemitism in South Africa During World War II: A Documentation* in Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual, Volume 4 Chapter 8 (White Plains, New York, 1997), translated by Martha Humphreys and Sybil Milton, appear in the present thesis.

⁴⁷ D F Malan, *Afrikaner – Volkseenheid en My Ervarings op die Pad Daarheen* (Nasionale Boekhandel, Bepers Cape Town, 1959).

⁴⁸ D F du T Malherbe, *Afrikaner – Volkseenheid, Die Tweede Trek – Reeks*, Nr XV (Nasionale Pers, Bepers, Bloemfontein, 1942).

about the National Party's attitude to the Jews and about antisemitism as a factor in the 1938 General Elections.

Several published works which discuss the origins and nature of Afrikaner nationalism focus specifically on the degree to which fascism played a significant role or otherwise in the ideological underpinnings of the Afrikaner nationalist movement focussing, however, primarily on the Apartheid period in the country's history. Some writers, such as Dan O'Meara ⁴⁹ and Howard Simson, ⁵⁰ present a Marxist analysis of the development of Afrikaner nationalism and the relationship between Afrikaner nationalism and capitalism. While such works are valuable for elucidating views about the nature of Afrikaner nationalism, they throw scant light on the relationship between the Afrikaner and Jewish communities and make little if any mention of antisemitism during the period under review. The focus, rather, is on several other themes: the nature of fascism; the degree to which fascist ideology served to inform Afrikaner nationalism; the distinctions between classical fascism and 'Afrikaner fascism;' and the differences between so-called hardline Afrikaners living in the Transvaal and those in the Cape who were deemed to be less extreme.

The most significant work on Afrikaner nationalism published in recent times is a monumental study by Hermann Buhr Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*. ⁵¹ Published in 2003, and republished six years later, this magnum opus paints an informed and insightful tapestry of the Afrikaner people from its early beginnings, and demonstrates clearly the dynamic and evolving nature of Afrikaner nationalism. Giliomee notes that, after 1924, with the election victory of General James Barry Munnik Hertzog's National Party, South Africa was almost continually in the control of Afrikaner political majorities until the last decade of the 20th century. If "a sense of being Afrikaners rather than being Dutch or French or German had crystallised by the end of the 18th century," ⁵² an energetic, bold and spirited Afrikaner identity was to emerge some three or four decades hence, reflected in the increasing assertiveness and militancy of Afrikaner nationalism. The eleventh chapter of Giliomee's work is

⁴⁹ D O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934–1948* (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1983).

⁵⁰ Simson, *The Social Origins of Afrikaner Fascism and its Apartheid Policy*.

⁵¹ H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Virginia University Press, Charlottesville, 2003)

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.51.

fittingly titled 'To stop being Agterryers: The Assertion of a New Afrikaner Identity.'⁵³ The emergent confidence of the Afrikaners was to become increasingly evident with their rapid urbanisation in the 1930s.⁵⁴ At the same time, South Africa witnessed the emergence of what Giliomee terms "the new nationalist intelligentsia"⁵⁵ – intellectuals who became firmly committed to fostering Afrikaner identity – a people who had evolved "with their own religion, church, language and nationality, as a result of a particular historical force" – an exclusive dynamic ethnic group.⁵⁶ It is this dynamic view of Afrikaner nationalism that informs this thesis.

Several unpublished theses⁵⁷ and honours research essays⁵⁸ have been written about South African Jewry, some of which overlap with the period covered by this study. None of these unpublished theses and essays, however, specifically addresses the central issues with which this study is concerned, although some contained useful factual information. A number of unpublished dissertations on Afrikaner nationalism were consulted for this study. These works included theses by Juta, Jonck and Korf. The latter, a 2010 doctoral dissertation entitled 'Malan: A Political Biography',⁵⁹ is uncritical of Dr Malan, whose antisemitism is treated extensively in the present thesis. Korf all but ignores the so-called 'Jewish Question' which was of significant political concern in the 1920s and particularly the 1930s, and only includes mention of a brief article by Edna Bradlow⁶⁰ in her bibliography. In contrast, C J Juta's work, 'Aspects of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1900-1964: An Analysis',⁶¹ provides a detailed critical analysis of Afrikaner nationalism and its relationship to racism and contemporary fascism. The well-researched doctoral dissertation by Frederik Jacobus van Heerden, 'Nasionaal-Socialisme as Faktor in Die Suid-Afrikaanse

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 355-402. (The term *Agterryers* may loosely be translated as 'those who ride on the tailcoats of others' or as 'followers' or 'also-rans'.)

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 405ff. These developments and the concomitant increasing militancy of Afrikaner nationalism are discussed in later sections of this thesis.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 415.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.419.

⁵⁷ See works by Ben-Meir, Bradlow, Rubin, Shain, Shimoni and Uran listed in the Bibliography of this dissertation.

⁵⁸ See works by Cohen, Friedman, Schechter and Weiner listed in the Bibliography of this dissertation.

⁵⁹ L Korf, 'D F Malan: A Political Biography' (PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2010).

⁶⁰ E Bradlow, 'Anti-Semitism in the 1930s: Germany and South Africa', *Historia*, 49, 2, 2 November, 2004 (UNISA Press, Pretoria).

⁶¹ C J Juta, 'Aspects of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1900-1964: An Analysis' (D Phil., University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1966).

Politiek, 1933-1948',⁶² is a fine scholarly work. However, van Heerden makes comparatively little mention of South African Jewry and is uncritical in his discussion of the specific issues which this thesis addresses. His conclusion is that the Nationalists upheld democratic values and that the National Party's relationship with Nazi ideology had little if any immediate or long-term significance and was a mere dalliance. The relationship between Afrikaner nationalism and fascism is also examined by Steven Uran in 'Afrikaner Fascism and National Socialism in South Africa: 1933-1945'.⁶³ Writing from overseas, Uran at the time had limited access to South African archival documents and relied heavily on secondary sources. Nevertheless, his theoretical analysis of Afrikaner nationalism, Afrikaner fascist ideology and the nature and forms of National Socialism and fascism provided a useful discussion for the present study. His thesis, however, is based on very limited sources with respect to South African antisemitism, and references in the text to the Jews in the six years prior to 1939, for the most part, were not of significance to this dissertation.

A number of primary sources proved essential to this study. I first became aware of some of these sources while researching anti-Jewish manifestations in South Africa for my honours research essay.⁶⁴ The current thesis afforded me with the opportunity to develop extensively my earlier research interest in South African antisemitism. Newspapers, press cuttings, contemporary periodicals and the *Press Digest* published by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies provided resources not only for factual information but also for editorial and popular discourse. Given the strong political thrust and partisan nature of the South African printed media, the juxtaposition of the mainstream Afrikaans publications against the English-language press afforded considerable opportunity for analysis and comment, although the ideological lines were not always dictated by entrenched and predictable views. This was evident when the English-language press uncharacteristically expressed strong support for the National Party's 1930 legislation which clearly aimed at restricting Eastern European Jewish immigration. During the period under review, a plethora of

⁶² F J Van Heerden, 'Nasionaal — Socialisme As Faktor In Die Suid-Afrikaanse Politiek, 1933-1948' (D Phil, University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein, 1972).

⁶³ Uran, 'Afrikaner Fascism and National Socialism in South Africa: 1933-1945'.

⁶⁴ M Cohen, 'Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa During The Nineteen Thirties' (BA Honours Extended Research Essay, University of Cape Town, 1968).

pamphlets and flyers, published primarily during the 1930s, proved of considerable value to this study. These publications, whether produced by political parties, Jewish communal organisations or the various antisemitic and fascist movements of the day, provide a window into the world of the *ante bellum* period in South Africa and the sometimes complex relationships which ensued between the Afrikaner nationalist movement and South African Jewry.

The response of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies to South African politics is discussed in Atalia Ben-Meir's 1995 dissertation⁶⁵ which covers a 48-year period – from 1930 to 1978 – and which includes an epilogue for the seven years from 1978 to 1985. Ben-Meir's primary aim was to examine the Board's deliberations and statements in regard to 'political' issues...to "identify its procedures, ascertain the dominant considerations and constraints and gauge its success..." using the archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in Johannesburg as her primary source.⁶⁶ She uses no other archival sources and thus makes no reference to the extensive archival material housed in the Cape Town-based Morris Alexander Collection and relating to the national Board's relationship with the Hertzog government. She also fails to consult the detailed minutes of meetings in the archives of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. These documents are a valuable repository of evidence about the Board's efforts – certainly during the 1930s.

The concise *Reports of the Executive Council of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies* which cover the entire period under review proved a most valuable resource for the present study. The Board's executive published a booklet in July 1936 entitled *The Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa: The Need for Action* which provided valuable insight into the structure, nature and activities of the 'Shirt' and other antisemitic movements in South Africa and which serves as a primary source for information about these movements. Files in the archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and at offices of the Cape Committee of the Board – specifically the Cape Board's meticulous minutes of meetings – proved an excellent source of

⁶⁵ A Ben-Meir, 'The South African Jewish Board of Deputies and Politics, 1930-1978' (PhD, University of Natal, 1995).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.27.

information. The most valuable primary archival source consulted, however, was the vast Morris Alexander Collection. Alexander (1877-1946), arguably the most prominent South African Jewish leader during the first half of the twentieth century, served the Jewish community for over four decades and was a member of parliament for almost the same length of time. He kept extensive records. While some of his collection was at one time designated as 'restricted', full access was granted for the purpose of the current research thesis. His *Letter Books*, in particular, proved an invaluable source.

Of the private collections consulted, those of Sarah Gertrude Millin, Smuts and Hofmeyr provided particular insight into South Africa's political situation as it related to the themes addressed in this thesis. The friendship between Smuts and Millin, and particularly between Hofmeyr and Millin, reflected in numerous letters, cast considerable light not only on the events of the day but on the degree to which antisemitism had become entrenched in the ranks of contemporary Afrikaner nationalists. Other private collections which contained valuable source material include the papers of Dr Malan, housed at the University of Stellenbosch, and the Hertzog Collection at the Government Archives Depot in Pretoria. My request for access to the private papers of Greyshirt founder and leader, Louis T Weichardt, housed in Bloemfontein at the Institute of Contemporary History (University of the Orange Free State) was denied, although access to some of the newspaper clippings was granted.

Over and above the *Debates of the House of Assembly*, by far the most comprehensive source on Jewish immigration to South Africa other than the detailed information in the Morris Alexander Collection and some valuable documents in the J H Hofmeyr Collection relating primarily to the 1937 Aliens Act, are three chapters in Edna Bradlow's doctoral dissertation, 'Immigration into the Union, 1910-1948: Policies and Attitudes'.⁶⁷ Equally useful in this respect are a host of publications issued by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, especially a mimeographed document, *South African Jewish Board of Deputies: Statistics on Jewish Population and Immigration, 1926 1942* (February, 1944) and *South African Jewish Board of Deputies: The*

⁶⁷ E Bradlow, 'Immigration Into The Union, 1910-1948: Policies and Attitudes' (PhD, University of Cape Town, 1978).

Immigration of Jews into the Union (1926-1935) With Appendices for the Year 1936: An Analysis Of Official Statistics (6th January, 1937), while documents in the Smuts, Strydom and Malan archival collections and a National Party publication, *The Nationalist Party and Jewish Immigration* (c.1937), throw considerable light on the immigration issue as it relates to this thesis.⁶⁸

While antisemitism has been a chameleon of history, perpetually changing its colour and consistently making new appeals to the particular prejudices of the age, it has remained a characteristic of western civilisation. Literature on antisemitism is prolific, and a plethora of works ranging across a host of disciplines were consulted as part of the research for this thesis. The objective was to uncover the different forms of antisemitic thought or themes and the principal ways in which antisemitism is expressed, and thereby to gain a greater understanding of the antisemitic discourse in South Africa during the period encompassed by this study. The typologies of theological, racial, nationalist and economic antisemitism, though invariably intertwined, are clearly discernible in the vast array of extant literature. These recurrent anti-Jewish themes of the past and of the contemporary world were reflected – to varying degrees – in the motives and activities of the protagonists of antisemitic dogmas in South Africa. Historical and sociological studies, writings on the theology and psychology of race, works on eugenics and on nationalism, essays in edited works, together with recent and earlier studies of antisemitic forms and manifestations – including the so-called ‘new antisemitism’ – were consulted in the course of the present study. These works appear in the bibliography of the thesis.

⁶⁸ A 1981 article by Professor Greg Cuthbertson throws no new light on the immigration issue. Cuthbertson makes no reference to Bradlow’s doctoral dissertation (*supra*) other than in an oblique single footnote to a chapter in that work, nor to Jewish Board of Deputies’ archival sources or the Morris Alexander Collection, rich in primary source material on Jewish immigration. See G C Cuthbertson, ‘Jewish Immigration as an Issue in South African Politics, 1937-1939’, *Historia*, May 1981 (UNISA Press, Pretoria), pp.119-133.

CHAPTER ONETHE HISTORICAL SETTING AND UNDERCURRENTS OF ANIMOSITY TOWARDS
SOUTH AFRICAN JEWRY

The antisemitism which characterised South African history prior to the Second World War must be viewed in the context of South Africa's historical development and its unique sociological complexities. Since its early beginnings in the seventeenth century, South Africa's population comprised a highly structured and well-defined pluralistic society of which the Jewish community has long formed an integral and significant part. Indeed, the Jewish community had already established firm foundations by the time the Union of South Africa had come into being in May 1910, with the unification of the country's four provinces and South Africa's acquisition of dominion status within the British Empire. In 1880 there were only some 4,000 Jews in the sub-continent; by 1910 the numbers had swelled to approximately 45,000. According to the 1911 Census, there were 46,919 Jews in South Africa, constituting 3.76% of the white (or European) population.¹ By 1936 South African Jewry constituted 4.52% of the country's white (or European) population group.²

Professor C W De Kiewet has expressed the view that

the true history of South Africa[n] ... describes the growth ... of a totally new and unique society of different races and colours and cultural attainments, fashioned by conflicts of racial heredity and the oppositions of unequal social groups.³

The Jews have always been one of the significant groups to which De Kiewet refers, and strained relations between the Jewish and gentile elements in the community which characterised the period after 1930 in particular are a classic example of the "conflicts of racial heredity and the oppositions of unequal social groups" in South African history.

¹ Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p. xv. See also Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Union Statistics for Fifty Years 1910-1960, Jubilee Issue*, pp.A-3, A-26, C-7.

² Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p. 371. See also Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Union Statistics for Fifty Years 1910-1960, Jubilee Issue*, pp.A-3, A-26, C-7.

³ C W De Kiewet, *A History of South Africa: Social and Economic* (Oxford University Press, London, 1964), p.19.

With its rigidly stratified racial structure comprising a white minority and a 'black' majority, the South African population was complex in terms of race, colour, language, nationality, culture, religion and general standards of education. The society was always an hierarchical one in which only the white minority enjoyed all the rights and privileges, while the non-European or black elements were subject to various forms of discrimination and degrees of diminution of rights in accordance with their position in the racial hierarchy. This racial pattern, determined by South Africa's historical development and principally by the central struggle of the white minority to maintain its position,⁴ had become firmly entrenched by the early decades of the twentieth century.

Within the ranks of the white group there developed a marked dualism between the Afrikaner majority who, by the turn of the present century, had forged an exclusive group nationalism, and the English-speaking minority which was devoid of any distinctive *national* identity. It is with the latter group rather than with the Afrikaners that the Jews in South Africa have always acculturated. Gravitation of the Jews towards the English-speaking sub-culture was motivated principally by the Jews' rapid urbanisation at a time when the urban population of South Africa was predominantly English-speaking; the rapidly upward economic mobility of the Jews in an era when South Africa's middle class was almost exclusively dominated by the English; the strong Anglo-Jewish origins of the community; the attractiveness of the English culture; and the perceived patronising and exclusive nature of Afrikaner nationalism. Outside the economic sphere the Jews' only contact with the non- whites within this unique compartmentalised white oligarchy or 'pigmentocracy' was via the master-servant relationship which, for the most part, has characterised the segmented and culturally diverse society.⁵ Shimoni has described the significance of South African Jewry's position, at least since Union, in the following terms:

As legitimate members of the dominant white minority the Jews do not suffer the discriminations of the non-white peoples. On the other hand, they do not possess the advantage of separate, state-maintained, cultural institutions

⁴ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), IV, 18, *World Conference of Christians and Jews: Memorandum on Problems Arising from the Inroads of Nazism on Contemporary Thought and Practice, 27 June 1946*, p.2; [A copy of this document is housed in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), IV, 18]; see also M Wilson and L Thompson (eds.), *Oxford History of South Africa, Volume 1* (Oxford University Press, London, 1969), p.v.

⁵ Shimoni, 'The Jewish Community and the Zionist Movement in South African Society', p.8; P Van den Berghe, *South Africa: A Study in Conflict* (University of California Press, Berkley, 1967), p.270.

parallel to those enjoyed by the Afrikaners and the English. Thus the) implicit price of their belonging-ness as whites is the expectations that they acculturate ... to one or the other white culture, while maintaining their own subcultural identity, if they so choose, on the basis of purely voluntary association.⁶

In a pluralistic society like South Africa, group focus is the product of the social milieu⁷ where each group often strives to preserve its own identity. Thus the South African Jews made a concerted attempt, despite their affinity with the English-speaking sector, to maintain and enhance their own distinctiveness. Frequently in a highly heterogeneous country, separateness is a direct outcome of ethnic pluralism. So, too, are anonymity and alienation, which often lead to sub-cultures of violence created by groups with values which are at odds with those of other cultural elements. From the vantage point of this study, therefore, Jewish particularism within South African society, the reaction of the other cultural groups to Jewish exclusiveness, and Jewish communal responses are of special interest.

The position of the Jews in South African society brought them face to face with several dilemmas which, for a variety of reasons, were highlighted during the post-1930 era of Nazi antisemitism, although they had existed much earlier. The tradition of the Jews, grounded on the one hand in the biblical concepts of social justice and reinforced on the other hand by memories of religious and racial persecution over the centuries, has always seen Jews outright in their condemnation of any form of racial discrimination. In theory, therefore, Apartheid (even in its unarticulated forms prior to 1948), should have been anathema to the South African Jews. Yet paradoxically, South Africa's cultural and political climate, with its emphasis on the distinctiveness of cultural and ethnic group life, created conditions favourable for the preservation of Jewish identity. South African Jews had always been permitted and even encouraged to establish their own religious, educational welfare and philanthropic institutions. Indeed, there had never been any attempt to place pressure on the Jews to abandon their Jewish way of life.

⁶ Shimoni, *The Jewish Community and the Zionist Movement in South African Society*, p.10. According to Harry Schwartz, a leading late twentieth century South African parliamentarian, "the future of Jews in South Africa [was always] inextricably bound up with the future of the white community. If the white community survives and prospers, then the Jews ... survive and prosper". *The Jewish Herald*, 25.10.1977.

⁷ Wilson and Thompson (eds.), *Oxford History of South Africa Volume 1*, p.v.

The Jews of South Africa, however, like their white counterparts, thrived directly or otherwise at the expense of a severely underprivileged non-white majority – people classified officially as Bantu or Natives, Coloureds and Indians or Asiatics. Despite the well-documented predominance of several Jews in the radical, leftist movements promoting racial tolerance and equality, the vast majority of South African Jews adopted for themselves the basic personal attitudes of all whites towards the blacks and other non-whites. Indeed, as in America, Jews – perceived as part of the “white ‘family’ of races”⁸ – had few reservations about defining their communal bonds in terms of being members of the white race. As Shimoni has observed, the South African Jewish immigrants, from the outset, had

entered into the dominant, caste-like white sector and lived thereafter within its confines. At best, relations with ‘non-Europeans’...were limited to employer-employee or domestic master-servant spheres. Indeed, for most Jews, as for most whites, blacks were almost invisible in social terms.⁹

While racial prejudice jibes neither with Jewish values nor Jewish historical experience, Jewish particularism in South Africa invariably took precedence over conflicts of conscience, creating an ambivalent situation for the Jews: on the one hand they were often left marginalised by the white ruling class, while on the other hand, as whites, they were socially and politically privileged. This resulted in a situation of moral ambiguity – the demand to make ethical compromises as a precondition for social acceptance and economic success.¹⁰ This moral ambiguity was clearly reflected in the almost complete silence of Jewish leaders with regard to discriminatory racist-based legislation directed at non-white members of the population, and their protestations when the Jewish community was subjected to racist slurs, antisemitic agitation and immigration legislation which restricted the entry of Jews into South Africa. Shimoni points out that when the South African Jewish Board of Deputies combatted antisemitism it never linked the Jewish situation

⁸ E L Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2006), p.12.

⁹ G Shimoni, *Community and Conscience: The Jews in Apartheid South Africa* (David Philip Publishers/New Africa Books, Cape Town, 2003), p.3.

¹⁰ See J Sherman, ‘Serving the Natives: Whiteness as the Price of Hospitality’ in Southern African Yiddish Literature’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 23, No.3. September 2000, pp.505 *et seq.*

with racism directed at the non-whites.¹¹ This is certainly true for the inter-war period, as there is no evidence in the literature consulted for this study to indicate that the Jewish leadership opposed racial discrimination directed against the non-whites. For the Jews, who perceived the whites as superior and the non-whites as inferior, there was a clear demarcation between racism against non-whites and antisemitism.¹²

South African Jewry's support for Jewish settlement in Palestine and for the Zionist Movement during the early decades of the last century made the community's commitment to the country in which they lived questionable. This was exacerbated by considerable demands placed on South African Jews to demonstrate loyalty to South Africa and, further, by the Jews' general fear – and disparagement – of Afrikaner nationalism, while simultaneously acknowledging the Afrikaners' right to preserve their cultural uniqueness. The Jews thus found themselves on dangerous ground. For, while it was often the norm for the Afrikaners to acknowledge and even to encourage South African Jews to remain ethnically and religiously separate, and even to retain national links with world Jewry, there was always a proviso: the Jews were not permitted to tamper with the Afrikaners' own conception of how South African society ought to function or what South African nationality entailed.¹³

The early relationship between the Jews and the settled Afrikaans community throws considerable light on the Afrikaner nationalists' antipathy towards the Jews in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. To many Afrikaners, the Jews were late-comers and foreigners, their migration to South Africa having been preceded much earlier by the Dutch, French, English and German settlers. Indeed, the South African Jewish community's roots can be traced to the constant stream of immigration which

¹¹ Shimoni, *The Jewish Community and the Zionist Movement in South African Society*, pp.413-414.

¹² See S Gilbert, 'Jews and the Racial State: Legacies of the Holocaust in Apartheid South Africa, 1945-1960', *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 16, Number 3, Spring/Summer 2010 (New Series), (Indiana University Press), p. 40.

¹³ For an outspoken view of the South African Jews' 'Crisis of Pluralism', see B Litvinoff, *A Peculiar People*, (Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1969), pp.178-179; cf also G Shimoni, 'The Future of the Jewish Community in South Africa', *Jewish Affairs: Monthly Journal of The South African Jewish Board of Deputies* (Johannesburg, January 1971), pp. 7-10; G Saron, 'The Jews in Complex South Africa: A reply to Gideon Shimoni', *Jewish Affairs*: February 1971, pp. 6-9; 'Jewish Role in South Africa', *The Argus*, 14.3.1975; Shimoni, *The Jewish Community in the Apartheid Society of South Africa*, *passim*; *Encyclopædia Judaica*, XV, col. 197; M Cohen, *Judaica II, Guide 8: South African Jewry - From Its Early Beginnings To The Second World War* (Department of Semitics, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1976), pp. vi-vii.

characterised the decades preceding the turn of the nineteenth century and the earlier years of the twentieth century, long after the other European settler communities had arrived. However, as early as 1669¹⁴ — seventeen years after the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck and his Dutch East India Company officials at the Cape of Good Hope — European Jews began arriving at the port of Cape Town. Most of these immigrants were men employed in the services of the Company and, either due to the dearth of single Jewish women at the Cape during those early years, or because all Company servants had to embrace the Protestant faith,¹⁵ no Jewish community of any sort was established until the mid-nineteenth century. It was, in fact, fairly common for Jews to embrace Christianity, and there are many instances on record of ceremonies where Jews were officially baptised.¹⁶

The mid-nineteenth century heralded a transformation in the structure of South African Jewry, by which time a distinct and recognisable Jewish community had emerged. The impact of South African Jews on the development of the country in those earlier years, as well as latterly, proved considerable — as early pioneers, in the economic sphere, education, the law courts, politics and the arts.¹⁷ This became more discernible with the considerable increase in the country's Jewish population during the latter decades of the nineteenth century, a period which constitutes a decisive watershed in the chronicle of South African Jewry. The reason for this increase was twofold. First, the great diamond boom of the eighteen-seventies, followed shortly thereafter by the discovery of gold, heralded the start of South Africa's period of 'economic take-off'. The lure of potential fortunes witnessed the arrival of thousands of fortune-seekers to the sub-continent, many of whom were Americans, Englishmen, Germans and East

¹⁴ Herrman, *A History of the Jews in South Africa*, p.55.

¹⁵ G Saron, 'The Making of South African Jewry', in L Feldberg (ed.), *South African Jewry 1965* (Fieldhill Publishing House, Pty, Ltd, Johannesburg, 1965).p.9.

¹⁶ Herrman, *A History of the Jews in South Africa*, p. 57.

¹⁷ For details of the early history of the South African Jewish community and its contribution to the country, see Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews of South Africa, passim*; Herrman, *A History of the Jews in South Africa*; G Saron, 'The Jews in South Africa', *Lantern*, Vol VI, No 1 July-September 1956 (mimeographed); Cohen, *Judaica II: Guide 8 South African Jewry* chap. I – III; L Herrman, *The Cape Town Hebrew Congregation 1841-1941* (The Mercantile Atlas Printing Co, Cape Town, 1941),chaps. I-V; Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), IV, 18; J Endendyk, *Die Jode As Faktor in die Beskawingsgeskiedenis*, afdruk van artikels deur die Skrywer in *Die Republikein* (Uitgegees deur die Skrywer, Johannesburg, c. 1936), pp.8-10; I Pinshaw, 'Joodse Setlaars onder SA se baanbrekers', *Die Burger*, 24.7.74; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, XV, cols 184-210; L Marquard, *The Peoples and Policies of South Africa* (Oxford University Press, London, 1962),p.194; *Jewish Affairs*, May 1960, pp.4-38, and pp. 58-81; Sachar, *The Course of Modern Jewish History*, p.506; Shimoni, *The Jewish Community and the Zionist Movement in South African Society*, pp.55, 59, 63-64.

Europeans of Jewish stock.¹⁸ Richard Feldman, former Transvaal Provincial Council member, referred to these Jewish newcomers as immigrants in pursuit of "the mirage of fortunes and Eldorados which is bound up with an unknown country".¹⁹ A second reason — and one of far greater significance than economic motivation — was the arrival of Jewish immigrants of Eastern European origin, principally from Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Galicia. This flood of immigration, which began in the early eighteen-eighties, was a direct consequence of a mass exodus of Jews fleeing the oppression and persecution which characterised Tsarist Russia then, as in later years.²⁰ In this regard, Chaim Gershtater wrote:

The great turning-point in Jewish communal life was the arrival in the eighties of the new stream of immigrants from Eastern Europe ... these immigrants represented a purely Jewish movement, entirely unconnected with any stream of immigration to South Africa.²¹

An awareness of the nature of this migratory movement to the shores of South Africa is crucial in any attempt to comprehend the antisemitism of the Right and Radical Right especially during the post-1930 era, since South African have been the physical and, in large measure, the spiritual heirs of these Eastern European immigrants. Owing to its decidedly Lithuanian or 'Litvak' character, the South African Jewish community was dubbed a "colony of Lithuania" by the Zionist leader and Jewish historian, Nahum Sokolov, who first visited the country in 1926.²² The phrase has since been frequently employed and with considerable justification, as estimates place the 'Litvak' influence in the South African Jewish community as well over seventy per cent.²³

¹⁸ This observation is supported by an extensive collection of letters and articles from *Hamelitz*, a Hebrew paper first published in Warsaw and later in Berlin, and *Hatzefira*, particularly those penned by N D B Hoffman (1860-1929), a Lithuanian Jew who settled in South Africa in 1928. In addition to providing an insight into the factors which motivated the comparatively large waves of Jewish immigration to South Africa, the documents also contain valuable historical material concerning contemporary Jewish attitudes, life-styles, and Jewish-gentile relationships, *inter alia*. Excerpts appear in Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, pp. 63, 69-72, 181, 186, 194; and G Saron, 'Toe Jood en Boer Ontmoet Het' ['When Jew and Boer Met'], *Buurman* (South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg, December 1970), pp.17-19.

¹⁹ Richard Feldman Collection (A 804), Cb 1952, typescript of a speech on Jewish immigration to South Africa, 31.3.1952.

²⁰ See B Pares, *A History of Russia*, (Methuen and Co Ltd, London, 1965), pp.467-468; M Margolis and A Marx, *A History of the Jewish People* (The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1927), chap. XCIII; I Gottlieb, writing in *The Zionist Record*, 28.3.1930, notes that entire villages frequently immigrated.

²¹ C Gershtater, 'Jewish Immigration, 1880-1913' in Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa* p.60.

²² *Ibid.*, p.61.

²³ In Yiddish lore and historiography, the term 'Litvak' is not geographically restrictive; it encompasses

Despite the Russification policies of late nineteenth century Tsarist Russia, these immigrants to South Africa were deeply identifying Jews with backgrounds rich in scholarship and values which had crystallised in the small-town *shtetls* where their voluntary isolation had shielded them in large measure from integrating with or adapting to the customs and habits of their gentile neighbours. Even those who had become urbanised in cities such as Kovno (Kaunas) and Vilna (Vilnius) brought with them a love of learning, a strong attachment to Jewish traditions and a sincere affection for sacred Jewish texts which had remained part of the Jewish people for two millennia or more.

Coming to a country where race and nationality formed the very foundations of the social structure ... their inborn tendency to remain Jewish in every respect seemed not only to be natural, but the wisest course to take.²⁴

The distinctiveness of the South African Jewish community was placed into sharp relief by the widespread use of Yiddish, the language spoken by the early 'Litvak' Jewish immigrants. This language soon became the principal medium of communication between Jews. Herrman noted that the increase of Yiddish-speaking Jews was so rapid

... that within twenty years from 1881 the positions became entirely reversed, and the bulk of South African Jewry, its rank-and-file and the majority of its leaders, were people whose mother-tongue was Yiddish, whose homeland was in Eastern Europe, and whose only tie with England was that common to South Africans of British and of Boer descent.²⁵

Distinctiveness set the Jews apart, to a significant degree, from other sections of the

areas such as Byelo-Russia or eastern Poland, Kovno-Gubernia and neighbouring areas. Ibid. See also *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, XV, col 186 and XI, cols 361-363; L Hotz, 'Jews Who Arrived Here Sixty Years Ago', *Jewish Affairs: Monthly Journal of The South African Jewish Board of Deputies* (Johannesburg, February 1963), pp.4 *et seq* – a valuable article on Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe based on a rare archival document; and Saron, 'The Jews in South Africa', *Lantern*, Vol VI, No 1, July-September 1956 (mimeographed), p.4.

²⁴ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), 6 (October 1944 - March 1946), South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Information Series*, No 25 21.6.1945. Article by J C Knotzel, reprinted from *The Palestine Post* (Jerusalem), 25.5.1945, pp.2-3. Knotzel added that "South African Jewry is probably the most nationalised Jewish entity outside Palestine".

²⁵ Herrman, *A History of the Jews in South Africa*, p.251. The Jew as a so-called foreigner, his alleged inability to speak English or Afrikaans (contemporary South Africa's two official languages), his predominance in the professional world and his particularism within the white society, became a target for attack during the 1930s. However, the communal foundations of South African Jewry (quite apart from the nature of the community) have always been decidedly Anglo-Jewish. (See Shimoni, *The Jewish Community and the Zionist Movement in South African Society*, pp.21 *et seq*).

community. A central focus of this study is an attempt to explore the complex factors which served as the underlying determinants of the anti-Jewish sentiment which proliferated in South, especially in the 1930s, against the background of emergent and increasingly militant Afrikaner nationalism, and the extent to which a dynamic and complex network of motives, among them the particularism of the Jewish community, contributed to it. To this end the early relationship between Jews and Afrikaners is instructive, so that any radical change in that relationship and the factors responsible for the transformation will prove significant.

Prior to the early decades of the twentieth century, the bond between Jews and Boers²⁶ was generally a cordial and close one, despite sporadic tensions.²⁷ Since the main stock of white South Africa sprang from Holland and Britain, where "freedom of the spirit flourished and the Bible was deeply treasured",²⁸ a sincere spirit of tolerance towards the Jewish immigrants prevailed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, the liberal religious policy instituted at the Cape by Governor de Mist at the beginning of the nineteenth century still prevailed over a hundred years later. The Boers, who cherished the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, were often wont to display friendliness towards the People of the Book and to associate their struggle for national self-determination with that of the Children of Israel for a return to the Promised Land — an essential feature of the emergent Zionist Movement at the turn of the nineteenth century. According to Lithuanian-born Jewish author Sarah Gertrude Millin,

...the Boers, indeed, saw a peculiar kinship between themselves and the Jews. The Jews too had once been Voortrekkers. They had fled from Egypt to found themselves a national home ... So had the Boers fled from the oppressor, and crossed the Vaal [River] and sojourned in the Wilderness....²⁹

²⁶ The word 'Boer' (farmer) is used synonymously with 'Afrikaner'.

²⁷ No empirical analysis, to date, has been undertaken of Afrikaner attitudes towards the Jews and *vice versa*. A limited attitudinal survey, however, was conducted by Prof Simon Herman in the 1940s. See S N Herman, *Report on a Survey on Anti-Semitism in South Africa*, conducted under the auspices of the Department of Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg, 1944) [mimeographed]

²⁸ Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.xii.

²⁹ S G Millin, *The People of South Africa* (Central News Agency, Ltd, Johannesburg, 1951), p.213; see also Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, pp.27-28, 182-183; G Sacks, *The Intelligent Man's Guide to Jew Baiting* (Victor Gollancz Ltd, London, 1935), p.21; S James, *South of the Congo* (Random House, New York, 1943), p.46. [The Voortrekkers were Dutch and Afrikaner pioneers who migrated into the South African hinterland from the Cape Colony as part of the Great Trek – a mass migratory movement – in the late 1830s and the 1840s, seeking to establish independent Boer republics beyond British control.]

This bond was strengthened by the close ties forged between the legendary Jewish pedlars (called 'smouse' in the Cape and 'tochers' in the Transvaal) and the rural Afrikaans-speaking white population.³⁰ It is clear, however, that, while the relationship between the Jews and Boers was initially based on a spiritual bond, economic considerations became far more significant.³¹ The overriding factor was probably national-racial: the attempt of the emergent Afrikaner nation to maintain and assert its own identity in the face of any threat, whether real or otherwise. This hypothesis is central to the present study.

The early bond forged between Jews and Boers was fragile and impermanent. The Afrikaners soon realised that the Jews' 'return to Zion' quest was to have little resemblance to Joshua's conquest of 'the land flowing with milk and honey' so graphically depicted in his Bible; that their biblical prototype of the Jews as exotic, picturesque characters from the pages of Scripture bore no similarity whatsoever to the local Jewish doctor or entrepreneur;³² and that the Jews' Zionist-based goals compromised their allegiance to South Africa, since these aspirations invited the question of dual national allegiance. It was thus an ambivalent relationship. The Jews remained secure as long as they did not threaten the national ethos of the Afrikaners who, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, had developed a marked degree of social and cultural exclusiveness together with a core of anti-progressive racial attitudes. That ethos included their historical heritage, their language, their militant national consciousness the focus of which was the establishment of an independent Afrikaner state, their Anglophobia and their fundamentalist Calvinistic theology.³³ For historian Sheila Patterson, who has written extensively on racial issues in South Africa,

³⁰ The early relationship between the Jews and Boers has been well documented. Nehemia Dov Hoffman (1860-1928), a Lithuanian-born migrant to South Africa and the country's first publisher of Yiddish and Hebrew books, wrote warmly of the relationship in letters to *Hamelitz*. See G Saron in Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, pp.181-183; *Die (De) Volkstem*, 5.10.1907; Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience, 1910-1967*, p.65.

³¹ The later nineteenth century Jewish immigrants were prominent in the field of commercial pioneering. Sheila Patterson, in *The Last Trek: A Study of the Boer People and the Afrikaner Nation* (Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd, London, 1957), p.253, maintains that the early relationship between Boers and Jews was based almost solely on a commercial level.

³² See Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing*, pp.301-302.

³³ This is clearly reflected in the works of one of the foremost historians of Afrikaner nationalism, Floris Albertus Van Jaarsveld. See, for example, F A Van Jaarsveld, *The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History* (Simondium Publishers Pty, Ltd, Cape Town, 1964). See also Juta, *Aspects of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1914-1964*.

the Jews served "only to provide Afrikaner Nationalism with a two-headed scapegoat. On the one side the Jew ... figured as a Kaffir-loving communist trade-union organiser or intellectual; on the other the cartoon figure of Hoggenheimer has for decades been the symbol of the bloated foreign capitalist who trod poor Afrikaners down in their thousands." ³⁴ However, Patterson's radical and markedly exaggerated perspective of the relationship between the Afrikaners and the Jews is simplistic and belies the complexities which came to characterise the interplay between the two groups.

The progressively rapid concentration of the Jews in the principal towns – an increase of 40.73% between 1926 and 1936 ³⁵ – brought them increasingly into frequent contact with the urbanised English-speaking population which became their reference group for acculturation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Afrikaners' traditionally-based enmity for the English-speaking South African could so easily be transferred to the Jews. Professor A C Cilliers, deemed a moderate Afrikaner nationalist, illustrated this clearly in 1939, at the end of a turbulent decade of South African antisemitism, when he wrote of the South African Jews' predilections for their English-speaking compatriots. Referring pointedly to the sixteen generations of the Afrikaners, the six generations of the Englishmen and to the Jew as "a comparative newcomer with three or less generations to his credit", Cilliers argued that the 'problem' of the Jews had become a political one, and if

... the Jews as a body continue to throw in the weight of money and their talents on the one side only [i.e. with the English-speaking section of the community] as they have been doing ... in an effort to tip the scales against the legitimate aspirations of the very much older section of the population, they must naturally expect that their lot will be dragged into and decided in the political arena. If they want to change the present unfortunate state of affairs it is up to them to re-orientate their attitude towards the Afrikaners. As comparative newcomers into an older community, which itself has a dual national character, they should disperse more evenly among all sections of the population and divide their attentions culturally and politically more evenly among the two sections of that population. As a matter of policy, and not as a bribe, I offer the suggestion to South African Jewry to come forward and also openly support, associate and identify themselves with Afrikaner causes, as they have done so splendidly in

³⁴ Patterson, *The Last Trek*, p.290. References to 'Hoggenheimer' appear elsewhere in this study.

³⁵ See South African Jewish Board of Deputies: *The Immigration of the Jews into the Union (1926-1935). With Appendices for the Year 1936: An Analysis Of Official Statistics (Palladium Stationers, Johannesburg, 6th January, 1937)*; Saron, 'The Making of South African Jewry', in Feldberg (ed.), *South African Jewry, 1965* (Fieldhill Publishing House, (Pty) Ltd, Johannesburg, 1965), p.13; and Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p. 371.

the case of English causes. One good turn deserves another. If they prove themselves our friends how can we be their foes? On the other hand, the converse is equally true. I recommend our Jewish friends to a serious study of the implications of this ... in all its aspects ... pending the solution of this question on a sound but equitable basis, all fair-minded citizens must deprecate the sporadic attempts at Jew-baiting which have cropped up ... all over the country ... In building up the future Afrikaner or South African nation the Jew has a definite role to play. If he attempts to play a lone hand or to play off one of the partners in the firm South Africa (Pty) Ltd against the other, such action cannot augur too well for the future.³⁶

Veiled threats by Afrikaner politicians, intellectuals and writers for South African Jewry to toe the line of Afrikaner nationalism (failing which antisemitism, even when endorsed by "fair-minded citizens", may be justified) was not uncommon after 1930. Similar views, expressed by Dr D F Malan in a widely-publicised interview with *Die Burger* in November 1931, are discussed later in this study. Jan Burger, writer of the column 'Afrikaner's Diary' in the highly respected Johannesburg newspaper, *The Star*, berated the Jewish community as late as 1960 for having "linked itself too much in the past with the English community" and contended that it remained for the Jews to rectify this situation by gravitating towards the Afrikaners.³⁷

Theological undertones also rendered the relationship between Afrikaners and Jews considerably complex, again highlighting the facile analysis of Patterson. While the Calvinist Afrikaners allegorised their own national development in Old Testament terms, perceiving themselves as God's Chosen People in Southern Africa and hence felt affinity with the Jews, the same religious fundamentalism caused them to approach the Jews with reservations on theological grounds. For implicit in Calvinist doctrine, particularly in the Dutch Reformed wing, is the interpretation of Christianity's supersession of Judaism and its attendant psychological prejudices.³⁸ It is ironic that the Old Testament served as the source of the Afrikaners' affinity for the Jews and their reservations towards the Jews, and the source by which they justified the white-black master-servant relationship in which the Jews acquiesced, despite Judaism's biblical-based postulate that inequality and discrimination are morally reprehensible.

³⁶ A C Cilliers, 'Afrikaner, Briton, Jew', *South African Opinion*, 1.9.1939.

³⁷ See J Burger, 'The Jew as Portrayed in Afrikaans', *Jewish Affairs*, August 1960, p.17.

³⁸ See Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.187; Shimoni, *The Jewish Community and the Zionist Movement in South African Society*, p.48. Saron's article, 'Boers, Uitlanders, Jews' in *The Jews in South Africa* illustrates clearly how President Paul Kruger epitomised this ambivalence in his relationship with the Jews of the Transvaal (South African Republic). See also Prof D W Kruger, 'Paul Kruger en die Jode', *Jewish Affairs*, November 1960, pp.23-26.

A more sympathetic approach by the Afrikaners towards Jewish acculturation was not uncommon. This approach acknowledged Jewish group distinctiveness and the need of the Jews to preserve their own distinctive national identity while simultaneously evincing understanding for the legitimate national aspirations of their 'hosts', the Afrikaners. Tielman Roos (1879-1935), leading Transvaal nationalist, pragmatist and author of the political fusion between the Hertzog and Smuts factions in the early 1930s, illustrated this attitude:

There is no question that on sentimental grounds alone our ideals of nationalism should make the strongest appeal to all true Jews ... What have all your great leaders been ... but great heroes battling for the preservation of your nation? Our struggle is the same in principle as yours. All we desire is to establish on a firm basis, as in your case you desire to do in Palestine, and preserve our nationality in South Africa, as a national identity ... As we desire it for ourselves, so we would never oppose you in your legitimates aspirations to preserve within our state the integrity of your religion, your traditions, our language and your literature...³⁹

Afrikaans literature serves, to a considerable degree, as a mirror of Afrikaner attitudes towards the Jews. The Jew is frequently portrayed in Afrikaans literature as the mean, short, fat, hooked-nosed, avaricious stereotype — the "Hoggenheimer" driving out the Afrikaners from their idyllic paradise, the foreign element uprooting the 'indigenous' Afrikaners from the soil of South Africa. There are, however, no attempts made to represent the Jews as the embodiment of absolute wickedness, as is common in the literature of other nations. The Jew usually appears in Afrikaans novels as the shopkeeper, and frequently as the unreasonable mortgage-holder of farms owned by Afrikaner customers. He is frequently depicted in his early role as pedlar, pestering the farmers for a few pennies and paying a pittance for the services of others in his greed and preoccupation with money. Jochem Van Bruggen, for instance, portrays the character Fisher, the Jewish shopkeeper, as a Shylock in his novel, *Die Spinkaanbeampte Van Sluis* (1933):

Fisher het weer gelol oor 'n paar sjielings skuld. Dis die ou se poltiek om wek amper verniet gedaan te kry. Hy laat eers voel wat jy aan hom verplig is, om jou daarna te palm...

³⁹ *The Jewish Chronicle*, 5.3.1920; see also Shimoni, *The Jewish Community and the Zionist Movement in South African Society*, p.83.

This attitude was a common one. Conversely, however, other Afrikaans works treat the Jews sympathetically and display considerable insight into their traditions.⁴⁰ It should be borne in mind that the Afrikaner group was never a homogeneous one and that attitudes and reactions to the Jews varied considerably.

The role of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies as the unofficial mouthpiece of South African Jewry during the 1930s is of central concern to this study.⁴¹ Determined to protect their own interests and to see the specific needs of the Jewish community, a Jewish Board of Deputies had been established for the Transvaal and Natal on 15 April 1903, to be followed eighteen months later with the formation of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony. In 1912, soon after Union, a single board, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, was constituted at a conference in Bloemfontein, to become recognised widely as the representative body of South African Jewry.⁴² Similar developments took place with the formation, initially, of disparate Zionist groups in the 1890s, culminating in the establishment of the South African Zionist Federation in 1898.⁴³

The national board, which had come into being largely through the efforts of Morris Alexander, was established to serve as the representative organisation and mouthpiece of the South African Jewish community, to safeguard Jewish religious and civil rights and to strengthen and enrich Jewish communal life. The general press, official Government, provincial and local bodies and the non-Jewish community readily came to acknowledge the Board's claim to be the authorised mouthpiece of South African Jewry, despite a vocal minority opinion within the Jewish community that the Board was not a truly democratic representative organisation. A considerable number of Jews led by well-known spiritual leader of Cape Jewry, the Rev A P Bender, had

⁴⁰ [Translation: "Fisher again began to fuss about a few shillings owing. It is his policy of getting work done for next to nothing. He first lets you feel guilty for what you owe him, and thereafter holds out his palm to you..."] See J Burger, 'The Jew as Portrayed in Afrikaans', *Jewish Affairs*, August 1960, pp.15-17.

⁴¹ The South African Zionist Federation, established in December 1898, was the first Jewish organisation to attain a national organisational framework. Its aims, however, were not specifically local, and while its impact on South African Jewry has been considerable, its role in the antisemitic saga was minimal. Palestine and the establishment of an independent Jewish state remained its prime area of concern.

⁴² L Feldberg (ed.), *The South African Jewish Year Book, 1953-1954* (Fieldhill Publishing House, Pty, Ltd, Johannesburg, 1954), p.69.

⁴³ Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing*, pp.22 et seq.

vehemently opposed the concept of a Jewish Board of Deputies. In a letter to Morris Alexander, Bender wrote:

I am so thoroughly satisfied that the Jews of this Colony have not the slightest reason to fear that any civil or religious disabilities would be imposed upon them by any Government in power, that I cannot see the least necessity for a special Board into existence to protect their interests. ⁴⁴

Bender's letter is pertinent insofar as it reflects a marked contrast to the situation some 25 years later, when the Government disbarred Jewish immigrants from entry into South Africa.

The problem was highlighted after 1930 when the Board took a distinctly antagonistic stand towards extremist Afrikaner nationalist elements which adopted antisemitic programs and the principles of National Socialism. The Board, however, frequently held that a collective or communal Jewish attitude in relation to South African politics and more particularly to racial policies is not feasible. Claiming to be a non-political body without any *locus standi* in the political arena, it consistently maintained that Jews participated in the country's political life as individual citizens and not as members of a specific group; that, since there could not be a clear-cut approach to South Africa's highly complex racial issues, the Board could not advocate any specific policy in the name of South African Jewry; that only where Jewish interests were directly involved would it enter the political field; and that it could only exhort the individual Jew to play a part in promoting justice and tolerance in race relations in accordance with the person's political convictions and understanding of the teachings and precepts of Judaism. The underlying principle, then, is that the Jewish community did not, and should not function in the party political arena as a collective entity and that no uniform Jewish policy was feasible since there was no uniformity of political outlook among Jews. In consonance with this viewpoint, the Board invariably held that there could not be a specifically Jewish approach to the moral issues involved in racial discrimination as these moral issues challenged Jews and non-Jews who subscribed to moral and ethical principles

⁴⁴ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), 1, May 1903 - April 1923; A P Bender to M Alexander, 22.2.1905. Most general texts on South African Jewish history treat the establishment of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and the nature of the emergent Jewish leadership fairly extensively. A detailed study is to be found in M Shain, *The Jewish Population and Politics In the Cape Colony 1898-1910* (MA, University of South Africa, 1978), pp.24-59. See also Ben-Meir, *The South African Jewish Board of Deputies and Politics, 1930-1978*.

in like manner.⁴⁵ The role of the Board of Deputies and the individual Jew in the political field after 1930 must therefore be seen in the light of the Board's stated objectives, together with the interpretation it always gave to its role in South African life as the 'umbrella' body of South African Jewry, and its view of the individual Jew's role in South African politics.

While there was a clear context for antisemitism to take root in South Africa, particularly among the Afrikaner section of the community, there was also historical precedent. Indeed, the anti-Jewish sentiment which characterised South African life, particularly after 1930, must be seen against a background of hostility — blatant and covert — which existed towards Jews from early times. Louis Herrman documented what was probably the earliest anti-Jewish comment on record in South Africa:

Eschel Joel was a helmsman on the ship 'Kievietsheuvel'. In 1754 he was involved in a dispute which came before the Court of Justice. The mate questioned his right to authority and abused him in these words: Jou blixen se Jood! [You bloody Jew!] ⁴⁶

Officials of the Dutch East India Company, however, frequently abused 'foreigners' in rather unflattering terms — Jews and non-Jews alike.

Economic antisemitism — accusations made that the Jews were avaricious capitalists and exploiters — became fashionable for the first time proper soon after the start of the

⁴⁵ G Saron *The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Its Role and Development: An analytical review on its 70th Anniversary (South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg, 1973), passim; The South African Jewish Board of Deputies: Constitution 1940; Cohen, Judaica II; Guide 8: South African Jewry; pp.26-35; G Saron, '70 years: Some Historic Highlights'; Jewish Affairs, - 70th Anniversary of South African Jewish Board of Deputies, March 1973, pp.45-46; Gitlin, The Vision Amazing, passim; esp. pp.92-99; Alexander, Morris Alexander, pp.29-34 and passim; Saron and Hotz (eds.), The Jews In South Africa, passim esp. chap. XIII; G Saron, Morris Alexander: Parliamentarian and Jewish Leader: A Memorial Lecture on the 20th Anniversary of His Death (South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg, 1966), pp.16-21; Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i), January 1929 - June 1939: Letter from G Saron to M Alexander, 15.3.1939, with attached pamphlet entitled *The South African Jewish Board of Deputies: What it is and What it Does*, 13 March 1939. For the Board's role vis-à-vis South African political and racial issues and its ongoing policy of 'collective non-intervention', see G Saron, 'The Jews in complex South Africa', *Jewish Affairs*, February 1971, pp.6-9.*

⁴⁶ Herrman, *The Jews in South Africa*, p.3. The incident was of no specific significance and should be seen in context. Dr Louis Herrman, doyen of the early history of South African Jewry, in a reply to the writer's questionnaire, 28.1.1975, observed that the Joel incident was a mere passing archival reference probably attributable to xenophobia stemming from the arrival of Eastern European Jews into the Netherlands during the mid-eighteenth century. M Kaplan, *Jewish Roots in the South Africa Economy* (C Struik Publishers, Cape Town, 1987), p.31, also focuses on the Dutch East India Company's attitude towards non-Christian immigrants.

diamond and gold booms during the latter quarter of the nineteenth century.⁴⁷ The contemporary influential historian, James Anthony Froude, spent a considerable period in South Africa in the mid-1870s. After a visit to the prospectors at the Dry Diggings in 1874, he wrote of

a marvellous, motley assemblage, among whom money flows like water ... and in the midst of them a hundred or so keen-eyed Jewish merchants, who have gathered like eagles over their prey ...⁴⁸

This form of anti-Jewish sentiment became more prominent towards the end of the century when South African Jewry was frequently associated with 'grasping capitalism' at a time when talk of imperialism and its motives were rife. The works of J A Hobson, the British socialist thinker and proponent of Marxist theories of economic imperialism, became a classical source of quotation by antisemites.⁴⁹ Hobson visited South Africa as a correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* on the eve of the Anglo-Boer War, and his conclusions gained wide acknowledgement among serious writers.⁵⁰ He averred that a

group of men ... chiefly foreign Jews, representing the most highly organised form of international finance yet attained, controls the entire gold industry of the Transvaal ... Their interest in the Transvaal has been purely economic; they went there for money, and those who came early and made most have commonly withdrawn their persons, leaving their economic fangs in the carcase of their prey.

He went on:

In all human probability, for some decades the persons who control the Rand gold mines hold the economic future of South Africa in the hollow of their hands.

⁴⁷ Diamonds were first discovered in 1867 in Kimberley. The Witwatersrand goldfields were opened in 1886, the year in which Johannesburg was founded.

⁴⁸ J A Froude, 'Leaves from a South African Journal' (1874), *Short Studies on Great Subjects, 1867-1882*, Vol IV (Longman, Green and Company, London, 1898-1899), p.375.

⁴⁹ Saron and Hotz (ed.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.209.

⁵⁰ See for example H Arendt, *The Burden of Our Times* (Secker and Warburg, London, 1951), pp.24, 135n, 14n. [*The Burden of our Times* is the original version of Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (André Deutsch Limited Publishers, London, 1968). Both texts were consulted for the present study.] The work of Hilaire Belloc, anti-capitalist and well-known antisemite who wrote extensively about the alleged 'Jewish Conspiracy' and about the Jews as the arch-enemies of civilisation, also gained currency during the early years of the twentieth century. See Belloc's *The Jews* (Constable and Company Limited, London, 1922). See also R Kruger, *Goodbye Dolly Grey - the Story of the Boer War* (New English Library, London, 1967), *passim*.

Hobson referred to a Jewish "confederacy of international financiers ... the economic rulers of South Africa" whose growing need to control the political reins of the country was "the *causa causans* of the present trouble." He saw these financiers as

the power behind the throne ... the principal propellers of aggressive imperialism, consciously or instructively using, in order to conceal their selfish dominance, the generous ... impulses of humanitarian sentiment, and relying ... on one secret ally which ever lurks in the recesses of the national character ... that race-lust of dominance, that false or inverted patriotism.⁵¹

Milton Shain notes that Hobson, whose writings influenced the supporters of the Boers in England and the views of Lenin on imperialism "went beyond a mere condemnation of financiers" and that he believed that it was "specifically Johannesburg's Jews who wielded inordinate power."⁵²

Shain demonstrates how the Eastern European Jewish immigrant became, by the end of the nineteenth century, the reason for, and a psychological symbol of the upheaval and dislocation occasioned by the dramatic revolution in diamonds and gold, the rinderpest (cattle plague) epidemic of the early 1890s, sporadic other plagues and the devastating Anglo-Boer War. He argues that the negative lineage of the Jews evolved at this time with full force, personified in the character Max Hoggenheimer (from the musical, *The Girl from Kay's*), a vulgar and unscrupulous Jew whose name became a household term and even a national symbol because of the bloated capitalist 'Hoggenheimer' caricature employed so extensively and effectively by the cartoonist D C Bonzaier. Shain shows how Hoggenheimer represented a symbol of oppression for the frustrated, and for the wretched, an explanation for their plight. Regularly featured, the cartoon figure symbolised all that was pernicious in the world of mining and finance in the wake of the 'Randlords' era — the heyday of men such as Alfred Beit and Barney Barnato, both of whom were Jews. Shain refers extensively to contemporary sources to illustrate the animosity expressed towards those looked upon

⁵¹ J A Hobson, 'Capitalism And Imperialism In South Africa', *Contemporary Review* (The Contemporary Review Company, London, January 1900), pp.1-9; see also articles in the same journal by J Guinness Rogers, W Hosken and J A Hobson, May 1900, pp.609-619, 656-668; and J A Hobson, *The War in South Africa - Its Causes and Effects* (MacMillan and Co, New York, 1902), pp.184-194. The degree of economic antisemitism prevalent in the Cape Colony at the turn of the nineteenth century, with particular reference to anti-Jewish remarks and blatantly antisemitic publications such as *The Owl*, is discussed by Shain in *The Jewish Population and Politics In The Cape Colony 1898-1910*. See especially chap. I(ii) and chap. IV, pp.98-178.

⁵² Shain, *The Roots of South African Antisemitism*, p.41.

as "Shylocks ... of the tribe of Benjamin", and of "the greatest curses of South Africa", responsible for illicit dealings in diamonds and liquor.⁵³

With the emergence of the millionaires in the wake of the boom in diamonds and gold and the formation of De Beers Consolidated Mines in 1886, the Jewish capitalist emerged as the "living incarnation of the spirit of Mammon" – the evil power behind international finance. Against the background of nineteenth century urbanisation and modernisation emerged the image of the manipulative and dishonest Jews, "a stiff-necked and perverse generation" of "Israelitish boereverneukers" (Jewish swindlers of the Dutch settlers). Shain argues that these images were essentially a product of contemporary feelings of alienation and displacement which were simply projected onto a readily available symbol of change. It is in this context that the Randlord or 'Goldbug' — another pejorative term which acquired common usage at about that time — should be understood. Shain illustrates how the 'Hebrew Goldbugs' were accused of attempting, with the Chinese, to take over Johannesburg, and of joining Jewish finance with British imperialism to foment the abortive Jameson Raid of 1895.⁵⁴

The fact that a social thinker of Hobson's calibre held such views may indicate the degree to which these sentiments were common at the time.⁵⁵ It would be reasonable to assume that such literature was read by the post-1902 Afrikaner intellectuals.⁵⁶ It is safe to assume, too, that the less discerning Afrikaans-speaking public would identify the Jew as a 'little Hoggenheimer' once the image was firmly established in their minds — more so in the welter of anger and resentment which followed the British victory over the Boers in 1902. The Jews, newly-arrived, were a convenient scapegoat.

There is also evidence of an element of statutory antisemitism, by way of precedent, long before the Quota Act of 1930 which placed inordinate restrictions on Jewish

⁵³ M Shain, 'Hoggenheimer – the Making of a Myth', *Jewish Affairs*, September 1981, pp.112-116.

⁵⁴ M Shain, 'From Pariah to Parvenu: The Anti-Jewish Stereotype In South Africa, 1880-1910', *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol 26 (2), December 1984 (Maurice Freedman Research Trust Limited, London), pp.111-127. [It is instructive to consider the typology of the Jew as a pariah and as a parvenu within nineteenth century European society since the same themes resonated in South Africa. See Arendt, 'Between Pariah and Parvenu', in *The Burden of our Time*, chapter 3, part 1, especially pp.66ff.]

⁵⁵ See G Saron, 'Boers, Uitlanders, Jews', Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, pp.209-210.

⁵⁶ See W K Hancock, *Smuts: The Sanguine, 1870-1919* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1962).p.202; *Smuts: The Fields of Force, 1919-1950* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1968), pp.64n, 70, 162. Further references to 'Hoggenheimer' are to be found in C M Van den Heever, *General J B M Hertzog* (APB Book Stores, Johannesburg, 1946).p.232; and Vatcher, *White Laager*, p.62.

immigration from Eastern Europe and Palestine. It is common knowledge that Paul Kruger, President of the South African Republic (the Transvaal), was kindly disposed towards the Jews of the state. In fact, Afrikaner historian Prof D W Kruger pointed out that because his friendship circle consisted not only of those of his own ilk ("sy eie volk") but also of a few Jews, Paul Kruger came under criticism from some of his fellow Afrikaners.⁵⁷ Notwithstanding this, the Republican 'Grondwet' [Constitution] subjected all non-Protestants to certain educational and civic disabilities. These laws originated in 1858, at a time when there were no Jews and probably fewer than a handful of Catholics living north of the Vaal River, and they were rooted in what Prof Kruger calls "die Heidelbergse Kategismus"⁵⁸ and not in anti-Catholic or anti-Jewish sentiments.

Such sentiments did come to the fore, however, when Transvaal Jewry made a concerted effort to attain religious emancipation, only to be thwarted by certain sections of the Volksraad (Parliament). President Kruger's 'Grondwet' denied Jews and Catholics parliamentary membership or the right to hold official positions in the civil service. Government education subsidies were denied to non-Protestant educational institutions while non-Protestant teachers and pupils were barred from the state-aided Protestant schools as all education was to be grounded in Calvinist traditions. Further regulations prevented Jews and Catholics from holding military positions. While the strict letter of the law was not always enforced, protracted negotiations were nevertheless entered into by prominent members of the Jewish community under the leadership of Rabbi J H Hertz (later to be appointed Chief Rabbi of the British Empire) for the removal of the disabilities, with little success. The fact that the Jews constituted some 12% of the Uitlander⁵⁹ populations of the Transvaal (and the struggle between Kruger and the Uitlanders is legion) rendered the removal of the disabilities even less likely.⁶⁰ There is, nevertheless, no evidence of legal antisemitism in any gross form under the Kruger regime. The Rev Mr David Wasserzug, a Jewish Minister of Religion

⁵⁷ D W Kruger, 'Paul Kruger en die Jode', *Jewish Affairs*, November 1960, p.23.

⁵⁸ [Translation: The Heidelberg Catechism]. Ibid.

⁵⁹ Uitlander: Afrikaner word for 'foreigner' applied mostly to English-speaking, non-Afrikaners in the Transvaal Republic in the late 19th century. Tens of thousands of such Uitlanders had settled in the Transvaal following the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886. The influx threatened the political independence of the newly formed republic.

⁶⁰ For a detailed discussion, see G Saron, 'Boers, Uitlanders and Jews' in Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, chapter 11. All other published and unpublished works which touch upon this topic are mere summaries (often unacknowledged) of Saron's chapter. Saron's article, 'Jews in the Kruger Republic', *Jewish Affairs*, May 1971, and D W Kruger's article, 'Paul Kruger en die Jode', *Jewish Affairs*, November 1960, are of specific interest to this subject.

in the Transvaal at the turn of the century, was probably safe in asserting that "whatever offences are to be laid at the Boers' door that of antisemitism must surely be excluded".⁶¹

Transvaal Jews, however, were not free from frequent verbal onslaughts. In 1894, for example, J H Munnik, a Government Inspector of Mines, made reference to Polish Jews who owned canteens as "the most blackguardly race of men in existence," lacking "the slightest sense of decency and morality ... a more depraved race never existed". An editorial attack in the *Johannesburg Times* cast similar aspersions on the Russian Jew, referring to him as a "pettifogging Peruvian", and as a representation of "the apparitions of a slovenly, unkempt and generally unwashed edition, in various members, of the Wandering Jew". The editor added that the Russian Jew held "his money tightly clenched in his sinister hand ... He is a pariah among his own people and among the Gentiles", and concluded with the threat that "if some restraint is not imposed upon the unwashed peregrinators it will be necessary to consider some legislative means for the isolation of the species".⁶² The expression of such sentiments may have been motivated by the belief that the Jews, and more particularly the mining magnates and financiers of Jewish origin, played a leading role in the Uitlander agitation and its sequel.⁶³ Similar views were expressed in the Cape House of Assembly by one Mr Venter, MLA. Venter, however, was sharply rebuked by Sir Gordon Sprigg, Treasurer-General and later Prime Minister of the Cape, for expressing such sentiments, and the hearty endorsement Sprigg received from the House appears to indicate that Venter's impressions of the Jews were not sympathetically received.⁶⁴

In the wake of the defeat of the Boers in the Anglo-Boer conflict (1899-1902) some Boers, dissatisfied with Alfred Milner's settlement arrangements, demanded that the Jews should be relegated to the status of second-class citizens. Milner refused,

⁶¹ *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 16.8.1901.

⁶² Quoted by Shimoni, *The Jewish Community and the Zionist Movement in South African Society*, pp.50-51, from *The Standard and Digger News*, 5.11.1894, and *The Johannesburg Times*, 1.4.1896. The term 'Peruvian', a pejorative label of obscure origin, enjoys fairly wide usage in South Africa. Its etymology is discussed by Shain, 'From Pariah to Parvenu: The Anti-Jewish stereotype in South Africa, 1880-1910', *Journal of Jewish Sociology*, vol. 26(2), December 1984, pp.118-119, 126.

⁶³ The assertion was largely an unwarranted and exaggerated one and has been authoritatively disputed by Gustav Saron in Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, pp.192 *et seq* and *passim*. It was probably given credence by the contemporary writings of J A Hobson. See also R Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, pp.324, 329.

⁶⁴ G Saron in Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, pp.86-87.

however, to revive what he called the "bigoted medieval traditions of the late Transvaal government" and made an effort to ensure that the Jews were not subjected to legal discrimination.⁶⁵ At about the same time, however, developments took place which gave South African Jewry cause for considerable disquiet, with some justification – developments which were to have important implications some years later. A 'Report on the Working of the Immigration Act for the year 1903', drawn up by John Gregory, Medical Officer of Health for the Cape Colony, and endorsed by leading officials, contained disparaging comments on the education, occupations, personal habits and physiques of Russian Jewish arrivals. The report reflected a pronounced prejudice against these immigrants and endorsed the view that restrictions be enacted to prevent further such immigration. However, through the efforts of Morris Alexander, then a young advocate, and David Goldblatt, a Yiddish scholar and editor of the Yiddish publication *Die Yiddische Advokaat*, a legislative loophole which could have been used to prevent the entry of Yiddish-speaking Jewish immigrants to South Africa was sealed.⁶⁶ This occurred after protracted negotiations, initially with the Cape authorities, to gain statutory recognition of Yiddish as a European language so that potential Jewish immigrants who only spoke and wrote Yiddish could comply with immigration stipulations.⁶⁷ Initially the Immigration Law (Act 47) of the Cape Parliament, assented to on 13 November 1902, and enforced from 30 January 1903, sought to define a prohibited immigrant as

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 character of any European language, an application to the satisfaction of the Minister.

The operative phrase in this definition, contained in Section 2(a) of the original Bill, was "in the character of any European language". The specific intention was to restrict the further entry of Asiatics, who had been arriving in South Africa since 1860, yet it also

⁶⁵ R Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christian Smuts* (EP Dutton and Co Ltd, New York, 1944), p.126; Cohen, *Anti-Jewish Manifestations in the Union of South Africa*, pp.4 and 11; Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, pp.91, 217 and *passim*. Milner gave his blessings and lent considerable support to the establishment of a Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal.

⁶⁶ Saron and Hotz, *The Jews in South Africa*, pp.76, 94-95, 243.

⁶⁷ The struggle for the recognition of Yiddish and its sequel – the establishment of the Cape Board of Deputies – is related in Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, chapter III; Saron and Hotz, *The Jews in South Africa*, *passim*; Saron, *Morris Alexander: Parliamentarian and Jewish Leader*, pp.16-20; G Saron, *The South African Jewish Board of Deputies: Its Role and Development*, *passim*.

affected Jewish immigration. The argument against the recognition of Yiddish was based on the premise that Yiddish was a jargon written in Hebraic characters and that it was not spoken by any European nation. Jewish communal leaders were most reluctant to accept private assurances from the authorities that Yiddish-speaking immigrants would not be prohibited from entry under the Act, as future Governments were under no obligation to honour such assurances. Eventually the Immigration Law (Act 30) of 1906 granted statutory recognition of Yiddish as a European language for compliance with the Cape's immigration requirements. The proviso was contained in Section 3(a) of the Act. The Transvaal Parliament included the self-same specification in Section 2(1) of the Immigrant's Restrictions Act of 1907 (Act 15).⁶⁸ The provision was finally included in Section 4(1) (b) of the Immigration Regulation Act (Act 22) (No. 22-1913) enacted by the Union of South African Government three years after unification. It referred to a restricted immigrant as a person, *inter alios*,

who is unable ... to read and write any European language to the satisfaction of an immigration officer ... For the purpose of this paragraph Yiddish shall be considered as a European language.⁶⁹

The increasing immigration of Jews to South Africa brought about a general increase in anti-Jewish manifestations which, while insignificant in comparison to the later anti-Jewish excesses, still served to set a precedent. In November 1906, it was reported that a Judge, during the case of Mrs Freen and Mrs Cohen, made a remark to

⁶⁸ The Morris Alexander Collection contains some personal documents which throw light on the recognition of Yiddish as a European language for immigration purposes. See document entitled 'The Recognition of Yiddish and the Early Days of the Cape Board'(BC 160), C (i), Jewish Board of Deputies File 5, August-September 1944, signed by Alexander and dated 4.2.1944. An edited version appeared in *Jewish Affairs*, February 1944. File 1, May 1903 - April 1923 of the C (i) (formerly restricted=access sections of the Morris Alexander Collection) also houses a short three-page memorandum, 'Report Presented at Meeting of Board held on Tuesday 2 April 1907' relating details of a deputation led by Alexander to Mr Justice T L Graham, Attorney General, on 28 June 1903, over the question of Yiddish. It makes the claim that the President of the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies (i.e. Morris Alexander) "succeeded in getting the Government to withdraw a proposed Naturalisation Bill which would have severely hampered, if not entirely prevented Jews of this Colony and particularly the Russian Jews, from being naturalised." See also *The Cape Times*, 29.5.1903, in which the Rev A P Bender expressed his conviction that he was "so thoroughly satisfied that the Jews of this Colony have not the slightest reason to fear that any civil or religious disabilities would be imposed upon them by any Government in power."

⁶⁹ *The Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1913, No. 22*. While Clause 4(1) (b) effectively closed a loophole with regard to Jewish immigration, Clause 4(1) (a) opened yet another. This Clause stated: "Any person, or class of persons deemed by the Minister on economic grounds or on account of standards of habits of life to be unsuited to the requirements of the Union" could be refused entry into the country. It was to be used with considerable effectiveness by the Government after 1922 for some time, until the promulgation of the Quota Act of 1930, which introduced far more stringent curbs on immigration and thus rendered it redundant.

the effect that "people with such names were better out of the country".⁷⁰ Similar sentiments were reported in December 1906, when a Justice Hopley of the Supreme Court allegedly expressed reluctance to interdict the Government from deporting two parties named Levi and Cohen after an urgent application was made to him, because of the Jewish extraction of the two parties.⁷¹ In November 1907, Morris Alexander received a letter of complaint from Richard Rosenthal, Honorary Secretary of the Jewish Board of Deputies, in which the latter reported that a member of the Board, a Mr Patlansky, had seen photographs of men wanted by the Transvaal police displayed in the Charge Office of the Port Elizabeth Police Station. It was specified that some of the men were of Jewish origin (e.g. "Jacob Katz, *Jew*, age 27-30, height ...", or "Samuel Seffert, English *Jew* ...") whereas all other men on the 'wanted' posters were designated as Greek, German, British and the like.⁷² At about the same time Alexander also received complaints of blatant antisemitic remarks passed by a magistrate at a meeting of the Aberdeen Divisional Council.⁷³ Earlier that year Jewish public opinion had been inflamed by the widespread reports that police on the Witwatersrand were setting 'false traps' in connection with the illicit sale of liquor. Those arrested were usually the poorer Yiddish-speaking elements who suffered considerably from the expenses of the court cases.⁷⁴

While the question of Jewish immigration bulked large during the election campaign which followed unification in 1910, and over the next few years, South African Jewry's general anxiety and disquiet over the immigration issue came about for reasons other than anti-Jewish sentiments. The issue, which centred on the question of curbing Asiatic immigration, could inadvertently have operated against Jewish immigration. Yet, with the successful passage of the 1913 Immigrants' Regulation Act (to which

⁷⁰ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i), Miscellaneous File, 1906, 1937-1939, S Goldreich (President, South African Zionist Federation) to M Alexander, 8.11.1906.

⁷¹ Ibid. E Morris (Hon Secretary, Oudtshoorn Jewish Vigilante Committee) to M Alexander, 8.12.1906.

⁷² Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), File 1, May 1903 - April 1923, Richard Rosenthal to Morris Alexander, 20.11.1907.

⁷³ Ibid. L Hail (Secretary, South African Zionist Federation) to M Alexander, 22.11.1907. Attached to Hail's letter is a copy of a letter from S D Balking, Secretary of the Graaf-Rienet Zionist Association, 1.11.1907, and a typewritten report reproduced from *The Graaf-Rienet Advertiser*, 30.10.1907, and entitled 'Jewish Hawkers: Spirited Discussion at Aberdeen'.

⁷⁴ There is no proof that the police were activated by antisemitic motives, despite contemporary opinions to the contrary. A meeting convened by the South African Zionist Federation in March 1907 nevertheless expressed concern, probably with scant justification, at the widespread antisemitism of the day. Louis Herrman, in a written questionnaire, 25.1.1975, exonerates the police from the charge of antisemitism. The question of 'trapping', however, was a recurrent problem for South African Jewry. See Saron and Hotz, *The Jews of South Africa*, pp.202, 229, 247-248.

reference has already been made) the issue was happily resolved, for South African Jewry at any rate. Admittedly some concern was expressed, during the three years of heated debate over the question of an 'open door' immigration policy, that there would be an influx of destitute Jews and other aliens and that the Afrikaners would be swamped in the process.⁷⁵ In general, however, a warm hand of welcome was extended during the first decade or so of the twentieth century to the Jewish arrivals, particularly by prominent personalities such as Oliver Schreiner,⁷⁶ Prime Minister Louis Botha⁷⁷ and especially by General Smuts who was to champion the Jewish cause for over half a century.⁷⁸

There is no gainsaying, however, that undercurrents of animosity towards the Jews were indeed present in South Africa by the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. Several factors contributed to this: the ever-present ideology of race; the fragile relationship between Jews and Afrikaners, whose ethnicity transcended class in determining their identity;⁷⁹ growing anxiety and fear among the Afrikaners about the influence of foreigners; and nascent Afrikaner nationalism, together with Calvinist fundamentalism. These considerations created a climate of some concern for South African Jewry. Together with the interplay of other influences which were soon to

⁷⁵ See M T Steyn to J C Smuts, 27.1.1911, in W K Hancock and J Van der Poel (eds.), *Selections from the Smuts Papers, Vol. III* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1966), p.23; Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews of South Africa*, p.101. The latter, together with pamphlet material by Gustav Saron (previously cited) and Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, chapter VIII, provide information on the immigration issues of the period 1911-1913. One of the many aspects which surrounded the 1911-1913 immigration question during this period was the attitude of Patrick Duncan (later Minister of Justice and Governor-General of South Africa). It was Duncan who, as a Unionist Party MP in the early years of Union, asked the Minister of the Interior for an assurance that the immigration legislation of 1913 would never be used as a weapon to keep Jews out of South Africa. Yet it was he who, during the 1920s in his capacity as Minister of the Interior (1921-1924), began to apply Clause 4(1) (a) of the 1913 Act to prevent the entry of Eastern European Jews into South Africa. See Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.377.

⁷⁶ Olive Schreiner's sentiments, expressed at a general meeting of the Jewish Territorial Organisation, were reported in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 17.8.1906, and are quoted in full in Cohen, 'Anti-Jewish Manifestation in the Union of South Africa', p.5. See also the editorial in *The Star*, 20.3.1922.

⁷⁷ See Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, pp.102.

⁷⁸ Examples of the Judeophilia of Jan Smuts abound. See for instance R Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, p.182; Hancock, *Smuts: The Sanguine Years, 1870-1919*, p. 361; Shimoni, *The Jewish Community And The Zionist Movement in South Africa Society*, pp.80 *et seq*, and chapter 9 entitled 'The Relationship of Jan Smuts And Other Political Leaders to Zionism'; p.57; Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i), File 1, May 1903 - April 1923, letter from Hon Secretary [name indecipherable], Jewish Immigration Committee [Cape Jewish Board of Deputies] to the Hon J C Smuts, thanking Smuts for looking after Jewish interests in the 1911 immigration debate and for his consideration in discussing the proposed legislation with Morris Alexander and the Rev A P Bender, 20.3.1911. See also G Shimoni, 'Jan Christiaan Smuts and Zionism', *Jewish Social Studies*, Fall 77, Vol. 39 Issue 4 (Indiana University Press), pp. 269 *et seq*.

⁷⁹ H Giliomee, 'The Growth of Afrikaner Identity' in W Beinart and S Dubow (eds.), *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth Century South Africa* (Routledge, London, 1995), p.193.

emerge, these concerns were to become palpable as official policy, legislation and political commentary rather than rhetoric became the primary issues in the so-called Jewish Question.

CHAPTER TWOTHE TIDE BEGINS TO TURN

It was the confluence of political upheaval, concern over Jewish immigration and the growing political strength of the National Party in the wake of the 1929 general elections¹ that served as the backdrop for the increase in antisemitism in South Africa during the period between the end of the First World War and 1930. Extant source material, however, contains virtually no information of any blatant antisemitism in South Africa from any quarters during World War One or during the three or four years after the termination of hostilities. There are, nevertheless, one or two references in the sources to the expression of anti-Jewish sentiments during the years 1920-1921.² During the war, some 3,000 Jewish volunteers fought in the South African forces. This degree of participation was larger than that of the general white population and may indicate, to some degree, the extent to which South African Jews had become integrated, and had identified with the broad spirit of South Africanism. Yet, there were rumours and criticism that Jews were not joining up in sufficient numbers.³

It was in 1922, that South African antisemitism came of age — four years after the war and, significantly, almost five years after the Bolshevik Revolution. In February-March of that year, coal and gold miners on the Witwatersrand went on strike in the wake of the post-war economic depression, a fall in the gold price, the decision of the Chamber of Mines to employ more non-whites in semi-skilled positions and the increase, after 1918, in Communist activity in South Africa. The South African Party, under the Prime Ministership of Jan Smuts, found itself confronted with a revolution on the Reef. "Workers of the world unite and fight for a white South Africa" became a frequent cry.

¹ In a 148-seat parliament, the Nationalists held 63 seats after the 1924 general elections. After the 1929 general elections they held 78 seats. For general election results and statistical analysis, see C Van Rensburg (publ.) *South Africa 1982: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa* (Chris van Rensburg Publishers, Johannesburg, 1983), *passim*.

² See, for example, a report in *The Jewish Chronicle*, 11.2.1921, on remarks levelled at the 'Christ-Killing' Jews made by aspirant Nationalist MP, A Kruit, at the meeting of the Elders of the Dutch Reformed Church in Amersfoort. Some disquiet about the arrival of a "large number of undesirable aliens the majority of whom were low-class Russian Jews" was also expressed in contemporary government circles. See Bradlow, 'Immigration into the Union, 1910-1948', p.197.

³ See Saron, '70 years: Some Historic Highlights'; *Jewish Affairs*, March 1973, pp.57-58; Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews of South Africa*, p.377.

At the same time, the revolutionaries called for the establishment of a Republic.⁴ In the midst of considerable confusion South African Jewry, a community of some 62,000 people constituting approximately 4.1 per cent of the total white population, came under attack. The South African press in particular, as Marcia Gitlin noted, "took up a distinctly unfriendly stand ... every prominent newspaper in the country uttered shrieks of alarm and outcries against the 'Bolshevik' immigration at whose door most of the blame for the revolt was laid." ⁵

Jews were thus accused directly, and by implication, of fomenting the social and economic upheavals on the Witwatersrand. Yet, of the 850 people brought before the courts,⁶ only one was apparently of Jewish extraction. He, however, was acquitted.⁷ In fact, there is no evidence whatsoever of any significant Jewish involvement in the rebellion, despite the disproportionately high percentage of Jews represented in labour and other leftist movements in South Africa.⁸ While Jeremy Krikler, in the most comprehensive study of the 1922 uprising to date, analyses the nationalist, racial, class ideology and socialist elements which underscored the revolt,⁹ he makes no mention of Jewish involvement of any significance at all in the rebellion. The unprecedented antisemitism generated by the unrest, however, was undoubtedly attributable to a mixture of motives: the contemporary role of Jews such as Trotsky as the archetypes of anarchy and revolution; the prominent role played by a handful of Jews (among whom were Ben Weinbren and Solly Sachs) in the South African Labour Party and in the

⁴ See J Krikler, *White Rising: The 1922 Insurrection and Racial Killing in South Africa*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2005), p.52; I L Walker and B Weinbren, *2000 Casualties: A History of the Trade Unions and the Labour Movement in the Union of South Africa* (The Natal Witness Pty., Ltd., Pietermaritzburg, 1961)

chapters 11-25; Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force, 1919-1950*, chapter 5.

⁵ M Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing*, p.302.

⁶ Walker and Weinbren, *2000 Casualties: A History of the Trade Unions and the Labour Movement in the Union of South Africa* p.150.

⁷ Shimoni, 'The Jewish Community and the Zionist Movement in South African Society', p.98. Shimoni provides this information, but does not cite the source, in the course of a discussion about the involvement of Jews in South African labour politics, chapter 2, section 5.

⁸ N Herd, *1922: The Revolt on the Rand* (Blue Crane Books, Johannesburg, 1966), Walker and Weinbren, *2000 Casualties: A History of the Trade Unions and the Labour Movement in the Union of South Africa*, and J Basson, *The General Strike on the Witwatersrand, 1922* (BA Honours Extended Research Essay, University of Cape Town, 1962), provide no information of any consequence about the involvement of Jews in the 1922 upheavals. Jews' participation in socialist movements in a significant way only became marked later in the century. Many of those involved in general labour agitation, however, were Jews by extraction rather than by identification. In this respect, see Shimoni, 'The Jewish Community and the Zionist Movement in South African Society', pp.87-98.

⁹ Krikler, *White Rising*, chapter 4. (See also pp.52-54 and chapter 6, *passim*.)

trade union movements; fear of the spread of Bolshevism in the wake of a steady arrival of migrants, mostly Jews from Russia; and — most significant — typical xenophobia and attendant scapegoatism generated by post-war economic uncertainty, coupled with racial tensions in the Transvaal and elsewhere. The period 1921-1924 was generally characterised by unease and popular anxiety leading, in 1924, to the collapse of the Smuts Government. Furthermore, *post bellum* economic depression and xenophobic nativism prompted a revival of the entire issue of unrestricted immigration.¹⁰ The 1922 insurrection was paradigmatic of the disquiet which marked the period after World War One.

There is abundant evidence of the sudden and widespread attacks on South African Jewry during the Rand Rebellion. Soon after the outbreak of hostilities, the editor of *The Sunday Times*, South Africa's weekly newspaper with the largest circulation, wrote:

Among the revolutionary band on the Rand there were a good many men who were obviously neither British nor Dutch. In the lists of people convicted under the martial law regulations were many names which were not South African. And in the groups in the streets talking under their breath against the Government and the police, were men and women who, judging by their appearance, were not born in this country and had not dwelt in it long.

These facts call for consideration. It is clear that South Africa is receiving from Russia and other parts of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe a number of most undesirable immigrants. Some of them are out-and-out Bolsheviks. Others are sympathisers with Bolshevism, and are ready at any movement to help overthrow authority or impede it in suppressing disorder. Such people ... are aliens in mind and disposition and habits. Their ideas and methods are those of Eastern Europe — generally of Bolshevik Russia ... In South Africa, with its comparatively trifling white population the coming in of such people even in what would seem ... to be small numbers, is a menace to the security of the country.

We are not opposed to immigration ... But we do say that a land with the complicated racial problems we have here ought to inquire somewhat carefully into the records of those who wish to enter it ... We strongly advise the Government to guard the gateway more closely in future ... It is significant in our mind that at least fifteen hundred Russians entered the Union last year from overseas. We should like to know how many of them were wholeheartedly on the side of the Government during the revolutionary outbreak...¹¹

In the same edition of *The Sunday Times*, the following appeared under the heading

¹⁰ Bradlow, 'Immigration into the Union 1910-1948', p.199.

¹¹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i) File 1, May 1903 - April 1923, press cutting, *The Sunday Times*, 19.3.1922.

'People Say -'

That perhaps recent happening on the Reef will help the Government realise the necessity of restricting alien immigration; that many Jews who may be considered as ornaments (*sic*) and help to any community are likely to suffer from the association of imported material with the suppressed revolutionary effort; that it is time subscribers to Jewish charitable institutions saw that their control was vested in reputable citizens of yore.¹² [i.e. not in the hands of recent arrivals from Russia.]

A great stir was caused when, in the columns of *The Star*, a reputable newspaper, a certain Dr J Fehrsen of Benoni gave the following description of those arrested during the strike:

We studied the faces of the prisoners, a mentally deficient, repulsive looking lot of ruffians, amongst them a Russian Jew, just three weeks in Africa from Kovno. He could not utter a word of English.

Fehrsen went on to ask how long South Africa would "tolerate this Russian invasion?"¹³

The editor of *The Star* expressed the belief that Fehrsen "voices the feeling of thousands of people throughout South Africa today". He went on to attack what he claimed to be the undesirable stream of Bolshevick Russians entering South African in their thousands – which, he argued, "should be stopped immediately" or else "in another generation South Africa will largely be in the hands of the Russian Bolsheviks."¹⁴

A pencilled copy of a telegram written on flimsy post office paper in the files of the Morris Alexander Collection indicated quite clearly the alarm with which the Jewish community reacted to such allegations. The text of the telegram – despatched from Johannesburg on 20 March 1922, and obviously sent by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies to Morris Alexander – read:

¹² *The Sunday Times*, 19.3.1922.

¹³ *The Star*, 16.3.1922.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.3.1922. See also the reported comments of Cabinet Minister Col H L Mentz, in the same edition, with reference to "the nefarious schemings (*sic*) of the men from Russia and Middle Europe who had stirred up the recent trouble".

Please communicate with other Jewish members [of Parliament] and interview Premier reporting result by wire...? ... [word illegible] in consequence of current allegations and suggestions in public press more particularly in Johannesburg that Russian Jews are largely responsible for recent deplorable happenings on Witwatersrand which inflammation allegations and suggestions ...? ... [Document torn] uncontradicted may have serious results. South African Jewish Board of Deputies respectfully and earnestly requests that you may be pleased to issue a statement setting out what the board submits are the true facts namely that whereas some Russian Jews may have committed offences the total numbers of such Jews is insignificant compared with that of other persons either tried or awaiting trial in connection with revolt while on other hand Jews including Russian Jews figure in the casualty lists of govt. (*sic*) forces and cooperated in very large numbers with rest of population alike in fighting forces special police and civic guards in suppressing the revolt.¹⁵

South African antisemitism had indeed come of age. What was particularly instructive was the antipathy directed at the Jews from sections of the English-language press, more so because of the opposition that the self-same media was to express to the antisemitism which was manifest in Afrikaner nationalist circles in the 1930s. In 1922, however, Communism was the bogey – not only in South Africa, of course, but in other lands of the British Empire and beyond, and fear of the inroads of Communism was manifest in both English-and Afrikaans-speaking circles.

These conclusions are borne out by Milton Shain. In his detailed discourse on the events on the Witwatersrand, Shain explains how political parties manipulated the Bolshevik bogey to serve their particular political ends and how the English language press endorsed the stereotypes of Russian Jewish immigrants as subversive Bolsheviks.¹⁶ As he notes, both the government and those newspapers supporting it defined the upheavals on the Rand “as an attack on civilised values by a Bolshevik revolutionary force.”¹⁷ Predictably, a conspiratorial explanation for these events “focussed on the ...Russian-Jewish immigrant.”¹⁸ For Shain, “the animus directed

¹⁵ Morris Alexander (BC 160), C(i), File 1, May 1903 - April 1923, South African Jewish Board of Deputies to Morris Alexander, 20.3.1922; see also C(ii), Box, 1899-June 1924, Folder 8-1922, which contains newspaper clippings and typewritten transcripts relating to allegations of a "Jewish-Bolshevik" element in the 1922 Rand Rebellion. Of particular interest are the following: *The Rand Daily Mail*, 16.3.1922; *The Cape Times*, 18.3.1922 (editorial); *The Star*, 24.3.1922 (article by Mr H E King, Secretary of the South African National Union, entitled by 'The Obvious Duty: Advance in All Direction'); *The Rand Daily Mail* (Letter to the Editor, 'Bolshevism And The Jews', from N Levi of Pretoria, denying the truth of anti-Jewish allegations). See also the description of the Jewish immigrant as a low-down alien – an anarchist with his pockets full of worthless roubles and deadly bullets, in *The Natal Advertiser*, 16.3.1922.

¹⁶ Shain, *Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa*, pp.83ff.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.95.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.97.

towards Jews during the Rand Rebellion and its aftermath was possible only because of a well-entrenched Jewish stereotype in South Africa that had the potential to be manipulated at any time.”¹⁹ There is considerable truth in this assertion.

Morris Alexander led the counter-offensive against allegations of a Jewish-Bolshevik plot. On Wednesday evening, 19 April 1922, in the course of a long speech during the Parliamentary debate on the Indemnity Bill, Alexander hurled invectives at the would-be antisemites. "Judaism", he argued, "is the very antithesis of Bolshevism, but the two things seem to be sadly confused in South Africa at the present time." He went on to relate that an offensive postcard had been sent to him, and similar ones, apparently, to other Members of Parliament, which "nakedly referred to the upheaval on the Rand as the Bolshevik and Jewish Revolution". Stressing the serious natures of such allegations, Alexander then attempted to refute them:

There is not an atom of foundation in it, and that anybody should come to such a conclusion is deplorable. I am afraid that it is a matter that touches inherited prejudices; and the result is that the Government is being urged to adopt reactionary measures, and the whole Jewish community is being dubbed as a revolutionary community. It seems to be forgotten that a Jewish boy was publicly thanked for carrying ammunition to a band of police who were sorely pressed at Fordsburg, or that many Jews on the Rand had their sons in the Transvaal Scottish, some of whom were dangerously wounded. People did not bother to look up and see how many of the men in the defence force belonged to the Jewish community. They have simply got hold of three or four names, and from that it is an easy flight to say that every Jew is a Bolshevik.

Referring to scapegoatism, and to the allegation that Jews were often accused of being both capitalists and communists when the occasion suited, Alexander went on:

Always, and on all sides, the Jew is blamed because he is the easiest scapegoat ... And here you have it even in this house. One hon[ourable] member talks about the Jews of Petticoat-Lane meaning the Chamber of Mines Jews [i.e. capitalists]; and another member gets up and talks about Mr Kentridge [Labour MP] being a Jew concerned with the other side. And there you have it. The Jews are responsible as capitalists; they are responsible as revolutionaries. But they can hardly be both.

What people completely failed to comprehend, argued Alexander, was that those who suffered most under Bolshevik rule were the Jews who were, in the main, Russia's

¹⁹ Ibid., p.113.

middle-class traders. And — as a final shot — he reminded the House that Trotsky, the one notable Bolshevik Jew, had been excommunicated by the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities.²⁰

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies also expressed concern over the sudden widespread and unprecedented anti-Jewish outbursts. A special meeting was called on 20 March 1922, where it was decided to make representations by telegram to Smuts and to ask Morris Alexander, together with other Jewish Members of Parliament, to interview the Prime Minister. A request was also despatched to the Criminal Investigation Department to ascertain the truth of all allegations about the number of Jews arrested during the disturbances. Smuts subsequently saw fit to condemn the allegations.²¹ Since it appeared obvious to many that "undesirables" and "Jewish immigrants" were synonymous, Jewish citizens and communal leaders wrote to the press throughout this period, emphasising South African Jewry's contribution to the Union and roundly denying accusations of a Jewish-Bolshevist plot.²² The Board's anxiety is also reflected in the report of its executive committee to the Board's fifth congress in August 1923. The report contains information about the dissemination on a wide scale of anonymous antisemitic leaflets and a publication, distributed by *Die Burger* with antisemitic extracts from the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*.²³ Of interest, too, are the 'Hoggenheimer' - type cartoons which appeared at that time.²⁴

The 1922 disturbances on the Rand not only brought the Jewish question to the forefront for the first time proper, but also revealed the effectiveness with which it could be used as a weapon in the political arena. While the anti-Jewish outburst died down by mid-1922, it was soon superseded by the vexatious question of Jewish immigration — a problem which bulked large throughout the period of the 1920s and which provided a backdrop to the blow for South African Jewry which came with the passage of the Quota Act in 1930.

²⁰ *The Argus*, 'Judaism not Bolshevism. Mr Alexander's Vigorous Protest. "Everlasting Tragedy of the Jews"', 20.4.1922. See also Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, pp.92-93.

²¹ Shimoni, 'The Jewish Community and the Zionist Movement in South African Society', p.97.

²² See, for example, *The Cape Times*, 25.3.1922, 28.3.1922, 3.5.1922.

²³ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Committee, August 1921 to May 1923 to Fifth Congress*, (South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg), August 1923, p.13.

²⁴ See Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force, 1919-1950*, p.70, and Hancock's comments, p.64n. See also Saron, '70 years: Some Historic Highlights'; *Jewish Affairs*, March 1973, p.59.

The publicity given to Russian Jewry during the Rand revolt was inextricably linked to the immigration issue of the period which followed. From about May 1922, Patrick Duncan, Minister of the Interior, began to use Clause 4(1) (a) of the Immigration Regulation Act (1913) to restrict the entry of immigrants. The provision, it will be recalled, empowered the authorities to declare as a prohibited immigrant

Any person, or class of persons, deemed by the Minister on economic grounds or on account of standards of habits of life to be unsuited to the requirement of the Union.

On these grounds, considerable numbers of Jews were barred from entry to South Africa, and Duncan — who vigorously denied the charge — was accused of discriminating against potential Jewish migrants. Duncan's contention was that prevalent economic conditions, and particularly unemployment,²⁵ necessitated the stringent application of the said Clause.²⁶ It was common knowledge that the original intention of this section of the Act was to prevent the entry to Asiatics into South Africa, without specifying so in the legislation. Ironically, during the 1913 debate on the Immigration Regulation Bill, Duncan himself had asked for a personal assurance from General Smuts that the Bill would not be applied against Jews. A somewhat sensitive (and possibly over-sensitive) Jewish community, convinced that the Government had adopted an antisemitic stand on immigration, entered into a protracted confrontation with the authorities replete with protest resolutions, urgent meetings, a deputation to the Minister of the Interior, the despatch of numerous telegrams and letters and the usual charge and counter-charge. Duncan, however, continued to refute the allegation that the increasingly stringent application of Clause 4(1) (a) was aimed at potential Jewish migrants.

Edna Bradlow cites correspondence between Patrick Duncan and Lady Selbourne which gives the lie to Duncan's public statements that he was not opposed to Jewish immigration. In April 1924, Duncan wrote:

²⁵ See Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i), File 1, May, 1903-April 1923, press cutting, *Die Burger*, 10.7.1922 (editorial).

²⁶ Morris Alexander, as early as April 1922, had intimated that the Government was excluding Eastern and Central European migrants from entry into South Africa, although he did not charge the Government with pursuing an antisemitic policy *per se*. Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i), File 1, May 1903 - April 1923, press cutting, *Die Burger*, 10.7.1922 (editorial).

It amused me to get your advice about the Peruvians as I have just been making a small effect in that direction since the United States closed the door to a large extent against the immigration from Eastern Europe. We are getting them here in growing numbers and I have been putting in force a clause in the Immigration Act which enables the Minister to bar anyone whom he deems suitable on economic grounds or from standards or habits of life. The victims are of course all Jews ... they are really coming in much faster than we can assimilate them and the present Bolshevist scare — which is nothing but a scare — gives a good opportunity for trying a little restriction.

In a later letter to Lady Selbourne, he wrote:

I have many Jewish friends whom I like and admire. But nothing in me revolts against our country being peopled by the squat-bodied, furtive eyed, loud voiced race ... In a big population they would be lost and negligible. But we have too many of them.²⁷

The Morris Alexander Collection contains English and Afrikaans extracts from Hansard of the debate on the Immigrants Regulation Act No 22 of 1913. These broadsheets reveal that the intention of Clause 4(1) (a) was not to discriminate against European immigrants and include Duncan's earlier emphatic public endorsement thereof. At a meeting held on 1 December 1922 between Duncan, in his capacity as Minister of the Interior, and representatives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Duncan again refuted accusations that his intent was to restrict Jewish immigration, confirming this in a letter to the Board dated 1 December 1922.²⁸

Alexander, who led the attack on the manner in which the Clause was being applied, claimed that he spoke on behalf of all potential European immigrants and not merely in the name of those of Jewish extraction.²⁹ *Die Burger*, however, argued that Duncan had indeed included potential Jewish immigrants in the category intended for Asiatics. An editorial declared that "die Minister het reguit erken dat vandag die Jood word uitgehou onder 'n bepaling in die immigrasie - wet wat indertyd vasgestel is vir die Indië." ³⁰ By conflating the concerns of the Jews with those of the Asiatics, Alexander

²⁷ Bradlow, 'Immigration Into The Union, 1910-1948', pp. 204-205.

²⁸ See Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i), Folder 9 – January / February 1923, Box 1899 - June, 1924, press cutting from *The Zionist Record*, 31.1.1923, which contains a report of the meeting, held on 1.12.1922 in Pretoria, and the contents of the Minister's letter to the Board, dated 12.12.1922.

²⁹ See untitled document in the Morris Alexander Collection BC160, C (i), File 2, May 1923 - December 1928. See also Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, p.94 *et seq.*

³⁰ [Translation: 'Today the Minister has acknowledged outright (that) the Jew suffers under a provision in the immigration act which was formerly established for Indians.'] *Die Burger*, 10.7.1922 (editorial) –

had obviously exaggerated in an attempt to exonerate himself from the charge that, as a Member of Parliament, he was only bent on protecting the Jews' interests when indeed he was doing so. It should be noted, however, that the Jewish community, which aligned itself with the white minority, certainly showed no undue concern then, as in earlier years, over the anti-Asiatic implications of the Act. Indeed, there is no evidence that the official representatives of the Jewish community protested against injustices, legislative or otherwise, levelled against the non-white sections of the population during the entire period under review.

The reaction of certain sections of the press towards the immigration question ³¹ during the 1922-1924 period is of interest. *The Cape Times*, for example, came out in support of the Smuts Government and was highly critical of the stance of the Jewish leaders. On the other hand, *Die Burger*, the powerful Cape Nationalist organ which became a principal source of antisemitism in the 1930s, and the voice of the right-wing Afrikaner nationalists, expressed sympathy for the Jewish standpoint, and added fuel to the National Party's condemnation of the South African Party, accusing the Smuts' supporters of propagating the 'Jewish-Communist' myth for political purposes. The editor expressed it simply: "Die agitatie teen die Jode weens Bolsjewistiese neigings is dus pure ondankbaarheid van genl. Smuts en sy joernalistieke volgelinge."³² However, *Die Burger's* invective against Smuts, a lifelong friend of the Jews, was undoubtedly an attack on the South African Party, using the Jewish card as a political ploy, rather than an expression of sympathy for the Jews, more so given *Die Burger's* distribution of extracts from *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* ³³ and subsequent support for Dr Malan and the Purified National Party's antisemitism during the next decade. In general, however, while anti-Jewish proclivities became increasingly evident during the nineteen-twenties, they were not overtly evident in Afrikaner nationalist

press cutting, Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), File 1, May, 1903 - April 1923.

³¹ The immigration controversy, May 1922 - February 1924, is chronicled comprehensively by Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, pp.93-97, and in the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Committee, August 1921 to May 1923 to Fifth Congress*. It does not, therefore, warrant repetition here. See also G Saron, *Morris Alexander, Parliamentarian and Jewish Leader* Saron, G: *Morris Alexander, Parliamentarian and Jewish Leader: A Memorial Lecture on the 20th Anniversary of His Death* (South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg, 1966), pp.24-25; *Jewish Affairs*, March 1973, pp.61-62; Saron and Hotz (eds.) *The Jews in South Africa: A History*, p.377; and Cohen, *Judaica II*, pp.49-50.

³² [Literal translation: 'The agitation against the Jews because of Bolshevik tendencies is thus sheer ingratitude of General Smuts and his journalistic supporters.'] Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i) File 1, May 1903 - April 1923, press cutting, *Die Burger*, 10.7.1922.

³³ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Committee, August 1921 to May 1923 to Fifth Congress*, August 1923, p.13.

pronouncements until the close of the decade.

The attitude of *The Cape Times* to the question of Jewish immigration in the 1922-1924 period was exemplified by editorial comment published in May 1922. The newspaper was vehemently critical of South African Jews who provided Jewish arrivals with the minimum sum of twenty pounds sterling required by law for entry into South Africa. This, *The Cape Times* charged, was an evasion of the law by South African Jews who, by lending money to their compatriots, enabled them "to sustain the fraudulent pretence of having the required sum when they arrived at Union ports".³⁴ The editorial continued:

There may be no formal 'organisation' which supplies the requisite funds for indigent immigrants of Jewish birth, but the practice is widespread, is a fraud upon the immigration laws of the Union, and should be condemned openly by all responsible Jews who are good South Africans.

The patriotism of South African Jewry was thus being questioned. Similarly, the Jews were criticised for "putting pressure on the authorities" to permit fellow Jews into the country

as though they believe that the fact of being a Jew is sufficient to override every disability of morality or previous record ... And it is pressure by Jews on behalf of Jews merely because they are Jews. No other race has even imagined the possibility of such tactics. They are used with ruthless, continual and unscrupulous persistence.

The editor then went on to suggest a 'quota' system of immigration based on countries of origin and urged the introduction of such a system during the forthcoming Parliamentary session, This, then, would put paid, once and for all, to the claim by South African Jewry "that the Jews must be allowed to come in, whether the Union wants them or not, because they are Jews."³⁵ Here, then, was a call for an immigration quota system with anti-Jewish overtones by a leading English-language newspaper which, while endorsing the National Party's Quota Act in 1930, went on to oppose the Nationalists' stance against Jewish immigration in the 1930s.

³⁴ *The Cape Times*, 1.5.1922. [It is common knowledge that this practice was widespread throughout the early decades of the twentieth century. During the nineteen-thirties the Standard Bank assisted with loans to enable immigrants to meet the financial stipulations.]

³⁵ *Ibid.* The newspaper continued to call for restrictive immigration throughout the 1920s. See, for example, editions 4.3.1926 and 28.8.1929.

The nature of *Die Burger's* attack on Duncan is of special interest. *Die Burger* contended that the Jews were by far the section of the population most affected by Duncan's administration of the Government's immigration policy. An editorial pointed out that, while the disturbances on the Rand were at their height, much currency was made by depicting the Jew as a money-grabber who spoke neither English nor Afrikaans, and who was in cahoots with the revolutionaries – despite the fact that the post-revolutionary trials were testimony to the Jews' innocence. Thereafter, argued *Die Burger*, a new angle was given to the anti-Jewish movement – restricting the entry of Jewish immigrants on the grounds that Jews were having increasing influence on the country's economy:

Die Jode is voorgestel as die mense wat die hele tussenhandel in hande weer te kry. Hulle begin klein en hulle besigheid word groter en welvarender. Die agitatie in die S.A.P. — pers het so vorgegaan en nou is dit wel toevallig dat die beperking van die Joodse immigrasie kom na die persveldtog.

The editorial went on to praise South African Jewry, to cite recent examples of unfair treatment of potential Jewish immigrants, and to encourage the Government to permit any Jew who would benefit the country to enter as an immigrant. It added that Duncan, while admitting the need for European migrants, was discriminating against potential Jewish immigrants to protect vested British business interests in the Union.³⁶ This, however, may have been yet another political ploy to attack the Smuts-led government rather than an expression of support for the Jews from Afrikaner quarters.

The argument over Clause 4(1) (a) continued unabated and became a contentious issue in the inter-party political struggle of the day. Nationalist spokesmen, such as C W Malan, continued to support the Jews' contention that the Clause was being wrongly used to exclude European, and especially Jewish immigrants. On 1 May 1924, however, the Smuts Government announced that it was suspending the use of

³⁶ [Literal translation of the Afrikaans text: 'The Jews are portrayed as the people who acquire the entire commercial trade in their hands. They begin small, and (then) their businesses grow larger and more prosperous. The agitation in the S.A.P press came first, and now, just "accidentally", the restriction of Jewish immigration follows the (S.A.P.'s) media campaign.'] Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i), File 1, May 1903 - April 1923, press cutting, *Die Burger*, 10.7.1922. See also press cutting, *The Argus*, 20.4.1922, in C (i), Box 1899 - June 1924, which contends that *Die Burger's* allegations against Duncan were without substance. (See also *Die Burger's* editorial, 11.7.1922).

the Clause for six months.³⁷ The South African Party, no doubt, could not afford a confrontation over the Jewish question or the loss of traditional Jewish support in the impending election clash with the Nationalists. Less than a month earlier, on 5 April 1924, the South African Party had lost an important by-election to an almost-unknown Nationalist candidate in the 'safe' South African Party Eastern Transvaal seat of Wakkerstroom. Smuts, on the eve of the 17 June 1924 General Elections, thus had sufficient problems on his political plate. The suspension of the use of Section 4(1) (a) against European immigrants appears a belated attempt by the Government to win Jewish support which had dissipated since 1922.

The South African Party lost the elections. General J B M Hertzog became Prime Minister of the Pact (National-Labour alliance) Government, and served as Prime Minister until September 1939. Dr D F Malan, former Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, was appointed Minister of the Interior, Education and Public Health. Soon after Malan's appointment, Morris Alexander lost little time in approaching him on the Jewish immigration issue.

You will remember the matter raised by me on several occasions during the last Parliament, when I complained that Section 4(1)(a) of the Immigration Regulation Act of 1913 was worded in general terms, though intended to be used for the exclusion of Asiatic immigrants only, and whereas a definite pledge was given to Parliament in 1913 that it would not be used for the exclusion of European immigrants, the late Government dishonoured this pledge, and refused to give way though appealed to on many occasions. On May 1st the Department of the Interior issued a notice that the application of Section 4(1) (a) to European immigrants was suspended for six months.

There is, of course, complete provision in the Act for the exclusion of undesirable European immigrants, without invoking Section 4(1) (a) which was never intended to apply to them.

I would urge the new Government to honour the pledge given to Parliament in 1913 and decide not in future to apply Section 4(1) (a) to European immigrants. Suspension is, in my opinion, insufficient.

³⁷ Saron, '70 years: Some Historic Highlights'; *Jewish Affairs*, March 1973, p.62; Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, p.95. (The *Jewish Affairs*' article gives the date of suspension as February 1924. Morris Alexander's letter to Malan, 1.10.1924 in Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List IV, No. 24, correctly gives the date as 1 May 1924.) The article in *Jewish Affairs* points out that some Jews relinquished their support for the Smuts Government because of the immigration issue and voted for the opposition in the election of May 1924. See also Shimoni, 'The Jewish Community And the Zionist Movement in South African Society', p.101 *et seq* for Shimoni's analysis of Jewish political tendencies in the 1920s.

In view of the public interest attaching to this matter, I should like to publish this letter and your reply.³⁸

In his reply to Alexander, Dr Malan gave the assurance that the Government had no intention of discriminating against Jewish immigrants — a promise based on political expediency and one which was broken by Malan in word and in deed shortly after the General Elections of 1929. In the light of later events, and the prominent if not pivotal role played by Malan in the Nationalists' anti-Jewish saga, his letter to Alexander is cited here in full:

In reply to your letter of the 1st instant, I beg to state that I am in entire agreement with your view that Section 4(1) (a) of the Immigrants Regulation Act of 1913 was never intended by Parliament to be applied to European immigrants and certainly not on any basis of racial distinction or country of origin. This view is undoubtedly confirmed by the Parliamentary records. Under the circumstances I have no hesitation in stating that in the application of the abovementioned section we do not intend to revert to the practice of our predecessors, which you have deprecated in the past, and that I willingly give the assurance that in using the other provisions of the Act for the purpose of keeping out undesirables no discrimination will be made against any particular European race or nationality. I have issued the necessary instructions in accordance with this policy.³⁹

By his actions Malan had opened the door of South Africa a little more widely and Jews began to enter in larger numbers. The virtual closure by the United States and Australia of their doors to aliens no doubt contributed to the increased arrival of Jews into the Union under the Pact Government.⁴⁰ Indeed, the immigration statistics for the period 1925-1929⁴¹ endorse the supposition that Hertzog's Government was generally well-disposed towards South African Jewry and Jewish immigration and that Malan honoured his pledge during those years. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, however, wary of the new Government's intentions, went so far as to write to Malan

³⁸ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List IV, No. 24, copy of letter from M Alexander to D F Malan, 1.7.1924.

³⁹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (ii), Box: July 1923 – 1933, Folder 18, May – December 1926, D F Malan to M Alexander, 10.7.1924. The original copy of this critical letter was sighted in C (ii), Box: July 1924 – 1933, Folder 13, July – December 1924.

⁴⁰ Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.378; Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing*, p.303. Prior to the 1924 elections, the National Party opposition emerged as a champion of an open-door immigration policy in an attempt to embarrass the South African Party Government and support the Jewish community in its resentment over the use against Europeans of legislation designed specifically to exclude the entry into South Africa of Asiatics. (See Bradlow, 'Immigration into The Union 1910-1948', pp.210, 213.)

⁴¹ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Immigration of Jews into the Union (1926-1935) With Appendices for the Year 1936: An Analysis Of Official Statistics*, *passim*.

noting "with pleasure your assurance that you do not intend to revert to the practice of your predecessor in applying Section 4(1) (a) to European Immigrants". At the same time, the Board reminded Malan by letter (and appended relevant extracts from *Hansard* to substantiate its assertion) that Duncan had given a similar assurance in 1913 only to renege on it when he assumed the Interior portfolio. The Board went to the extent of suggesting, perhaps presumptuously, that

the best way to make it impossible for Section 4(1)(a) to be applied to Europeans is either to pass an amending Act expunging that particular subsection from the Act of 1913 or else putting in such words as will make it perfectly clear that under no circumstances whatsoever would Section 4(1)(a) be applied to European immigrants.

To drive the point home the letter concluded with an expression of the Board's thanks

for your assurance that in using the other provisions of the Act for the purpose of keeping out undesirables no discrimination will be made against any particular European race or nationality.⁴²

The introduction of the Quota Act in 1930 was to be most surprising when viewed against the background of the relative harmony which had hitherto prevailed between the Jews and the Pact Government. Then again, political expediency – the need for Jewish support to defeat Smuts in June 1924, and possibly the assistance of Jewish entrepreneurs in Hertzog's large-scale, five-year program of industrialisation (1924-1929) – may have been partly responsible for Malan's pro-Jewish stance from 1924 until the end of the decade.

There were isolated anti-Jewish manifestations during the Pact Government's term of office.⁴³ As early as 1924, and again in 1926, Manie Maritz, the Afrikaner extremist whose anti-Jewish proclivities became a prominent feature during the 1930s, was reported to have made antisemitic pronouncements.⁴⁴ In 1926 one P.J. Cartwright of

⁴² Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i), File 2, May 1923 – December 1928, copy of letter from President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies to D F Malan, 21.7.1924. See also the covering letter from the Board's Secretary, Percy Cowen, sent with the copy of the above letter to Morris Alexander, 29.7.1924. All six other Jewish Members of Parliament were recipients of copies of the Board's letter to Malan. [The writer has not found any evidence that Malan replied to the Board's letter.]

⁴³ For general comment, see L Sowden, *The Land of Afternoon: The Story of a White South African* (Elek Books Limited, London, 1968), p.47, which contains a reference to anti-Jewish sentiment in South African schools during this period.

⁴⁴ Shimoni, 'The Jewish Community and The Zionist Movement in South African Society', p.104.

Three Anchor Bay, Cape Town wrote to Morris Alexander contending that South-European immigrants were unassimilable and were entering the Union under false pretences. Cartwright added that the Jewish MPs, furthermore, were a dishonest bunch as evidenced by their protest against the Insolvency Bill. "If these people are so law-abiding," he wrote, "surely it was not necessary for all of you to rise to a man."⁴⁵

An interesting example of the application of the *numerus clausus* during the late 1920s is contained in the records of the Council of the University of Cape Town. A letter from Morris Alexander to Prof Charles E Lewis, Chairman of the Council of the University, referred to complaints made to Alexander's wife, Enid, that Professor Brown, head of College House Residence, one of the university's student residences, had introduced a policy whereby only the first 15 Jewish applicants were automatically admitted to the House, while the next five Jewish applicants would only be admitted after careful selection. There would thus be a maximum of 20 Jews out of a total of 110 students. When approached by Enid Alexander, Brown had apparently argued that his policy operated in the interests of the Jews themselves, "as otherwise they would form a clique and not mix freely with other students." This attitude towards the Jews may have been fairly common at that time. Indicative of the Jewish response to such viewpoints, however, was Morris Alexander's invective:

The Jewish community will never tolerate differential treatment, even under the pleas that it is being done in the interests of the Jewish students. We demand absolute equality of treatment, and protest against the application of any differentiated system to our students entering a public undenominational institution, supported by the state and endowed by members of all communities.

The University Registrar's reply to Alexander, dated 7 September 1928, gave the assurance that the ultimate authority lay with the University Council which would brook no discrimination against Jewish students.⁴⁶ There is no evidence that College House Residence subsequently applied the *numerus clausus* to Jewish residential students.

Alleged discrimination against Jewish doctors over appointments to positions as Medical Officers, District Surgeons and Railway Doctors was also reported during the

⁴⁵ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (ii), Box: July 1923 – 1933, Folder 18, May – December 1926, P J Cartwright to M Alexander, c. 1926. (The letter is undated and is written on school note-book paper.)

⁴⁶ University of Cape Town, *Council Minutes*, January 31 1928 to December 7 1928, Minutes of monthly meeting, Tuesday, 25.9.1928, Appendix B.

later 1920s.⁴⁷ In addition to these charges of discrimination on economic grounds, religiously motivated antisemitism, with political overtones, also featured in the 1929 General Elections. In a sermon, entitled 'The Christian's duty during election time', the Rev G D du Toit of Swellendam, Cape, warned his congregation

- (1) never to vote for any individual who, you are certain, is an enemy of Christ. As a Christian you dare not do it, [and to]
- (2) see that your candidate is at least a member of the Christian Church so that when the Christian Sabbath in our country is in danger, he can defend it.

The sermon was published in pamphlet form by the National Party and distributed throughout Swellendam. It appears to have been designed to discredit Mayor E Biurski, a prominent Jew and the South African Party's candidate in the 1929 General Elections.⁴⁸

Although most Jews remained traditional supporters of the South African Party while Smuts was in Opposition, there was a fairly considerable swing within the ranks of Jewry towards the National Party ⁴⁹ during the Pact era, principally because of Hertzog's hitherto amenability to Jewish immigration – an attitude which contrasted markedly to his approach to Jewish immigration less than a decade later. The 1929 General Elections even found Hertzog and Malan supporting the candidacy of Morris Alexander in the Gardens constituency, Cape Town. Alexander, who stood as an independent and sole member of the Constitutional Party, urged people to vote for the Nationalists, mainly because of the Government's immigration policy. The election campaign thus found Malan (prime mover of the Quota Act less than a year later), paradoxically praising Alexander and the Jews at the hustings, and speaking at a political meeting at the Zionist Hall, Cape Town, in support of Alexander's candidacy.⁵⁰ Alexander was criticised in some quarters for sympathising with the Nationalists. In a

⁴⁷ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(iii)/II, Letter Book 1925 – 1932, M Alexander to P Cowen, Secretary of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, 13.9.1928. See also article by Rabbi E M Levy, Minister of the Durban Hebrew Congregation, Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(ii), Box: July 1924-1933, Folder 21, 1929, press cutting, 'The Lithuanian Jew in South Africa: A reply to the charge that he merely swells the ranks of the traders', *The Cape Times*, 4.12.1929.

⁴⁸ South African Party, *The Nationalists and the Jew* (Van de Sandt de Villiers, Company, Pty., Ltd., Cape Town, nd).

⁴⁹ Shimoni, 'The Jewish Community And The Zionist Movement in South African Society', pp.102 *et seq.*

⁵⁰ *The Cape Times*, 22.3.1929; *Die Burger*, 22.3.1929; Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, pp.140-142.

letter to him, a correspondent wrote:

Is it any wonder the Goyim distrust and despise we Jews (*sic*).... you are doing more harm to us Jews than you can possibly imagine. If ever a pogrom is started in South Africa it will be through the miserable mean actions of men like you ... is it any wonder that we Yids are distrusted, despised, hated? ⁵¹

Alexander, incidentally, narrowly lost the elections and spent two years on the political fringes at a crucial time for South African Jewry.

In his annual Jewish New Year Message, published in September 1929, the Rev Mr A P Bender, respected Jewish spiritual leader and scholar, expressed his confident hope

that the New Year will see a veritable spiritual revival among the Jewish people ... and not least in the happy realm of South African freedom.⁵²

Bender's optimism, however, was ill-founded. For, undaunted by sentiment and with disregard for previous assurances, Dr Malan – in his capacity as Minister of the Interior – proceeded to introduce legislation in January 1930, aimed at establishing a quota system whereby immigration would be restricted. The effects on the South African Jewish community of this controversial legislation, directed at prospective Jewish immigrants, were severe. A subtle hint, if nothing more, had been given early in 1929 by Oswald Pirow, Minister of Justice, that the Nationalists intended to introduce such a system. In reply to a question at a political meeting in Johannesburg, Pirow had indicated that sooner or later South Africa might introduce a quota system of immigration in emulation of systems which had effectively been implemented in other countries.⁵³

In general, for South African Jewry the twenties ended on rather a bleak note. The cry for restrictive measures against Eastern European immigration had never really been muffled, and it created a sense of insecurity. The Jewish community, after all, derived

⁵¹ See Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i) File 3, January 1929 – June 1939, R Cohen to M Alexander, 5.5.1929.

⁵² Alfred Philipp Bender Collection (199 B), II/199B, press cutting, *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 4.10.1929.

⁵³ Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing*, p.303.

its main source of strength from its Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish and Romanian immigrants. If the Government countenanced restrictive measures against the arrival of Jews into South Africa, the Jewish community would dry up at its source. With the National Party victory in the 'Black Peril' ('Swart Gevaar') General Election of 1929, an election won on a policy based on racial discrimination, the Nationalists, having gained 15 seats and now holding a parliamentary majority, no longer had to rely on the Labour Party to retain their power base. Together with the uncertainty generated by the collapse of the Wall Street Stock Market in September 1929, this created a climate favourable for harsh immigration measures.

With the introduction of the Quota Act in 1930 South Africa antisemitism was to become a significant factor in the country's political life. The Act was to transform what Professor Todd M. Endelman calls 'private' antisemitism into programmatic or 'public' antisemitism,⁵⁴ and to serve both as the backdrop to, and as the point of departure for the antisemitic scenario played out on the South African stage after 1930, with Dr Malan, his Nationalist supporters and the Radical right as the principal players.

⁵⁴ D Berger (ed.): *History and Hate: The Dimensions of Anti-Semitism* (The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1997), p.95 *et seq.*

CHAPTER THREEDR D F MALAN AND THE NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT: 1930 – THE GATESCLOSE

By 1930, with the Nationalists firmly in power, the situation in South Africa seemed ripe for legislation against Jewish immigration. The events of the 1920s and the diatribes leveled with increasing frequency against the character of the Jewish immigrants served as a backdrop to immigration restrictions against Jews, to be imposed by the National Party in the form of the Quota Act – a significant historical event which was both a product of Afrikaner thought and which served to inform the nature of antisemitism within the ranks of the Afrikaner Nationalists in the years ahead. It is the significance of this legislation in the context of the present study which is discussed here.

The historical and socio-economic setting against which the legislation was enacted is of considerable import. Within the ranks of South Africa's white population there were long-standing tensions and deep divisions between the English- and Afrikaans-speaking sectors. Among the latter, an exclusive nationalism had gained momentum after the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). The Afrikaners, early in the twentieth century, had become acutely conscious of themselves *qua* Afrikaners, and increasingly aware of the 'foreign' elements existing in what they deemed to be 'their' country. To many Afrikaner nationalists, the Jews symbolised that alien element and yet, by the late 1920s, they appeared to be arriving in increasing numbers into South Africa unchecked. Moreover, the racial composition of South African society – a pigmentocracy – and the increasing discriminatory measures enacted by the European minority against a non-European majority produced an atmosphere conducive to discrimination against a minority group. "Nowhere else were conditions for spreading the gospel of racialism as favourable as among the ... Boers,"¹ contended René Kraus. Added to this was a genuine fear that large-scale immigration would deprive South Africans, particularly the Afrikaners, of what they held to be their birthright.

¹ Kraus, *Old Master, The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, p.330. Kraus referred to the Boers as 'race-crazed'.

The promulgation of legislation restricting Jewish immigration also needs to be understood in the light of the dynamic nature of emergent Afrikaner nationalism – hitherto nascent and evolving – which had more or less come of age by the early 1930s. In his seminal work² on the nature and function of contemporary nationalism, Benedict Anderson, a votary of the ‘historicist’ or ‘modernist’ school of nationalism,³ posits that nations and nationalism are means to political and economic ends. For him, nation-states frame – and reframe – their identities in relation to domestic and foreign policy. These nation-states, he holds, are imagined communities: imagined because members of even the smallest nation-states will never know their fellow members, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their community. Though its boundaries may be elastic, the nation is perceived or imagined as limited because it is finite. Anderson points out that, regardless of factors such as exploitation and inequality, the nation is always marked by comradeship and is ultimately a fraternity.⁴ Culture and religion – or what Anderson terms “religious imaginings”⁵ - have a strong affinity with nationalism. National consciousness, argues Anderson, is further informed by shared language.⁶ For Anderson, however, racism *per se* is not so much a product of nationalism but rather has its origins in the ideology of class. Yet it may exist as a characteristic of nationalism within the boundaries of the nation state.⁷

These constructs of nationalism and national identity were to come to the fore within the ranks of Afrikanerdom in the 1930s. Other elements also became increasingly apparent. It was noted in the introductory chapter of this study, for example, that while antisemitism was certainly not an alien phenomenon in South Africa prior to 1930, its politicisation, particularly after 1930, may be understood in light of the

² B Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, London, 2003)

³ For a survey of theories of nationalism and discussions of nationalism as an ideology and a social movement, see U Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (Macmillan Press Limited, London, 2000). Özkirimli focuses, *inter alia*, on primordialism, perennialism, modernism and ethnosymbolism which he deems to be the key theories of nationalism, and discusses each critically. Other typologies of nationalism abound in the literature on the subject and include ethnic nationalism, civic nationalism, expansionist nationalism and post-colonial nationalism, among others.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, ‘The Origins of Nationals Consciousness’. See also pp.70 ff and pp.144-148.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.149-150.

nativism and ethno-nationalism among the Afrikaners, reflected in growing antagonism towards the non-whites, fear of Black nationalism, and Anglophobia – attempts to define Afrikaner identity and to understand it in terms of cultural unity, national roots, and opposition to foreigners. In an essay titled ‘A Nation is a Nation is an Ethnic Group, is a ...’ (*sic*), Walker Conner – to whom reference is made earlier in this dissertation, grapples with defining and conceptualising the notion of a nation and hence nationalism, yet nevertheless affirms that ethnicity is integral to the concepts of ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism.’ He emphasises the psychological bond that joins a people and separates it from others,⁸ and holds that “a subconscious belief in the group’s separate origin and evolution is an important ingredient of national psychology.”⁹ The renowned sociologist, Max Weber, who maintains that nations are ‘prestige communities’ endowed with a sense of cultural mission and that ethnicity is integral to nationalism, nevertheless argues that neither religion nor language are absolutely essential, albeit important factors, in defining the characteristics of a nation.¹⁰ Culture, argues Weber, is a most significant factor in forging a national identity – with a commitment to a political objective. He adds that the significance of the ‘nation’ is usually anchored in superiority, or at least “the irreplaceability of the cultural values that are to be preserved and developed only through the cultivation of the peculiarity of the group.”¹¹ A multifaceted and elusive phenomenon – Anderson argues that it has “proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyse”¹² - nationalism is nevertheless rooted in the word ‘nation’, and serves to bind individuals to an imaginary homeland by virtue of shared characteristics, ethnicity and landscape. This is certainly true of the growth of Afrikaner nationalism. Racial pride, cultural distinctiveness and spirituality – all reflected in the contemporary writings of theories of nationalism in some form or another – became increasingly characteristic of Afrikaner nationalism and, as noted in the Introduction to this thesis, increasingly expressed through what Uran called a mystical nationalism in which the Afrikaners’ national history and Afrikaner republicanism were perceived in terms of a messianic quasi-religious national eschatology. This was bolstered by the Dutch Reformed Church, which provided a

⁸ W Conner, ‘A Nation is a Nation is an Ethnic Group, is a ...’, J Hutchison and A D Smith, *Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994), p.37.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.37.

¹⁰ M Weber, ‘The Nation’, Hutchison and A D Smith, *Nationalism* pp.21ff.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.25.

¹² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.3

powerful institutional base for the upsurge of an exclusive and mystical nationalism, and by the rapidly increasing use of the Afrikaans language.¹³ As Anderson avers, nothing connects a nation affectively to its past history – perhaps to its sacred roots – “more than language.”¹⁴ The struggle in South Africa for the acceptance of the Afrikaans language, which has been well documented, was not simply an isolated concern: for the Afrikaner, language was an integral facet of the spiritual and organic unity of the *volk*. Dr Malan expressed this cogently:

We did not only achieve nationhood in a century, but also developed our own language, a language which did not previously exist. The soul of a nation is born, and that soul must have a form of expression.¹⁵

For the Afrikaner nationalists, language was hallowed as the deepest expression of the collective soul and raised to a level of sacredness, reflective of the very essence of the *volk*.¹⁶

A further contributory factor to the events which were to unfold in 1930 was South Africa’s ‘Poor White’ problem. At least twenty-two per cent of the European population in 1929 could be classed as Poor Whites¹⁷ – unqualified, landless men and women, an estimated 300,000 people, crushed between the haughtiness of skilled white labour and cheap black labour.¹⁸ The overwhelming majority of South Africa’s Poor Whites were Afrikaners. According to Kraus “they were Boers to the last man.”¹⁹ The collapse of the Wall Street stock market in 1929 and the consequent world-wide economic depression which had an adverse effect on South Africa’s agricultural exports and mining industry, causing widespread poverty and social dislocation, had given rise “to the most serious economic depression... [South

¹³ Afrikaans was considered a Dutch dialect in South Africa until the early twentieth century, when it became recognised as a distinct language under South African law, alongside Standard Dutch. Afrikaans became an official language in 1925.

¹⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 144

¹⁵ Pienaar, S W and J J J Scholtz (eds.): *Glo in u Volk: Dr D.F. Malan as Redenaar 1908-1954* (Tafelberg – Uitgewers, Kaapstad 1964), p. 235. [Translation.]

¹⁶ See Uran, ‘Afrikaner Fascism and National Socialism in South Africa: 1933-1945,’ p.48.

¹⁷ Ibid. [Extant historical literature on the ‘Poor White’ problem is prolific. See, for example, De Kiewet, *A History of South Africa: Social and Economic, passim*.]

¹⁸ J S M Simpson, *South Africa Fights*, (Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, London, 1941), p.12.

¹⁹ Kraus, *Old Master, The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, p.330. This is well-substantiated in the following: Carnegie Commission: *The Poor White Problem in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Commission I-V* (Pro-Ecclesia Drukkery, Stellenbosch, 1932).

Africans]... had ever faced".²⁰ It was understandable that the Poor Whites may have sought a scapegoat to ease their economic frustrations. The Jews – for many of them capitalism and affluence personified – were to become one of their targets. For 'poor-whiteism', endemic among the Afrikaners, was fertile soil in which seeds of racial animosity could flourish.

The nineteen twenties ended on rather a bleak note for South African Jewry, with the cry for restricting immigration from Eastern Europe – the wellspring of the Jewish community – becoming increasingly strident. However, the real blow for the Jewish community came from the Nationalist Government with the introduction by arch-Afrikaner nationalist, Dr Malan, in his capacity as Minister of the Interior, of legislation aimed to establish a quota system to restrict immigration.²¹ Notwithstanding the earlier written assurances he had given to Morris Alexander, Malan was to do a complete *volte face*. With the introduction and subsequent promulgation of what became known as the Quota Act, the battle lines between Malan and his Nationalist supporters on the one hand, and the Jewish community on the other, were set.

Although Dr Malan himself had opened the gates more widely, admitting Jewish immigrants from mid-1924, there had been constant rumblings in the press since August 1925, reflecting what was apparently general public concern over the number of Jewish 'aliens' entering the Union. These expressions of alarm at the comparatively large number of 'undesirable Lithuanians' entering the country were endorsed by the Director of Census and again in a Government report. Published in September 1929 on the eve of the Quota Bill debate, the report drew attention pointedly to the increasing arrival of immigrants from Eastern Europe. The document stated that 90% of arrivals were 'Hebrews', and maintained that the only section of

²⁰ D Reitz, *No Outspan* (Faber and Faber, London, 1952), p.167. See also A Minnaar, 'The effects of the Great Depression (1929-1934) on South African White agriculture', *South African Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, 1990 (Co-published by UNISA Press, Pretoria and Taylor & Francis online), pp.83 *et seq.*

²¹ Act No 8 of 1930 (Immigration Quota), *Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1930.*

South Africa's population which was growing to any marked extent was the Jewish community.²²

It was noted in the previous chapter that early in 1929 the Minister of Justice, Oswald Pirow (later to become a leading player in the antisemitic movement), was asked at a political meeting in Johannesburg why South Africa did not institute an immigration quota system akin to the systems implemented in the United States and Australia. He had hinted in his reply that sooner or later such a system might be introduced.²³ It may be assumed that Pirow could not at that stage announce the intentions of the Government vis-à-vis an immigration quota system for fear of diverting attention from the central focus of the National Party's 1929 election campaign, the so-called 'Black Peril' which was contested almost solely on racial lines. Given the paucity of extant documentation, the factors which motivated the Cabinet's decision to introduce the legislation remain obscure. However, in light of the pronouncements of leading Afrikaner nationalists, it is reasonable to conclude that the decision was underscored by increasing national parochialism in the Afrikaner-dominated Government.

The comfortable victory of the Nationalists in the June 1929 General Elections enabled them to consider introducing restrictions against would-be Jewish arrivals without fear of an adverse political backlash, more so since their former coalition Labour partners' votes were no longer required. In fact, *The Cape Times* reported that at the Orange Free State National Party Congress in October 1929, the delegates, with their party securely in government, occupying 78 out of 148 seats in Parliament, passed a resolution calling for an immigration quota similar to the USA model.²⁴ There is little doubt that the economic uncertainty to be generated by the collapse of the Wall Street stock market in October 1929 and its effects, in particular, on the Afrikaner population, together with the overtones of racial discrimination which characterised the 1929 'Black Peril' elections, created a climate conducive to restricting Jewish immigration. Of greater significance, however, was the manner in which the immigration issue was used as a political football by the Nationalists. On

²² Saron, '70 years: Some Historic Highlights', *Jewish Affairs*, March 1973, p.63; South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Immigration of Jews into the Union (1926-1935), with appendices of the year 1936*, p.15; Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing*, p.302.

²³ Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing*, p.303.

²⁴ *The Cape Times*, 21.10.1929.

the one hand, as noted, Justice Minister Pirow had hinted early in 1929 that an immigration quota system was under consideration by the Government. And yet on 17 January 1930, less than three weeks prior to the introduction of the Quota Bill, Pirow, in support of the Nationalist candidate in the Bethal by-election, publicly praised the Jewish community and gave assurances that the Government was not opposed to Jewish immigration.²⁵ Since the Bethal by-election was held only eleven days prior to the introduction of the Quota Bill in Parliament by Dr Malan, Pirow – in his capacity as Minister of Justice – must surely have been aware of the projected legislation when he spoke at Bethal.²⁶ Even if the large Jewish farming population in Bethal had supported the Nationalist candidate (the latter lost the by-election) it would be naïve to assume that Hertzog's Nationalist government would have set aside the proposed legislation. As Shimoni has shown, traditional Jewish voting patterns had remained unchanged in the General Elections of 1929: the Jews had again given overwhelming support to Smuts and the South African Party, and the Nationalists had no reason to believe that Jewish voters would transfer their allegiance from the English sector of the community.²⁷ Given the Party's comfortable parliamentary majority, gaining the Jews' political support was certainly not of critical import. Indeed, there was no need whatsoever to curry favour with them.

The failure of the Jews to support the Nationalist candidate at the Bethal by-election, if anything, simply served to confirm, yet again, that Hertzog's National Party Government had little to lose by offending the Jews since it did not have the support of the Jewish vote in any case. Pirow's comments on the eve of the Bethal by-election drew a rather snide and pointed reference, during the debate on the Quota Bill from Jan Hofmeyr. In attempting to substantiate the claim that Eastern European Jewish immigrants were gainfully employed in agriculture and were not a drain on the state, Hofmeyr referred to "the magnificent block of Jewish farms in the Bethal district, which last month drew such eulogium on the merits of Jewish immigrants from the presumably reluctant lips of the Hon. The Minister of Justice."²⁸ A child prodigy, Rhodes Scholar, cabinet minister under Hertzog and Smuts, a

²⁵ *The Argus*, 'Changed Tune of the Nationalists', 1.2.1930.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 'Appeal to Premier by Bethal Jewry', 30.2.1930.

²⁷ Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience 1910-1967*, pp.104-105.

²⁸ *Hansard*, Vol.14, 1930, col.588.

brilliant intellectual, and a liberal politician who frequently deputised as Prime Minister during World War Two, Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (1894-1948) was to champion the Jewish cause, along with his close colleague, Jan Smuts, throughout his political career.

Edna Bradlow, South African historian, notes that in the House of Assembly, on the 10 April 1944, the writer and MP Arthur Barlow claimed that the Nationalists were reluctant to canvass the introduction of an immigration quota on the eve of the 1929 elections for fear of losing Jewish support in certain constituencies. While Bradlow, uncritical of Arthur Barlow, does point out that the Jewish community was too small to have a material impact on a General Election, she implies that the loss of Bethal to the South African Party opposition “may have precipitated the introduction of the quota legislation”.²⁹ This, however, is most unlikely. Given the eleven-day span between the Bethal by-election and the first reading of the Quota Bill on 29 January 1930, the Nationalist Government must have been well prepared with the printed Bill in advance. It is highly doubtful whether a Nationalist victory at Bethal would have stayed the introduction of the Bill. It is, however, completely inaccurate to argue, as Jewish historian Howard Sachar does, that the Quota Act was motivated by Hertzog’s desire to retaliate against the Jewish ‘Uitlanders’ whom the Boers envied and resented for their [the Jews’] alleged disproportionate control of industry, commerce and the professions.³⁰

Malan, in fact, had put the proposed legislation in place without public pronouncements. He was well prepared. In a confidential letter from Malan’s private secretary, sent in late November on behalf of Malan to the private secretary of the Minister of Lands in Pretoria, a copy of the Immigration Quota Bill “which Dr Malan proposes to introduce at the next Parliamentary Session” was enclosed. The recipient was requested to keep “the provisions of this draft Bill strictly confidential and to return the copy “as early as possible”.³¹ As part of his preparation for the Bill’s introduction, Malan received a telegram from the Office of Census and Statistics in Pretoria, listing the preliminary 1929 immigration figures. The numbers

²⁹ Bradlow, ‘Immigration into the Union 1910-1948’, p.224.

³⁰ Sachar, *The Course of Modern Jewish History*, p.508.

³¹ D F Malan Collection (MS1), 1/1/859. Letter dated 25.11.1929.

for Lithuanians (1379), Poles (528), Latvians (400) and Palestinians (81) were underlined in pencil.³²

The statistical facts are significant. In 1921 South Africa's Jewish population stood at 62,103. By 1926 this figure had increased to 71,816. Over the next decade there was a considerable increase so that by 1936 the total stood at 90,645. That this growth was considerably influenced by immigration can be adduced from the fact that the proportion of the Jewish community to the total European population increased steadily, although the birthrate among Jews was lower than that among the population as a whole. In 1921 the Jewish population comprised 4.1% of the total European population. In 1926 the figure stood at 4.3%. By 1936 it had reached 4.5%. Similarly, the annual figures after the resumption of Jewish immigration in 1924 showed a steady increase: 1,353 in 1925; 1,479 in 1926; 1,752 in 1927; 2,293 in 1928, and 2,788 in 1929.³³ Morris Alexander was thus close to the mark when he wrote, two years before the introduction of the Bill, that

... it has long been realized from Government publications that Jewish immigration has assumed proportions in ratio to general immigration which is causing concern in the minds of our non-Jewish fellow citizens.³⁴

It was the increasing anxiety over the arrival of Jewish immigrants into South Africa which underscored the introduction of the Quota Bill. On the eve of the Parliamentary debate on the measure, *The Cape Times* outlined the Bill's rationale. In a lengthy editorial, the newspaper expressed considerable alarm at the Union's net loss, by migration, of some 1,857 citizens of British stock over the five-year period ending in 1928. During the same period South Africa acquired 10,577 aliens – foreigners who derived principally from Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Latvia and other

³² Ibid., 1/1/872. Telegram dated 29 1.1930. See also document titled 'Immigration by Quota', document 1/1/868 - a typewritten note, probably by Malan, outlining the agreement reached at the 1918 Imperial War Conference that, with respect to immigration policies, each government "should enjoy complete control of the composition of its own population by means of restriction on immigration from any ...community. It follows, therefore, that to an even greater degree, the Union Government is at perfect liberty to restrict and control the admission to its territories of aliens."

³³ See Saron, '70 years: Some Historic Highlights', Jewish Affairs, March 1973 pp.63-65; South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Immigration of Jews into the Union (1926-1935), with appendices of the year 1936*; also A A Dubb, 'Retrospect and Prospect in the Growth of the Jewish Community in the Republic of South Africa', in S DellaPergola, U O Schmelz *et al* (eds), *Papers in Jewish Demography* (Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Jerusalem, 1977), p. 108.

³⁴ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i), File 2, May 1923 – December 1928, undated document, c. January 1928, possibly the draft of a speech.

South and East European countries, and who had progressively supplanted those of British and South African extraction who had emigrated. The article went on to point out that during the first ten months of 1929 the Union's net gain in British immigrants was 150, while over 5,000 other immigrants – almost 2,000 of whom were of South and East European origin – had entered the country as immigrants. *The Cape Times* generally promoted Smuts' United Party, and while its editorial comment, in the context of the Quota Bill, was more concerned with the emigration of English-speaking South Africans than with Jewish arrivals, it nevertheless expressed sympathy with the National Party, concerned that

with a comparatively small white population of about 1,800,000, there has been flowing into South Africa a very large number of immigrants who are wholly alien by blood, character and national type to the predominant element in our South African nationality. This type of immigrant has been found in other countries to be unassimilable.

The editorial went on to state that the South and East European immigrants – an obvious reference to Jewish immigration since virtually all such immigrants were Jews – had come to the Union

not as settlers on the land, but as competitors in the commercial field, which is already overcrowded, trained as middlemen to exist on a very low economic standard ... aliens who have ... [adopted] ... what have really been non-European standards of living.³⁵

This editorial throws considerable light on the Nationalist Government's motivation for introducing the Quota Bill, and on the fear of the settled English-speaking population of an increased Jewish presence in South Africa. The widely-publicised implementation of measures radically restricting immigration to the USA combined with the early effects of the depression and a fear of mass immigration accompanied by widespread unemployment, were also significant factors in the rationale behind the Quota Bill's introduction.

The year 1930 thus marked a definite watershed in the historical annals of South African Jewry, events of that year foreshadowing tribulations yet to come. On

³⁵ *The Cape Times*, 30.1.1930. [The phrase 'non-European', quoted in the text and used here to refer to Bantu, Coloureds and Asiatics, generally had connotations of deprecation and disparagement.]

28 January, Dr Malan, on behalf of the Nationalist Government, launched a full-scale offensive against the arrival of undesirable immigrants into South Africa. Its results were embodied in the Immigration Quota Act,³⁶ assented to on 11 March 1930, and enforced from 1 May:

- (1) As from the first day of March 1930, no person born in any country not specified in the Schedule ³⁷ ... shall enter the Union, unless his entry has been approved in accordance with such regulations as may be prescribed, and unless he is in possession of a written authority in such form as may be prescribed by regulation, permitting him to enter the Union.
- (2) ... not more than fifty persons born in any particular country not specified in the Schedule ... shall in any calendar year be permitted to enter the Union for permanent residence therein.
- (3) (1)... it shall be competent for the board ³⁸ in any calendar year to permit in its discretion any person in any particular country not specified in the Schedule to this Act to enter the Union ... [that is, over and above the quota of fifty persons as specified in Clause 1(2)]

provided –

- (a) that the number of persons permitted to enter the Union under this section ... does not exceed one thousand;
- (b) that every person so admitted –
 - (i) is of good character; and
 - (ii) is in the opinion of the board likely to become assimilated with the inhabitants of the Union ...³⁹
 - (iii) is not likely to be harmful to the economic, or industrial welfare of the Union; and
 - (iv) does not, and is, in the opinion of the board, not likely to pursue a profession, occupation, trade or calling in which ... a sufficient number of persons are already engaged in the Union to meet the requirements ...
 - (v) Is the wife or a child under twenty-one years of age, or a destitute or aged parent or grandparent of a person permanently and lawfully resident in the Union ...

³⁶ Act No 8 of 1930 (Immigration Quota) *Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1930*.

³⁷ The Schedule, or “non-quota countries”, consisted of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The United States of America and all territories belonging to the British Commonwealth.

³⁸ Clause 2(1) provided for the establishment of an Immigrants Selection Board.

³⁹ Clause 3(1) (a) was similar in concept to this sub-clause, stipulating that every person admitted, in addition to the fifty permitted entry into the Union from quota countries, must be in the opinion of the board likely to become readily assimilated with the inhabitants of the Union, and to become a desirable citizen of the Union within a reasonable period after entry into the Union.

The countries of Eastern Europe were not included in the Schedule, and consequently immigration from these areas into South Africa was considerably arrested. Since virtually all immigrants and prospective immigrants from those countries were of Jewish origin, the measure was correctly interpreted by South African Jewry as a calculated attempt by the Nationalist Government to curb the arrival of Eastern European Jews into South Africa. Palestine, although governed under a British mandate, was deemed to be a 'quota country' because of its potential as a source of Jewish immigrants. It was the only mandated territory mentioned in the legislation and the only non-Eastern European area on which a quota was to be applied. Figures appearing later in this study will illustrate that the number of Jews entering the Union from non-quota countries was comparatively negligible – both prior to, and after 1930. On the other hand, Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe was substantial before 1930; thereafter, it was insignificant.

The Nationalists, and especially Dr Malan, denied emphatically that the law was specifically directed against Jewish immigrants, although this was widely believed to be the case. For the Act itself made no mention of any particular race or nation. Yet, it was unequivocally an anti-Jewish measure. Indeed, the facts speak for themselves. Dr Malan was soon to admit that it had in fact been his specific objective to limit Jewish immigration.⁴⁰ In fact, the National Party subsequently declared that the Jews were indeed the Party's specific target. This admission was endorsed by Dr Malan towards the end of 1931 when, during his well-publicised interview with *Die Burger*, he stated frankly that the measure was introduced because of the arrival of Jews from Eastern Europe and South Africans' overwhelming demand to curb their entry into the country.⁴¹

In 1936, during a debate in Parliament on Jewish immigration, Malan again alluded to the fact that the Act had been aimed at restricting Jewish immigration – in order to arrest the development of antisemitism.⁴² This somewhat convoluted argument was

⁴⁰ Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews of South Africa*, pp.378-379; see also South African Zionist Federation and South African Jewish Board of Deputies, 'Memoranda Submitted to the Anglo-American Committee Of Inquiry by the SA Zionist Federation and the SA Jewish Board of Deputies: Special Supplement to *The Zionist Record*, 12th April, 1946 (Magazine Press, Pty., Ltd., Johannesburg, 1946), p.5; and *Die Burger*, 21.10.1936.

⁴¹ *Die Burger*, 2.11.1931.

⁴² *Hansard*, 16.6.1936, Vol.27, col .6249.

frequently used by the Nationalists during the years prior to the outbreak of the Second World War: by limiting the number of Jews, antisemitism would somehow be minimized. Thus, by preventing the entry of Jews into South Africa the Nationalist Government, in effect, was combating antisemitism, for which, argued Malan, the existing Jewish population should be grateful. The Jews of South Africa, not surprisingly, considered this to be a patronising argument based on an inverted sense of logic, as Morris Kentridge was to point out during the parliamentary debate on the Quota Bill.⁴³

Seven years after the Act was promulgated, during a scathing attack on the Jews for their alleged control of commerce and industry and for their alleged unassimilability, Malan again declared that there had been no need to make specific mention of the Jews in the Quota Act. He was able, he explained, to check the arrival of the Jews simply by legislating against countries whose immigrants the Nationalist Government had not been anxious to receive in any case. Accordingly it was possible and desirable to impose restrictions not on a certain race, but on certain countries.⁴⁴ There was thus no need to mention the Jews by name.⁴⁵ In an undated National Party document, the translation of which reads “Nationalism brings victory”, the National Party was to declare openly:

Reeds in 1930 het die Nasionale Party ‘n wet laat aanneem waarvolgens ‘n beperking opgelê is aan immigrasie uit sekere lande. Die noodsaaklikheid was toe veral on die Joodse immigrasie uit Suid-en-Oos-Europa to keer.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Vol.14, 1930, cols. 579-585.

⁴⁴ America followed a similar path. In response to growing public opinion against the flow of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe in the years following World War One, the US Congress first passed the Quota Act of 1921, limiting immigration in any year to three percent of the number of each nationality in the country, based on the 1910 census. This regulation, the object of which was to freeze the racial balance as far as possible, was followed by the more restrictive Immigration Act of 1924 (the Johnson-Reed Act) which based ceilings on the number of immigrants from any particular nation on the percentage of each nationality recorded in the 1890 census — a blatant effort to limit immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, which mostly occurred after that date. The Act limited the quota to two percent of any nationality residing in the United States in 1890. See P Johnson, *A History of the Modern World: From 1917 to the 1980s* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1983), p.205.

⁴⁵ *Hansard*, Vol.28, 1937, col.41; see also col.118.

⁴⁶ *Nasionalisme Bring Oorwinning* [‘Nationalism brings Victory] (Voortrekkers Pers, Beperk, Johannesburg, nd). [Translation of quoted text: ‘Already in 1930 the National Party promulgated a law whereby a quota was placed on immigration from certain countries. The necessity for this was specifically to arrest (lit. check) Jewish immigration’.] See also Millin, *The People of South Africa*, p.137.

In 1938 *Die Transvaler*, official organ of the Transvaal branch of the Purified Nationalist Party,⁴⁷ lent further credence to the assertion that the Quota Act was an instrument designed by the Nationalists to exclude Jews from entering South Africa as immigrants. The newspaper's editor at that time was Dr Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd (1901-1966), a future Prime Minister of South Africa, and principal architect of the Apartheid policies of the National Party.⁴⁸

The major points of contention were highlighted in the debate on the Bill. On 10 February, in his introduction to the new measure, Dr Malan claimed:

I have proof positive that it meets the desire of a very large majority of the people in this country and that in some quarters, in most, at least, it has been hailed with a sigh of relief.⁴⁹

Almost his entire speech was directed at Eastern European immigration into South Africa. He contended that of these immigrants, 22% of whom were children, only 3% partook actively in the agricultural life of the country, while the remainder merely existed on what others produced. Most of the new arrivals were from the poorer classes, he claimed, and thus created an alarming unemployment problem for the country. He proceeded to quote figures to justify the introduction of such a measure: from 1924 to 1928, Eastern European immigration had soared by 351%, from 817 in the former year to 2,388 in the latter – a total increase of 12,662 immigrants over four years, as against an exodus from South Africa of only 517 Eastern Europeans. Correspondingly, the Union had only gained 800 new arrivals over the same period “from the main white racial stocks from which the population of South Africa is drawn”.

Malan postulated three fundamental principles underlying the Bill:

⁴⁷ The Purified National Party, called the Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party, was a hardline faction of Afrikaner nationalists led by D. F. Malan, who refused to accept the 1934 merger between Hertzog and Smuts which resulted in the formation of the United Party. Detailed reference to the formation of the Purified National Party appears later in this study.

⁴⁸ See *Die Transvaler*, 5.4.1938, 'Regering Se Joodse Beleid Bly Onbevredigend' [Translation: 'Government's Jewish Policy Remains Unsatisfactory.']

⁴⁹ *Hansard*, Vol.14, 1930, col.557. [Morris Kentridge, in *I Recall: Memoirs of Morris Kentridge* (The Free Press Limited, Johannesburg, 1959), p.162, relates that he arose and protested in the House on the First Reading of the Bill, but was ruled to be out of order, as debate was not permitted until the Second Reading.]

- (1) “The desire of every nation in the world to maintain its development on the basis of its original composition;”
- (2) “unassimilability” – a “desire to preserve homogeneity”; and
- (3) “the desire of every nation to maintain its own particular type of civilization”.

He argued that “everyone will admit that the civilization of Eastern Europe is, to a very large extent, a different one from the civilization of Western Europe [and] we are called upon in South Africa to maintain western civilization and the standards of western civilization”.

Malan justified further the actions of the Government by contending that the imposition of quota restrictions on some countries did not reflect on the racial composition or the culture of the people living in those countries; that, if the Bill was unjust and illiberal, as it had been termed, “it is because we cannot help ourselves – all the world is unjust and illiberal”; that the Bill was not aimed exclusively at the Jews, as no restrictions were to be placed on would-be immigrants from among the 120,000 Jews living in Holland or the 300,000 Jews of England; and that since the religions of the lands of Eastern Europe were predominantly Protestant and Catholic, the Bill was surely directed more at members of these religions than at the Jews.⁵⁰ This was a facile argument since the immigration of British and Dutch Jews to South Africa and the emigration of Protestants and Catholics from Eastern Europe had been negligible during the decade prior to 1930. As Morris Kentridge pointed out, “the Minister must know that at least 99% of the people who are coming from these countries are members of the Jewish race.”⁵¹ Given Malan’s and the Nationalists’ subsequent admissions, the Minister’s rationalisation for the introduction of the Bill was simply a fabrication.

General J C Smuts, at that stage leader of the South African Party and hence of the Parliamentary Opposition, was overseas when the Quota Bill was introduced in the Legislature, and Christian Joel Krige, Member for Caledon, had assumed the role of acting Leader of the Opposition. Krige’s reply to Malan and the Nationalists was a

⁵⁰ Ibid., Vol.14, 1930, cols.557-570.

⁵¹ Ibid., Vol.14, 1930, col.577. See also Kentridge, *I Recall*, p.164.

brief, half-hearted attempt to appease the Jewish community without actually opposing the Bill in principle. He admitted, however, that such legislation would tend to alienate the sympathy and goodwill of the Jewish citizens of South Africa. "According to the census of immigration," he claimed, "the Bill will completely keep out the Jewish element from certain countries, and that, I think, is looked upon as a stigma on their race." Krige appears to have been more intent on preventing Jewish ill-will ("we know what a highly sensitive and sentimental people they are", he said) than on opposing the Bill *per se*. He charged, however, that the Bill "would not have seen the light of day" had Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe not been so prolific in recent times, but implied that the 'pill' should somehow be 'sugar-coated', given "the racial pride and susceptibilities of our Jewish community". He claimed that the Bill, and its "underlying stigma", had struck the Jews of South Africa "like a bolt from the blue" and that Malan had "tried to brush away, rather lightly, the opposition of the Jewish community" to the proposed legislation.

Yet Krige made no concrete suggestions to change the format or thrust of the Bill. He could have moved formally for the establishment of a Select Committee to investigate the measure but thought it not fit to do so since "the Government has already indicated that it is not prepared to accept such a notion". His plea to the Minister to provide "our Jewish citizens" with "an opportunity of suggesting ... an alternative scheme" was vague, half-hearted, ineffectual and reflective of the Opposition's confusion and ambivalence over the issue – particularly in the absence of Smuts' decisive leadership.⁵²

The real attack against the Government was launched by Morris Kentridge (1881-1964), prominent Jewish member of the Labour Party and MP for Troyeville. He began by inquiring why Dr Malan had waited so long before taking any action against the "undesirable" immigration into South Africa, if he had been so alive to the issue since 1924. "There is no evidence," argued Kentridge, "to show that those people coming in from Lithuania, Latvia and Poland are any worse than those who came prior to the introduction of this Bill." He challenged the Nationalist Government on its silence over the issue during the recent general elections, and asked why no

⁵² *Ibid.*, Vol.14, 1930, cols.571-576.

reference was made to the Quota Bill in the Governor-General's speech, the traditional vehicle for outlining significant legislative proposals for the forthcoming session, at the recent opening of Parliament.⁵³

Dr Malan was to argue that the Bill was not mentioned in the Governor-General's speech because it was deemed unwise to give early notice of legislation restricting immigration. If forewarned of the impending legislation, he argued, a flood of undesirable immigrants which attempt to enter South Africa. Such a contingency, however, was adequately covered in terms of existing legislation, and Malan was undoubtedly aware of this. Malan also justified the introduction of the legislation, in part, on the premise that the measure was "more in the interests of the Jewish community of South Africa than in the interests of anybody else."⁵⁴

According to Dr Malan, "feelings of hostility" towards Jews in other countries had "led to ... disastrous and dreadful results" owing to the increasing proportionate strength of the Jewish population. He was "glad to say" that "there is in South Africa today ... very little antisemitism". Yet he was concerned that the "indiscriminate influx into our country" [of Jews] had already "given rise to a nervousness ... among all sections of the population" which, if Jewish immigration was not curbed, "might actually develop into open hostility [and] when that hostility arises, the Jewish community in this country has everything to lose". To which end, he argued, the Bill "is in the interests of every section of the population, and not the least, in the interests of the Jewish community's ... peace and happiness."⁵⁵ To argue that the proposed law was also in the interests of the Jewish community, as Malan had done, demonstrated that the Bill, as Kentridge noted, was aimed at the Jewish people. "I do not know," said Kentridge, "that the Jewish community will be very grateful to [Dr Malan] for his patronising reassurance."⁵⁶

Kentridge contended that the Minister of the Interior had placed an immigration quota on Palestine, a territory which was in fact under British mandatory rule, only because

⁵³ Ibid., Vol.14, 1930, cols.577-585. See Cohen, 'Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa', p.24. See also *The Cape Times*, 30.1.1930

⁵⁴ See *Hansard*, Vol.14, 1930, col.570

⁵⁵ Ibid., Vol.14, 1930, col.571.

⁵⁶ For Kentridge's response to Malan, see especially *Hansard*, Vol.14, 1930, cols.577-585.

of the recent arrival of Palestinian Jews into South Africa.⁵⁷ He quoted facts and statistics in an attempt to illustrate that the Jewish immigrants to South Africa were following gainful occupations, playing a vital role in the establishment of new industries and factories, providing employment for the unemployed, and playing a prominent role in the farming life of the country. There were, he maintained, approximately one thousand Jewish farmers in South Africa. And of the Jewish industrialists, manufacturers and farmers, at least 95% hailed from Lithuania and Poland. In an attempt to demonstrate further the assimilability of the Jews, and their ability to adapt to a new environment, Kentridge quoted examples of the large number of Jews attending local schools and universities, and referred to the last national census which showed that while 54% of the general European population was bilingual, 60% of the Jews in the Union were fully conversant in both official languages. The latter figure was as high as 81% in the rural areas.

Having attacked Dr Malan's thesis that Eastern European immigrants were "unassimilable", Kentridge then challenged the Minister's contention that these immigrants were also "undesirable". "The only test," he contended, "that you can have of desirability, is whether the individual has the necessary character and qualifications to enable him to serve the country to which he emigrates." And, maintained Kentridge, the facts he had quoted earlier were sound proof not only of the Jews' assimilability, but also of their desirability as useful citizens to South Africa.

Terminating his reply to the Minister, Kentridge delivered a coup, albeit with little effect. He quoted from a recent speech delivered by the National Party Prime Minister himself at a Jewish banquet on 4 July 1929, where Hertzog was reported to have said:

It is a great pleasure and privilege to me to say that if ever there was a section of the community which is looked upon by the Afrikaner as a fellow Afrikaner it is the Jewish section. During the Anglo-Boer War the most trusted and faithful men on commando were the Jews. I regret that racialism does exist in South Africa, but I must emphatically declare that the balance of the feeling is not on the side of the Dutch-speaking South African or the Jew. The Jew had

⁵⁷ The migration of Jews from Mandatory Palestine was undoubtedly due to the widespread Arab riots of 1929 and the murder of 67 Jews in Hebron on 24 August of that year

played a role in South Africa second to none, to any section (*sic*). He had left his mark on the country through his industry, capacity and loyalty.

Why then, asked Kentridge, had the Hertzog-led Nationalist Government introduced a Bill “based on prejudice and not on facts” – a discriminatory measure “aimed essentially at members of the Jewish race?”⁵⁸

Jan Hofmeyr then proceeded, in a somewhat contradictory maiden address, to berate the Government for what he considered an anti-Jewish measure. “We should be loth,” he said, “to lay prohibitions on others which touch their national honour. We in this country owe a very great debt to Jewish immigration. If there had been no Jewish immigration into South Africa, we would have been very much the poorer.” And, he added, “there is no fundamental difference between the newer Jewish immigrant and the older Jewish immigrant.”⁵⁹ Yet Hofmeyr, while rejecting the Bill because of its anti-Jewish implications, pledged his support to the Government over the issue, because he held that such legislation would help maintain the basic racial composition of South Africa.⁶⁰ *The South African Jewish Chronicle* – the Jewish newspaper with the widest circulation in the Union – criticised Hofmeyr’s reasons for supporting the Nationalists, claiming that they were unfounded. Surely, argued the editor, Hofmeyr had just heard Kentridge state that South African Jewry only constituted the insignificant figure of 4% of the country’s European population.⁶¹ Hofmeyr’s equivocation, however, reflected the Opposition’s ambivalence and lack of direction over the measure. Yet it is in no way reflective of his unremitting support of the Jewish community, his abhorrence of antisemitism and Nazism, and his unequivocal opposition both to the anti-Jewish proclivities of the Right and Radical Right throughout his political career. Bradlow has argued that Hofmeyr’s empathy towards the Jews was characterised by “indecisiveness”⁶² This, however, simply belies the facts. Notwithstanding his maiden speech delivered a month shy of his

⁵⁸ *Hansard*, Vol.14, 1930, cols.579-585. This view of the Quota Bill was supported by *The Friend*. See edition of 31.1.1930.

⁵⁹ *Hansard*, Vol.14, 1930, cols.587-589.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol.14, 1930, col.590

⁶¹ *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 21.2.1930.

⁶² E Bradlow, ‘JH Hofmeyr, Liberalism and Jewish Immigration’, *South African Historical Journal*, 40:1 (UNISA Press, Pretoria), p.115.

34th birthday and over which he had “hedged rather feebly,”⁶³ a cursory examination of his prolific correspondence with Sarah Gertrude Millin, Smuts and Alexander, would prove Bradlow wrong.⁶⁴

The discussion on the First Reading of the Quota Bill terminated with a plea by Mr Emile Nathan, also a Jewish MP, for the Government to adhere to the Immigration Act of 1913. This, he said, was adequate legislation for precluding the entry of undesirable elements into South Africa.⁶⁵ It is interesting to note that, at this stage of the Bill’s passage through the House of Assembly, no member of the Nationalist Government had participated in the debate with the exception of Malan who, as the Minister of the Interior, had introduced the measure. While some members of the Opposition had offered criticism of Malan’s selective immigration scheme, and others had supported it with limitations, the Nationalists had maintained, to cite Nathan, “a wonderful conspiracy of silence.”⁶⁶ With Smuts overseas, the South African Party was leaderless, and the occasion presented an ideal opportunity for the Nationalist Government to capitalize on the situation and to introduce the legislation in Parliament without warning.

When the debate on the Quota Bill was resumed on Wednesday 12 February, after a two-day interval, it was Mr W B Madeley, leader of the Labour Party, who spoke out in defense of Jewish immigration. Madeley quoted leading Nationalists such as F W Beyers, Tielman Roos and even Dr Malan as having previously stated that the

⁶³ Ibid. The quotation, cited by Bradlow, is from *The London Times*. Typical of Hofmeyr’s philo-semitism is the speech he delivered in Cape Town at the Jewish Board of Education Banquet on 17 February 1938, on the eve of the 1938 General Elections in which antisemitism bulked large. During his address, he said: “If I have resisted antisemitism I have done so because it is something utterly vile and loathsome and completely inimical to the best interests of South Africa. So when I think of the Jew in South Africa, I think of him as a South African who by virtue of his Jewish origin and tradition has contributions of real value to bring our common stock. I covet that contribution for South Africa. I want South Africa to have the full advantage of it. And so as one who is not a Jew I cordially endorse all that has been done by the Jewish Board of Education to make that specifically Jewish contribution more complete and more effective.” Recorded on a scrap of paper in Alexander’s handwriting and filed in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), Jewish Board of Deputies File 6. October 1944 March 1946 [including undated material].

⁶⁴ Sarah Gertrude Millin (1889-1968), one of South Africa’s most prominent literary figures, as noted earlier, was committed to her Jewish heritage and concerned about the fate of the Jewish people. She often referred to Hofmeyr’s unequivocal opposition to antisemitism in her prolific correspondence with him. In a letter to Hofmeyr in 1941, for example, she wrote: “...in all those bad years you stood by Jews as you have stood by all you think is right.” J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1), Ga, Millin to Hofmeyr, 15.8.1941.

⁶⁵ *Hansard*, Vol.14, 1930, col.620.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Vol.14, 1930, col.677.

Jews were assimilable. He slated Malan for having said that “so long as the Jews of South Africa continue to prove their readiness to serve the true interests of the larger South African nation, they need not fear the future.” “So long as they continue!” said Madeley. “Then the assumption surely is, in the estimation of the Minister of the Interior, [that] the Jews in the past have been helping to build up this nation ... Does assimilability mean they did not vote right? ... Are you afraid of the Jews? ... A menace? Why, their existence side by side with us is all to the good, and is an example.”⁶⁷ Madeley suggested that a Select Committee be established before any hasty legislation was passed. However, when the House divided that evening, there were 116 ayes in favour of the Bill and only 11 noes. The suggested amendment was thus dropped as most MPs were in favour of the Bill.

It was not, however, only Nationalist MPs who were to express sentiments which were overtly antisemitic. In fact, the first manifestation of undisguised antisemitism in the debate on the Bill came from A J MacCullum, a member of the South African Party Opposition. This was his maiden address in the House, and he launched it by deploring the lack of character, morality and manner of conduct of Eastern European immigrants. These, he maintained, were a type of people “wholly unacquainted with even the elementary principles of honesty and of straightforward.” He implied that there was a definite section of the Jews who were swindlers and criminals.⁶⁸ Members of the Opposition who spoke subsequent to MacCullum dissociated themselves from their colleague’s remarks. *The South African Jewish Chronicle* went so far as to say that MacCullum’s allegations, unsupported by facts, constituted the greatest insult ever offered to Jewry in South Africa.⁶⁹ *The Cape Times*, however, in keeping with its pro-Government stand on the issue, praised MacCullum for beating the National Party drum.⁷⁰ It should be noted, however, that MacCullum, together with R H Strubens and G Heaton Nicholls, represented those in the right-wing of the Opposition favouring the Bill without reservations. Opposition moderates, however, such as Hofmeyr, Duncan, Coulter and Blackwell, agonized over the anti-Jewish implications of the Bill which, if opposed, would be politically

⁶⁷ Ibid., Vol.14, 1930, cols.677-678.

⁶⁸ *Hansard*, Vol.14, 1930, cols.696-697. See Cohen, ‘Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa’, pp.27-28.

⁶⁹ *South African Jewish Chronicle*, 21.2.1930.

⁷⁰ *The Cape Times*, 18.2.1930.

imprudent, given its public support. The Jewish Opposition MPs, however, together with the Labourites under W B Madeley's leadership, opposed the measure as overtly anti-Jewish, as indeed it was, as the Jews were indisputably the sole targets, even though there was ostensibly no evidence of any blatant antisemitism in the wording of the legislation itself.

On the afternoon of 17 February, during the Committee Stage of the Bill, General Smuts returned from his overseas trip to lead "his reluctant followers into opposition against the Bill."⁷¹ Back but a few hours, he addressed the House. The Bill, he said, was dangerous. South Africa's white population was already small, yet the Bill aimed at restricting the entry of additional Europeans into the country. "This black mark, this stigma" was depriving the Union of great men such as Sammy Marks, and was tantamount to an unintentional declaration of war against South African Jewry.⁷² Smuts had always been a staunch protagonist of the Jewish cause, and remained so throughout his life.⁷³ The Prime Minister, who subsequently addressed the House, dismissed Smuts' call for a system of selective immigration based on the American model in place of a system which discriminated against certain countries and, by implication, against certain sections of the South African population. Hertzog also made political currency out of the obvious contradictions between Smuts' outspoken opposition to the Bill and the strong endorsement given to the Bill by the South African Party, of which Smuts was leader, in the vote which had followed the Second Reading.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Round Table: *The Round Table: A Quarterly Review of the Politics of the British Commonwealth*, Volume 27, No.107, June 1937 (Routledge, London), p.669. See also Sacks, *An Intelligent Man's Guide to Jew Baiting*, pp.20-22.

⁷² *Hansard*, Vol.14, 1930, col.838. [Sammy (Samuel) Marks, 1843-1920, was an exceptional Lithuanian-born Jewish entrepreneur, businessman and self-made millionaire who was held to have contributed considerably to the growth of South Africa's economy.]

⁷³ S G Millin, in *General Smuts, Volume II* (Faber and Faber Ltd, London, 1936), p.416, quoted Smuts as having once said: "Whether I am in South Africa or London, or wherever I may be in the future, I will serve the cause, not because it is a Jewish cause, but because it is a great human cause." Millin, maintained that Smuts fought almost a lone hand against the Third Reading of the Bill. See Millin, *The People of South Africa*, p.212,

⁷⁴ *The Cape Times*, 18.2.1930, leveled a lengthy and vituperative attack on the South African Party and, in particular, on Smuts' speech of the previous afternoon, in an editorial entitled 'Bad Day for the SA Party'

Smuts' opposition to what he had termed an "illiberal and dangerous" bill⁷⁵ was thus not convincing. His own party, in his absence, had given the measure its full support, and the Nationalists were resolute in their stand on the immigration issue – so much so that Mr C R Swart, National MP for Ladybrand, moved that the Bill be enacted from May 1930, and not July – the original date laid down for its enactment.⁷⁶ Kentridge maintained that this urgency was a sign of fear on behalf of Hertzog's Nationalist Government and was totally irrational.⁷⁷ He made a somewhat desperate attempt to prevent the change of date but, despite Smuts' backing, his proposed amendment was rejected by a margin of eleven votes, and the word "May" was substituted for "July".

At this stage of the proceedings, the passage of the Bill was virtually a foregone conclusion. Between 20 February and 11 March, it was discussed clause by clause at frequent intervals. Thus far the Nationalist Government, except perhaps for Mr Swart and Mr Strydom, had continued to play a passive role in the proceedings. Its members sat, according to Colonel D Reitz, "all silent and all damned."⁷⁸ Of the Opposition party, the majority had supported the *principle* of the Bill. On Monday, 24 February, Dr Malan conceded the admission into South Africa of wives and minor children of all those married and resident in the Union on or before 1 May 1930.⁷⁹ But his concession was limited to a maximum of 750 people per annum, and this number would constitute part of the unallotted quota of 1,000 as stipulated in Clause (2)(a). Aged parents of South African residents could not enter the country under the concession. Nor was a woman from a "quota country" able to join her husband, as General Smuts pointed out, if the quota was exhausted each year.⁸⁰

The Bill was read for the last time on 3 March. Kentridge, in his attack, dubbed the measure antisemitic, quoting the Prime Minister as having said that the Nationalist Government was "not prepared to see the door left open to an element that might lead to the disruption of the South African nation". He even went so far as to imply

⁷⁵ *Hansard*, Vol.14, 1930, cols.837-842. [Smuts' and Hertzog's addresses during the Committee Stage of the Bill.]

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol.14, 1930, col.850.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol.14, 1930, col.851.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol.14, 1930, col.872.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol.14, 1930, col.1091.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol.14, 1930, col.1264.

that Malan's attitude was not in accordance with Christian principles.⁸¹ His efforts, however, were in vain. Dr Malan may have made public a "desire to give to the Jewish people ... full equality in every respect",⁸² but his professed esteem for the Jews did not extend to the point where he wished to add to their number in South Africa. The Bill was assented to on 11 March 1930, and became law from 1 May of that year.

The debate in the Senate reflected, in miniature, that which was carried out in the House of Assembly. Dr Malan, in his capacity as Minister of the Interior, introduced the Second Reading of the Immigration Quota Bill to the Senate on Tuesday, 4 March. His introductory speech reiterated, by and large, the underlying principles which he had outlined in the Lower House. He emphasized that the need for such a measure had "been felt in very wide circles for a considerable time" and added that its introduction was the consequence of considerable thought by both the present Government and its predecessors. Malan went on to attack the class of immigrants arriving in South Africa from South and East European countries – "people who have to exist on what others produce" – and stated that South Africa's commercial community was already too large to absorb new middle class, business elements. Despite subsequent statements to the contrary by Malan and by his Nationalist followers that the Bill was directed against the Jewish section of the population, the Minister emphasized that the measure did not aim to "restrict immigration on racial lines" but "from certain countries" – this along the lines of the American immigration quota model, to which reference was made earlier in this study. He affirmed the Government's intention not to "allow any discrimination between different races," a somewhat bizarre statement, given the National Party's specific intent to restrict the entry of Jews into South Africa.

Malan next discussed the question of national identity, emphasizing the right of every nation to develop on the basis of its original composition and to reject those elements which detract from national homogeneity by virtue of their unassimilability. He implied that South African society was a homogeneous one – surely an implicit reference to the ruling white minority. He touched on what he deemed the obvious

⁸¹ Ibid., Vol.14, 1930, col.1354.

⁸² D F Malan, quoted by Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich*, p.57.

“nervousness” prevalent in the country as a consequence of Eastern European immigration and stressed the need to safeguard the Union’s Western European civilization from the influence of Eastern European civilization. The implication must surely have been obvious: a xenophobic attempt to protect South Africa’s white civilization from Eastern Europe’s Jewish civilization.⁸³

In reply, Senator F Ginsberg, a Jew, argued strongly in support of the Jewish community, even though his Gentile colleagues in the Opposition benches favoured the Bill. Ginsberg’s protestations were more personal than political. He admitted that, as a Jew, his opposition to the Bill was “only natural”, maintaining that adequate powers already existed to prevent the immigration of undesirable elements to South Africa. He pointed out that, but for some minor *post bellum* border adjustments in 1919, he too would have been prevented from immigrating to South Africa under the intended legislation as would the likes of Paderewski, Kubelik and other notables. He saw the measure as an “insult”, more so because the Jews were being placed alongside the blacks and the Indians as a problem to South Africa, and contended that “there are sixty or seventy thousand people in this country whose feelings have been deeply hurt by the Bill”. The irony must have escaped Ginsberg, who inveighed against perceived discrimination against the Jews by the Nationalists, yet deemed others – non-whites – to pose a problem for South Africa.

Ginsberg was attacked by Nationalist Senator G G Munnik who argued that “everyone has the right to say who shall be his guests and who shall not be his guests in his own house”. Munnik went on to criticise the character of the Eastern European immigrants, in much the same style as his Nationalist colleagues had done in the House of Assembly. He maintained that these immigrants never bothered to learn English or Afrikaans (a fact which was vehemently disputed by Senator Langenhoven and which had been controverted both in the Lower House and in the press), that “they came here to make money”, that “they will remain a separate colony” (*sic*), “are not necessary to the country ... and we do not need them”. Senator Neser somewhat naïvely chided South African Jewry for feeling slighted by the Bill when in fact “there is not a word about the Jew or any nationality

⁸³ See discussion in Cohen, ‘Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa’, chapter 2.

in the Bill ... It is just a coincidence that a large number of Jews have come from that part of the world against which this Bill is directed". He added that "if it were directed against all Jews I would vote against it", but implied that there were a number of "bad" Jews who needed to be excluded from South Africa. It is not unreasonable to conclude that the statements of the two Nationalist senators were disingenuous and predicated on antisemitic sentiments.

The Senate was subsequently presented with an example of inverted logic by Senator C J Langenhoven (author of South Africa's pre-1997 national anthem). Langenhoven was well-known for his personal sympathies for the Jews. Politically, however, he supported the Quota Bill, either because he deemed it necessary to toe the National Party line or out of genuine conviction that the Bill was not based on anti-Jewish principles. He nevertheless declared that

Even if this Bill is calculated to be a measure against the Jews as such, and not because they happen to be immigrants from the countries concerned and from where we receive so many immigrants, then it is because we feel that the shortcomings of the Jew is his greatest virtue. The Jew is the biggest nationalist in the whole world, and in the circumstances he succeeded in maintaining the purity of his race to a greater extent than any other race in the world. The result is that the Jews remain a separate group, they form one herd, and as such they do not readily assimilate with the rest of the population ... I would vote for this Bill ... not because I regard the Jew as undesirable but as a matter of self-defense, of self-preservation ... let my hon. [Jewish] friends regard my action as a mark of honour to them as a race, because I realize that they are stauncher and more loyal to their race than we are to ours.

It is not difficult to imagine that the majority of South African Jewry, panic-stricken by what was considered by most Jews to be an antisemitic piece of legislation, derived cold comfort from Langenhoven's seemingly patronizing, backhanded compliment. There is, too, no real evidence from the Jewish community for Malan's viewpoint that the measure was

... even more in the interest of the Jewish community in this country in that they want to identify themselves with South African life, with the South African nation, they want to be treated on a footing of equality with other sections of the community, and they want to take their part, their share in the national life of South Africa. That is only possible if there is no feeling arising in this country, such as there exists, unfortunately, in a good many other countries against the Jew as a Jew. That feeling today ... is dormant, but if this great influx from overseas should continue that feeling will grow and it will become

increasingly difficult in such circumstances for the Jewish community to come into their own, and take their share in the life of South Africa on a footing of equality.⁸⁴

Malan may have been threatening the Jewish community with the proverbial big stick in the event of continued Jewish opposition to the Bill. In retrospect it is equally feasible that he was declaring the start of his confrontation with South African Jewry and that of his Nationalist supporters – a clash which lasted some eighteen years.

The South African public was by no means oblivious to the battle being waged in Parliament over the Quota Bill. For the Jews of South Africa in particular, the issue was a vital one, and the entire community was alive to its possible implications. As soon as the Bill was tabled, Morris Alexander apparently sent a telegram to the Executive of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in Johannesburg. The Board's anxiety was expressed in its reply:

Thanks wire will convene special meeting on receipt draft Bill stop Raphaely [President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies] suggests you immediately call together Jewish Members Parliament obtain their personal views and attitude all political parties stop They must at all costs prevail upon Government not to hustle Bill through House without giving express opinion on such vital issue stop Kentridge wired am requesting him cooperate stop Please obtain figures for past five years of immigration from all countries affected by Bill.⁸⁵

Alexander immediately convened a meeting in Cape Town of all Jewish Members of Parliament – this on the morning of 30 January. The MPs unanimously recommended that public protest meetings be held immediately and that all Jewish institutions should pass resolutions of protest and forward these to their respective members of Parliament.⁸⁶ Alexander, whose record term as a Parliamentarian spanned the periods September 1910 – April 1929, and January 1932 – January 1946, had found himself in the political wilderness during the crucial debate on the Quota Bill. Despite Kentridge's prominent position in the Jewish community, Alexander would undoubtedly have led the attack against the Nationalists in

⁸⁴ *The Senate of South Africa: Debates*, January-May 1930, cols.287-323.

⁸⁵ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), File 3, January 1929 – June 1939, 'Jewafric' [South African Jewish Board of Deputies] to M Alexander, 29.1.1930.

⁸⁶ The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Committee for the period December 1929 to November 1931 to be submitted to the Ninth Congress, Bloemfontein, 3rd January and 4th January 1932*, p.9.

Parliament in Kentridge's stead had he been re-elected in 1929. He had, however, to content himself with sitting in the Strangers' Gallery and listening to the debate, and with leading the extra-Parliamentary opposition to the Bill.⁸⁷

On 31 January the Executive of the Board of Deputies again sent a telegram to Alexander, indicating the manner in which it intended to respond to the proposed legislation:

Executive resolved Jewish mass meetings be held throughout the country to pass protest resolutions against the Bill. Am telegraphing all communities excepting Cape Town Johannesburg stop Johannesburg meeting next Thursday Town Hall stop Executive submit for your approval and suggestions following draft resolutions. Please consult Jewish Members Parliament wire reply begins: this mass meeting of Jewish citizens ... emphatically protests against the proposed immigration Quota Bill on the ground that it is based on unjust and illiberal principles because of its discrimination against particular races and creeds stop This meeting asserts that the type of immigrant now sought to be excluded has played an outstanding part in both the spiritual and material development of this country and readily assimilates itself to and becomes identified with the general population stop That copy of this resolution be telegraphed to the local Parliamentary representatives.⁸⁸

At the first mass meeting, held at the Johannesburg City Hall on Thursday, 6 February, and presided over by Siegfried Raphaely, President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Morris Kentridge proposed a resolution protesting against the forthcoming immigration legislation. The resolution gained full support from Jewish communal figures such as Professor J L Landau, Chief Rabbi of the Federation of Synagogues of the Witwatersrand, and A M Abrahams, then President of the South African Zionist Federation. The meeting was well attended and the resolution of protest was passed with acclamation.⁸⁹ On the following day the South African Jewish Board of Deputies sent telegrams to the Prime Minister, the Minister of the Interior, all Jewish Members of Parliament and to Morris Alexander, conveying the text of the resolution passed in Johannesburg at the City Hall. The resolution

⁸⁷ See Kentridge, *I Recall*, p.163.

⁸⁸ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), File 3, January, 1929 – June, 1939, 'Jewafric' [South African Jewish Board of Deputies] to M Alexander, 31.1.1930. (The reference in the protest resolution to "races and creeds" – the plural usage – must surely have been a facile attempt by the Board to demonstrate somehow that it was not being parochial.)

⁸⁹ The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Committee for the period December 1929 to November 1931 to be submitted to the Ninth Congress, Bloemfontein, 3rd January and 4th January, 1932*, p.9.

was similar to the one contained in the telegram sent to Alexander on 31 January 1930, and to one passed by Cape Town Jewry soon afterwards.⁹⁰

Similar meetings were held in many other centres.⁹¹ Of note was a well-supported protest held in Cape Town, presided over by the Rev A P Bender, and attended by prominent South African Jews such as Morris Alexander, KC, Eli Biurski, MLA, Max Sonnenberg, MPC, Jacob Gitlin, Rabbi Mirvish and Mrs Ruth Alexander. According to a report in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*⁹² the speeches were all charged with emotion. Morris Alexander claimed that “the true title of this Bill is to prevent Jewish immigration into the country”, and that this “places a blot upon our national honour, upon our individual self-respect”. He went on to slate a recent leading article in *The Cape Times*, in which the editor had given unqualified support to the Nationalist Government’s stand on the immigration issue.⁹³ The editorial had exhorted Dr Malan not to “allow himself to be driven from his course by the protests of small minorities.” “This,” said Alexander,

is a new doctrine – justice to be only for majorities. Are we being threatened with the big stick in this country? ... For the first time in public – we have had it before in private – this is antisemitism come forward naked and unashamed, publicly proclaimed as a new political virtue in South Africa. If the Minister so chooses, not a single soul can come from any but these fourteen countries mentioned in the Bill ... *The Cape Times* has the audacity to say in its leader: ‘There can be no doubt that these principles are acceptable to the South African community, and in saying that, we include all those immigrants even from Southern and Eastern Europe, who have thrown in their lot with this country.’ To say that our race in South Africa are traitors to their own kith and kin is the worst insult I have ever heard ... I would not hesitate to say that ninety-nine percent of the Jewish population of South Africa stands shoulder to shoulder in their opposition to this Bill.

“Do not,” said Alexander, “treat a man according to the country from which he comes, but treat him according to his conduct, according to his character, and

⁹⁰ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), File 3, January 1929 – June 1939, ‘Jewafric’ (South African Jewish Board of Deputies) to M Alexander, 7.2.1930. Reference to the resolution passed by Cape Town Jewry appears later in this study.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 7.2.1930.

⁹³ *The Cape Times*, 30.1.1930.

according to his qualifications.”⁹⁴ A resolution was subsequently passed protesting against the Bill on the grounds that it was “based on unjust and illiberal principles.”⁹⁵

The Jewish community subsequently made official representation to Dr Malan, in an attempt to stay his hand. Alexander wrote to the Minister on 7 February, informing him that the Executive of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies had requested that he – Alexander –

... bring a deputation representing the Jewish community to you and General Hertzog on Monday morning with a view to granting a fourteen days’ postponement of the discussion on the Immigration Quota Bill. This would enable the Government to discuss the matter with those interested before the Bill is proceeded with further.

Alexander requested a hearing with Malan on the following Monday, and made similar representations to the Prime Minister.⁹⁶ Hertzog’s Private Secretary, T F Hurly, replied on the same day to the request, informing Alexander that the Prime Minister’s time was

... much too limited to allow him to receive any deputation of whatever kind ... In all probability Dr Malan will be able to accede to your request and you can have the matter thoroughly thrashed out.⁹⁷

Malan’s Private Secretary, W Louw, was equally prompt with his reply. He telephoned Alexander on 7 February to inform him that Malan would be absent from his office on the following Monday and would thus be unable to give the Jewish

⁹⁴ *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 7.2.1930; *The Argus*, 6.2.1930; *The Cape Times*, 6.2.1930.

⁹⁵ *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 7.2.1930. This resolution was based upon the one suggested by the National Executive of the Jewish Board of Deputies in its telegram to Alexander of 31 January, but was considerably more measured in tone. Alexander’s penciled amendments appear on the original telegram. A copy of the Cape resolution, housed in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), File 3, January 1929 – June 1939, reads: “This mass meeting of Jewish citizens of the Cape Peninsula emphatically protests against the proposed Immigration Quota Bill on the ground that it is based on unjust and illiberal principles. This meeting is of the opinion that the admission of immigrants should be based upon their individual qualifications, character, conduct and suitability and not upon their country of origin”. The resolution concluded with the decision to forward copies to the Prime Minister, to the Minister of the Interior and to the Members of Parliament for the Cape Peninsula. Reports of resolutions passed by numerous Jewish communities appear in contemporary newspaper articles. See for example *The Cape Times*, 7.2.1930.

⁹⁶ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(iii), List II, *Letter Book* 1925-1932, M Alexander to D F Malan, 7.2.1930.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Folder 22, 1930-1932, T F Hurly to M Alexander, 7.2.1930.

representatives an audience, confirming the telephonic conversation by letter on the following day.⁹⁸

Disappointed, Alexander again wrote to the Prime Minister's Private Secretary, enclosing a copy of the letter he had received from Louw. He noted that it was most regrettable

... that the Jewish community of South Africa was given no opportunity of considering the Bill before its introduction and that a deputation representing every section of [the community] ... in all parts of the country had been refused an opportunity of meeting the Minister and of discussing the desirability of a fourteen days' postponement of the Second Reading Debate, to enable those interested to confer with the Government on the Bill.⁹⁹

Alexander was attempting to place pressure on the Prime Minister to persuade Malan to grant the Jewish community a hearing. On the following day, 11 February, he wrote to Malan yet again to request an audience the next morning to "discuss with us the desirability of suggesting alternative methods of controlling immigration which would involve no stigma on our community". The letter went on to suggest a compromise solution by way of the establishment of a Select Committee prior to the Second Reading as the "best tribunal" for evaluating the Bill, or failing that, the appointment of a Select Committee after the Second Reading "to examine the Bill and consider suggestions which will remove the stigma".¹⁰⁰

There is little doubt that, by this stage, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and the Jewish community generally, were desperate, if not frantic. "We beg the Government in all earnestness not to rush into legislation that is a denial of every principle of justice and liberty and the very antithesis of statesmanship", editorialised *The Jewish Chronicle*.¹⁰¹ Malan did little, however, to ease the anxiety. He indeed granted an interview, as requested, and met with a deputation of Jewish representatives for a quarter of an hour on the morning of 12 February. After Alexander and C P Robinson, MP, had "pleaded for an opportunity to put our suggestions before a Select Committee", or even before a sub-committee, Malan

⁹⁸ Ibid., *Letter Book 1925-1932*, reference to letter from W Louw to M Alexander, 8.2.1930.

⁹⁹ Ibid., M Alexander to T F Hurly, 10.2.1930.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., M Alexander to D F Malan, 11.2.1930.

¹⁰¹ *The Jewish Chronicle*, 7.2.1930.

simply dismissed the suggestions “by saying that he thought our protest regarding a stigma was a mistake”. He argued that if he agreed to the appointment of a Select Committee he would then have to meet with representatives from the non-Jewish community and grant them a hearing. He did not want the matter to proliferate. However, he promised to discuss the issue with the Prime Minister. At the termination of the interview the Rev Mr Bender “thanked the Minister for reassuring us,”¹⁰² little more than an obsequious gesture, as Malan had provided the deputation with scant reassurance. His reasons for refusing to appoint a Select Committee were spurious and without substance, since potential immigrants from Eastern Europe to South Africa were almost entirely Jewish. Malan knew this, and simply used the argument as a ploy to dismiss the Jewish representation.

Although desperate, the attitude of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies was unequivocal: there was to be no compromise in the battle with the Nationalist Government over the Bill as long as the perceived stigma placed on potential Jewish immigrants remained. This was clearly reflected in a telegram sent by the Executive of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies to Alexander, in his capacity as Chairman of the Cape Committee of the Board:

Executive unanimously of the opinion that without sacrifice of principle of Bill stigma cannot be removed and that your negotiations on behalf of South African Jewry would prejudice further action unless it expressly recorded between Government and your committee that your negotiations are intended solely to ameliorate severity of clauses in the Bill and so long as Bill in principle discriminates between countries outside British Empire no compromise possible of acceptance by South African Jewry subject to foregoing executive entrust negotiations to your committee.

Alexander, who saw in the tone of the telegram, which was delivered on 18 February 1930, an expression of lack of confidence in the Cape Committee of the Jewish Board of Deputies, responded that there was never “the slightest question of sacrifice of principle or of saving the face of the Minister or of approving of the Bill in its present form.”¹⁰³

¹⁰² Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(iii), List II, *Letter Book 1925-1932*, M Alexander to Siegfried (i.e. S Raphaely), 12.2.1930. [Letter marked ‘Private and Confidential: Not to be published at the present juncture’].

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, M Alexander to P Cowen, 18.2.1930; and M Alexander to S Raphaely, 19.2.1930.

Dr Malan was equally adamant. His obduracy is illustrated clearly in a letter from Morris Alexander to Percy Cowen, in which Alexander discussed Malan's refusal to accept an amendment for a Select Committee prior to the Second Reading of the Bill and to his ready acceptance of an earlier date (1 May 1930 instead of 1 July 1930) for the enactment of the measure.¹⁰⁴

The reaction of Richard Feldman (prominent Jewish Labourite, social reformer and, from 1943, long-serving Transvaal Provincial Councillor) to the Quota Act is of interest not so much for its emotional appeal as for Feldman's perspective of South African Jewry in the country's racial constellation, against the background of increasing Afrikaner nationalism. A handwritten article in his private collection reads:

The gates are shut!

No event in his life had stirred him so deeply as did the legislation closing the gates of South Africa to the Jews ... His sunny South Africa!

Free, liberty loving, hospitable South Africa revealing herself, and so very suddenly to be as cruel and hateful to the Jews as the avowed and notorious anti-Semites. Surely it was but a dream! ... It was a proud and happy minute in his life when he read the speech by the Prime Minister of the Union declaring that Jew and Boer were true South Africans ... And then this sudden change. Within a few months this same hero of his declared the Jew to be a menace of Afrikanerdom and therefore undesirable as a citizen. Had this legislation introduced the Yellow Badge he would not have felt its sting ... A few faint recollections of his early youth in Russia flashed across his mind. There too God's air and God's earth was stinted to the Jew. There the Jew was a menace to the Slav culture, here to the Nordic race and in the long long ago, in Egypt, deliberated over the menace 'lest they multiply' and undermine the purity of the Egyptian race. Has nothing changed? ... Generations of continuous oppression of the Native has bred in the 'Echte [authentic] Afrikaner' the sense of domination and all its attributes. Then came the oppression of the Coloured, the Asiatic, the Indian and now the next weakest section – the Jew.

Feldman went on to point out that the South African Jew, in his entrenched position along with the other privileged whites, had

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., See M Alexander to P Cowen, 18.2.1930; see also M Alexander to S Raphaely, 19.2.1930; Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (ii), File 3, January 1929 – June 1939, S Raphaely to M Alexander, 17.2.1930; and The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Committee for the period December 1929 to November 1931 to be submitted to the Ninth Congress, Bloemfontein, 3rd January and 4th January, 1932*, p.9.

... too soon and too readily learnt the role of oppressor and vied with the other South Africans in the exploitation and oppression of the downtrodden, for did he not belong to the privileged caste – the ruling white? And now so suddenly and so unexpectedly he felt the whip and was pushed out of the camp of the privileged. Is his place amongst the oppressed? ... Has fate placed him to where he belongs – amongst God's step-children – Bantu, Coloured, Asiatic, Indian, Jew – the Christian God's step-children? ...¹⁰⁵

In his untitled, unpublished document, Feldman had articulated a view, hitherto unexpressed by any of the opponents of the Quota legislation, nor subsequently. This view, however, may be critical to understanding Malan's approach to legislation restricting the entry of Jews into the country. The context, in essence, was race. Legal discrimination by governments against the Bantu (Natives), Coloureds and Asians was endemic in South Africa long before the implementation of the policy of Apartheid, the system of racial segregation enforced through legislation by the National Party governments from 1948 to 1994 – a policy under which the rights of the majority black (non- white) inhabitants of South Africa were curtailed and white supremacy and Afrikaner minority rule was maintained. Although Apartheid was developed after World War Two by the Afrikaner-dominated National Party, the Nationalists, in power for most of the *inter bellum* period, had created a climate of discrimination based on colour and race long before Malan became Prime Minister after the 1948 elections. The significance of this, in the context of the present study, cannot be underestimated. In a climate of discrimination and racial prejudice, discrimination against a minority group such as Jews can be more easily understood within the South African context. What was unprecedented, however, was the fact that the Jews were whites, and as such were part of the privileged minority.

If this anomalous position of the Jews and the analogy with the blacks occurred to Morris Alexander, he certainly never expressed it. Instead, invited by *The Argus* to comment on the Quota Bill, he took the opportunity to discredit Malan and the votaries of his immigration policy by reiterating his oft-quoted immigration views – that existing legislation (Act No 22 of 1913) effectively kept undesirable elements away from the Union's shores, that favouritism towards, or prejudice against any particular immigrant on the basis of class, race or creed was unjustified and that the real object of the Quota Bill was specifically “to prevent Jewish immigration into

¹⁰⁵ Richard Feldman Collection (A 804), Bb2 c.1930.

South Africa". He asserted, further, that under the terms of the Bill, South Africa's leading fruit farmer, maize grower and potato farmer, together with many public persons would be excluded as immigrants under the terms of the Bill, disqualified because they were born in countries not included in the Schedule to the Bill. He added, by way of a parting volley, that in terms of the Bill, the Minister of the Interior was vested with powers which were illiberal and autocratic: the Minister could admit 50 immigrants from "non-schedule" countries, or he could, at a whim, admit none. The same applied to the additional number of immigrants not exceeding a thousand in number to whom reference was made in Section 3 of the Bill.¹⁰⁶ Kentridge endorsed Alexander's views, calling the measure "pernicious in principle, reactionary in effect, and unfair in its discrimination". This interpretation of the Bill, however, was criticised by *Ons Vaderland* newspaper which contended that while its editorial policy was sympathetic towards Jewish immigrants, the Quota Bill was in no way directed against the latter.¹⁰⁷

The Jewish Chronicle – the unofficial mouthpiece of South African Jewry – made an ineffective attempt to combat the Government's new immigration policy. In a fiery and emotionally charged attack against the Nationalists, it claimed to express the resentment felt by the Jews, but was blunted by the determination of the Government to enact the measure regardless. And as the Bill was carried through the established parliamentary procedure, the futility of any form of opposition became increasingly apparent. The chagrin of the Jewish community was nevertheless expressed openly:

On rational grounds his [Malan's] Bill is beyond defense.

The Bill is ... an insult to a section of the people of this country who in every sphere of national idealism and achievement can claim that they stand on at least as high a plane as any other section.

We accuse the supporters of the Bill of political dishonesty.

We ask for no privileges for men of our blood merely because they are our kin. We oppose the Bill because it places a stigma on our people.

¹⁰⁶ *The Argus*, 30.1.1930. *The Cape Times*, in an editorial on 6.2.1930, accused Alexander of over-statement and arrogance, *inter alia*.

¹⁰⁷ See *The Argus*, 'The Immigration Bill: *Ons Vaderland* [Our Fatherland] And Jewish Position', 1.2.1930.

The Jewish community is not in principle against restricting immigration, but we are against unfair discrimination.

By what process of reasoning can one maintain the opinion that a Jew from Eastern Europe who arrived twenty years ago was a desirable citizen whereas his brother who comes today is undesirable?

Dr Malan is familiar with the Old Testament. It is not for us to point out to an ex-preacher how much more advanced he is than, say, Pharaoh, or Haman.¹⁰⁸

The protestations of the Jews fell on deaf ears. As noted, it was the traditionally liberal English language press, and particularly *The Cape Times*, which took up the cudgels on behalf of the conservative, Afrikaner-dominated National Party Government.¹⁰⁹ In an editorial early in February 1930, it defended its stand:

No doubt it is a fact that the bulk of recent immigrants from South and East Europe are Jews and that the effect of the Bill will be to limit Jewish immigration from such countries. But it is not fair to say that the Bill, for this reason, is ... aimed at Jewish immigrants. If that was the intention of the Bill, it would be easy to carry it out ... The intention is to limit the number of immigrants from countries of South and East Europe, whether they are Jews, Letts, or Lithuanians. That intention is justified in two ways. First, it is shown that a disproportionate amount of immigration into the Union during the last nine years has been from South and Eastern European countries ... The fact that these immigrants are mainly Jewish need not be disputed. It is beside the point, so far as the Bill and its purpose are concerned ... second, Dr Malan's Bill follows the practice of other countries which have been alarmed by the influx of particular kinds of immigrants and have taken measures to check the influx. The practice is based on the principle that a country has a right to control immigration and to decide whether any element in its incoming population is over-stepping the mark, from the national point of view. There is a widespread feeling in South Africa that immigrants from the less progressive countries of Europe tend to complicate the already tangled population problem of South Africa. They come to South Africa as to a refuge from the conditions of life which they find intolerable in their own countries. They are not producing people. By origin and tradition, and by their own practice, they are people who live by serving the minor needs of their neighbours. Their

¹⁰⁸ *South African Jewish Chronicle*, 14.2.1930. See discussion in Cohen, 'Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa', p.35.

¹⁰⁹ The editor of *The Cape Times*, 6.2.1930, stated that it was no crime for his newspaper to support the Government and that "the rarity of the event" is indicative of the popular agreement behind a Bill whose underlying principle is justifiably the right of every country to choose its own immigrants and to reject those whom it does not seek to admit. In the edition of 11.2.1930 *The Cape Times* applauded Malan for his "admirable" Parliamentary speech on the Bill. There is unequivocal evidence of anti-Jewish sentiment in the columns of *The Cape Times* during this period. See editorials of 30.1.1930, 7.2.1930, as well as those cited here.

standard of living is low, their capacity for keen competition correspondingly high. In racial origin they are not akin to either of the white races of South Africa. Their numbers, among the small white population of this country, make them certain to become, in two or three generations an important element in the total community. The belief that this is undesirable and that a check must be put on it is strong. That is the case for the Bill, which is supported by a very large proportion of white South Africans.¹¹⁰

Since *The Cape Times*' viewpoint was, in large measure, an echo of Malan's sentiments as expressed during the Parliamentary debate on the Bill, Morris Alexander accused the newspaper of entering with Malan into an "unholy alliance."¹¹¹ Soon after, in an editorial entitled "Immigration Cross-Currents", *The Cape Times* lauded Malan's presentation in Parliament, praising his "cold logic", his "admirable arrangement" of fact and argumentation, and his appeal "to patriotism over party". The editorial reveals the Opposition's "tepid affection" for the Bill and its confusion and ambivalence over the issues implicit therein.¹¹² *The Cape Times*' attitude at this juncture is particularly interesting in the light of its almost complete *volte face* over similar issues relating to Jewish immigration with the promulgation of the Aliens Act in 1937.

The contention that the Bill was not aimed at Jewish immigrants *qua* Jews – a contention endorsed by *The Cape Times*¹¹³ – was subsequently controverted on numerous occasions by the progenitors of the measure, as noted earlier. Boonzaier, celebrated political cartoonist of *Die Burger*, the organ of the Cape National Party, encapsulated the issue in a cartoon entitled 'Geregverdigde Strengheid' [justifiable severity] in which a South African customs' official welcomes well-dressed Western European immigrants at the dock, but rejects a bearded, impoverished Jew because his admittance "sal darem nie in belang van die volk wees nie".¹¹⁴ *The Argus* typified the general feeling on the issue among South Africa's white population by charging that the Eastern European settlers

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 3.2.1930. Further editorial comment entitled 'Quota Quandary' appeared in the same issue in which Jewish immigrants, by implication, were placed in the same category as Asiatics who fell under the mantle of 'restricted non-European immigrants'. See also the edition of 4.2.1930, editorial entitled 'An Ill-Mannered Gentile'.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 'Immigration Bill Protests', 6.2.1930.

¹¹² Ibid., 11.2.1930.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ [Translation: "Will surely not be in the interest of the people."] *Die Burger*, 5.2.1930.

belong almost universally to a class which is town bred and ill-adapted to take part in the work for which immigrants are mainly desired, viz, development of the agricultural and mining resources of the country Any country is entitled to say it stands for homogeneity of population and will not admit people who cannot be absorbed or whose absorption takes so long as to create unnecessary problems.¹¹⁵

It is of interest to note that Dr H F Verwoerd, Prime Minister of South Africa from 1958 until his assassination in 1966, a fervent Nationalist and the architect of Apartheid, launched his political career during this period by coming out in full support for the Government's policy of restricting Jewish immigration into the Union.¹¹⁶ Verwoerd, who sympathized with the Nazis, was to play a key role in the radical right wing of the Afrikaner nationalist movement from the mid-1930s, and was openly critical of the Jews.¹¹⁷ It should also be noted that a handful of prominent Jews lent support to the Nationalists over the Act. Dr Manfred Nathan (1875-1945), Jewish communal leader, prolific author and lawyer, for example, felt constrained to take sides with the Government over the Act, expressing his reasons for doing so in a private letter to the Prime Minister. "With regard to the Quota Act," he wrote:

I, for one, though of the Jewish faith, cannot see that it is in any way directed against the Jews, or that it militates against the interest of the Jews in South Africa. I am convinced, also, that there are large numbers of Jews who think the same way as I do. I gather that the protest meetings have been by no means well-attended (except perhaps in one or two special centres), and they were certainly not representative of the sentiments as a whole.¹¹⁸

One of the few Jewish National Party members and aspirant politicians, H J Schlosberg, also wrote privately to the Prime Minister soon after the introduction of the Quota Bill – perhaps in an effort to exonerate himself from the charge that he was opposed to the Government, or to feather his own political nest:

¹¹⁵ *The Argus*, 30.1.1930.

¹¹⁶ *The Cape Times*, 6.9.1966 [early edition]. The special early edition was published to report the Prime Minister's death by assassination. Interestingly, mention of Dr Verwoerd's opposition to Jewish immigration was expunged from the obituary in the later edition of the same day.

¹¹⁷ Dr Verwoerd's first editorial, as editor of *Die Transvaler*, a voice of the Afrikaner nationalist movement, was titled 'Die Joodse Vraagstuk Besien Vanuit Die Nasionale Standpunt: 'n Moontlike Oplossing' ['The Jewish Question as seen from the National Point of View: A Possible Solution']. 1.10.1937. Reference to this and other antisemitic articles in *Die Transvaler* appears later in this study.

¹¹⁸ J B M Hertzog Collection (a. 32), Box 29, M Nathan to J B M Hertzog, 12.12.1930.

Of course the position [i.e. adopting a stand on the Bill] was a difficult one. There seemed to be a clash of loyalties, my loyalty to my original stock, and my loyalty to my beloved Afrikaner people in whose service I dedicate my life and whose ideals, aspirations and spiritual hopes I have made my own. But I can see in the Bill nothing but wisdom, resulting in a better protection of the Jews themselves. I can have nothing but the greatest admiration for the speech made by Dr Malan, and I have not heard an argument to convince me against what Dr Malan said. He is a very fine man ... I can never ask you completely to forget the impertinence and unjust accusations against your Government. It has rankled [with] me very much ... so I ask you to forgive those who were hasty and foolish.¹¹⁹

Neither Nathan nor Schlosberg would have known that, several years later, the Nationalists would ban Jews from National Party membership in the Transvaal – a ban which was to last for 15 years.

One section of the South African Jewish community – albeit a small one – favoured a general boycott by Jews of all newspapers which had supported the Government's immigration measures. Morris Alexander, however, vetoed this suggestion in favour of a concerted attempt to foster "better relations between Jews and non-Jews in South Africa and remove causes for misunderstanding" – this as "a basis for mutual self-respect."¹²⁰

After the enactment of the Bill the voices of protest subsided, but for the Jews of South Africa, a bitter taste lingered. Morris Alexander and a few other communal leaders, however, continued to criticise the Government. *The Cape Times*, for example, reported Alexander's comments made at an address to the Maccabean Luncheon Club, during which he stated that the Quota Act was "a stain on the minds and hearts of South African Jewry ... a purely racial and antisemitic act" against which South African Jews continued to express their "strong and deep-rooted objection."¹²¹ On 14 January 1931, at the first South African Zionist Conference to be held since the passing of the Quota Act, a motion moved by Mr B S Hersch of Johannesburg was carried unanimously, strongly condemning the Nationalist Government's actions and appealing for the removal of this "stigma attached to

¹¹⁹ Ibid., Box 33, H J Schlosberg to J B M Hertzog, 12.2.1930.

¹²⁰ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(iii), *Letter Book 1925-1932*, M Alexander to P Cowen, 2.7.1930.

¹²¹ *The Cape Times*, 18.9.1930.

Jewry by the differentiation of countries from which the bulk of immigration is Jewish".¹²² The self-same sentiment was expressed by others too, long after the measure was enacted. In January 1931, for instance, Morris Alexander saw fit to tell Percy Cowen that South African Jewry was fully justified in regarding the Quota Act as "a purely antisemitic measure" and suggested strongly that the Union's Jews continue to express indignation at the "clear antisemitism" of Malan and his followers.¹²³

With the National Party firmly in power after the 1929 General Elections, Dr Malan had few if any qualms in transforming antisemitism into public policy to serve his political purposes. With the passage of the Quota Act, antisemitism had indeed become public policy, entrenched in the statute books in all but name.

¹²² Ibid., 15.1.1931.

¹²³ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(ii), Box July 1924-1933, Folder 22, 1930-1932, rough copy of a letter from M Alexander to P Cowen on small pieces of notepaper, 12.1.1931. See also C (iii)/II, *Letter Book 1932-1934*, M Alexander to W Hillman, 7.3.1932, in which similar sentiments – including the need for a repeal of the Act – were expressed as late as March 1932.

CHAPTER FOURTHE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE QUOTA ACT

Malan's Quota Bill reflected endemic nativism, giving immigration legislation an inflexible cast, hitherto absent, through the introduction of an arbitrary principle of selection according to country of origin rather than the merits, *per se*, of each applicant for migration. The corollary to the 'country-of-origin' principle was the question of "assimilability", defined in 1930 by Malan without specific reference to Jewish migrants' supposed lack of assimilability. It was only after the rise of Nazism in the mid - and late - 1930s, and the concomitant growth of the Shirt movements in South Africa, that Malan and the Nationalists defined assimilability as a term designed absolutely to exclude from South Africa all Jews except dependents.

In her doctoral dissertation, Edna Bradlow noted:

The 1930 legislation ... did not need to mention Jews specifically by name, for the great majority came from specific countries, thus making it easy to place restrictions on a country rather than a race. The syllogism was then completed by Malan's assertion that his Quota Act did not rest on racial discrimination, but on discrimination between countries.¹

Malan and the Nationalists had indulged in sheer sophistry. Yet, insofar as they were concerned, the Quota Act had its intended outcome. Indeed, its effectiveness was to become at once apparent. Some fourteen years later, Gert Daniel Scholtz, historian and sometime editor of the staunch Afrikaner nationalist newspaper, *Die Transvaler*, frankly admitted that

Om hieraan [die ... rassevraagstuk van die Jode] paal en perk te stel, het Dr Malan reeds in 1930 'n immigrasiewet laat aanneem waarvolgens slegs 'n bepaalde aantal emigrante uit sekere lande in die Unie jaarliks toegelaat sou word. Hierdie wet het goeie vrugte afgewerp ...²

¹ Bradlow, 'Immigration into the Union 1910-1948', p.229.

² G D Scholtz, *Dr Nicolaas Van der Merwe, 1880-1940* (Voortrekkerpers, Beperk, Johannesburg, 1944), p.373. [Translation: "In order to put paid (to the racial question of the Jews) Dr Malan had already, in 1930, promulgated immigration legislation whereby only a limited number of immigrants from certain countries would be permitted entry into the Union annually. This law was most effective" (lit. "produced good fruits.")]

An immediate consequence of the Quota Act was to increase the work of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, this due to the complicated nature of the legislation. J Carasov and J Rothstein were appointed by the Board to handle the problems of Jewish migrants at the ports of Cape Town and Durban respectively.³ An outstanding example of the complexities resulting from the Act was the case of a twenty-seven year old Jew naturalized in Australia as a British subject, an engraver by trade, having knowledge of English, French, German, Italian, Hebrew and Yiddish, and with £40 in his possession. On arrival at Cape Town this man was declared a prohibited immigrant because he was born in Palestine. He was forced to return to the ship by which he had come, for although he had been brought up in one of the exempted countries (that is, a country mentioned in the Schedule to the Act), he had been born in a 'quota country'.⁴ "To turn away an immigrant with such qualifications," argued the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, "one who moreover was a British subject, [and] merely because he happened to be born in Palestine, shows how unjust this Quota Act is ... in the interests of South Africa."⁵

This case reflected the strong racially motivated overtones of the Hertzog-led Government's immigration policy. Birth, not citizenship or country of domicile, was the determinant in assessing the candidacy of potential immigrants. During the debate on the Quota Bill, Dr Malan had articulated this principle:

If a Scotsman was born in Lithuania of Scotch (*sic*) parents, under this Bill he will fall under the quota of Lithuania. For the purposes of the Bill, he would be a Lithuanian, but if a Lithuanian is born of Lithuanian parents in Scotland, for the purpose of this Bill he would be classed as a Scotsman. On the other hand, if Lithuanians go and live for so long, say twenty or fifty years, in some part of England, and they then come to South Africa, they fall under the quota of Lithuania.⁶

The following statistics reflect the sharp decrease in the arrival of Jewish immigrants into the Union after 1930.⁷

³ The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Committee for the period December 1929 to November 1931 to be submitted to the Ninth Congress, Bloemfontein, 3rd January and 4th January for the period 1929-1931*, pp.10-11.

⁴ *Ibid.* [See also *The Cape Times*, 18.9.1930].

⁵ Quoted in *Hansard*, Vol.14, 1930, col.562.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Compiled from *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 7.2.1930 and *The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, The Immigration of Jews into the Union (1926-1935) with appendices for the year 1936*, p.15. See also W Heidenfeld, 'Debunking the Immigration Bogey', *Common Sense - Journal to*

TABLE ANumber of Eastern European Jews Entering South Africa, 1925-1928

<u>1925</u>	<u>1926</u>	<u>1927</u>	<u>1928</u>
1,282	1,429	1,725	2,257

TABLE BSouth Africa's Immigration Figures, 1931-1936(a) From "Quota countries":

	<u>1931</u>	<u>1932</u>	<u>1933</u>	<u>1934</u>	<u>1935</u>	<u>1936</u>
Total Immigration	935	723	539	697	702	906
Jewish Immigration	780	608	446	579	498	538

(b) From "non-Quota countries":

	<u>1931</u>	<u>1932</u>	<u>1933</u>	<u>1934</u>	<u>1935</u>	<u>1936</u>
Total Immigration	3,205	2,375	2,492	4,005	5,798	9,934
Jewish Immigration	105	68	299	544	561	2,792

TABLE CPercentage Increase of Jews as a Proportion of South Africa's European Population

<u>1904</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1926</u>	<u>1928</u>	<u>1936</u>
3.4%	3.7%	4.1%	4.28%	4.36%	4.75%

Promote Goodwill March 1944 (South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg), pp.10-11. See Sergio DellaPergola and Allie A. Dubb, "South African Jewry: A Sociodemographic Profile", in D. Singer (ed.), *American Jewish Year Book 88*, Tables 2 and 3 (Jewish Publication Society and American Jewish Committee, Philadelphia and New York, 1988), pp.105-106 for statistics on South Africa's Jewish population, 1880-1986, and on the growth of the Jewish and total *white* populations, 1880-1980.

Relative to the total number of immigrants entering the Union, Jewish immigration from abroad decreased from 35.31% of the total immigration percentage of 1,929 arrivals, to 16.58% of the total number of immigrants entering the country in 1935.⁸ A negligible number of Jews arrived from countries upon which no restriction had been placed, although this figure did increase somewhat in 1935 and 1936, as a direct consequence of Germany's draconian anti-Jewish Nuremberg Laws (15 September 1935) and Hitler's militant antisemitic campaign.⁹ In 1937 the South African Government put paid to this by passing the Aliens Act, thus closing the loophole in the immigration legislation whereby German Jews could enter South Africa as immigrants, without restriction. Prior to 1930 the entry of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe into South Africa had therefore been a steady stream, increasing year by year, to become a trickle after the Quota Act was entrenched in the Statute Books.¹⁰ During the period 1926 to 1936 the percentage increase of Jewish immigration was thus only 0.47%.¹¹ Available statistical data indicate that the immigration of Jews to South Africa from restricted countries decreased by about 75% between 1930 and 1935 and that the total number of immigrants (Jews and Gentiles) born in 'non-scheduled' countries was considerably lower than the maximum permitted by the Quota Act each year. Furthermore, besides an absolute decrease in the number of Jewish immigrants to South Africa since the Quota Act, there was a steady decrease in the relative proportion of Jewish immigrants to South Africa's total immigration.¹²

An interesting sidelight to the Quota act vis-à-vis South African Jewry was the fact that, despite the overwhelming disillusionment felt by the Jews towards Hertzog's Nationalist Government over the Act, there was no radical change in Jewish voting patterns at the next General Election, held in 1933. For, with the formation of the Hertzog-Smuts Coalition in February 1933, the Jews, traditional supporters of Smuts, found themselves voting for the supporters of Hertzog and Malan (the latter stood for

⁸ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Immigration of Jews into the Union (1926-1935) with appendices for the year 1936*, p.2.

⁹ See Table B(b)

¹⁰ See Table B(a)

¹¹ See Table C

¹² See South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Immigration of Jews into the Union (1926-1935), with appendices for the year 1936*, *passim*.

election in May 1933 on coalition tickets despite his subsequent breakaway into Opposition to form the Purified National Party) and hence supporting those who had barred the entry of Jews into South Africa.¹³ The choice for South African Jewry was not a happy one. However, there was apparently no alternative.

There were a few minor anti-Jewish manifestations shortly after the Quota Bill was introduced in Parliament and November 1931 (the latter date being that of Dr Malan's noted interview with *Die Burger*), but these incidents, essentially acts of vandalism, were comparatively insignificant. Furthermore, whether anti-Jewish sentiment generated by the Quota Act underscored the motivation for these acts is open to question.¹⁴ Of greater significance, perhaps, was the theological perspective of the Jews held by elements within the Dutch Reformed Church. In a lengthy article in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, titled 'Dutch Reformed Church Commissions Attack on Jews', it was revealed that Jews and Catholics were the subjects of two reports to be examined by the Dutch Reformed Synod sitting in Pretoria. The reports stated that the Jews were

people who were strangers to the God of their forefathers, who have time and respect for nothing else but capital and capitalists, and who are clearly worshippers of Mammon.¹⁵

Strong objections to this remark were lodged by South Africa's Chief Rabbi, Dr J L Landau, in an address at the Wolmerans Street Synagogue.¹⁶ "We are sure," said Rabbi Landau, "that the members of the Dutch Reformed Synod in Pretoria do not speak for the majority ...". Indeed, it was later discovered that the antisemitic references were made by only one missionary, and that they were deleted from the final report. Yet, in light of events which occurred later in the decade, it is of interest to record that placards were placed in prominent positions in the Synod Chamber, proclaiming that out of a total world population of 1,850,000,000 there were

¹³ For traditional Jewish voting patterns, see Shimoni, 'The Jewish Community And The Zionist Movement in South African Society', p.227.

¹⁴ An example of such acts occurred in February 1930 in Bloemfontein when the Rev Mr Batlan arrived at the synagogue one Sabbath to find the four Scrolls of the Law stripped and the parchment strewn all over the house of worship. The new piano, recently installed in the communal hall, had been badly damaged, and there were obscene writings on the blackboards of the Hebrew school's classrooms. This was the third time that such an incident had occurred at that synagogue. *The Cape Times*, 24.2.1930.

¹⁵ *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 24.4.1931.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, The address is reproduced verbatim in this edition.

206,900,000 Protestants living in “sunlight”, 475,000,000 Greeks and Roman Catholics living in “twilight”, 225,150,000 Jews and Mahomedans (*sic*) living in “moonlight”, and 942,450,000 heathens living in “darkness”.¹⁷ The Dutch Reformed Church, of course, was a bastion of Afrikaner nationalism, and the conflation of religion and race in the manifestations of antisemitism among Afrikaner nationalists in the 1930s was a common feature..

Barely a month later, in May 1931, the Criminal Investigation Department informed the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies of the circulation in Cape Town of an antisemitic pamphlet. Apparently the person responsible for the distribution of the pamphlet was a certain Dr Gericke, who had later attempted to sell antisemitic books under the auspices of local publishers but who had been prevented from doing so after representations had been made to the publishers by the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies. Gericke had evidently been responsible for the circulation of publications by the antisemitic organisation known as ‘The Britons’, and of an antisemitic poem replete with hostile references to anybody in favour of fair treatment for the Jews of South Africa.¹⁸

The extent to which the Jewish community was sensitive to any sign of anti-Jewish prejudice or to any opportunity for antisemitism to manifest itself against the backdrop of the Quota Act promulgated by the Nationalist Government, is revealed in a confidential communication from Morris Alexander to the editor of *The Zionist Record*. Alexander took the editor to task for an article, published on 21 August 1931, entitled ‘Supply and Demand’, in which the attention of Jewish parents was drawn to the growing difficulty of finding suitable employment for tertiary graduates. “The article,” charged Alexander, “could not have been more hostile than if it had been drafted by an enthusiastic antisemite introducing a *numerus clausus* for Jewish graduates at our universities.” Alexander expressed the hope that the article would pass unnoticed, for if not it could be used “to cut the ground from under the feet of

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(iii)/II, *Letter Book 1925-1932*, M Alexander to I M Goodman, 13.5.1931; 22.6.1931; 1.7.1931.

those who are trying to secure absolute equality of opportunity and even justice for members of the Jewish community in South Africa.”¹⁹

It was obvious, by the end of 1931, that despite Dr Malan’s disavowal of any anti-Jewish sentiments, and despite his insistence that the Quota Act was intended to prevent the growth of antisemitism in the country, distrust and alienation had begun to develop between sections of the Jewish community and the National Party. It came as little surprise, therefore, when in November 1931 the Jewish question was again at the forefront of South Africa’s political scene, though the manner in which it appeared shocked the Jewish community. In an interview on 2 November 1931, with a reporter from *Die Burger*, mouthpiece of the National Party in the Cape, Dr Malan made the following assertions:

There is a section of the Jews who want revenge on the National Party for the Quota Act, but they are of course afraid to come out into the open, and for that reason they make use of such men as [Dr W P] Steenkamp to fight the National Party. I know that there are many Jews who do not agree with this agitation, but I want to warn those who stimulate it that it is very easy to rouse a feeling of hate towards the Jews in this country. The Quota Act was introduced in the interest of the Jews. There was a feeling of unrest owing to the arrival of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the whole country demanded legislation to restrict this.

The feeling of unrest threatened to develop into a feeling of hatred against the Jews and this feeling was subdued as a result of the Quota Act. The Jews have in the past always had a friend in the National Party and I warn them that if they want to hit us they may be sure that we will hit back. If they continue with this offensive I can give them the assurance that at the next election we shall force every candidate to give a candid reply to the question whether he is or is not in favour of repeal of the Quota Act.

If they want an election on the Quota Act, I can promise them that they will get it, and that the Jews will be able to see for themselves what they are doing in sacrificing the friendly relations between them and the nationally-minded section of the people.

I want to stress again that the Quota Act was accepted just as much in the interest of the Jews as in those of the country as a whole, and if they go on with the campaign, it will, in the long run, simply harm their own interests.²⁰

¹⁹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(ii)/II, *Letter Book 1925-1932*, Alexander to the editor of *The Zionist Record*, 24.8.1931.

²⁰ *Die Burger*, 2.11.1931; *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 6.11.1931; Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, p.153; The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Committee for the period December 1929 to November 1931 to be submitted to the Ninth Congress*,

The Jewish community was up-in-arms over what was interpreted as a calculated threat by Dr Malan for it to toe the National Party line. Typical of the outrage expressed by South African Jewry were remarks made by Mr L Gradner, Deputy Mayor of Cape Town, in an interview with the press:

This outburst amazes me, because there is not the least justification for it. To me, this talk of retaliation is nonsense. Jews as a race have no political organisation or Party ... I know of no section of Jews out to take revenge on the National Party for the Quota Act by enlisting the support of Dr Steenkamp or anyone else. For Dr Malan to make such a statement is wholly absurd. Jews may be found among Dr Steenkamp's followers, but they will also be found on almost every political platform ... To me this talk of retaliation is nonsense.²¹

There appears to have been considerable animosity between Malan and Dr Willem Petrus Steenkamp, to whom Dr Malan had referred in his interview. Steenkamp was a fiercely independent parliamentarian, known as 'the lion of the north-west'. An ordained minister and medical doctor, he admired the Jews and opposed Malan's fervent Afrikaner nationalism. Prior to Malan's interview with *Die Burger*, however, there was no apparent evidence that the Jews featured in the Malan-Steenkamp clash, nor that the Jewish community "made use ...of Steenkamp" to fight the National Party over the Quota Act. What was seemingly a personal political feud between Dr Malan and Opposition MP, Dr W P Steenkamp, had been turned by Malan into a Jewish issue. Malan appeared to be using the Jews as scapegoats in his political arsenal to attack Steenkamp.²² The latter repudiated Malan's assertion that he – Steenkamp – was being used by the Jews "to stir up ... agitation against the Quota Act" by describing the charge as "ridiculous". He emphasised, however, his opposition to the Act in its existing form because "it presses too heavily on one particular section".²³

Bloemfontein, 3rd January and 4th January for the period 1929-1931, p.45; The Cape Times, 3.11.1931. [Translation from The Cape Times, 3.11.1931]

²¹ *The South African Jewish Chronicle, 6.11.1931; The Cape Times, 3.11.1931.* Gradner was one of the many Jews who played a prominent role in South African public life.

²² See A H Jonker Collection (PV 42), File 146, *The Argus*, newspaper cutting, 'When the Doctors Crossed Swords at Calvinia', 30.10.1931.

²³ *The Cape Times, 3.11.1931.*

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies called an emergency meeting on the evening of 3 November to consider what action, if any, to take in light of Malan's invective. After a prolonged discussion, however, the Board decided not to pursue its original intention of issuing a statement to the press.²⁴ The 'official' reply from the Jewish community to Dr Malan, however, came a few days later in a statement by Chief Rabbi Dr J L Landau. It read:

If the Minister is correctly reported I must strongly object to the injustice he has done to the Jewish community. There is not the slightest justification for his accusation ...

Nor can we be blamed for resenting the Quota Act ... we publicly and very strongly expressed our feelings at mass meetings which were fully reported in the daily press, and indeed, we blame the South African Party at least as much as the Nationalists for allowing the Bill to pass without any amendment ... it is the sting [of the Act] that is most resented.²⁵

Alexander argued that the Jews were free citizens in a free country, and that they resented Dr Malan's "unwarranted" threat. The Jew, he said, was entitled to express his opinions freely and to vote without dictation from Dr Malan or anyone else. He was free to join any political party according to his individual political views, for the Jews of South Africa belonged to no particular party, but united together only when attacks on their status or their self-respect as a community were made. The Jews, he added, would not be deterred by threats from any quarter.²⁶

On Monday, 9 November, Dr Malan gave an audience to a deputation from the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. The latter had submitted a lengthy written statement on 6 November, outlining its objections to Dr Malan's perceived intimidation of the Jews during his interview with *Die Burger*. The statement read in part:

²⁴ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i) File 3, January 1929 – June 1939, press cutting, *The Argus*, 4.11.1931; C (ii), Box July 1924-1933, Folder 22, press cuttings, *The Argus*, 6.11.1931, and *Die Burger*, 7.11.1931, reports indicating that the meeting between Dr Malan and a deputation from the South African Jewish Board of Deputies on 9 November was a sequel to the emergency meeting called by the Board on 3 November.

²⁵ *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 6.11.1931.

²⁶ *The Cape Times Clipping Files*: Box 'Politics: Speeches – Malan C W and Malan D F, 1922-1930', *The Cape Times*, 3.11.1931; *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 6.11.1931.

Taking the Hon the Minister's interview as a whole, the impression of the Jewish mind is that it constitutes an attempt – unintentional perhaps – to terrify Jews either into joining his political party or into keeping silent, though labouring under a keen sense of injustice.

It should be unnecessary to emphasise that the Jewish community as such is not a political body and that its members who belong to any political body do so not as Jews but as citizens.

We feel ... that the 'warning' by the Hon the Minister that 'it is easy to rouse the feeling of hate towards the Jews in this country' is calculated more than anything else to tend towards outbreaks against ... Jews.

Our main objection is to the discrimination against Jewish immigrants – the stigma cast upon a proud people which had not been imposed by legislators and which in a free country we should not be called upon to endure in silence, especially as the general restriction of Immigration if desired can be achieved by other means; and far from 'being afraid to come out in the open' we have loudly voiced our protest from public platforms.

The submission takes Malan to task for the warning implicit in his statement that "it is very easy to rouse a feeling of hate towards the Jews in the country". The submission is respectful but at the same time notes that *Die Burger* interview "constitutes an attempt, unintentional perhaps, to terrify Jews either into joining his [Malan's] political party or into keeping silent, though labouring under a keen sense of injustice."

In an equally lengthy written reply on 12 November, Malan explained that his warning was not directed against Jewish individuals who opposed the National Party. Nor was it aimed at the Jewish opponents of the Quota Act.

The warning in the interview was explicitly directed to another section – and unfortunately a very large one – which is organised and which is still organising Jews as such for the purpose of defeating the present Government, and which is for this purpose exploiting the feeling aroused by the Quota Act. About the facts as stated there can be no doubt, as they have been confirmed from time to time by information from various sources.

Dr Malan maintained that this organised group of Jews was attempting to exploit Jewish resentment against the Quota Act for political purposes. Its aim, he said, was also to resuscitate those feelings of animosity which had subsided after his immigration legislation had served to relax the general antipathy towards the Jews. "So far from being unjust and uncalled for ... [*Die Burger*] statement must be

considered to be necessary and timely.” A somewhat lengthy correspondence ensued between the two parties, but neither side would relent.²⁷

Even three weeks after *Die Burger* interview had appeared, *The Rand Daily Mail* was able to report that, despite assurances given by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Dr Malan still asserted that he had proof that a very large section of South African Jewry was organised for the purpose of defeating the Government. There is, however, no evidence to corroborate Malan’s claims, and he published none. His response, perhaps, can be attributed to his use of the Jews’ open antagonism to the Quota Act as a political ploy.

The same edition of *The Rand Daily Mail* also held that

from the national point of view the whole incident is deplorable. The Jews have made, and are making, an important contribution to the building up of his country. South Africa is grateful to them, and the large majority of the people will resent equally with them both the tone and the text of ‘*Die Burger*’ interview.²⁸

An interesting reaction to Malan’s interview with *Die Burger* came from prominent Jewish writer, community identity and political activist, Richard Feldman (1897-1968), who slated both the South African Jewish Board of Deputies for soft-pedaling the issue, and Malan for blatant antisemitism. After the publication of the interview, wrote Feldman,

... everybody seemed to be content to leave it to the Jewish Board of Deputies speaking in the name of the Jews of South Africa to ‘hit back’. When it was published that the Board had asked Dr Malan to receive a deputation, many were amazed at this most undignified step since it was considered that we in South Africa had already freed ourselves from the *Ma-Jofez* [i.e. sycophantic] attitude which was characteristic of the terrorized Jews of the ghetto. People wondered what the deputation which Dr Malan so graciously consented to receive could tell them. Was it to utter a strong protest against his most

²⁷ For the November 1931 correspondence between the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and Dr Malan, see the D F Malan Collection, ‘Immigrasie en Emigrasie’ [Immigration and Emigration], letters between S Raphaely, Board president, and W H Louw, Dr Malan’s private secretary. The text of the deputation’s submission, and the subsequent correspondence also appeared in full in the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Report of the Executive Committee for the period December 1929 to November 1931, pp.46-56. It was also published in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 27.2.1931.

²⁸ *The Rand Daily Mail*, 21.11.1931.

definite anti-Jewish outburst, and draw his attention to the fact that his utterances constituted a breach of the laws of the land, or was it to cringe and attempt to show what nice law-abiding citizens the Jews of South Africa are? ... The publication of the events that transpired makes very sore reading. The Board had taken up the defensive and certainly proved itself no match for the ingenious Dr Malan. The Board told the Minister that he was 'labouring under a wrong impression' reminding one of the meek wife who when the husband came home drunk used to stroke his head and say 'have you a headache, my dear?' Wrong impression indeed! The deputation likewise refers to Dr Malan's statement as 'an attempt, unintentional perhaps, to terrify the Jews'. Unintentional! Evidently the deputation (which consisted exclusively of lawyers) had forgotten that it was not their part to defend Dr Malan. They should have known that Dr Malan is a strong man and a responsible Minister and is very careful of his utterances.

Finally, Feldman claimed that

... the Jews have a definite right to know whether Dr Malan's statement has the approval of the Cabinet, and if so whether it is the intention of the South African Government to take advantage of conditions which Dr Malan summarised as such 'that it is very easy to rouse a feeling of hatred towards the Jews in the country' should the Jews organise to vote against the National Party. The inference is obvious. It has been practised for a good many years. It is to find a scapegoat. When conditions are bad and the people cry out for bread the rulers divert the attention of the hungry masses away from themselves onto the Jews ... We must press for a definite answer. Is this what the Honourable Minister for the Interior means?²⁹

There was certainly no published statement from the Cabinet by way of reaction to Malan's utterances. Strangely enough, however, Prime Minister Hertzog found cause in 1932, in a message to the Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, to praise the South African Jew for his patriotism and for employing his "sterling qualities of race to the advantage, not only of himself, but also of our common country".³⁰

Refutations of Dr Malan's allegations came from many quarters. Mr P Mostert, Chairman of the Farmers' and Workers' Board for the Union, charged that Malan "was guilty of deliberate misrepresentation".³¹ Sam Goldstein, former President of

²⁹ Richard Feldman Collection (A 804), Ab2, R Feldman to the Editor, *The Zionist Record*, 23.11.1931, press cutting, Richard Feldman Collection (A 804), Fad 1. [Reference to Richard Feldman (1897-1968) was made earlier in this study.]

³⁰ Saron, '70 Years: Some Historic Highlights', *Jewish Affairs*, March 1973, p.66.

³¹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(ii), Box July 1924-1933, Folder 22, 1930-1932, press cutting, *The Cape Times*, 6.11.1931.

the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, went much further. In a press interview he was quoted as saying:

It is hardly credible that so responsible a person as a Cabinet Minister should vent his fury on the whole Jewish community because of a 'rough house' he received at a political meeting. Because certain Jewish citizens supported Dr Steenkamp, the Minister attacks the whole community ... Why pick on the Jews? ... It was true that South African Jewry resent (*sic*) the Quota Act, but there is no question of revenge. The South African Party was as responsible as the National Party for the Quota Act: but we do object to Dr Malan's pedagogic attitude and threat to spank us if we don't behave and be good boys ... One can imagine the Dr Malan of a few centuries ago summarily saying: 'Away with the Jews – to the stake with them!' ³²

Well-known radical trade union leader, George Sacks, also attacked Malan, referring to him as a "Minister of the Interior breathing fire and slaughter at those who dare to oppose the sacrosanct legislation of his party". He also referred to Malan's "thinly veiled threat to the Jews of South Africa that their support of this 'schismatic party [i.e. the Opposition South African Party] will result in hatred of the Jews'." According to Sacks, "the colossal insolence of such talk in a country where liberal thought is not so emasculated as it is here, would be breathtaking." He considered Malan's "outburst" as merely "another round in the popular pastime which may be described as 'having a go at the Jew'" and concluded:

The amazing thing to me is the impudence of a jackanapes in office who threatens and encourages racial hostility against people using the perfectly legitimate method of the platform and the ballot box to reverse legislation which, rightly or wrongly, they regard as unjust ... [We have here] a situation where everything which savours of enlightenment must be on the defensive against the aggression of fundamentalist backveld parsons. ³³

The Jewish question remained a sensitive one throughout 1932, although no major clash erupted during the year. The atmosphere, however, was apparently tense, exemplified in several incidents. In May, for example, Mr R Stuart, Secretary of the Cape Federation of Trades, informed *The Argus* that Peninsula Transport (Pty) Ltd, whose joint Managing Directors Harry Ravdin and Isadore Sebba were Jews, had embarked on a scheme to retrench Gentile employees in order to make way for

³² Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(ii), Box July 1924-1933, Folder 22, 1930-1932, press cutting, *The Cape Times*, 9.11.1931..

³³ *The Cape Times*, 'What A Jew Thinks Of', 5.11.1931.

Jews. Stuart maintained that this retrenchment was the result of a request from the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies to the Company. One of the retrenched men submitted an affidavit containing these allegations to Stuart. The available evidence, however, indicates that the allegations were part of an antisemitic canard and the entire affair was scotched before it could be made public.³⁴ At about the same time the Jewish community expressed considerable concern over the “recrudescence of the fixing of antisemitic slips in books” at the South African Public Library in Cape Town.³⁵

An issue which bulked large during the early months of 1932, and one which had veiled anti-Jewish overtones, was the debate over the Potchefstroom University College Bill. It was held that the Bill, which aimed at making the Afrikaans-language medium university an institution ‘For Christian Higher Education’ and adding the said phrase to the University’s name, infringed upon the religious freedom of non-Christians who wished to study or teach at what was a Government-subsidised institution of higher learning. It was argued that freedom of conscience, implicit in the University’s ‘Conscience Clause’, and the undenominational principle were threatened by the Bill. In the parliamentary debate over the Bill, veiled antisemitic comments were made by Nationalist MPs., and there were fears, albeit unfounded, among sections of the Jewish community that Jews would be subject, based on what had occurred in Eastern Europe, to a *numerus clausus* or, perhaps, a *numerus nullus*.³⁶

³⁴ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (iii), List II, *Letter Book 1932-1934*, M Alexander to W Hillman President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies), 18.5.1932, M Alexander to I M Goodman, 24.5.1932, 30.5.1932, 17.6.1932; M Alexander to R Stuart, 27.5.1932; C (ii), Box July 1924-1933, Folder 22, (1930-1932), Affidavits by P Sylvester and H Groenewald, 16.5.1932; Affidavit by H Ravdin and I Sebba, 13.5.1932.

³⁵ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(iii), List II, *Letter Book 1932-1934*, M Alexander to I M Goodman, 17.6.1932; See also M Alexander to I M Goodman, 30.5.1932 in which reference is made to the publication of “a New York Nazi photograph” in *Die Burger*.

³⁶ See Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), File 6, October 1944 – March 1946 [including undated and other material]. ‘The Potchefstroom University Bill: 1949’ (mimeographed) which traces the history of the issue until 1949; ‘What’s In A Name?’ [nine pages of sundry type-written and hand-written notes and extracts from Parliamentary debates, 1932-1933, probably prepared by Enid Alexander. Includes details of relevant legislation since 1921]; C (ii), Box July 1924-1933, folder 22, 1930-1932, W Hillman to M Alexander, 12.3.1932; M Alexander to W Hillman, 15.3.1932. See also Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, pp.159-162. A change in the university’s nomenclature was formalised in 1933.

The degree to which the Jewish community felt sensitive and vulnerable in the aftermath of the Quota Act and of Malan's anti-Jewish onslaught in *Die Burger* and later, is reflected in Morris Alexander's correspondence with Jan Hofmeyr towards the end of 1932. Hofmeyr had suggested that Alexander travel to Johannesburg for a few days to support the candidature of J G N Strauss (later to become one of South Africa's most prominent politicians) in a by-election at Germiston by addressing the Jewish community, but to come there

...nominally in connection with some other matter, and that our Jewish friends in Germiston would then take the opportunity of entertaining you at a social gathering ... you would, of course, not talk party politics or [of] the election ...but would nevertheless see Jewish voters on Strauss' behalf ... The suggestion in this letter comes from the Jews in Germiston themselves.³⁷

Alexander, however, felt constrained to reply that

...it would be a fatal blunder to address a Jewish meeting on election or political matters. The Jews are part of the general community, belonging to various parties as individuals and attending public meetings with their fellow-citizens of other denominations. The Jewish community would in my opinion strongly resent the holding of Jewish political meetings and even if such a meeting could be arranged it would do the candidature of Strauss a great deal of harm. I don't know which Jewish quarters suggested the meeting. They could not be responsible leaders of the community. Is it perhaps a Nationalist trap? ³⁸

Later, in a reply to two letters from Hofmeyr, the first of which had informed Alexander that the Jew, H J Schlosberg, Strauss' Nationalist opponent, was going to hold a meeting which he was to address in Yiddish, Alexander wrote:

The Jews in South Africa are not identified with one political party ... There are Jews in all the political parties. As one of their leaders in South Africa, I feel, after serious and final consideration, that I should not come up to Germiston. It would only bring the Jewish community as a community into the vortex of party politics, and give currency once more to the erroneous popular belief that there is such a thing as a Jewish vote.³⁹

³⁷ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (ii), Box July 1924-1933, Folder 22 (1930-1932), J H Hofmeyr to M Alexander, 4.10.1932; see also J H Hofmeyr to M Alexander, 18.10.1932 [the document is partially destroyed].

³⁸ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(iii),List II, *Letter Book 1932-1934*, M Alexander to J H Hofmeyr, 28.10.1932.

³⁹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC160), C (iii), List II, *Letter Book 1932-1934*, M Alexander to J Hofmeyr, 24.10.1932. In this letter Alexander promised to write, in his capacity as a member of the

The self-same sensitivity was expressed by I M Goodman in his correspondence with Alexander. Goodman, who claimed no personal interest in the Germiston by-election “other than that Schlosberg is a friend of mine” attempted, in a personal capacity and not as a member of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, to persuade Alexander not to enter the election debate. He wrote:

I hope *you will not come* to Germiston. There has been such a lot of ‘tosh’ spoken and written about the ‘Jewish Vote’ that I feel strongly that you should not take [an] active part in this by-election ... Schlosberg’s candidature is of course in the nature of a ‘sop’ to Jewish sentiment ... your presence in the field of action will inevitably bring the ‘Jewish Question’ to the forefront, which is undesirable.⁴⁰

Schlosberg apparently believed that there was indeed a ‘Jewish vote’, and his intention to deliver the address in Yiddish was undoubtedly designed to curry favour among the Jews for the Nationalist candidate, as Yiddish was spoken by a large majority of South African Jews.

A week later Goodman again wrote to Alexander. This letter, too, reflects the sensitive relationship between the Jewish community and the National Party – a relationship which, since Malan’s ‘*Burger Interview*’, was rapidly deteriorating. After informing Alexander that 530 Jewish voters would cast their ballots in the by-election, Goodman went on to add:

I can give you some inside information. On or about October 29th General Kemp is to deliver a strong, pro-Jewish speech at Germiston. He is to say that there has been a ‘misunderstanding’ between the Jewish community and the Nationalists and that this has now been cleared up and that the Government now offers the hand of friendship and conciliation to the Jews...⁴¹

South African Party, a letter to Strauss in support of the latter’s candidature. This, in fact, he did. Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (iii), List II, *Letter Book 1932-1934* M Alexander to J G N Strauss, 24.10.1932. Apparently Strauss, who won the seat and who subsequently served in Parliament for 25 years, becoming leader of the United Party after Smuts’ death in September 1950, made good use of Alexander’s public endorsement of his candidature. See Alexander: *Morris Alexander*, p.163.

⁴⁰ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), File 3, January 1929 – June 1939, I M Goodman to M Alexander, 7.10.1932.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, I M Goodman to M Alexander, 14.10.1932. While there is no reference to the text of General Kemp’s speech, neither in the Morris Alexander Collection nor in the press of the day, the notion that Kemp would discount the anti-Jewish sentiments of the National Party, of which he was a prominent member, is instructive.

Bernard Alexander, Morris Alexander's cousin, an aspirant politician and sometime President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, illustrated clearly the dilemma which confronted the South African Jew *qua* Jew and the possible anti-Jewish ramifications in adopting a specific political stand where 'Jewish interests' were concerned. Urging his cousin not to speak on behalf of Strauss in Germiston, Bernard Alexander wrote:

I am sure that you will not think that I am actuated by the fact that I am a member of the National Party and, therefore, would like the Nationalists to gain Germiston. I am actuated solely in the interests of Schlosberg, he being a Jew, and I think that it would not be right for you to oppose Schlosberg for that reason ... I appeal to you in your own interests as well as in the interests of the Jews of South Africa to abstain from speaking at the Election, where a Jew is standing against a non-Jew.⁴²

The initial period following the passing of the Quota Act was thus a bleak one for the Jews of South Africa, marked with uncertainty and several hostile influences. The temper of the times, however, foreshadowed what was yet to come. As early as 1931 the Nationalist press again began personifying the Jew as the "Hoggenheimer"⁴³ caricature, a bloated capitalist or huge parasitical figure waxing fat on the impoverishment of the Afrikaners. This was symptomatic of the sentiments of powerful Afrikaner nationalists who became active in the Union during the 1930s. History thus gives the lie to Dr Malan's message in the Jewish New Year Annual of 1932, where he wrote:

It must be evident to every observer that, compared with a few years back, there has taken place a vast and growing improvement in the good and friendly relations of the peoples of South Africa generally towards the Jewish community.⁴⁴

The haste with which the Quota Act was brought into operation by the Nationalists, the attempt to disguise its real intentions under the pretext that it was not aimed specifically at Jewish immigration, and the events and utterances subsequent to the enactment of the law served to suggest growing undercurrents of anti-Jewish feeling.

⁴² Ibid., B Alexander to M Alexander, 17.10.1932.

⁴³ References to 'Hoggenheimer' appears earlier in this study. (See especially Shain, 'From Pariah to Parvenu: The Anti-Jewish Stereotype in South Africa, 1880–1910', *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol.26 (2), December 1984, pp.111-127.)

⁴⁴ Quoted in *The Cape Times*, 28.9.1932.

The Jews, furthermore, to all intents and purposes, had become increasingly part of the racism of the National Party which had hitherto been focused primarily on the non-white population. “More than anything that had happened since Union,” wrote Enid Alexander, “the Quota Act helped to provide the background against which later agitations were played out.”⁴⁵ The full significance of this was to be realised in the proliferation of antisemitism from the Right and the Radical Right in the immediate period which followed.

Noted South African historian, Eric Walker, observed that 1930 was the year in which

... the Jews had found that the door into South Africa ... [had begun] to close against them, as it was closing in so many other states just as bad times and rising *Judenhetze* were driving so many of them from their Eastern European homes.⁴⁶

The Rev Mr A D Bender, Chief Minister of Cape Town Jewry, summed up the mood in the Jewish community. In a message to the Jews of South Africa on the eve of the Jewish New Year in September 1931, penned some two months before Dr Malan’s anti-Jewish interview with *Die Burger*, he wrote: “Looking back on the year which has passed to its bourn, we can find little to cheer, much less to console us.”⁴⁷ Given the advantage of historical hindsight, it is clear that the Quota Act marked the beginning of the deterioration in the relations between the Jewish community and the National Party – relations which were considerably aggravated in the following years when the ideologies of Nazism and antisemitism began to infiltrate South Africa’s public life.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, p.151.

⁴⁶ Walker, *A History of South Africa*, p.643.

⁴⁷ A P Bender Collection, I, 199B, press cutting, *The Argus*, 11.9.1931. The Jewish New Year commenced on the eve of 11 September 1931; Malan’s interview was published in *Die Burger* on 2.11.1931. See also press cutting from *The Zionist Record*, 30.9.1930, article by G Saron, ‘5692 A Review Of The Year’, in which the author analyses the emergence of contemporary world antisemitism as a doctrine rather than simply a manifestation of “the brutalities of ignorant mobs”.

⁴⁸ See Saron, *Morris Alexander: Parliamentarian and Jewish Leader*, p.26.

CHAPTER FIVEAFRIKANER NATIONALISM, NATIONAL SOCIALISM, AND THE PROLIFERATION
OF ANTISEMITISM

The six years prior to the outbreak of World War Two witnessed the unprecedented proliferation of antisemitism among South Africa's right-wing nationalists. The period, which coincided with the development of an aggressive Afrikaner nationalism, was marked by the emergence of far-right radical groups, attributable to a combination of local and international forces. On the domestic front, economic factors were the primary consideration, given the ramifications of the world-wide depression. A second significant domestic factor was the radical change in political alliances during 1933 and 1934 which witnessed the emergence of a vociferous and staunch right-wing nationalist minority opposition in the South African Parliament. The international factor was the rise of Nazism and the effects of Nazi inroads into South Africa on the Afrikaner nationalists – both the Right and the Radical Right.

While there is no doubt that Afrikaner nationalism and concomitant antisemitic manifestations were considerably augmented by the rapid inroads of Nazism into South Africa, there is nevertheless no gainsaying that the antisemitism, both populist and political, was deeply rooted in the South African condition.¹ That it was spearheaded by Afrikaner nationalists and the extreme Afrikaner Right, and not simply a foreign import, is indisputable. This argument lies at the core of the present study. It should be noted, parenthetically, that by the third decade of the twentieth century, the specific Afrikaner nationalism, interpreted as an “almost exclusive reflex” of the Afrikaners' humiliating defeat during the Anglo-Boer War, had been transformed as a result of industrialisation, urbanism, the alienation of many Afrikaners from a purely rural lifestyle and by the “socio-psychological effects ...of the encounter of the Afrikaner with the urban industrial lifestyles that were coming into being.”² The rapid growth of a militant Afrikaner nationalism was to cause deep

¹ See Shain, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa, passim*; also M Shain in Shain and R Mendelsohn, *Realities and Dreams: Aspects of the South African Jewish Experience*, p.77.

² See Hagemann, *Antisemitism in South Africa During World War II: A Documentation* in Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual, Volume 4, p.267. [For the evolution and transformation of Afrikaner nationalism during this period, see Floris Albertus Van Jaarsveld's writings, especially *The Afrikaner's*

divisions – a “cleavage” – in South Africa,³ was to fuel the racism of the Afrikaners and, insofar as South African Jewry was concerned, was to foster among right-wing Afrikaner nationalists and the Radical Right an unprecedented period of antisemitism.

The Great Depression, which had engulfed the world in the wake of the 1929 collapse of the Wall Street Stock Market, had a marked effect on South Africa, bringing in its wake widespread social and economic dislocation and witnessing a radical realignment of the country’s political party structure. Significantly, the Afrikaners, living primarily an isolated rural existence, were ill-prepared to confront the devastating consequences of the Depression, especially the demands of the post-Depression period of industrialisation.

According to the report of the Carnegie Commission’s extensive four-year study of the Depression’s effects together with its study of the so-called ‘Poor White Problem’, South Africa’s woes were in large measure due to “inadequate adjustment to modern economic conditions among a portion of the older white population”⁴ – essentially the country’s Poor Whites. As noted earlier in this study, Poor Whiteism, according to the report submitted by the Carnegie Commission, was almost exclusively an Afrikaner phenomenon. For the Afrikaners, the complexity and tempo of urban life, which had attracted many ‘foreigners’, primarily Jewish and British migrants, presented a marked contrast to the simplicities of their own rural existence. This isolation from urban culture was among the factors which accentuated the Afrikaners’ sense of difference, in large measure, from the rest of the world, causing them to cling tenaciously to their own national identity *qua* Afrikaners, to perceive themselves as the country’s true pioneers and to regard others, to a greater or lesser degree, as ‘aliens’. Caught unprepared by the Depression, lacking skills required to

Interpretation of South African History (Simondium Publishers, Pty., Ltd., Cape Town, 1964) and F A Van Jaarsveld, *Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse verlede; Geskiedenisideologie en die historiese skuldvraagstuk* (Lex Patria, Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1984) - literally, ‘South Africa’s Controversial Past: Historico-Ideology and the Question of Historical Guilt.’ Van Jaarsveld (1922-1995), who was prepared to challenge the custodians of so-called orthodox interpretations of Afrikaner history, is one of the foremost historians of Afrikanerdom. See also Giliomee, *The Afrikaners.....*]

³ A Keppel-Jones, *Friends or Foes? A Point of View and a Programme for Racial Harmony in South Africa*, (Shuter and Shooter, Pietermaritzburg, 1950), pp. 14, 16.

⁴ Carnegie Commission, *The Poor White Problem in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Commission, Vol. 1*, p.viii.

find work and unable to compete with cheap black labour, the consequences for the Afrikaners were devastating. Within months of the collapse of the Wall Street Stock Market, almost 18% of Afrikaners – a conservative estimate – were classified as ‘Poor Whites’. This percentage was to increase rapidly as the effects of the Depression became more severe.⁵ Albrecht Hagemann estimates that of the two million white South Africans, approximately 300,000, predominantly Afrikaners, were classified as Poor Whites, living in “unprecedented poverty”, many dwelling in crowded urban centres where, according to Hagemann, “English and Jewish segments of the population “controlled trade and banking.”⁶

The Carnegie Report gave South African Jewry considerable cause for disquiet, presaging the economic antisemitism which was soon to manifest itself in Afrikaner nationalist quarters. No longer was the contact between the Jews and the Afrikaners based on economic discourse in the rural areas. Urbanisation – the movement of Jews and Afrikaners to the towns and cities – had created a very different and far more complex economic scenario. It was during this period, the years of the depression, that economic antisemitism became more discernible with the development of “the alien Jew who controls the urban economy and blocks the way of the home-born Afrikaner.”⁷

Commissioner J F W Grosskopf implied, in a section of the Report entitled ‘Handicaps in the Modern Money Economy’, that wily Jewish businessmen cheated the rural native Afrikaner folk who were “ignorant of the world and its ways and unaccustomed to money transactions.” He added, however:

We are not entitled to assert that actual fraud was perpetrated on a simple farming population: but they stood little chance against men whose conception of ‘business’ was not theirs. Often traders, foreigners, who came to South Africa to fill their pockets, took unfair advantage of existing conditions and undoubtedly made use of cunning means. The influence of Jews engaged in commerce was often pernicious. Calm, sensible people in all parts

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ See A Hagemann, *Antisemitism in South Africa During World War II: A Documentation* in Simon Wiesenthal Annual, Volume 4, p.267.

⁷ S N Herman and G Shimoni, *The Jewish Community In The Apartheid Society of South Africa: Study Circle On Diaspora Jewry In The Home Of The President Of Israel* (The Institute of Contemporary Jewry / Sprinzak Division, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1973) (English translation from Hebrew by Dr A Super). (Mimeographed).

of the country repeatedly bear this out. Often the moral effect was more detrimental than the monetary loss.⁸

Grosskopf went on to point out that, as early as 23 February 1893, some four decades previously, the Cape Town-based newspaper, *De [Die] Volksblad*, had published a leading article entitled 'One Cause of Indigence' stating that 57 of the 86 General Dealers' Licences in Oudtshoorn, a town in the Eastern Cape Province with a preponderance of Jewish migrants, were held by people with Polish, Russian and Hebrew names. The Commissioner parried the potential charge of implicit antisemitism by contending that among the Jewish businessmen who had arrived in South Africa early in the piece there were "honourable men" and that "merchants of other nationalities" were also guilty of dishonest business practices.⁹ Grosskopf, however, singled out only two people – "two Jews" – for business malpractice¹⁰ and accused Jewish farmers in the Highveld region of frequently and shamelessly exploiting South Africa's farmland.¹¹

This not-so-veiled antisemitism appears to have been cause for concern insofar as South African Jewry was concerned. In an unpublished six-page typescript housed in the Morris Alexander Collection the writer, assumedly Alexander himself, expresses serious disquiet about

a number of unfortunate blemishes to be found in the [Carnegie Commission's] Report [which] are of particular import to South Africa's Jewish citizens and [which] merit the serious attention of the Trustees for the Carnegie Corporation in South Africa...the Hon Patrick Duncan, Sir [John] Carruthers Beattie and Dr C T Loram.

The writer goes on to accuse two of the eight South African commissioners responsible for the Report, Professor J F N Grosskopf of Stellenbosch University, a bastion of Afrikaner nationalism, and the Reverend J R Albertyn, a Kimberley-based sociologist, to "have gone out of their way to convey gratuitous insults to Jews

⁸ Carnegie Commission, *The Poor White Problem in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Commission Vol. 1*, pp.15-16.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.115-116.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.117.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.123. See also p.218.

without any justification whatsoever.”¹² References to cases of infringements of Industrial Council and Wage Board regulations by Jewish shopkeepers,¹³ which appear elsewhere in the Report, also appear to smack of racial prejudice. Given the temper of the times, these issues were cause for considerable concern to the South African Jewish community.

While South Africa maintained the gold standard during the Great Depression farmers were hard hit when the resulting rise in the cost of South African goods devastated exports, especially minerals and wool. Once Prime Minister Hertzog had announced, at the end of December 1932, that South Africa would abandon the gold standard, as Great Britain and other countries had already done, the country immediately “felt the weight of the depression lifting from off its back.”¹⁴ The period which followed, prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, witnessed the rise of a militant Afrikaner economic movement as the Afrikaners attempted to adjust to the accelerating process of urbanisation and industrialisation which followed the years of economic depression.¹⁵ In an attempt to secure for themselves prominent positions in industry, commerce and the professions, many were to point accusatory fingers at the so-called foreigners, the Jews and Englishmen, contending that it was these ‘aliens’ who were denying the Afrikaners their rightful places in South Africa’s economic and professional life. According to Saron and Hotz, “soon all the ills of ‘Afrikanerdom’ were attributed to British-Jewish capitalism.”¹⁶

Several Afrikaner economic organisations emerged in the 1930s, among them the Reddingsdaadbond¹⁷ (Union of the Act of Salvation), led by Dr Nicholaas (Nico) Johannes Diederichs (1903-1978). He, together with Piet Meyer, was involved in extremist, pro-Nazi Afrikaner nationalist movements throughout the 1930s and beyond, among them the Broederbond, of which Diederichs served as chairman from 1938 to 1942, and the Ossewa Brandwag. Diederichs, who ended his career as

¹² Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), 3, January 1929 – June 1939. [The unpublished typescript was probably written in 1934.]

¹³ Carnegie Commission, *The Poor White Problem in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Commission Vol. 1*, *passim*.

¹⁴ Hancock, *Smuts, The Fields of Force, 1919-1950*, pp.244-245.

¹⁵ Saron, '70 Years: Some Historic Highlights', *Jewish Affairs*, p.71.

¹⁶ Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.182.

¹⁷ For details of the Reddingsdaadbond, see J H Le Roux, *Die 'Gesuiwerde' Nasionale Party, 1935-1940* (MA, University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein, 1972), pp.257ff.

State President of the Republic of South Africa (1975-1978), was later accused of harbouring strong antisemitic proclivities, reinforced by his affinity with Nazi Germany and authoritarian philosophies,¹⁸ the latter predicated on his belief that “service to the nation is ... part of my service to God.”¹⁹ Steven Uran claims that foreign models – Mussolini, Hitler and Salazar – offered inspiration for Afrikaner fascism. Although the mode of expression of Afrikaner nationalism “appears ... [to have been] greatly determined by its foreign examples...the major impetus in the direction of [Afrikaner] fascism was indigenous.”²⁰ Keppel-Jones also notes that the *Herrenvolk* philosophy – the doctrine of racial superiority – was ingrained in the psyche of leading Afrikaner nationalists,²¹ an observation which again supports a central argument of this thesis that, irrespective of the significant influence of Nazism in South Africa after 1933, the Right and the Radical Right had an intrinsic propensity for racism and, by association, antisemitism. As late as 1957, several years after there had been a ‘softening’ of Nationalist attitudes towards the country’s Jews,²² with the National Party in power and the Apartheid policy fully entrenched in South Africa, Diederichs was still bent on accusing the Jews of enjoying a disproportionate share of the country’s wealth, thus threatening what he deemed to be the rightful economic destiny of Afrikanerdom.²³

The militancy of the emergent Afrikaner economic movement which developed in the 1930s with its antisemitic subtext is clearly reflected in sections of the contemporary press. Resolutions adopted at a Purified National Party meeting urging the Department of Public Health to remove a Jewish District Surgeon, or Piet Meyer’s call for the percentage of Jews vis-à-vis the total population not to increase in order to ensure equity for the Afrikaner, were typical.²⁴ Similarly, at the Helpmekaar Congress held in Molteno in 1936, speakers called for the elimination from South

¹⁸ Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, pp.81, 92.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.92.

²⁰ Uran, ‘Afrikaner Fascism and National Socialism in South Africa: 1933-1945’, p.68.

²¹ See Keppel-Jones, *Friends or Foes? A Point of View and a Programme for Racial Harmony in South Africa*, pp.21; 24; 26-27.

²² Reference to this development is made later in this study and includes the decision of the National Party in 1951 to permit Jews to join the Party in the Transvaal, the restriction to do so having been imposed by the Malanites in the late 1930s.

²³ L Rubin, ‘Afrikaner Nationalism and the Jews’, *Africa South*, Volume 1, Number 3, April-June 1957, (Africa South Publications, Pty., Ltd., Cape Town), p.28.

²⁴ See *Die Burger*, 21.11.1936. [Piet Meyer went on to play a prominent role during the Apartheid era in South Africa, and served as the influential chairman of the powerful state-owned South African Broadcasting Corporation from 1959 to 1982.]

Africa of parasites – a clear reference to the Jews – in order to achieve a purely Afrikaner cooperative movement, and what one speaker, J A Pretorius, termed the Afrikaners’ “regmagtige plek in die handel”²⁵ – their rightful place in the country’s commercial life. Appeals by Afrikaners in the Afrikaans press to avoid buying from “die Jood” and “die Koelie”, and accusing the government of failing to ensure that Afrikaners, the ‘ware’ (real) South Africans, received their due share in business, were common.²⁶ Calls for the establishment of exclusive Afrikaner trade unions, with a rider to exclude Jews, were also frequent.²⁷

In July 1936 an Afrikaans organisation styled the Rasse Afrikaanse Kultuur²⁸ accused the Jews involved in trade unionism for attempting to spread materialistic values among the Afrikaner workers with complete disregard to their culture.²⁹ Shortly thereafter, an anonymous letter to *Die Burger* endorsed an editorial of the paper which urged Afrikaners to form their own Protestant Christian trade unions from which Jews would be excluded.³⁰ In October 1936, the Grey Workers’ Bond, in a publication outlining its aims, stated specifically that its primary goal was “to make trade unions totally South African national institutions under loyal patriotic leadership [and] to free them from all alien domination and from all anti-Christian influences.”³¹ This sort of rhetoric, and the obvious anti-Jewish implications, was characteristic of

²⁵ *Die Volksblad*, 23.11.1936.

²⁶ See, for example, Ermina Loubser’s letter in *Die Burger*, 18.11.1936. [‘Jood’ is the Afrikaans word for Jew. ‘Koelie’ (‘Coolie’), a racial slur, is a derogatory term for Chinese or Indians. Derogatory language with racial overtones has been part of the South African lexicon for years. Jews would be called, not infrequently, ‘jou blixem se Jood’ – ‘you bloody Jew.’ By the same token, Jews would resort to using the pejorative term ‘chattis’ (plural – *chatteisim*), an ethnic slur directed at Afrikaners. The term derives from the Hebrew word ‘*chatta’im*’, meaning ‘sinners’. *Chatteisim* is the Yiddish pronunciation.]

²⁷ See for example *Die Vaderland*, 23.7.1936. See also a report in *Die Volksblad*, 23.11.1936, with details of a Helpmekeer Congress held in Edenburg, calling for the establishment of a purely Afrikaans trade union movement and emphasising the necessity to eliminate parasites – an obvious reference to Jews. Reginald Bridgman, ‘Fascism in South Africa’, *The Labour Monthly. A Magazine of International Labour*, Vol.19, May 1937 (The Labour Publishing Company Ltd., London), records attempts to split the South African Trade Union movement on racial lines by setting up Afrikaans Trade Unions “which are anti-Jewish and anti-Communist,” adding that in the goldmines an Afrikaans union, the Mynwerkersbond, had been established as a rival to the Mine Workers’ Union of South Africa, p.314. [Piet Meyer was at the forefront of the Mynwerkersbond’s establishment.]

²⁸ Rasse Afrikaanse Kultuur- literally ‘Racial Afrikaans Culture’.

²⁹ *Die Volksblad*, 23.7.1936; *The Friend*, 24.7.1936. *Die Volksblad* subsequently embarked on a campaign to promote the establishment of Christian trade unions. See editions of 22.7.1936 and 18.8.1936.

³⁰ *Die Burger*, 11.12.1936. See also *Die Volksblad* (editorial), 14.12.1936.

³¹ See the October 1936 edition of *The National Worker*, publication of the Grey Workers’ Bond. The organisation was open to workers of non-Jewish European and Aryan descent.

extremist Afrikaner nationalism. At a Dingaans Day ³² celebration in December 1936, held in Taaisbospruit in the Transvaal's north-west and attended by some 600 people, a Mr L.J. Naude of Johannesburg who was actively involved in promoting exclusive Afrikaner trade unions, argued that the Jews, synonymous with the Communists, were out to control South Africa's commerce and industry, as well as the spiritual, social and economic assets of the Boers. He contended, too, that they controlled almost all worker groups through exclusively communistic trade unions.³³ While such accusations were undoubtedly exaggerations, they were certainly not uncommon.

Fiercely protective of the Afrikaners' rights to exclusive trade unions, Dr Malan – once in opposition after 1933 ³⁴ – began bitterly attacking the 'communist Jews' and other forces he deemed to be ranged against the establishment of Afrikaner trade unions. At a National Party gathering in Stellenbosch on 10 April 1937, for example, he argued that as long as Jews formed a minority, remaining below a certain percentage of a country's population, they did not constitute a threat. He went on to contend, however, that with increased numbers, together with "the help of powerful international organisations," they invariably establish undue influence at the root of a country's economy, directing affairs in their own interests.³⁵ While there were certainly prominent Jews such as E S ('Solly') Sachs and Ben Weinbren at the forefront of trade union politics in South Africa,³⁶ Malan's charges – classic antisemitism – were clearly misplaced, and again underscored by conspiratorial arguments. Views similar to those of Malan were expressed by his fellow opposition MP, J L Brill, Member for Vrededorp, who accused the Jews of "trying to crush everything that is Afrikaans".³⁷ Col F H P Creswell (1866-1948), long-time Labour stalwart and aligned with Smuts during the 1930s, implied that Malan had become

³² Until the end of Apartheid in 1994, Dingaans Day, also called the Day of the Covenant or the Day of the Vow, was marked annually on 16 December to celebrate the Boer victory over the Zulus, the latter led by their chief, Dingaans, at the battle of Blood River in 1838.

³³ *Die Volksblad*, 19.12.1936.

³⁴ Reference to Dr Malan's departure from the Hertzog camp and the establishment of the Purified (Gesuiwerde) National Party appears later in this chapter.

³⁵ *The Star*, 12.4.1937.

³⁶ See Walker and Weinbren, *2000 Casualties: A History of the Trade Unions and the Labour Movement in the Union of South Africa, passim*. Giliomee notes that Solly Sachs was a most effective trade unionist and a committed member of the Communist Party of South Africa, serving as General Secretary of the Garment Workers' Union (GWU) between 1928 and 1952. See Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p.425.

³⁷ *Rand Daily Mail*. 19.4.1937.

mentally unbalanced insofar as his attitude towards the Jews' involvement in the economic life of the country was concerned.³⁸ Although this accusation was undoubtedly far-fetched, it will be argued that by the mid-1930s Malan and others in the Right were at the forefront of a political program of antisemitism, underscored by strong economic argumentation.³⁹

Malan and his then-Nationalist supporters had shown antipathy for the Jews during the 1930 Quota Act saga and in its immediate aftermath. It was after 1933, however, with the political 'fusion' between the National Party, led by General J.B.M. Hertzog, and the South African Party under the leadership of General J.C. Smuts, that antisemitism was to become increasingly pronounced in right-wing Afrikaner nationalist circles. Talks of coalition between Hertzog and Smuts, which commenced in February 1933, led to the dissolution of the South African Parliament on 7 April 1933 and then to a fusion of the country's two major political parties after a General Election held on 17 May 1933. At that election, during which Malan and other right-wing Afrikaner nationalists such as Oswald Pirow stood alongside Hertzog, albeit with considerable reluctance,⁴⁰ Hertzog's National Party won 75 seats, while the South African Party under Smuts gained 61 seats. The coalition thus swept the country, garnering over 90% of the votes – 136 seats in a 150-seat parliament.

Having gone off the gold standard, and having emerged from several years of economic depression, it appeared for a brief moment that South Africa was free of political strife: but this was not to be. While Hertzog's endorsement of a coalition with Smuts was overwhelmingly affirmed at the 1933 National Party conferences in the Transvaal and Orange Free State provinces, Dr Malan and his followers rejected Hertzog's coalition platform at a conference in the Cape by 164 to 18 votes.⁴¹ At a conference held in Bloemfontein in October 1933, the Malanites repudiated

³⁸ *The Star*, 13.4.1937.

³⁹ Accusations levelled by the Malanites, as members of the Purified National Party came to be called, that Jewish fortune hunters (see *The Friend*, 29.5.1937) and Jews generally dominated the trade unions were common throughout the 1930s. See for example *Die Burger*, 1.6.1937 and *Die Volksblad's* editorial, 1.6.1937.

⁴⁰ Hancock, *Smuts, The Fields of Force, 1919-1950*, p.252.

⁴¹ J J Van Rooyen, *Die Nasionale Party – Sy Opkoms en Oorwinning – Kaapland se Aandeel* (Uitgegee deur die Hoofraad van die Kaaplandse Nasionale Party en gedruk deur Nasionale Handelsdrukkery, Beperk, Elisiesrivier, 1956), p.137. [Johannes Gerhardus (J.G.) Strydom, Afrikaner nationalist firebrand leader in the Transvaal who later served as a Prime Minister during the Apartheid era was among Malan's leading supporters.]

Hertzog's leadership. Two months later, in December, they founded their own party, the Gesuiwerde (Purified) Nasionale Party, a hardline, extremist parliamentary opposition headed by Malan.⁴² The very name of the new party – the *Purified National Party*, maintained Hancock, was an indictment on Hertzog, implying that he was an errant, “lapsed” leader.⁴³ Hancock could just as easily have noted that the word ‘purified’ had powerful connotations of race. Indeed, once in opposition, Malan's racism became clearly manifest, expressed in large measure in his antisemitic proclivities. Insofar as he was concerned, Hertzog had betrayed the Afrikaner nationalist movement, pursuing ‘vereniging’ (union) rather than ‘hereniging’ – the latter term implying Afrikaner reunion.⁴⁴

The Malanites, a 19-member parliamentary rump, now found themselves in the political wilderness, to become a vociferous, extremist opposition, soon to be supported to a considerable degree by radical pro-Nazi and virulently antisemitic Shirt movements. Meanwhile, the establishment of the United South African National Party, generally called the United Party, was formalised on 5 December 1934 in Bloemfontein, with Hertzog as Prime Minister and Smuts as Deputy Prime Minister. Malan's ‘Gesuiwerdes’ became the official parliamentary opposition on 10 January 1935.⁴⁵ Bitterly anti-British, aggressively pro-Afrikaner, staunchly republican and often sceptical of democracy – for some fervent Afrikaner nationalists the autocratic style of leadership implicit in Nazi ideology appeared very attractive⁴⁶ – Malan and his supporters held little truck for the Jews who, almost without exception, were committed supporters of Smuts. Moreover, they identified strongly with the English – rather than the Afrikaans-speaking section of the population. Dr Malan subsequently made the bizarre and unsubstantiated claim that the Hertzog-Smuts alliance and the

⁴² Hancock, *Smuts, The Fields of Force, 1919-1950*, p.253.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.253-254.

⁴⁵ J J Van Rooyen, *Die Nasionale Party – Sy Opkoms en Oorwinning – Kaapland se Aandeel*, p.132. [With Fusion, the ability of the National Party to present itself as the personification of the national will and interest had been undermined. However, the years from 1934 saw a continual decline of Afrikaner support for the United Party under Hertzog and a corresponding rise in support for the Gesuiwerdes under Malan. This was to become apparent four years later, in the Malanites' gains in the 1938 General Election.]

⁴⁶ See the comment of seasoned South African Afrikaner journalist, Professor Petrus (Piet) Johannes Cillie in an interview, cited in S L Friedman, *Jews, Germans and Afrikaners — Nationalist Press Reaction to The Final Solution* (BA Honours Extended Research Essay, University of Cape Town, 1982), p.7.

formation of the United Party constituted a form of Jewish revenge against the National Party for the 1930 Quota Act.⁴⁷ This view appears to have resonated with the Jewish conspiracy theory which underscored Malan's November 1931 interview with *Die Burger*, to which reference was made earlier in this study. However, conspiracy theory or political opportunism notwithstanding, a minority group which displayed little if any sympathy for the ideals of Malan and his followers provided an open target for attack on the grounds of alienism and lack of assimilability.

It was thus against this background of economic and political ferment and tension that a wave of ideological and racial intolerance spread. In a country accustomed to the terminology of race and, in some quarters, of 'blood-and-soil', conditions were ideal for opponents of democracy and antisemitic propaganda.⁴⁸ Gus Saron, long-serving general-secretary (1937-1972) of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and historian of South African Jewry, held that perhaps the most potent factor in the proliferation of antisemitism "was the vast network of Nazi propaganda operating directly from Germany and also within South Africa over and above other factors."⁴⁹

The influence from abroad was certainly considerable, and served to fuel the prevalent anti-Jewish prejudice. The cue came with the importation of political and racial doctrines of National Socialism which began to penetrate South African society soon after Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933. What is significant for this study is the fact that the dissemination of Nazi ideologies coincided with the increasing militancy of the Afrikaans nationalist movement in South Africa, and also lent impetus and inspiration to political and racial doctrines which constituted the ideological basis of the different 'Shirt' and fascist organisations of the thirties. By mid-1935, in the aftermath of the Greyshirt Trial,⁵⁰ antisemitism, with a significant Nazi subtext, bulked large in the economic and political life of South Africa. From the report presented by the executive committee to the eleventh congress of the South African

⁴⁷ *The Star*, 12.4.1937.

⁴⁸ L Hotz in F H Sichel (comp.), *From Refugee to Citizens: A Sociological Study of the Immigrants from Hitler – Europe Who Settled in Southern Africa* (A A Balkema, Cape Town, 1966), p.13.

⁴⁹ Saron, '70 Years: Some Historic Highlights', *Jewish Affairs*, p.71.

⁵⁰ The Greyshirt Trial (1934) is discussed later in this study.

Jewish Board of Deputies, held in Johannesburg in May 1935, antisemitism in South Africa had reached hitherto unparalleled heights.⁵¹

South Africa was indeed fertile ground for the seeds of Nazism. The country's population, as noted earlier, consisted of diversified racial elements. Dominant was the white group, consisting roughly of 60% Afrikaans-and 40% English-speaking people. The fear of the white man that, in this complex multi-racial society his civilisation would be submerged by the pressure of colour, was a real one. Fear was also prevalent among some of the Afrikaans-speaking sections that their language and culture, so recently taken root, would be submerged by the older-established English language and culture. Some English-speaking South Africans, on the other hand, believed that their own culture was endangered in the face of aggressive Afrikaner nationalism.⁵²

Nazism strove to set section against section, race against race, and South Africa's complex racial composition ideally suited Hitler's notions for exploiting racial divisions for his own purpose.⁵³ According to Furlong, the Nazis' purpose was twofold: to create a powerbase among German nationals living in South West Africa – present-day Namibia and formerly German South West Africa⁵⁴ – and naturalised citizens of German descent, many of whom had assimilated into the Afrikaner population; and to promote the Nazi cause among non-Germans, particularly the Afrikaner nationalists.⁵⁵ It is germane to this thesis that the notion of racial superiority which characterised right-wing Afrikaner nationalism and the Nazi concept of racial purity – the belief in the existence of a superior Aryan *Herrenvolk* – made Afrikaner nationalists and Nazis ideological bedfellows to a marked degree. According to Sachs, “by exploiting the national and anti-British sentiments of the Afrikaner people, and by the extravagant use

⁵¹ See. Cohen, 'Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa', p.77; Saron, '70 Years: Some Historic Highlights', *Jewish Affairs*, p.71; also South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Committee to the 11th Congress*, May 1935, p.3.

⁵² This discussion is developed in Cohen, 'Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa', chapter 3.

⁵³ See World Conference of Christians and Jews (held at Oxford, July 1946): *Memorandum Submitted on Behalf of the South African Delegates on Problems Arising from the Inroads of Nazism on Contemporary Thought and Practice in South Africa*, 27 June, 1946, p.1. [Mimeograph housed in the library of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg]

⁵⁴ The area which lies on the north-west border of South Africa became a German colony, known as German South West Africa (*Deutsch-Südwestafrika*), in 1884. South African forces occupied the colony in 1915, during the First World War, and became responsible for its administration from 17 December 1920 under terms of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations as a Class C Mandate. Namibia gained independence on 23 March 1990.

⁵⁵ Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, p.73.

of the Communist bogey, coupled with widespread antisemitic propaganda, the Nazis secured a considerable following among Afrikaners.”⁵⁶ Professor Karl Friedrich Graf Dürckheim-Montmartin who, on behalf of Baron von Ribbentrop, travelled extensively throughout South Africa and South West Africa in 1934 and 1935, suggested in his report that the Nazis should prey upon the fiery nationalistic and anti-British sentiments of the National Party. This, he maintained, would eventually bear fruit for Nazism, because “die Duits-Afrikaanse boere” are “die draers van die politieke toekoms.”⁵⁷ The report reflects the inordinate efforts of the Nazis to make inroads into South Africa – to establish “Duitse kragette”⁵⁸ – German power bases – in the Union. It encourages Nazi propaganda in the schools (...“Duitsland ook die skole heeltemaal wil gebruik om sy doel te beruik in Suid-Afrika”⁵⁹) and especially in the churches – the focal point for spreading Nazi ideology - frequented by Afrikaners. Indeed, the report states emphatically that “nog harder wil die Nazis misbruik maak van die Kerk.”⁶⁰ It also highlights the affinity of the Greyshirts with the Nazis,⁶¹ and the importance to the Malanites of Germany and South Africa’s German-speaking population in the pursuit of their political aims.⁶²

The Nazis were also fully aware that Britain was not only the traditional enemy of the Germans, but also that of the Afrikaners, many of whom looked upon Nazism as an instrument whereby they could establish, once again, their lost Republic, with Britain defeated in the international arena.⁶³ Indeed, Malan and the extreme right-wing Afrikaners desired a Republic, a national flag and national anthem, the right to opt for neutrality and to secede from Britain, as well as the ascendancy to power of the

⁵⁶ E S Sachs, *The Choice Before South Africa*, (Turnstile Press, London, 1952), p.28.

⁵⁷ [Translation: lit. ‘The German-Afrikaans boers (are) the bearers of the political future’.] *Die Dürckheim Rapport: Officiële Dokumente oor Nazi Komplot in die Unie*, p.8.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁵⁹ [Translation: Germany will also entirely use (exploit) the schools to achieve its goal in South Africa.] *Die Dürckheim Rapport*, p.4.

⁶⁰ [Loose translation: The Nazis will make an even greater effort to exploit the Church.] *Ibid.*, p.5.

⁶¹ *Die Dürckheim Rapport*: p.8.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁶³ Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich* (1964 edition), p.54. [Bunting, who died in 1988, was a committed Communist. A political activist and journalist, he served briefly in the South African Parliament before being ousted and banned. In 1994, having lived in exile since 1963, he was elected to the South African Parliament in post-Apartheid South Africa. Bunting counted as close friends and fellow ideologues anti-Apartheid votaries such as Nelson Mandela (President of South Africa, 1994 – 1999), Thabo Mbeki (President of South Africa, 1999 – 2008), Joe Slovo (long-time leader of the South African Communist Party and leading member of the African National Congress), and Ruth First, Slovo’s wife – an anti-Apartheid activist killed by a parcel bomb in Mozambique in 1982. Slovo and First were Jewish.]

Afrikaners. To this end, "they became oriented towards the German Nazis."⁶⁴ Hitler's attacks on the Jews thus found a sympathetic response among Afrikaners - the most impoverished white ethnic group in South Africa. Most Jews were better educated and had more business and professional motivations than Afrikaners, and were generally more prosperous. Comparisons between the two population groups were thus to provoke savage attacks upon the Jewish community.⁶⁵

The bond between German and Boer had existed since the Anglo-Boer War, and even during World War One sections of Afrikanerdom harboured a strong pro-German sentiment.⁶⁶ Nazi partisanship for the Afrikaners and the Afrikaner nationalists' glorification of the Nazis proved of mutual benefit prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, but was to be counter-productive, with the defeat of Germany, after World War Two.⁶⁷ Brian Bunting argues that "Hitler's [1933] success in Germany evoked widespread Nationalist admiration"⁶⁸ and implies that Malan's philosophy of Afrikaner supremacy was, to some extent, Aryan in nature. The similarities between Aryan philosophy and Malan's ideology are indeed instructive. According to Malan,

...our history is the greatest masterpiece of the centuries. We hold this nationhood as our due, for it was given to us by the Architect of the universe. (His) aim was the formation of a new nation among the nations of the earth... The last hundred years have witnessed a miracle behind which must lie a divine plan. Indeed the history of the Afrikaner reveals a will and a determination of purpose which makes one feel that Afrikanerdom is not the work of man but a creation of God. We have a divine right to be Afrikaans. Our history is the highest work of art of the Architect of the centuries.⁶⁹

The Nazi master race ideology of a *Herrenvolk* and hence Aryan or Nordic superiority is undoubtedly reflected in these comments by Malan. However, notwithstanding obvious similarities between the two ideologies, neither Malan nor his followers, nor the followers of the various South African Shirt movements, were ever intent on the

⁶⁴ Vatcher Jnr, *White Laager*, p.5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.60.

⁶⁶ Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, p.164.

⁶⁷ See A Hagemann, *Antisemitism in South Africa During World War II: A Documentation* p.267.

⁶⁸ Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich* (1964 edition), p.54.

⁶⁹ Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion*, p.1. See also Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich* (1964 edition), preface. Bunting provides a truncated version of this quotation.

Nazi-inspired program to exterminate the Jews which was implemented after the outbreak of the Second World War.

The foundations of Afrikaner superiority, according to Malan, whose deeply held Calvinist beliefs informed his political calling, had a strong theological basis, underscored by his statement that Afrikanerdom is not the work of man but a creation of God, and that Afrikaners have a divine right to be Afrikaans.⁷⁰ This argument was intrinsic to the antisemitism of the Malanites: while influenced by Nazism, the antisemitism of the Right was certainly not an outgrowth of the Nazi movement. It will be noted later that, for Germany, the Jewish issue was a national-political problem of race, whereas Malan's anti-Jewish proclivities, while certainly ideological, were also pragmatic. Nevertheless, as Hepple has noted, the Malanites appropriated the Afrikaans word *volk* (people) and the word *volksleier* (people's leader) as a significant part of their political terminology, "not unlike the German Nationalists, who used the word *volk* and *volkish* in a special way, evoking a mystical greatness from a Teutonic tradition of military might and glory." In Germany, these words connoted racial exclusiveness and superiority, blood and soil, extreme nationalism and antisemitism. In South Africa, the Nationalists used the word *volk* with overtones which evoked the Voortrekker past, the Afrikaners' separateness and their Calvinism. The *volk*, however, excluded 90% of the Union's population. Of the seventeen million inhabitants, fourteen million could not be part of the *volk* because they were not white; and of the whites, only those who fully subscribed to the policy of Christian Nationalism as determined by the National Party were accepted into the *volk's* exclusive ranks. To this extent, argued Hepple, the Nationalists in South Africa were a more closely knit elite than the Nazis.⁷¹

The Nazis invested considerable resources in the African sub-continent. As Kraus noted,

South Africa seemed a prize catch to Hitler. Here was the nucleus for the vast German colonial empire of which Wilhelm II had once dreamed. He who holds South Africa holds the whole continent below the equator. He also commands

⁷⁰ See Le Roux, *Die 'Gesuiwerde' Nasionale Party, 1935-1940*, pp.56. Le Roux implies that Dr Malan's inimical approach to foreign elements ("volksvreemde elemente") in South Africa was based on beliefs deeply anchored in God and Calvinism, and that therein lay the destiny ("besteming") of an exclusive Afrikaner people ("n eie organise Afrikanervolk"), p.57.

⁷¹ A Hepple, *Verwoerd*, pp.139-140.

the confluence between the Atlantic and the Indian oceans... furthermore, he has the earth's richest gold output.⁷²

While this may be fair comment, Kraus' assertion that because there was more destitution in South Africa as a result of the Depression than in any other developed country, "South Africa fell prey more easily to Nazism"⁷³ than did Germany itself is both inaccurate and far-fetched.

Information concerning the arrival of Nazis into South Africa as early as September 1933 is found in a private letter from Morris Alexander to a Mr Niehaus. Alexander states that he was aware of the landing of two women and three young men (the latter in Nazi uniform), whose ostensible purpose was to attend a forum but who - according to his information - had been sent with written instructions from Germany to organise the Nazi Movement in South West Africa.⁷⁴ Some six weeks later Alexander and the Rev. A.P. Bender, in a joint interview on 27 October 1933, appealed for co-operation to stamp out the antisemitism which was proliferating in the country and to scotch Nazi attempts to rend asunder South Africa's racial harmony.⁷⁵ They accused the German government of sending financial assistance and propagandists - "Nazi agents" - into the Union as "part of a general German plan to Nazify the world" - as Alexander interpreted it. At the same time *The Cape Times* reported that the chairman of a 'Nazi' meeting in the Cape Town suburb of Woodstock was quoted as having said: "I want you clearly to understand that this meeting is purely an antisemitic meeting." He then went on to counsel openly the "killing of the Jews."⁷⁶ Two days later the same newspaper reported the existence of an organisation in Johannesburg "carrying on antisemitic propaganda on a large scale."⁷⁷ Thousands of leaflets bearing Nazi slogans had been distributed in both official languages. The source of the leaflets, however, was unnamed. On the following day *The Cape Times* published a letter from "British Born" stating that he was a passenger on a South African-bound ship together

⁷² Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, p.331.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.330.

⁷⁴ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book. 1932-1934*, List II, letter dated 9.9.1933.

⁷⁵ *The Cape Times*, 28.10.1933. During the interview, Alexander and Bender expressed concern that Nazi agents were distributing enormous quantities of antisemitic literature brought into the country on German ships.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.10.1933.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.10.1933.

with enlisted passengers in Nazi uniform. These men and women had distributed Nazi literature on board.⁷⁸

During the latter months of 1933 a spate of letters, many written by non-Jews, appeared in the South African English-language press. Most of the writers - though by no means all - deplored the Nazi persecution of the Jews in the wake of Hitler's accession to power in Germany. Many criticised the alleged Nazism of Ernst Wilhelm Bohle and Louis T Weichardt.⁷⁹ Anti-Nazi meetings were organised, and at one of these gatherings held in the Johannesburg City Hall, as *The Cape Times* noted, violence broke out. The Police soon began investigating letters and pamphlets which bore the swastika insignia and which warned the Jews to "beware."⁸⁰

Even at this early stage Germany's Nazi movement had established numerous counterpart organisations in South Africa⁸¹ and expressions of disquiet were being voiced by members of the Jewish community and beyond. South African Jews had earlier articulated their concern about the proliferation of antisemitism during the debate over the Quota Bill and in the period which followed. After Hitler came to power in Germany in January 1933, the level of concern immediately increased, although official, organised anti-Jewish groups were only established towards the end of the year. In July 1933 a Jewish doctor, one B Morrison from Dewetsdorp, a small town in the Orange Free State, noted in a letter to Morris Alexander that, while Jews still "enjoy nominal legal equality in this country" and

while, no doubt, our tortured brethren in Germany must envy our lot, still I wonder how many hibernating Hitlers there are in this country. There is a saying in Yiddish: '*as wen shert die shepen tsitteren die lemmer*' [when the sheep is shorn, the lamb trembles.] This old-new resuscitation of the Inquisition only a few days' journey from here has revived in us in no small measure the horror of the Dark Ages. Of course we do get gentle reminders of this now and again. What about the 'Quota Bill'? It did not affect the Jews already domiciled in this country. But it was the way the ugly monster was dragged through Parliament. For instance, the extra dig about ante-dating the

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.10.1933.

⁷⁹ The role of Ernst Wilhelm Bohle in establishing a Nazi presence in South Africa is outlined later in this study, while the position of Louis T Weichardt, leader of the Greyshirts in South Africa, who stood with Malan and others at the forefront of South African antisemitism in the *ante bellum* years, is discussed in sections of this study which follow.

⁸⁰ See for example *The Cape Times*, 1.11.1933 and 2.11.1933.

⁸¹ These organisations are treated in detail in later sections of this study.

enforcement of the Bill by a month – due, I believe, to the extra turn of the wrack by the Member for Ladybrand ...⁸²

There was certainly considerable justification for Dr Morrison's concern. In October 1933, General Smuts, in a brief note to novelist and literary figure, Sarah Gertrude Millin,⁸³ expressed his support for the Jews in the face of the rising tide of anti-Jewish sentiments:

I grieve with you and your people over what is happening. But the Jews of all people should never lose heart. Born to suffering, they have always drawn ... profit from it ... And they will again in this horrible crisis. Meanwhile, let us keep serene and do our duty.⁸⁴

Some seven weeks later, after a considerable increase in antisemitic activity, Smuts, in his capacity as Minister of Justice, performed what he deemed to be his 'duty'. He denounced the Nazi movement in a well-publicised statement, issued on 1 November, 1933. After appealing to South Africans to discourage antisemitism, he issued the following caveat:

I am bound to issue a word of warning to those who take part in this anti-Jewish campaign and thereby ferment feelings of ill-will and unrest between various sections of our South African people. If in future they find themselves unexpectedly in trouble they will have only themselves to blame...

Information reaches me from various parts of the country that attempts are being made to work up anti-Jewish feeling among the public by the dissemination of leaflets and in some case even by holding meetings. Wild charges are made against the Jews as a community, which are calculated to create ill-feeling and racial prejudice, and, in the end, to lead to breaches of the peace.

It is possible that in some cases these charges are merely expression of private spite and personal prejudice. Unfortunately, there are also indications that they represent an organised movement and are the beginnings of a campaign to foster and exaggerate and exploit race feeling and class antipathy among our people. What is even more lamentable is that this movement has its origins

⁸² Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), File 3, January 1929 – June 1939, B Morris to M Alexander, 27.6.1933.

⁸³ Hancock, in *Smuts: The Fields of Force, 1919-1950* (p.290), describes Sarah Gertrude Millin as "a gifted authoress." She was not only Smuts' biographer but also enjoyed a close association with both Smuts and Jan Hofmeyr - the two most ardent political opponents of antisemitism and two of South African's foremost politicians. The extensive correspondence between Millin and Smuts, and between Millin and Hofmeyr, reflects these men's genuine concerns about the proliferation of anti-Jewish sentiment in South Africa among the Right and the Radical Right, as noted earlier.

⁸⁴ S G Millin Collection (A 539), C1, Smuts to Millin, 7.10.1933. [See also Smuts to Millin, 5.10.1933.]

abroad and is an attempt to import into South Africa the alien hatreds and rancour of the Old World, and this too, at a time when the people of South Africa are making a supreme effort to get away from the unhappy racial divisions of the past. I am sure South Africa will set its face against this invasion of hatred and intolerance from aboard.

Hitherto South Africa has, as a whole, been happily free from the taint of antisemitism which has poisoned life in several countries of the Continent of Europe. We do not desire the transplanted of this poisonous weed to South Africa.

Under these circumstances, an earnest appeal is made to all South African of goodwill to discourage this movement which, under various political or economic disguises, is really of a most sinister and dangerous character. I hope that this appeal will be enough.⁸⁵

While it had been Smuts' intention, as he informed Sarah Gertrude Millin a few days after his public statement, to give South Africa's Nazis "a rap over the knuckles" in the belief that they had "become somewhat too vocal",⁸⁶ his actions bore no immediate effect. Yet it appears that he made his statement with considerable reluctance. On the same day the statement was issued, he wrote to Morris Kentridge, expressing the view that "undue publicity does more harm than good in such issues."⁸⁷ The proliferation of antisemitism, however, had apparently brought a change of mind.

There is a plethora of extant data reflecting the intensification of Nazi activities and Germanophilia during the closing months of 1933. Evidence for this is clearly reflected in the proliferation of antisemitic and pro-Nazi activities, particularly in the establishment of the various Shirt organisations. The Jewish community thus had considerable cause for concern about the ramifications of Nazi propaganda for South African Jewry which, wrote Morris Alexander in the closing months of 1933, "are innumerable."⁸⁸ Simpson goes so far as to argue that "Hitler struck at the Union of South Africa" as far back as

⁸⁵ Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, p.166; also *World Conference of Christian and Jews: Memorandum submitted on behalf of the South African delegates on the problems arising from the inroads of Nazism on contemporary thought and practice in South Africa*, p.8. The full text of the statement appeared in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 3.11.1933. For a typewritten transcript, prepared either as draft or media release, see the J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1), DH, 1937-1939.

⁸⁶ S G Millin Collection (A 539), C1, Smuts to Millin, 7.11.1933.

⁸⁷ See Kentridge's article, 'Smuts' Friendship for the Jewish People,' reprinted from *The South African Jewish Times*, in Kentridge, *I Recall*, Appendix III, pp.421-425.

⁸⁸ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (iii), II *Letter Book 1932-1934*, letter to Hillman, Chairman, South African Jewish Board of Deputies, 2.11.1933.

1934,”⁸⁹ even “pumping” carefully selected German nationals into Southern Africa the previous year as part of his sophisticated propaganda machine.⁹⁰ In Simpson’s view, Nazi fifth-column activities in the Union were far more prolific than in any other member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.⁹¹

General Smuts, like the leaders of the Jewish community, was also worried. Some two months after his statement of 1 November 1933, he wrote privately to Sarah Gertrude Millin, conveying his concern while expressing caution about the possible negative ramifications of implementing anti-defamation legislation in South Africa:

...we are dealing with dangerous matters and such caution is demanded of us. Any false step might have most mischievous results. I am in continuous contact with the spokesmen of the Jewish community in Parliament. We all feel that there is a grave risk in legislation which would lead to acrimonious debates at the present juncture. At the same time my hand may be forced by events and in the meantime I can only watch an ugly situation developing.

There is an undercurrent of antisemitism in the country. It is rising to the surface, owing to Hitler's success elsewhere and certain propaganda here. [Yet] it is just possible that the storm may blow over after all, like so many others. Our Jewish friends can gain nothing from undue publicity at present.... I hear the Malanites are going to enhance the antisemitic propaganda and make it one of their [political] planks. All sorts of developments are possible. Patience and watchfulness!⁹²

Jan Hofmeyr, a deeply committed Christian and liberal, recognised with hindsight the extent of Nazi antisemitism imported into South Africa. He argued that the doctrine of the *Herrenvolk* was not confined to Germany but was part of a world phenomenon. Invited in his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Education in the Smuts government to deliver the prestigious inaugural Reinhold Frederick Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé Memorial Lecture in the closing months of the Second World War, he noted:

Similar tendencies were at work in other lands before the war and.... in the very countries that are fighting Germany today, there has in many cases been a strengthening of racist tendencies, with the result that, when the conflict is over,

⁸⁹ J S M Simpson, *South Africa Fights* (Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, London, 1941), p.1.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.5.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.1.

⁹² S G Millin Collection (A 539), C1, Smuts to Millin, 5.2.1934.

we may find that, while we have defeated Nazism in its homeland, our own national life is deeply infected with the germ cells of Nazism... intolerance, racial prejudice, thinking with the blood. If we justify - as we do - our participation in the war on the ground that the corruption of the *Herrenvolk* is a dire threat to Christianity and to human welfare, we must not fail to ask ourselves to what extent a similar conception prevails in our own midst...⁹³

Hofmeyr tended to be far more concerned about the inroads of Nazism and concomitant antisemitic agitation than with the racist attitudes evinced by Afrikaner nationalist extremists.⁹⁴ Yet the impact of Nazism was certainly manifest. There were many protagonists of National Socialism in South Africa, and quite a number of these people held responsible positions. Foremost were Professor Hermann Bohle of the University of Cape Town's Electrical Engineering Department, and his son, Ernest Wilhelm Bohle. Both men were of German extraction. Professor Bohle, leader of the National Committee of Germany's Nazi Party's *Ausland* (Foreign)-Organisation in South Africa from 1932 to 1934, was quite open about his Nazi affiliations. In a letter to *The Cape Times*, he declared:

As far as the doings of real German 'Nazis' in this country are concerned, I take sole and complete responsibility ...All the speaking which has been done has practically (all) been done by me ...I wish to make it quite clear that, as a person of German birth, I consider it may bounden duty to stand up for my country...⁹⁵

Earlier, while describing Hitler, on the eve of his accession to power, as an "outstanding figure," Professor Bohle denied that he was attempting to form "a Hitler Party" in South Africa.⁹⁶

The English press showed little sympathy for the German professor, and *The Cape Times* in its editorial on the following day slated Bohle for open Hitlerism and antisemitism.⁹⁷ Hermann Bohle soon returned to Germany to become chief of the African Division of Dr Haushofer's 'Geopolitical Institute', Hitler's brains trust. Ernst Bohle remained in South Africa, and served as head of the *Ausland's* organisation. He

⁹³ J H Hofmeyr, *Christian Principles and Race Problems: Hoernlé Memorial Lecture 1945* (The Natal Witness, Pietermaritzburg, 1945), p.11.

⁹⁴ Hofmeyr's perspective in this respect is discussed in Chapter 7 of this study.

⁹⁵ *The Cape Times*, 31.10.1933.

⁹⁶ See 'Hitler's work in Germany – Professor H. Bohle Explains' in *The Cape Times*, 4.8.1932. The article was based on a paper prepared by Professor Bohle and read in his absence and on his behalf at the Lunch Club of the Sons of England, a patriotic and benevolent Society for British ex-patriots.

⁹⁷ *The Cape Times*, 1.11.1933. Editorial titled 'Hitler's local voice'.

was later appointed an SS General and, after the Second World War, convicted and sentenced to five years' imprisonment in the Landsberg penal facility located in Landsberg am Lech, Germany at one of the follow-up Nuremberg trials in 1949, but subsequently pardoned.⁹⁸ Both father and son encouraged the emigration to South Africa of numerous Germans, and the only instance of protestation against this was when the South African government rejected entry permits to 4,000 alleged German 'miners' intending to arrive in South West Africa.⁹⁹

On 1 December 1936, Professor Bohle's position as Territorial Leader of the Nazi Party in South Africa was assumed by Dr Bruno Stiller, German Consul in the Union since 1934.¹⁰⁰ Both Bohle and Stiller vehemently opposed the appointment by the German Foreign Office of Baron Otto von Strahl as German Consul in Natal. Von Strahl was an experienced diplomat, but not a Nazi sympathiser. Appointed towards the end of 1935, his refusal to join the Nazi Party and to embrace Nazi ideology made his task a very difficult one. "I was regarded with the gravest suspicion by Party adherents",¹⁰¹ he wrote. Prior to his appointment, he participated in a secret meeting of von Ribbentrop's staff held on 10 October 1935, and chaired by Baron Dürckheim-Montmartin. The meeting, he wrote, gave him "a clear insight into the multifarious plans and designs of the various Nazi organisations in Berlin with regard to South Africa's future."¹⁰²

Several Afrikaans universities became hotbeds of antisemitic and Nazi propaganda. According to Sachs, many professors who had studied at German universities had avidly imbibed the doctrines of Nazism.¹⁰³ Oswald Pirow, leading Nationalist MP and Minister of Justice in the Pact Government, was avowedly sympathetic towards the racial and totalitarian doctrines of Nazism. He had met Hitler and Mussolini¹⁰⁴ and

⁹⁸ Bohle was pardoned after a plea, submitted by general council of the American Civil Liberties Union, Arthur Garfield Hays, a Jew, to United States military officials. The former SS general was the only defendant at the Nuremberg trial, where he appeared with other former Nazis, to plead guilty and was deemed to be at risk from former colleagues, despite precautions taken by the Landsberg prison guards. See *Canadian Jewish Review*, 15.7.1949.

⁹⁹ Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, p.331. See also Simpson *South African Fights*, p.3.

¹⁰⁰ *Der Deutch-Afrikaner*, 16.12.1936.

¹⁰¹ O Von Strahl, *Seven Years As A Nazi Consul*, p.117.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.109.

¹⁰³ Sachs, *The Choice Before South Africa*, p.28

¹⁰⁴ See Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich* (1964 edition) p.57. [In a letter to Sarah Gertrude Millin, Hofmeyr alluded to Pirow's enthusiastic response to the outpouring of Afrikaner national sentiment over the 1938 Voortrekker Centenary, to which brief reference is made later in this study,

spoke only German at home. A right-wing extremist and an antisemite, Nazi antisemitism certainly resonated with him. "I am outspokenly antisemitic", he once wrote. "I firmly believe that if every Jew could disappear from the earth, the world as a whole would be a better place."¹⁰⁵ Pirow, contemptuous not only of Jews but also of all those officially classified as non-whites, was to launch his avowedly fascist, antisemitic organisation, *Die Nuwe Orde* [The New Order] in September 1940 when, together with 16 other Nationalist MPs, he left the National Party to establish a party based on anti-democratic authoritarian principles. He later published a broadsheet titled *Die Nuwe Orde*.¹⁰⁶ *Patria*, the official organ of the South African Fascists, published the following statement – part of a document "successfully obtained" by a Greyshirt¹⁰⁷ spy from the offices of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in Johannesburg:

Pirow is a German by birth and education. Recently he visited Germany, where he was ceremoniously received by Hitler and entertained at Nazi functionsPirow is very enthusiastic about the importation of Germans into the Union and obtaining appointments for them in the Public Service.

The writer goes on to say that "the Greyshirts have Pirow's blessing", and enthusiastic Greyshirt followers hoped that "Pirow would come forward and lead them to victory." The publication, in Afrikaans with an English supplement, vilifies the Jews – "germs of corruption and national decay" - charging them with conducting a "secret Jewish Parliament in South Africa" which influences "the Parliament of the Government", and perpetrating "a series of the most abominable crimes against our land and our unsuspecting people."¹⁰⁸ On the eve of the Second World War, Pirow's daughter, Else, was quoted as having said in London:

My father was a boy in Germany, my grandparents on both sides are Germanat home we speak German.... (and) though I have never been there I feel Germany is home.

claiming that Pirow "is undoubtedly more disturbed than ever before." S G Milan Collection, A539, File C (i), letter from Hofmeyr dated 16.12.1938.] See also *Nuwe Orde vir Suid Afrika*, a pro-fascist publication, in E G Jansen Collection (PV 94), File 173, Crisis-Volksparty.

¹⁰⁵ *Die Nuwe Orde*, 4.10.1945 (leading article: 'The Jewish Problem'). This was the first edition of the broadsheet, which ceased publication in 1948. The English version cited here is housed in the Archives of the Cape Town Jewish Museum, Historical File 300, 'Antisemitism in South Africa'.

¹⁰⁶ A Paton, *Apartheid and the Archbishop: The Life and Times of Geoffrey Clayton*, p.100.

¹⁰⁷ 'Greyshirt'- a member of the antisemitic, pro-Nazi South African National-Socialist Bond. (S.A.N.S.B.). The Greyshirts' radical right-wing antisemitism features prominently in the remainder of this study.

¹⁰⁸ *Patria*, 30.1.1937. [Copy dated Saturday 30 January 1937 and housed in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List IV, Items. 18.] The theft of documents from the Board is discussed later in this study.

Else was on her way to a camp organised by the 'German Women's League' - the '*Deutschen Mädchenbund*'. Her parting remark was, "I am going to try my best to be a good German."¹⁰⁹

A number of Nazi agents and spies were despatched to South Africa. Botany professors, pretending to draw samples of the rare South African flora, sketched bridges, harbours and the location of munitions' dumps. German ethnographers arrived, ostensibly to study the life and habits of the Bushmen.¹¹⁰ Instead they distributed extracts from *Der Stürmer*, the German publication of Julius Streicher, notorious Jew-baiter. Pamphlets which were openly anti-Jewish and pro-Nazi were broadcast throughout the country. The cover would proclaim their contents to be treatises on ancient Japanese customs, or tracts on the mineral resources of Indo-China. But inside would be full-blooded anti-Jewish tirades. According to Simpson, most of the non-Jewish Germans entering South Africa were "true-blue Nazis", who concentrated their efforts on attempts to control the Afrikaans-speaking section of the country - "to woo them to partiality for Germany." The 300,000 "Poor Whites" - most of them Afrikaners - were fertile soil for such propaganda, he writes, adding that literature was distributed at farms, hamlets, and to lonely road gangs, and that slowly the necessary sympathy and fellow-feeling for Germany increased. Recognised members of the Gestapo¹¹¹ and Nazi agents such as Herr Lierau and Jasper (both served with the German Consulate in South Africa) controlled this sort of propaganda, notes Simpson.¹¹² An extract from a letter sent by a Nazi agent to Germany, and intercepted by the Union Intelligence Department, read: "We have got those fools [Afrikaners] eating out of our hands."¹¹³

Emil Wiehl, Germany's consul-general to South Africa from July 1933, maintained a watching brief on the South African Jewish community. In November 1936 he presented an extensive analysis of the South African Jewish community and its concerns about the proliferation of antisemitism and increased Nazi activity. Entitled

¹⁰⁹ *The Daily Express*, 6.6.1939.

¹¹⁰ Kraus, *Old Master, The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, p.333.

¹¹¹ Simpson, *South Africa Fights*, p. 7.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp.7- 8. According to Simpson, Lierau wielded far more power than Herr Leitner, German Plenipotentiary in the Union.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

‘Judenfrage in Südafrika’,¹¹⁴ the report, much of which appears to defy logic, discussed what Wiehl deemed to be the Jews’ disproportionate influence on South Africa’s economy, and the “Jewish dominated press”¹¹⁵ in “one of the most Jewish countries in the world”¹¹⁶ by percentage population. (Wiehl obviously excluded the overwhelming Bantu, Asiatic and Coloured populations from his calculations.) He perceived the Jews to be “a compact, powerful unit”,¹¹⁷ and “the most closed and self-conscious racial group in South Africa,”¹¹⁸ with “a command of public and economic life greater than in any country on earth.”¹¹⁹ Besides their monopoly on industry, especially the gold mines, trade and finance, Jews, he believed, controlled every single important profession. He held further that the Jewish issue was rending South African society asunder. Of note is Wiehl’s comment about the differences between Malan’s antisemitism and that of Nazi Germany. For Germany, the Jewish issue was a comprehensive ‘national-political problem of race’, while Malan’s antisemitism, though also ideologically based, was utilitarian.¹²⁰

In the latter years of the pre-war decade, soon after the Purified National Party had adopted an open policy of antisemitism, J W Gadow, Secretary of the Greenside Branch of the Purified National Party in Johannesburg and would-be Nazi agent, contacted the German Consulate in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, African headquarters of Nazi espionage. “My sentiments”, he wrote, are with Germany.”

I feel that my knowledge of South Africa, its peoples, its political parties, its armaments and defence installations may be of great use to you in Germany. Knowing all sections of the community so intimately, speaking their language fluently, and having access to influential political, military and financial quarters, I feel I would provide information of use to Germany. I know Mr Bruckner de Villiers, who controls *Die Burger*, and on whose behest Dr Malan adopted the policy of open antisemitism. I know Mr Pirow ... I could without difficulty arrange to see the airports at Roberts Heights, or find out more about the great harbour works at Cape Town and their fortifications.¹²¹

¹¹⁴ Citino, *Germany and the Union of South Africa in the Nazi Period*, 78.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.79.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.87.

¹²¹ Kraus, *Old Master, The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, p.336. The letter, read in Parliament in 1938 by Harry Lawrence, Minister of the Interior, was one of similar letters intercepted by the South African

While Gadow's boast may have been far-fetched – Pirow was after all a former Minister of Justice and current Minister of Defence – it was widely known that Pirow openly admired Hitler and the Nazi regime.

A well-known source of antisemitic propaganda directed at South Africa throughout the Hitler era was Zeesen, the German shortwave radio station. From 1933 South African Naziphiles became accustomed to the subtle antisemitic and pro-Hitler utterances of "Naughty Naughty", South Africa's Lord Haw-Haw. These broadcasts, compiled and programmed by especially imported South African personnel, were at first transmitted in the English language. Then on 24 April 1939, Sidney Erich ('Erik') Holm (1907-1996) replaced "Naughty Naughty". Holm was a former Natal teacher of German and a sometime principal of a small private German-language school. His father was a descendant of German migrants to South Africa, his mother was born in Germany, and he had spent many years in Germany working and undertaking post-graduate studies before returning to South Africa in 1934. A dyed-in-the wool Afrikaner, Holm attracted a large South African audience, broadcasting in Afrikaans.¹²² "His speeches", wrote Kraus, "were concealed hymns of hate.... Referring to Smuts as 'Jan Smutskowitz', he excelled in Jew-baiting..." Another prominent South African personality on Zeesen Radio was Kate Voss who went to Berlin for voice-training, and became friendly with Rosenberg, von Ribbentrop, Goebbels and Goering.¹²³ Regular broadcasts from Zeesen were heard by thousands of South Africans, both before and during the Second World War.¹²⁴

authorities. [For a succinct general survey of Nazi propaganda in South Africa, see Archives of the Cape Town Jewish Museum, 'Nazi Foreign Propaganda', Historical Files, 580: Nazism and the Jews.]

¹²² *Die Nuwe Orde*, 26.9.1946. [See also C Marx, *Oxwagon Sentinel: Radical Afrikaner Nationalism and the History of the Ossewa Brandwag* (University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2008), p.519. Marx states that Erich Holm was recruited by German agents, was a radical antisemite despite his Jewish ancestry, and delivered "vicious antisemitic attacks in his speeches."]

¹²³ Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, p.342. See Simpson, *South African Fights*, p.15; and A Hagemann, *Antisemitism in South Africa During World War II: A Documentation; The Cape Argus*, 9.1.1936 carried a report about a reception for South African students held in Berlin and attended by Dr S.F.N. Gie, Union Minister to Berlin (*sic*), at which a certain Mr Hiemstra, on behalf of the guests, said that "the South Africans were proud of the large proportion of German blood in their veins." The paper reported that Catherine Voss (Kate Voss) entertained the gathering by singing.

¹²⁴ See unpublished typescript, 'Memoranda Prepared by Lieut. & Signalling Officer H Chas Manley, Reserve of Officers, Union Defence Force, Cape Town, on Enemy Radio Propaganda and Suggested Means of Nullifying its Effects Upon Union Listeners, 15.1.1940,' in Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List IV, No, 24.

The South African Nazis appear to have aped their European counterparts.¹²⁵ In March 1937, a secret Nazi tribunal was held in Cape Town where a man who occupied a prominent position in South African mining circles was summoned by the Nazi Party to answer for his "anti-Nazi conduct".¹²⁶ Less than a week later, replying to questions asked in Parliament by Duncan Burnside, General Hertzog declared that a court case was pending against the German press agency, Africopa, and other persons, apparently relating to the secret tribunal.¹²⁷

The Nazi government set up a host of agencies and institutes, disposing of enormous sums of money, enjoying the support of every Nazi propaganda department and co-operating with fascist and antisemitic associations abroad. Among these organisations, all of which served to inform the South African anti-Jewish groups, were 'The Anti-Jewish World League', the 'Aryan-Christian Alliance', the 'Anti-Comintern League', the Hamburg-based 'Fichte Bund' which had been established in January 1914, the 'Institute for the Jewish Questions' which operated from Berlin, the 'Institute for the History of the New Germany', which was established in Munich and the most formidable, the *Welt Dienst* [World Service] publications. This organisation, based in Erfurt and spearheaded by Lt-Col (retd.) Ulrich Fleischauer, produced prolific quantities of antisemitic literature, much of which found its way to South Africa.¹²⁸ On the eve of the Second World War, an article appeared in the *Deutsche Afrika-Post*, published in Johannesburg, claiming that younger nationalists, almost all of them Afrikaners, were "all particularly strongly antisemitic". The writer went on to state that

...in the interests of South Africa, Jewry must be put energetically in its place...
The present government stands totally under Jewish influence...¹²⁹

¹²⁵ See L Golding, *The Jewish Problem* (Penguin Books Limited, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, February, 1949) for a general overview of Nazi Fifth Column activities in South Africa, pp.145-146.

¹²⁶ *The Sunday Tribune*, 14.3.1937.

¹²⁷ *The Cape Times*, 20.3.1937. There appears, however, to be no further reference in the press to the secret tribunal.

¹²⁸ J B Lunn, *Treachery and Anti-Semitism*, (Hutchinson and Co Ltd, London, c. 1941), pp.8-9; 14-15. See also G A Mintzer and N Levy, *The International Antisemitic Conspiracy* (American Jewish Committee, New York, 1946), pp.21-29, a publication housed in the Archives of the Cape Town Jewish Museum, Historical File 300, 'Antisemitism in South Africa'. According to Mintzer and Levy, by 1 July 1937 *Welt Dienst* was being published in eight languages. More languages were added later. Mintzer and Levy (page 29) quote the Greyshirts' edition of *Die Waarheid*, 10.7.1937, in which the Jews were accused of ritual murder on the annual Jewish festival of Purim. Ulrich Fleischauer, according to Mintzer and Levy, was succeeded as publisher of *Welt Dienst* by A Schirmer on 15 September 1939.

¹²⁹ *Deutsche Afrika-Post*, 5.7.1939.

A real hot-bed of Nazi activities and antisemitism was the mandate territory of South West Africa – present-day Namibia - which, prior to the First World War, had been a German colony.¹³⁰ The knowledge that South West Africa (which had formerly been bound to the Fatherland, and a region where a large population of German-speaking people resided) was no longer part of the great German Empire, rankled with Nazi imperialists.¹³¹ As early as 1926, Germans in South West Africa had called for the return of that territory to Germany. Thereafter, there had been racial clashes on issues such as the status of the German language and naturalisation laws. The Cape Town Agreement, reached in 1932 between the warring factions, proved an ineffective compromise.¹³²

In 1929, Nazis began their activities proper in the mandated territory. After January 1933, when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, their operations increased considerably. Nazi organisations in South West Africa (the N.S.D.A.P.) were in “close connection with the Nazi party in Germany”, and the Deutsche Bund, which had formerly existed as a German cultural organisation, adopted an open political policy.¹³³ Morris Alexander held that South West Africa was “the spearhead of Nazism” in South Africa.”¹³⁴ In July 1933, a certain Dr Brenner arrived in South West Africa from

¹³⁰ See Kentridge, *I Recall*, p.275.

¹³¹ The introductory chapter of this thesis makes reference to Robert Citino’s 1991 study of Nazi Germany’s foreign policy towards South Africa, titled *Germany and the Union of South Africa in the Nazi Period*. As noted, the author traces the relationship between the two countries, based almost solely on reports by German diplomats. P S Joubert’s chapter in an unpublished thesis, *Partypolitieke Groepering In Suidwes-Afrika Sedert 1919* [Party Political Grouping in South–West Africa since 1915] 1915 (MA, University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein, 1959), provides documentation emphasising Nazi influence and the widespread acceptance of the Führer Principle (see chapter 9 – ‘Die Invloed Van Die NSDAP Op Die Duitse Seksie’), and focuses on the influence of the Nazis on the German community in the mandate territory. Surprisingly, however, Joubert makes no mention of antisemitic activity.

¹³² Union of South Africa, *Report of South West Africa Commission* (U.G. 26-1936), presented to the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa in March 1936 and to the Union Parliament on 12 June 1936, paragraph 255. For a typescript summary of the Report, see ‘South West Africa Commission Report: Summary of Findings and Recommendations’, CXXIV/13, 3, Aliens Bill and Report of the South West Africa Commission, 1936 (annotated), File/Doc 34 [1936]. See also *Friends of Europe: Nazi Activities in South West Africa* – a publication (Friends of Europe, London, c.1936) of Section XI of Chapter V of the more-than 100 pages of the original report, with headings added for clarification, and a Foreword by The Rt. Hon. Lord Lugard.

¹³³ Round Table, *The Round Table: A Quarterly Review of the Politics of the British Commonwealth*, Vol.25, December 1934 – September 1935, p.426. See also Vol.26, December 1935 – September 1936, p.779.

¹³⁴ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(iii), List II, *Letter Book 1932-1934*, Letter to Mr Wasserstein, 17.1.1934.

Germany, armed with powers and funds for the Nazification of all German institutions in South West Africa. Employing would-be dictatorial means, he dragooned all German institutions into the Nazi complex. The schools became nurseries for the cultivation of Nazi recruits and children of school-going age became members of the Hitler Jugend (Youth). A uniformed 'Women's Federation' (B.d.M) – a league for young Nazi girls – was also established.¹³⁵

In November 1934, less than two years after Hitler had become German Chancellor and only three months after he had assumed the title of Führer, Prime Minister Hertzog was able to conclude:

The Nazi organisation in South West Africa is a branch of the so-called 'Landesgruppe' of the National Socialist Labour party in Germany. The party is... identical with the German State and Government. The territorial leader of the N.S.D.A.P. in South West Africa is appointed by the external division of the party in Germany, the head of which stands directly under the leader-in-chief. For Major Weigel, the leader of the group, and for his predecessor, Herr Wandke, South West Africa is a bit of German territory. The struggle for the freedom of Germany, therefore, comprises for them a return of the territory to Germany.¹³⁶

Hertzog was perhaps more concerned with the future of a lucrative territory, rich in diamonds and mandated to South Africa, than with the nature and consequences of Nazi ideology or antisemitic activities. This view could certainly be upheld if his attitude towards the Jews of South Africa, expressed in 1937 during the debate in Parliament on the Aliens Bill and Jewish immigration is taken into consideration.¹³⁷ The Malanites, however, were favourably disposed to handing South West Africa to Nazi Germany. Reporting on the Rand Congress of the Purified National Party held on 7 October 1937 at which the Party resolved to support Hitler's demand for the return of former German colonies, *The Pretoria News* suggested in a leading article that, "having come out into the open as an antisemitic party", consistency demanded that the Purified Nationalists

¹³⁵ Union of South Africa, *Report of South West Africa Commission* (U.G. 26-1936) paragraphs 264 and 268. See also Joubert: *Partypolitieke Groepering In Suidwes-Afrika Sedert 1915*, p.153.

¹³⁶ *Round Table, Round Table, A Quarterly Review of the Politics of the British Commonwealth*, Vol.25, December 1934 – September 1935, p.426.

¹³⁷ Hertzog's outburst against Jewish immigration during the debate on the Aliens Bill, a rather bizarre interlude during which the Prime Minister revealed his hand and went against the policy of the Government outlined earlier by Deputy Prime Minister Smuts while Hertzog was absent from the House of Parliament, is discussed later in this study.

“should take the next step by going Nazi.”¹³⁸ There was certainly some truth to this. The Labour Party’s response was swift. Within days of the pro-Nazi resolution passed by the Gesuiwerdes, a 2,000-strong mass meeting of the Labour Party, held in Johannesburg, passed a resolution expressing alarm at “the application of Nazi and Fascist principles in South Africa by the ...Purified National Party” and warning South Africans “to be on guard against dictatorship ideas...which exploit the emotions of the people.”¹³⁹

The Labour Party had cause for concern, given the rapid inroads of National-Socialism into South West Africa. As early as 7 February 1934, an order issued in Hamburg had enjoined each Nazi officer in South West Africa to swear to “bear unbreakable allegiance to Adolf Hitler and yield unconditional obedience to leaders appointed by him.”¹⁴⁰ The organisation and dissemination of antisemitic and Nazi propaganda was deemed so successful early on in the piece that Major H. Weigel was able to write in June 1934 that “the German Empire and the N.D.S.A.P. are one today...”¹⁴¹ The Criminal Law Amendment Act of February 1934, however, empowered the South African-appointed Administrator for South West Africa to declare as illegal any political organisation which, in his opinion, was detrimental to peace and order. Consequently, in July 1934 the headquarters of the Nazi and the Hitler youth movements were raided by the police. Important documentary evidence was seized, the Hitler Jugend was promptly banned and its leader, Captain Erich von Lossmitzer, was expelled from the country. In October 1934, Dr G E Conradie, Administrator for South West Africa, declared all Nazi organisations to be illegal, and the Nazi Territorial Leader, Major Weigel, was given three weeks to leave the country.¹⁴² In a subsequent clarification, the South African Department of External Affairs issued an official statement on 24 November 1934, which read in part:

The Administrator of South-west Africa had no other choice but to declare the 'Landesgruppe' of the National Socialist German Labour party a prohibited

¹³⁸ *The Pretoria News*, 8.10.1937.

¹³⁹ *The Daily Mail*, 13.10.1937.

¹⁴⁰ Union of South Africa, *Report of South West Africa Commission* (U.G. 26-1936), paragraph 270. The annexures to the Report, in German with English translations, reflect the inordinate extent to which the Nazis had already made inroads into South Africa by the mid-1930s.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, paragraphs 267 and 270.

¹⁴² Round Table, *The Round Table*, A Quarterly Review of the Politics of the British Commonwealth, Vol.25, December 1934 – September 1935, p.427.

association, and to order Major Weigel, leader of the party in the territory, to leave the country... There is no scope in the minds of members of the party, and of the German-speaking inhabitants under their influence, for loyalty to any authority or community other than the German nation – a state of affairs that the Union Government can only contemplate with alarm. If the object of the party had been achieved, then the German State and Government would have had at its disposal an organisation controlling the whole of the German-speaking population in South West Africa. It is clear that the Union Government could not allow such an organisation of a foreign State in the mandated territory.¹⁴³

Yet, despite the suppression of the South West African Nazi organisation, it appears that the position did not alter. Members of the 1936 South West African Commission reported that “Nazi activities continue in disguise, and politically [they] have concentrated themselves behind the cover of the Deutsche Bund.” The latter organisation had not been banned, having couched its real intentions under the pretext that its purpose was purely cultured. Documents examined by the Commission revealed clearly that Nazi elements were still hard at work. In a letter written by a Nazi officer to a subordinate subsequent to the imposition of Conradie’s ban, the Nazi leader was still able to write that the Nazis’ object in South West Africa was “to drum Hitler’s programme into the Germans here... The territorial group,” he said, “still keeps in touch with the authorities in the homeland.”¹⁴⁴ According to Vernon Barber, the Commission proved “up to the hilt that high authorities of the Nazi Party in Germany, and even the Reich Foreign Office” had instructed “naturalised British subjects in South-West Africa how to act politically and how to conduct themselves in other ways.”¹⁴⁵ In his view, Nazi activities in the mandated territory amounted “to a complete dictatorship of speech and action” of German-speaking residents.¹⁴⁶

Discrimination against Jews appeared rampant. A front-page 1936 report in *The Forward* under the heading “Non-Germans Sacked from German Stores: A Foreign Atmosphere” is typical of developments in the mandate: shop assistants who could not speak German were dismissed; a Jewish doctor “had lost ninety per cent of his German patients”; and, according to the report, “the spirit of Hitler is alive in South West

¹⁴³ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24.11.1934.]

¹⁴⁴ Round Table, *The Round Table*, A Quarterly Review of the Politics of the British Commonwealth Vol.26, December 1934 – September 1935, p.779.

¹⁴⁵ V A Barber, ‘Nazi Activity in South Africa’, in *The National Review*, Vol.CVII, July - December 1936 (Published by the Proprietors, London) p.347.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Africa.”¹⁴⁷ Two years later, the same publication levelled an invective against South Africa’s Nazis and Nazism generally in the aftermath of Germany’s Anschluss with Austria, which the publication described as a “shameless rape.”¹⁴⁸

Senior officials from Nazi Germany such as Gedat, a Christian missionary, and Diverge (the latter a member of the Gestapo and associate editor of the *Swarze Corps*, the official organ of Hitler’s Blackshirts) continued their frequent visits to South West Africa during the latter years of the nineteen thirties. Their purpose was not only to encourage the escalation of Nazi activities, but also to supply the German Government with reports on the conduct of German nationals.¹⁴⁹ A report by *The Star’s* Windhoek correspondent in February 1937 reveals that the Nazi movement in South West Africa was at that time far stronger than it had been prior to its prohibition. Terrorism prevailed, and anyone showing antagonism towards Nazi principles found themselves boycotted and socially ostracised.¹⁵⁰

With the approach of the Second World War, Nazi activities in South West Africa did not decrease. The Report of the South West Africa Commission (1936) may have been “one of the most remarkable blue books ever published by the Government of the Union of South Africa,”¹⁵¹ but little was done to curb Nazi activities. Three months of intensive investigations by the President of the Commission, Mr Justice Van Sly, and by his assistants, Dr M E Holloway and Mr Justice van der Heever, only served to expose the situation, but had scant effect on the activities of South West Africa’s Nazi sympathisers.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), A (iii), File 63. Newspaper cutting, *The Forward*, 17.1.1936.

¹⁴⁸ Publication reprinted from *The Forward*, c. March 1938, by Forward Press Ltd., ‘entitled ‘German Nazis Organise in South Africa: Party Groups Spread Subversive Propaganda – Grave Menace To Union Security’. Copies housed in the Archives of the Cape Town Jewish Museum, file: ‘Antisemitism in South Africa’, and in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i), Box 1934-1941, Folder 29-1938.

¹⁴⁹ J S M Simpson, *South Africa Fights*, pp.6-7.

¹⁵⁰ *The Star*, 27.2.1937.

¹⁵¹ Barber, ‘Nazi Activity in South Africa’, in *The National Review*, Vol.CVII, July to December 1936, p.347.

¹⁵² See D J Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Policies and National Identity in Namibia* (Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio, 2002), Chapter 9, ‘National Socialism, Politics and German Identity’, which provides a balanced overview of Nazism in South West Africa between 1932 and 1939. Walther, however, makes scant mention of antisemitism. See pp.166 ff.

Towards the end of 1938, while the Union Parliament was engrossed in an acrimonious debate on the defence issue, the Germans in South West Africa took advantage of the perceived weakness of the Government. A 'German South West African League' was founded in Windhoek, and when Dr Conradie requested permission to ban it, Hertzog only allowed him to forbid civil servants from joining any political organisation. Encouraged by this, Manie Maritz – the former rebel of 1914¹⁵³ and prominent member of South Africa's antisemitic Blackshirt organisation, to which reference is made later in this study – returned from Germany to South West Africa as an agent of Hitler, and in 1939 published his virulently antisemitic book, *My Lewe en Strewe*. In this book Maritz's diatribes against the Jews are prolific. The Jew is referred to as "die verborge hand... besig om Suid-Afrika in hul doodsgreep vas te klou"... "die hoofstokers van die Transvaalse oorlog"... 'n lafaard en 'n leuenaar gebore."¹⁵⁴ Maritz fills much of the book quoting the Bible in an effort to justify his anti-Jewish proclivities. He reproduces text from the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, and claims that this well-known quintessential antisemitic publication was not a forgery. He was tried in court for these utterances, but was only fined £75. Encouraged by the leniency of the judiciary towards Maritz, leader of the *Deutscher Südwestbund*, Dr Hans Hirsekorn, Hitler's appointed 'gauleiter' for South West Africa who had recently returned from Europe, then called upon all the territory's 8,500 Germans to enrol in a "German Fighting League."¹⁵⁵

On the evening of 15 March 1939, when Hitler's occupation of Prague became known, the streets of Windhoek, capital of South West Africa, were crowded with German enthusiasts. Dr von Oelhaven, a former German Consul in Windhoek, told a meeting of Germans that evening: "If you trust the Führer and rely on him, he will keep his pledge and liberate us in South West Africa." A 'putsch' had been organised for Hitler's

¹⁵³ Manie Maritz (1876-1940) was an Afrikaner general who had fought during the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). In September 1914 he led an unsuccessful, short-lived pro-German rebellion shortly after South Africa, as a member-state of the British Empire, had joined forces with Britain and her allies against Germany after the outbreak of the First World War. With the defeat of his 12,000-strong rebel force on 24 October 1914, Maritz took refuge among Germans in South West Africa.

¹⁵⁴ [Translation: The hidden hand...busy grasping South Africa in their death-grip...the chief instigators (*sic*) of the Transvaal War (i.e. the First Boer War, 1880-1881)...a born coward and a liar.] M Maritz, *My Lewe en Strewe*, [My Life and Struggle] (Gepubliseer en Uitgegegee deur General Manie Maritz, Pretoria, 1938). pp.97-102.

¹⁵⁵ Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, pp.338-339. See also J. Burger [*pseud.* for Leopold (Leo) Marquard, *The Black Man's Burden* (Victor Gollancz Ltd, London, 1943), p.228.

birthday, 20 April. The plan was to seize Walvis Bay. Hertzog, who always appeared reluctant to take any positive action against the Nazis, did nothing when the possible insurrection became known, but Smuts suppressed it with a force of 300 South African policemen, and thereafter established a Burgher Force in the territory to maintain a watchful eye on any further Nazi developments.¹⁵⁶ Plans for a general pro-Nazi uprising to spread throughout South Africa were reported in the press in November 1939, two months after South Africa declared war against Germany. The uprising never materialised.¹⁵⁷

The Nazis had encouraged the proliferation of what Brian Bunting calls “the grosser forms of racialism,” particularly among Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans.¹⁵⁸ Together with the domestic forces discussed here, Nazi ideology was to fuel Malan’s and his followers’ adoption of antisemitism as an official plank in the National Party’s platform - a significant feature of aggressive right-wing Afrikaner nationalism.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, the seeds of Nazism had become deeply embedded in South African soil, augmenting the antisemitic climate which prevailed in the country prior to the inroads made by Nazi ideology. For South African Jewry, this presented cause for considerable concern.

¹⁵⁶ Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, pp.340-341.[In his 1943 work, *South of the Congo* (Random House, New York, 1943), journalist and foreign correspondent Selwyn James reported on his three-week visit to South West Africa (pp.210 *et seq.*) on the eve of the planned *putsch*. The text, which includes damning attacks on Malan and Hertzog, is a veritable anti-Nazi and anti-Afrikaner, and oft-sensationalist diatribe. It should be treated by historians with considerable circumspection.]

¹⁵⁷ *The Star*, 5.11.1939; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 6.11.1939. [Adam Payne’s article, ‘Nazi Plot in South Africa: The Amazing Story of Nazi Activities in South Africa and a Plot for an Armed Rising on the Outbreak of War,’ *Pyramid War Special Number 3* (published by Strand-London, Todd Magazines, c.1950s) was not obtainable for the study.] One of the tasks of the Nazi government after the outbreak of war was to establish links with Nazi sympathisers and the Radical Right in South Africa. For an account of these activities, see for example K Federowich, ‘German Espionage and British Counter-Intelligence in South Africa and Mozambique, 1939-1944’, *The Historical Journal*, Volume 48, Issue 01, 21 March 2005 (Cambridge University Press, UK), pp. 209-230.

¹⁵⁸ Bunting, *The Rise of the South Africa Reich* (1964 edition), p.57.

¹⁵⁹ The formalisation of an official published antisemitic policy by Dr Malan and his party is discussed later in this study.

CHAPTER SIX

THE RADICAL RIGHT

While this study holds that antisemitism in South Africa was evident in Afrikaner nationalist consciousness and that it predated the advent of Nazism, there is no gainsaying that Nazi influence was of significant import in the history of South African antisemitism after 1933. The impact of National Socialism was particularly - but not exclusively - reflected in the ranks of the Radical Right and the organised antisemitic Shirt movements. These movements first appeared on the South African scene in March 1933, several weeks after the Nazi Party, with its official anti-Jewish platform, assumed power in Germany. In their initial stages the Shirt organisations conducted their operations underground, but the agitation came into the open in organised and public form in the second half of 1933.¹ Most of the antisemitic movements in the Union tended to overlap. Several amalgamated soon after inception, and it is thus sometimes difficult to distinguish between the different organisations. Many protagonists of "Shirtism" – the omnibus term for the uniformed antisemitic movements – had multi-affiliations. All subscribed to an extremist agenda underscored by Afrikaner nationalism.

Undoubtedly the most organised and most prominent of these uniformed groups was the "Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Sosialistiese Bond" (S.A.N.S.B.), known also as the South African National Party, and commonly referred to as the Greyshirts. The S.A.N.S.B. only came into existence under that name in May 1934. Prior to this change in nomenclature it had been called, since its inception in October 1933, the South African Gentile (Christian) National Socialist Movement – the S.A.G. (C.)N.S. The Greyshirts served as its "advance guard". About the organisation's early beginnings, and the immediate reaction to it, Louis Theoder Weichardt – the founder – wrote:

In 1924, after many years of absence in Europe, I returned to my native land of South Africa, and immediately threw myself into political life. From then, till 1933, I struggled, within the ranks of one of the then existing political parties,

¹ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa*, p.3.

to propagate the principles of National Socialism, but found myself checkmated at every turn by powerful financial interests, predominantly Jewish. Finally, in October of the last-mentioned year, having convinced myself that the struggle was absolutely futile under the prevailing party system, I came out openly as the founder of a new non-political body called the South African Gentile (Christian) National Socialist Movement...

His movement, he wrote, was

greeted with a howl of rage from South African Jewry and likewise from those renegade Europeans ('Gentile Hoggenheimers', as they are commonly called) who include the greater number of our professional politicians and who show more diligence and zeal than even the Jews themselves in exploiting and oppressing the unhappy South African people. The Jewish and Jew-controlled press assailed me with a virulence probably unparalleled in the whole of South African history.²

Born in Paarl on 21 May 1894, Weichardt was the principal architect of the Greyshirts' antisemitic policies. A Cape Town hairdresser of German-born parents,³ but a British subject, at the outbreak of the First World War Weichardt had elected to fight in the German ranks against the British. He served for three years and three months, and was discharged as a corporal after being seriously wounded.⁴

The Greyshirt movement was established in the Cape with its headquarters at 166 Longmarket Street, Cape Town. Frikkie J Du Toit was the Organising Secretary. Greyshirt branches or 'cells' existed throughout the Union, with local secretariats in many urban centres. The Natal Branch, at first organised by Raymond K Rudman, and after 1936 under the leadership of Dr Stoffberg of Vryheid, was one of the most

² L T Weichardt, 'National Socialism in South Africa', *Fascist Quarterly*, October 1936 (British Union of Fascism, London) p.557. [*The Fascist Quarterly* (1935-1936), which later became *The British Union Quarterly*, was the theoretical journal of the British Union of Fascists. It was edited by John Angus Macnab (1906-1977), a member of the British Union of Fascists and a founder, with William Joyce ('Lord Haw Haw'), of the avowedly pro-Nazi National Socialist League.]

³ Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, p.334. (Weichardt died on 26 October 1985.)

⁴ For a brief background to Weichardt's early life, see SANSB: *Die Plan En Die Man Vir Die Volk Van Suid-Afrika: Beleidsverklaring van die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale - Sosialistiese Bond (Gryshemde)*. [Translation: 'The Plan And The Man For The People Of South Africa Policy: Statement of the South African National Socialist League (Greyshirts)' (A L de Jong Drukpers (Eiendoms), Robertson, nd).] See also Juta, *Aspects of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1900-1964: An Analysis*, p.271. An almost verbatim version of Juta's summary of Weichardt's early years appears in D M Scher, 'Louis T. Weichardt and the South African Greyshirt Movement', *Kleio*, 18:1, 1986, (UNISA Press, Pretoria, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00232088685310051>, accessed 9.12.2012), p.67.

active sections of the organisation. Its offices were located at Maritzburg.⁵ The official organ of the S.A.N.S.B. was a fortnightly newspaper, printed in Stellenbosch in both official languages by the Pro-Ecclesia Press, entitled *Die Waarheid* or *The Truth*.⁶ With its masthead, printed in Gothic characters and flanked by swastikas, the publication, from its first issue on 23 February 1934 to its last issue, dated 29 July 1938, was blatantly antisemitic, pro-Nazi, fiercely nationalistic and fostered the supremacy of South Africa's white population.

J H H de Waal Jnr, a radical Afrikaner nationalist and at that time a practising solicitor in Hopefield, founded an openly antisemitic organisation in Malmesbury, Cape, in the same month that the Greyshirts were established. Styled 'The Anti-Jewish Association', the group soon merged with the Greyshirts.⁷ The Association's founder later wrote *My Ontwaking*, possibly the most antisemitic text published in South Africa during the *ante bellum* period. Based on Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, the book is replete with material from *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*.⁸

While the Greyshirts were the principal antisemitic organisation reflecting the extra-parliamentary views of the Radical Right and were active throughout the country, especially in the Cape Province, similar organisations were established, albeit on a somewhat smaller scale, beyond the Cape borders. The South African National Democratic Bond Movement (S.A.N.D.B.), for example, was active in the Transvaal, inaugurated at an open-air meeting in Vrededorp on 16 August 1934. With its headquarters in Johannesburg, the organisation, commonly known as the Blackshirts, was led by the chairman of the executive, H J 'Mannie' Wessels.⁹ Inaugural addresses, before a crowd of over 2,000 people, consisted of appeals to

⁵ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa*, p.4. Rudman, who later joined the Malanites, remained a fervent votary of fascist ideology and Afrikaner nationalism and, from his base in Natal, produced a number of antisemitic publications, several of which are listed in the bibliography at the end of this study. See for example *England Under the Heel of the Jew, Book 2*, and *The whole world is crying 'To Madagascar with the Jews'* (issued by *Die Boerenasie* which styled itself as the only registered anti-Communist and anti-Jewish organisation in South Africa.) See also an 11-page pamphlet by Rudman, housed in the E H Louw Collection (PV 4), 108, titled "Warning to Christian Races of South Africa (European)." The pamphlet is replete with quotations from the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* and other antisemitic tracts.

⁶ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa*, p.4.

⁷ The only reference to this organisation appears to be an unpublished typescript, 'A Memorandum on the Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa', p.5, in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List 4, No.24. [Reference to this document appears later in this chapter.]

⁸ Reference to *My Ontwaking* [My Awakening] appears elsewhere in this study.

⁹ *The Cape Times*, 16.8.1934.

South Africa's Christian churches to assist the newly established movement to free the country from the Jews' alleged "stranglehold" on the commercial life of the country.¹⁰ The movement extended its activities to the Orange Free State and published a newspaper, *Ons Reg* [Our Right], at Ermelo from time to time.

An offshoot of this movement, styled 'Die Volksbeweging' [The People's Movement], was established in the Transvaal under the leadership of Chris Havemann, a one-time associate of Wessels.¹¹ Members also donned Blackshirt uniforms. At its first public meeting, held in Vrededorp on 24 August 1934, verbal attacks were levelled against the Jews.¹² After a short spell of two years, the Blackshirts fell into financial difficulties, and the movement, beset by petty power struggles for control of its leadership, found itself on the point of collapse. In an attempt to heal the breach, Wessels, chairman of the Supreme Council of the S.A.N.D.B., appealed to all South African Christians to attend the organisation's Christian National People's Congress, to be held on 18 and 19 December in Potchefstroom. "Do not let party differences keep us away from the Congress", he wrote. The remainder of his appeal was an invective, for the most part, against the Jews. The "international Jewish Capitalist" was accused of holding 96% of South Africa's farmers to ransom through a process of enforced over-capitalisation and monopolisation, and of monopolising the country's credit system, livestock and produce market, commerce and 99% of the Union's wholesale butchers. According to Wessels, Jews were responsible for the country's Poor White problem and had been granted control by the government, through unscrupulous means of the banking system, including the Reserve Bank, "which is really Oppenheimer's institution to create paper money on the nation's credit in favour of the national Jewish capitalist and at the cost of the Afrikaner nation."¹³ By September 1936 the Blackshirt Movement was on the point of

¹⁰ *The Cape Argus*, 'Anti-Semitic meeting at Vrededorp', 16.8.1934, press cutting in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(i), Jewish Board of Deputies, File 3, January, 1929 – June, 1939.

¹¹ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa*, p.4.

¹² *The Cape Times*, 25.8.1934.

¹³ 'A Call to every Christian Father, Mother, Son and Daughter in the Union of South Africa to attend the Christian National People's Congress of the South African National Democratic Movement to be held in Potchefstroom on December 18th and 19th, 1935.' Typescript - distributed by H J Wessels, S.A.N.D.B., 1935, in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List 4, 24. [The 'Oppenheimer' to whom Wessels referred is Sir Ernest Oppenheimer (1880-1957), a German-born Jewish entrepreneur, financier and philanthropist who controlled De Beers Consolidated Ltd., and founded the Anglo-American Corporation.]

collapse.¹⁴ According to *The Sunday Express*, they amalgamated with the Greyshirts in October 1936, under the name of the 'South African National Gentile Fascist Society'.¹⁵

A somewhat smaller anti-Jewish organisation, headed by H S Terblanche, was 'The People's Movement'. Its headquarters were located in Cape Town. This group, though apparently small in number, distributed hundreds of antisemitic leaflets and flyers, mainly directed at inciting hatred for the Jew among the economically depressed classes in the urban and particularly rural areas. Their principal propaganda medium was titled *Terre-Blanche*, named apparently after its leader, and meaning 'white land', illustrating its racial underpinnings. Based largely on the lines of *Die Waarheid*, and often emulating *Der Stürmer*, this publication was openly

The document makes the spurious claim that "the ratio between the two sections of the White population is Jews - 7.5%; Christians 92.5%?" and then proceeds to produce the following bizarre table:

	Jews per 100	Christians per 100
Licensed Liquor Trade at Hotels	90	10
Unemployed	0	100
Wholesale Butchers	99	1
Retail Butchers	95	5
Wholesale Merchants (Import)	90	10
Retail Trade (General)	90	10
Poor Whites	0	100
Theatres and Bioscopes [Cinemas]	100	0
Joiners and Bricklayers	1	99
Attorneys and Advocates	65	35
Labour (Heavy Work)	0	100
Medical Professional (Doctors and Dentists)	70	30
Press and Wireless	90	10
Mine Workers (Mine Captains and Shift Bosses)	1	99
Stock Exchange	97	3
Controllers and Shareholders in Gold Mines	75	25
Controllers of Diamonds and Diamond Mines	99	1

The foregoing list, with another ten categories in similar vein, is replicated in a publication, "compiled and presented" by R Rudman, Provincial Leader, Natal Province, of the South African National Socialist Movement (South African National Party). Probably issued in 1934, the booklet is replete with material from the *Protocol of the Elders of Zion*, *inter alia*. The front cover exhorts the reader to "study diligently the *amazing* factors (*sic*) mentioned herein and lend to your friends - but not to Ikey!" ['Ikey' is a pejorative term for 'Jew.']

¹⁴ The *Deutsche Afrika-Post* (a South African German weekly, opposed to Nazism and the various Shirt movements), 30.9.1936.

¹⁵ *The Sunday Express*, 25.10.1936

antisemitic, and often gave prominence to the more pornographic elements of Jew-baiting, with detailed descriptions of Jewish businessmen who lure the Gentile shop assistants into sexual traps.¹⁶ H S Terreblanche had been a Greyshirt leader. However, he had broken with Weichardt because of the latter's close affinity with a non-South African organisation – the German Nazi movement.¹⁷ He formally resigned his Greyshirt membership on 4 November 1933, reported almost three months later without comment in *Die Waarheid*.¹⁸

Other small-scale movements also existed, thriving purely on financial assistance rendered by antisemitic sympathisers. One such organisation was the 'National Workers' Union' (the 'Bond van Nasionale Werkers') more commonly known as the 'Brownshirts' established in Pretoria in September 1934. Its adherents, in emulation of the Nazis, adopted badges, salutes, signs, codes and passwords. Members wore brown shirts and green ties, deemed to symbolise solidarity. Their main goal was to rid the Union of exploiters – "those living on the sweat and blood of South Africans."¹⁹ The Brownshirts enjoyed a life-span of only two years. In November 1936, its leader and Organising-Secretary, T J Kruger, announced the movement's disbandment, and all members and officials were released from their allegiance.²⁰

Finally, there were 'The South African Fascists' and the 'Gentile Protection League'. The former – under the leadership of Johannes von Strauss von Moltke, a person closely associated with Weichardt – operated mainly in the Eastern Cape Province and the Orange Free State. Its headquarters were at Aberdeen. The latter was established by J H H de Waal, Jnr, who was also at one time associated with Louis Weichardt, but who broke away from him in January 1935 to form the 'Gentile Protection League'. The reason given for the establishment of the breakaway body was a desire to be free from the political character of the Greyshirts in order to concentrate all efforts exclusively towards the eradication of the "Jewish menace" from South African life. The League's "Programme of Principles", comprising a brief statement followed by eight clauses, was directed solely against the Jews : removal

¹⁶ See *Terre-Blanche*, September 1936.

¹⁷ See *The Anti-Nazi*, 3.3.1934.

¹⁸ *Die Waarheid*, 23.2.1934.

¹⁹ *The Cape Times*, 12.9.1934.

²⁰ *Die Republikein*, 13.11.1936.

of "the ever-increasing Jewish control" over the "life and destiny of the South African nation", prohibition of further Jewish immigration, cancellation of citizenship certificates granted to Jews as and from 1918, protective measures against the "supplanting of Christians" by Jews in trade, commerce and the professions, a law prohibiting Jewish ritual slaughter of animals, deportation of Jews guilty of misconduct and denial of employment for Jews in the civil service.²¹ By July 1936, however, the League lapsed into a state of quiescence, from which it never again emerged.²²

The aims and methods of the different antisemitic parties differed little. The aspirations of all these groups appear to have conformed, to a greater or lesser extent, with those of the Greyshirts. Weichardt's speech in late 1933 at the Koffiehuis, Cape Town, the popular meeting place of the Cape Town Greyshirts, affords some insights into the extremist ideology which underscored the Shirt movements generally:

The subject on which I am going to talk to you tonight might be very similar to that which is at present being spoken of all over the world. But I am sorry to say, it is kept quiet by the Press which we all know is in the hands, either directly or indirectly, of the very race, I wish to refer to. (Applause)

Believe me, I do not want to preach persecution and should never support a movement that tolerated it. But if there are 100 people of which seven of them are Jews, shall those seven have 93% of the benefits?

He went on to say:

The Jews deliberately stir up hatred and are out to crucify Christianity... I challenge anyone here to accuse me of speaking murder and persecution – the reports you see of the affairs in Germany are lies – but if the Jew does not want to be put in his place, we shall put him there.²³

Entrenched in the Greyshirt Constitution under the heading of "The Jew Menace", the S.A.N.S.B. openly declared that it stood for:

²¹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List 4, No.24, unpublished [draft] document entitled 'A Memorandum on the Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa', p.8.

²² South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa*, p.5.

²³ *The Cape Times*, 27.10.1933. *Die Burger*, 27.10.1933, also gave coverage to Weichardt's address and noted the official establishment of the Greyshirt Movement.

- (a) The discontinuance of the granting of South African nationality to Jews who entered the Union of South Africa after the 1st November 1918;
- (b) Where South African nationality has already been granted to such Jews, the immediate revocation of such grants;
- (c) The prevention of any Jew whatsoever from holding any official position in South Africa;
- (d) The treatment of all Jews merely as temporary guests in accordance with the provisions of an Alien Statute;
- (e) The disability of all Jews to hold immovable property, directly or indirectly, except with the permission of the State;
- (f) The protection of South Africans against being ousted by Jews from any trade or profession.²⁴

The principles of the Greyshirts define clearly the character of a future Greyshirt-controlled South African state. In contrast to what they perceived to be the current unorganised and so-called alien democratic, liberal, British–Jewish parliamentary system in which there is ongoing conflict and strife,²⁵ they proposed an ‘organic homeland’, free of Jews – a National–Socialist republic based on responsible leadership reflecting the white core of the country’s national character.²⁶ The Party’s program embraced “the abolition of all oppression, exploitation, corruption and injustice” in order to ensure “an uncompromising maintenance of Christian Civilisation” and correspondingly “the overthrow of the domination at present exercised by the Jews over South Africa and the South African people.” The Jews were regarded “as a dangerous alien element which must be subjected to strict control.” This political structure would ensure the victory of “White Supremacy in its fullest sense.”²⁷ The movement also advocated national self-determination for the Afrikaners and a one-party system under the leadership of the “staatsleier van die Afrikaner volk” who would automatically be the leader of the Greyshirts.²⁸ By styling

²⁴ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa*, pp.5-6.

²⁵ The original Afrikaans text reads: “...die huidige an organiese, sogenaamde ‘demokratiese’, liberalistiese, Brits Joodse Parlementere Staat, waarin die belangstryd van een teen almal en almal teen een gevoer word en wat nie alleen uitheems is nie.” S.A.N.S.B., *Die Doel en die Middel: Grondbeginsels van die S.A. Nasionaal-Sosialistiese Bond (Gryshemde) sedert 1933*, p.7.

²⁶ The original Afrikaans text reads: “...’n Nasionaal Sosialistiese Republiek gebaseer op Verantwoordlike Leierskap en ingerig op Korporatiewe Grondslag te bewerkstellig... volkome by die Volksraad en die nasionale karakter van die blanke kernvolk van Suid Afrika”. S.A.N.S.B., *Die Doel en die Middel: Grondbeginsels van die S.A. Nasionaal-Sosialistiese Bond (Gryshemde) sedert 1933* [‘The Goal and the Means: Fundamental Principles of the S A National-Socialist Organisation (Greyshirts) since 1933’], (SANSB, Kaapstad, nd), p.7.

²⁷ Weichardt, ‘National Socialism in South Africa’, *Fascist Quarterly*, October 1936, p.569.

²⁸ [Lit. The state leader of the Afrikaner people.] S.A.N.S.B., *Die Doel en die Middel*, pp.8-33.

themselves as “die ware volksbeweging van die Afrikaner volk ²⁹ – the genuine movement of the Afrikaner people – Weichardt and his followers hoped to win over to their cause all South Africans of Afrikaner persuasion.

These principles of Shirtism are embodied in the “S.A.N.S.B. Wydingslied” – their “Consecration Song”:

Ons glo in God
 En Godgegewe Leiding
 Ons glo aan Ras –
 En rasse-onderskeiding,
 Ons glo aan Bloed en Bodem –
 Aan Volk en Vaderland.

Ons volg ons Leier waar hy lei,
 Ons kring word wyer wat bely:
 Ons veg vir Bloed en Bodem –
 Vir Volk en Vaderland...³⁰

The official Greyshirt flag consisted of a white circle, set against a blue background. Inside the circle was an orange swastika. This flag was the only one displayed at exclusive Greyshirt gatherings. At public functions, however, the two official flags of South Africa, the Union Jack and the South African flag, were flown – on either side of the Greyshirt flag.³¹ For the Greyshirts, the swastika symbolised the notion of race and reflected the organisation’s belief in kinship with the Germanic people – “bloedverwantskap met die Germaanse volksfamilie”.³² It also represented for them the struggle of Aryan fascism on behalf of the whites in the face of perceived Jewish corruption of white civilisation, and their determination ultimately to eradicate the ‘Jewish menace’ from their midst.³³ In mid-1937, by which time antisemitism had become a significant political factor and entrenched in South African life, a series of

²⁹ I Le Grange, *Die Organiese Volksbeweging: Waarheen en Hoe?* [‘The Organic People’s Movement: Where and How?’], (SANSB, Kaapstad, nd), p.iv.

³⁰ Ibid., p.viii. [A general translation: ‘We believe in God and Divine Guidance. We believe in Race – and racial discrimination. We believe in Blood and Soil (territory) – in Peoplehood and Fatherland. We follow our Leader where he leads, (and) our circle becomes wider than what is perceived. We fight for Blood and Soil – For Peoplehood and Fatherland.’]

³¹ Van Heerden, *Nasionaal Socialisme as Faktor in die Suid-Afrikaanse Politiek*, pp. 39-40.

³² J A Steenkamp, ‘Die Swastika – Betekenis en Invloed op die Suid-Afrikaanse Politiek’ [The Swastika – Meaning and Influence on South African Politics], *Acta Diurna Historica*, 2, 3, September, 1973 (University of the Orange Free State. Institute of Contemporary History, Bloemfontein), p.7. [‘Bloedverwantskap’, implying kinship, literally means ‘blood-relationship’.]

³³ *Die Waarheid*, ‘Die Swastika Simbool en sy Betekenis [The Swastika Symbol and its Meaning], 23.3.1934.

attempts were made to effect an alliance between Dr Malan's Purified Nationalists and the Greyshirts – between the Afrikaner Right and the extreme Right – in order to form a united front against the Hertzog-Smuts government in forthcoming elections.³⁴ The attempt failed. Among the reasons proffered was the refusal of the Malanites in the Cape Province to come to terms with a swastika which, as a symbol of the Greyshirts, was indistinguishable from that of the Germany's Nazi Party – a non-South African political party.³⁵

The *Anti-Nazi*, a privately funded newspaper published in Johannesburg by non – Jews, was acutely concerned with the proliferation of the Shirt organisations. Typical of its concern was a response, in early 1934, to a series of antisemitic meetings, to be held by the Greyshirts in the Witwatersrand area:

The attempts of the Nazis in the Union [and] by the Greyshirts... to obtain any influence are centred upon one section of one of the white races in this country... We must penetrate into even the remote backveld, but particularly among the urban poor, and show them the truth about Nazi promises, expose the Fascist swindles, and convince them that only by staunchly defending democratic liberty...will they be able to achieve any improvement at allThat is the only possible basis for [successfully overcoming] the Nazi menace, here and elsewhere.³⁶

Prominent South Africans, among them the writer and biographer of Smuts, Sarah Gertrude Millin, appealed to the Government to take action against the Greyshirts. In October 1934, she wrote to Hofmeyr urging ministerial intervention:

Dear Jan,
Coming back from Kimberley [to Johannesburg] yesterday, I met in the train two very intelligent Jewesses, refugees from Germany. They told me that in these days it was quite a common occurrence in Germany for Jews to have all their possessions taken from them without any explanation, to be tortured in concentration camps and to be made to disappear finally. Sometimes a body is returned, or ashes. It has also happened to their friends. Communists

³⁴ The import of these developments is discussed later in this study.

³⁵ Steenkamp, 'Die Swastika – Betekenis en Invloed op die Suid-Afrikaanse, *Acta Diurna Historica*, 2, 3 September, 1973, p.8.

³⁶ *The Anti-Nazi*, 17.2.1934. The writer calls for a nation-wide united anti-Nazi campaign to be set up immediately - "a supreme effort for the speedy liquidation of the canker which has appeared in South Africa's political and social life. Self-paralysis and wilful blindness must give way to self-confidence and a fearless facing of realities. The menace must be tackled aggressively, firmly and immediately."

suffer slightly less.... "But in our first week in Cape Town", they said, "we asked ourselves if we were back in Germany. We saw placards all over the city with the words: 'Kaffirs and Jews assault white girls.' The placards were connected with a newspaper called *Truth* [*Die Waarheid*] that reminded us of the German papers." "Are you not," the women asked me, "afraid to live in this country?" "Well", I said, "that paper is run by a forger called von Moltke, whose real name we understand to be van Jaarsveld; and also by a man called Manie Maritz who is probably the worst traitor we have had in this country." "In Germany too," said the woman, "this horror was born in the dirt."

I found on returning to Johannesburg, a confirmatory paragraph in *The Sunday Times*. I sent it to you. But perhaps other indignant Jews have sent it to you, asking: "Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?"

Surely, Jan, *you* can do something...it is in your power to stop papers and posters that inspire the ignorant and vicious to "gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous and condemn the innocent blood." (I can only, as you see, think in terms of the 94th Psalm.) Cannot you and Deneys Reitz [parliamentarian, fiercely loyal to Smuts] together do something? The calamity is on Jews when such things happen in our country, but the shame is on the country.

Goodbye. I would rather not have to appeal to a friend. But what can I do when a friend happens to be in the place where I have to appeal? ³⁷

³⁷ J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1), Ga, Millin to Hofmeyr, 8.10.1934. Millin enclosed with her letter to Jan Hofmeyr a newspaper clipping from *The Sunday Times*. The report, undated, referred to an incident which occurred in Adderley Street, the main street of Cape Town's Central Business District, on the previous afternoon [probably on Saturday, 2.10.1934]. "Enraged by a poster carried by newspaper-boy selling the official Grey Shirt organ, three prominent Cape Town Jews, Advocates M S Comay [Member of Cape Committee of Board of Deputies and later Israel's representative at the United Nations and ambassador to Canada and Great Britain], Dr J L Gordon and Councillor A Z Berman... caused a scene yesterday afternoon by wrenching the poster from the paper-seller and tearing it to pieces. The poster read: 'Kaffirs and Jews indecently assault white girls'." The three men summoned a policeman to witness their act and "explained a wish to be prosecuted as a protest against the offensive nature of the poster." Berman stated that he had acted "in the full knowledge that I was breaking the law. It is about time that this thing was brought to a head." [Note: The term 'newspaper-boy' was a commonly used term which generally referred to a non-white newspaper vendor, irrespective of the vendor's age.]

S G Millin's reference to Manie Maritz as a traitor relates to a well-documented act of rebellion during the First World War, to which reference is made in a previous chapter of this study, when General Maritz betrayed his military commission and joined the ranks of the German forces in South West Africa. During the 1930s, Manie Maritz played a prominent role in the antisemitic movement, details of which appear elsewhere in this study. Millin also referred to von Moltke, one of the most prominent Greyshirt leaders, ultimately convicted as a forger in the Greyshirt Trial, also treated in detail elsewhere in this study. Von Moltke, like Weichardt who became a National Party senator under South Africa's apartheid regime, teamed up with Malan after 1948 and was the Party's representative for the electoral division of Karas, South West Africa (as noted elsewhere, the region was renamed in 1990 after South West Africa gained independence as Namibia) from August 1950 to March 1966. In 1959 Morris Kentridge, MP, wrote that "Mr Von Moltke, now a Nationalist Member of Parliament ... has frequently buttonholed me in the Lobby of the House to explain that he was misled by Inch [one of the three men convicted in the Greyshirt Trial] and that he is a great friend of the State of Israel." Kentridge, *I Recall: Memoirs of Morris Kentridge*, p.220.

Millin's appeal to Hofmeyr did not fall on deaf ears. Both he and Smuts, who stood together at the forefront of South African politics until 1948, when Smuts fell from power, were the most ardent champions of the Jews in the Union. Hofmeyr, as a liberal and a man of Christian conviction, was deeply affronted by what he perceived to be the gross injustice of antisemitism and, in particular, Nazism. Smuts equally supported Jewish causes, was often dubbed by his detractors as a lackey of the Jews and, as noted earlier, was frequently called 'Jan Smutskovitz'. He was honoured for this support by the State of Israel shortly after its establishment.³⁸

Like Smuts, Jan Hofmeyr also found it necessary to issue an appeal – and a warning – against the proliferation of antisemitic activities. After a series of anti-Jewish meetings held throughout the country together with the publication of provocative anti-Jewish posters, leaflets and dodgers,³⁹ and clashes between individual Jews and members of the Shirt organisations, Hofmeyr, in his capacity as Minister of the Interior, said in the course of his admonition – this on 26 October 1934, that

....there has been an open organised attempt to stimulate racial hatred against a section of the South African nation. To that end, public meetings have been held and publications issued, some of them appealing to the least worthy instincts of humanity. An attempt has been made to invite racial animosity and religious intolerance, and tendencies have been set in motion which can only tend towards social disruption. We are already plucking some of the bitter fruits, the wells of good feeling have been poisoned, passions have been aroused and there have been some actual physical clashes. The continuation and aggravation of present-day tendencies and the serious consequences which they imported cannot be contemplated without alarm by men and women of good sense and goodwill...⁴⁰

More than most, perhaps, Hofmeyr was acutely conscious of the proliferation of antisemitism and the potential effects it could have on a country whose complex

³⁸ See the biographies of Smuts listed in the bibliography to this study. See also *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol.15, cols.13-14.

³⁹ For examples of antisemitic flyers and dodgers, see Cohen, 'Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa', Annexures A - E; and South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa*, pp.23-29.

⁴⁰ See the 13-page typescript (unpublished), housed in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List 4, No.24, entitled 'A Memorandum on the Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa' (c.1936), p.4. This document was probably the basis for the bi-lingual booklet, part of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies' propaganda campaign against the Shirt and Nazi movements which offered a detailed overview of antisemitic activities between 1933-1936, titled *The Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa: The Need for Action*.

racial composition and multiple divisions presented an ethnic powder keg. Invariably out of step with his political colleagues for holding liberal convictions which endorsed the brotherhood of man irrespective of race, creed or colour, Hofmeyr nevertheless constantly insisted that the brotherhood of man and racialism were diametrically opposed constructs.⁴¹

While there can be no doubt that a large body of South African whites were predisposed to antisemitism by both nature and circumstance, Hofmeyr believed that "antisemitism was not a natural growth in South Africa".⁴² Tradition, religious outlook, love of freedom and the fulfilment of the injunctions of Scripture and instincts of hospitality towards the Jew *qua* stranger were all factors which, in Hofmeyr's view, endorsed his contention. Yet his concern, expressed often - both privately and publicly - about the growth of Nazi organisations in South Africa underlined the seriousness of the phenomenon. Reflecting in 1945, he wrote:

.... during the last twenty years our traditional attitude towards the Jew has been widely breached. I have already referred to the growth of racism between the two wars and of Nazism as the chief exponent of that doctrine. It is with the Nazis that anti-Semitism took on a particularly aggressive form, and the antisemitism of Nazism was an article meant for export. The seeds of this evil thing were blown over the oceans even to South Africa. The stock libels of Nazi propaganda came to be sedulously disseminated among us, sometimes...adapted to our local circumstances, and antisemitism grew apace. This was the position before the present war began [and] the process has continued. What I [have] called the germ-cells of Nazism have grown in number and virulence during the war [and] wide sections of the community have become infected ... this ... constitutes a grave danger to our national future.⁴³

Hofmeyr was perhaps somewhat short-sighted, expressing a view in 1945 that antisemitism in South Africa was primarily a foreign import – “blown over the oceans” from Nazi Germany.⁴⁴ He lacked the vantage point of historical hindsight. The present study thus aims to demonstrate conclusively that irrespective of the significant impact of Nazism on South African antisemitism Afrikaner nationalists,

⁴¹ See for example Hofmeyr, *Christian Principles and Race Problems: Hoernle' Memorial Lecture 1945, passim*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.18.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.18-19.

both the Right and the Radical Right, were predisposed to antisemitism. Events in South Africa in the three years prior to the victory of the Nazi Party in Germany in 1933, among them the Quota Act which effectively curbed Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe and Palestine, and Malan's *Die Burger* interview of November, 1931, *inter alia*, give the lie to the view that it was only Nazi ideology and the impact of Nazism which were responsible for the antisemitic manifestations in South Africa during the decade prior to the Second World War.⁴⁵

There is, however, little doubt that the Shirt movements, specifically, derived spiritual and financial assistance from the leaders of the Third Reich. The *National-Sozialistische Partei Korrespondenz*, official organ of the German Nazi Party, published an article on 29 July 1936, claiming that the Greyshirts were in league with their German counterparts. Indeed, Weichardt was quite open in propagating for South Africa a state based on National Socialist principles, and lectured frequently on the subject.⁴⁶ The march of National Socialism, argued the Greyshirts, was both desirable and irresistible.⁴⁷ They were also, on occasions, quite open about the financial assistance granted to them by the Nazis, mainly for the purpose of perpetuating their antisemitic campaign.⁴⁸ "The Greyshirts", warned Smuts, "are subsidized from abroad."⁴⁹

These South African organisations were in large measure replicas of the Nazi movement. The prominent part played by the 'swastika' as an emblem of Shirtism, the greeting 'Hail' (Heil), the shirts and uniforms, and the adoption of antisemitic clauses from the official program of the Nazi party were evidence of this, clearly illustrated in the Greyshirt "National Anthem."

Watch in the world of the Swastika
The sign of awakening nations!
The Greyshirts march in South Africa
To free us from Jewish exploitations!
Cast off your fear, let's unite now at once
Down with foreign domination, and

⁴⁵ These events are discussed in detail in earlier sections of this study.

⁴⁶ *Die Waarheid*, 21.8.1936, reports one such lecture, delivered in Pretoria on 23.7.1936.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.11.1936.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.7.1936.

⁴⁹ Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, p.334.

Down with our bonds.

Hail, Greyshirt hail!

Hail, Greyshirt hail!

Watch in our country the rising tide
Of Greyshirts determined and faithful!
The Greyshirts march bravely to free and unite
The country they love and treasure!
If, British, if Dutch - be South African now,
But the Jew in our nation we do not allow!
Hail, Greyshirt hail!
Hail, Greyshirt hail!

Now them, South Africans, come along,

And join in the world's great endeavour!
'Sunny South Africa' must belong
To white men and Gentiles forever!
Come forward, fight bravely, your dear ones to guard!
Ours is the victory! Ours the reward.
Hail, Greyshirts hail!
Hail, Greyshirt Hail! ⁵⁰

[Words by A Grey. Music by A Perdun.]

As early as March 1934, H S Terreblanche, leader of the People's Movement and of the group styling itself the South African Gentile Organisation, claimed that he had broken away from the Greyshirts, although formerly a "prime mover of the Greyshirt Movement", after "satisfying [him]self of the German element at work." The destiny of South Africa, he claimed, came first. While admitting that he had been influenced by Nazism during his years in Germany after the First World War, Terreblanche refused to countenance the "external control of the [Shirt] Movement by Germany." ⁵¹

The South West Africa Commission's Report of 1936 provided conclusive proof of the close connections existing during the thirties between the Nazis and the followers of Louis T Weichardt. This is reflected in extracts from documents seized by the Attorney-General at Windhoek. In a letter from E Muller, the Nazi Group Leader at Sandfield, to Weigel (the Territorial Group Leader in South West Africa), Muller

⁵⁰ *Die Waarheid*, 27.2.1934.

⁵¹ *The Anti-Nazi*, 3.4.1934. Reference to Terreblanche's break with the Greyshirts appears earlier in this chapter.

refers to the 'National Socialists in the Union', the so-called 'Greyshirts', and mentions efforts by von Moltke to raise money in South West Africa for the Greyshirt movement. He says further:

Naturally party [i.e. Nazi Party] members must only support the movement anonymously. It is also in the interests of the Greyshirt movement that it should not be made known that it is being supported financially from the German side. (Letter dated 11.6.1934 – Exhibit 85.)

A letter from Weigel addressed to Professor Bohle at Cape Town, avowed Nazi sympathiser, read in part:

It may be possible for us to establish with the Greyshirts a united front based upon similar world views... Perhaps it is possible for you to interview Weichardt in this connection and to arrange that he sends sufficient propaganda material to South West... I have sent 58 copies of *Die Waarheid* along with Mr Mohl, who I have reason to know is a highly reliable person, as the latter is travelling straight to Windhoek. (Letter dated 29.4.1934 – Exhibit 46.)

Weigel also wrote to the Foreign Organisation in Hamburg:

Perhaps it would be possible to make provision for a nominal amount, say several hundred pounds, out of some political fund which one could then place in some suitable form at the disposal of the Greyshirt Movement along devious ways. It is obvious that I must avoid any open fraternization with the South African sister movement. The support of the movement can take place only through intermediaries without any direct connection with us. (Letter dated 27.5.1934 – Exhibit 16.)

In another letter, Weigel wrote:

I hardly think that a tolerable cooperation with the South African front will be reached, so that the Greyshirt Movement must be introduced here in order to split up the South African cliquism. I feel sure that a cordial agreement with Weichardt can be arrived at. (Letter dated 15.4.1935 – Exhibit 154.)

He expressed critical views on the political maturity of the Afrikaner:

People know very well that there is hardly a nation less capable of deciding political matters, less experienced therein than the Boers who, coming out of the wild African bush, should not all at once expect to be able to decide

politically. One can, of course, tell them anything – they believe it, are glad and pleased to believe it, because they feel themselves honoured. (Letter dated 18.12.1933 – Exhibit 27.)

This view is in accordance with what he wrote to the German Consul General in Pretoria:

We want to remain German and not gradually to become Africaner (*sic*). The German is a being of higher culture. (Letter dated 8.8.1933 – Exhibit 16.)

An extract from the Minutes of the staff meeting of the Nazis held on 10.4.1934 reads:

The Ogg [Ortsgruppenleiter, i.e. local group leader] drew attention to the fact that party [i.e. Nazi] members should be careful in passing the Greyshirt newspaper, *The Truth*, on to South Africans. Anything which would enable the other side to blame the Nazi party for carrying on antisemitic propaganda should be avoided. (Annexure 81.)⁵²

Prior to the publication of the South West African Report, Weichardt refuted the charge that the Greyshirts were allied with any other organisation – South African or otherwise – and even offered, on one occasion to have his party publicly investigated.⁵³ The Greyshirts adoption of the swastika symbol, he asserted, did not imply that they were in league with the German Nazis: the swastika, he claimed, was an international symbol, a banner under which the battle to preserve Christian principles and Western civilisation was being fought against tremendous odds – specifically "die Internasionale Joodse - Kommuisme en Joodse – Kapitalsime."⁵⁴

The Tenth Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, held in August 1933, reported an alarming increase in the circulation of anti-Jewish leaflets, and in the use of defamatory antisemitic labels pasted on buildings and in public library

⁵² Report of South West African Commission, U.G. - 26, 1936, *passim*.

⁵³ See *Die Burger*, letter to the editor, 5.9.1935.

⁵⁴ [Translation – international Jewish communism and Jewish capitalism.] See J A Steenkamp, 'Die Swastika - Betekenis en Invloed op Suid-Afrikaanse Politiek' [The Swastika - Meaning and Influence on South African Politics], *Acta Diurna Historica*, 2, 3, September 1973, p.8.

books.⁵⁵ As noted earlier, from the report presented to the Eleventh Congress which met in May 1935, at Johannesburg, it appears that such activities had, by that stage, reached an unparalleled height. These reports find justification in the prominent publicity devoted by the press to the activities of the Greyshirts.

In August 1933, a host of circulars and typed leaflets was issued by the Port Elizabeth branch of the S.A.N.S.B. Prominently circulated was a handbill entitled "South Africa Awake". This dodger exhorted Christians to deal only with their co-religionists, maintaining that the percentage of Jewish doctors, dentists, wholesalers, shopkeepers and attorneys was so high that ten years hence the future generation of Gentiles would have no opportunity for advancement in the face of Jewish competition.⁵⁶ Some six weeks later, *The Cape Times* reported that bricks were hurled through the windows of the synagogue in the Cape suburb of Maitland during the Concluding Service of the Day of Atonement.⁵⁷ A similar attack occurred in Bloemfontein, where swastikas were posted on the doors and windows of Jewish-owned shops. Addressing a public meeting in President Hoffman Square, Bloemfontein, a young man – Philip Bernard Saltzweidel – declared that "financially and politically, South Africa was controlled by the Jews." He said that the Greyshirt movement was out to curb this exploitation, and called upon his audience to rally round Weichardt, to whom he referred as the "Hitler of the Cape."⁵⁸ At the same time – on 6 November 1933 – a meeting was held in Salt River, Cape where, according to *The Cape Times*, a crowded hall of enthusiastic Greyshirts hailed Weichardt as the "Hitler of South Africa."⁵⁹ On the previous day, in the adjacent suburb of Observatory, Post Office van number 8017 was sighted on the main street displaying large swastikas on each headlight.⁶⁰ Izaak Zuidmeer, a Paarl councillor and prominent local Greyshirt leader who had visited Germany with Professor

⁵⁵ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council for the period July 1st 1932 to April 30th 1935*, to be submitted to the Tenth Congress at Durban, 6th August and 7th August 1933, p.3.

⁵⁶ *The Cape Times*, 3.8.1933.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.9.1933.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.11.1933 and 8.11.1933. [Saltzweidel was the local Greyshirt propaganda 'leader' in Bloemfontein, referred to as such in several issues of the *Anti-Nazi*, among them the editions of 17.2.1934 and 3.4.1934. According to Morris Alexander, Saltzweidel was a semi-skilled employee in Bloemfontein's railway workshops. See Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book 1932-1934*, C (iii)/II, letter to [Adolph] Schauder, 2.2.1934.

⁵⁹ *The Cape Times*, 7.11.1933.

⁶⁰ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book 1932-1934*, C(iii)/II, letter to the Divisional Controller of (the) General Post Office, Cape Town, 6.11.1933.

Bohle,⁶¹ declared that the whole world would adopt Hitler's policies and "not all the Jewish money in the world would stop the Hitler movement."⁶²

A floodlight was thrown upon the motives and methods of the Greyshirts by a trial which was heard in the Supreme Court at Grahamstown in July 1934. It was an action for damages by the Reverend A Levy against three of their leaders – Johannes von Strauss von Moltke, then leader of the "South African Gentile Socialists" branch in the Eastern Province; Harry Victor Inch, Eastern Province leader of the Greyshirts; and David Hermanus Olivier, Jnr, editor of *Die Rapport*, an official organ of the S.A.N.S.B., published in Aberdeen. This was one of the rare cases when an anti-Jewish libel could be exposed by a Court of Justice, because it implicated an individual and not merely the Jewish community as such.⁶³

The case dealt with the authenticity of a document (bearing the signature of the "Rabbi"), which these Greyshirts alleged was stolen by one of their number from the Port Elizabeth Hebrew Congregation, Western Road Synagogue. The Rev A Levy was the spiritual head of this Congregation. The document contained innuendoes intending to imply that

Jewish citizens of Port Elizabeth as of the rest of the world were antagonistic to the Christian Religion and determined to destroy it and were guilty of blasphemy in referring to the Christian Religion and to the Founder and Mother of the Founder of the Christian Religion (*sic.*);...[that] it was arranged that certain Jews were to go armed to a meeting of the South African Gentile National Socialist Movement, to create a disturbance, to commit crimes amounting to murder, homicide, manslaughter and the destruction of property; [that] the members of the Jewish Faith intended to subvert the existing

⁶¹ *Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 25 February 1936.

⁶² *The Cape Times*, 22.12.1934. Report of a Greyshirt meeting held in the Paarl Town Hall on Thursday 20.12.1934 which, like most Greyshirt gatherings, ended – according to the reporter – with a customary "three hails (*sic*) for South Africa."

⁶³ This is discussed in Cohen, 'Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa', chapter 4. [At the time of writing this dissertation, Lisa Miranda Sarzin, a relative of the Reverend A Levy, was completing a thesis at the University of Technology, Sydney, titled 'Levy v Von Moltke: How the form of the narrative influences collective and individual memory and shapes perception of an historical event'. The abstract states: 'The legal action of Levy v Von Moltke (South Africa, 1934) was the first case that demonstrated that the notorious antisemitic document, the 'Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion' was a fabrication. The thesis purported to explore this case and to consider why the Protocols continue to have currency despite repeated refutations, and whether there are effective mechanisms for countering the Protocols' influence and dissemination. <http://www.transforming.cultures.uts.edu.au/people/lisa-sarzin.html>. Accessed 27.4.2013.]

system of civilization... and to destroy the British Empire and hand back South Africa to the natives...; [and that] the members of the Jewish Faith were financing certain portions of the press for the purpose of disseminating false and atrocious news...

On 4 April 1934, at a public meeting in the Feather Market Hall at Port Elizabeth, and again at a public meeting on 27 March 1934, von Moltke read the document. On 6 April it was published in *Die Rapport*, first in Afrikaans, and then English.

The extensive publication of this document was calculated to arouse the worst passions against the Jews. The decision of the Court (consisting of Mr Justice Graham, the Judge President, and Mr Justice Gutsche) went to show that no such document had in fact existed in the synagogue; and that the false document published had been deliberately concocted by some Greyshirts for the purpose of arousing hatred against the Jews. An award of £1,000 damages was made against von Moltke; £750 against Inch; and £25 against Olivier. For the evidence which he had given in this case, Inch was subsequently criminally indicted. He was found guilty of uttering a forged document, making false statements in affidavits, and of perjury. He was sentenced to several years' imprisonment.⁶⁴ He was later appointed by Weichardt, on the day of the expiry of his sentence, as District Leader of the Witwatersrand Greyshirts.⁶⁵ Notwithstanding the outcome of the trial, von Moltke continued to propound the ideology of the right-wing anti-Jewish extremists.⁶⁶

While the Greyshirt Trial was in progress, and even after judgement had been pronounced, the anti-Jewish agitation did not abate. The Greyshirts, in fact, exploited the very trial itself for propaganda purposes. Events in the Cape Midland's town of Cradock served to highlight this. In May 1934, Morris Alexander wrote to Smuts in his capacity as Minister of Justice, expressing concern that the Greyshirts at Cradock had disregarded an order issued on 2 May by the local Magistrate,

⁶⁴ *Judgement: Greyshirt Libel Action at Grahamstown*, Reprinted from *Grocott's Daily Mail*, 21st August 1934, *passim*. See also M Lazarus, *The Challenge* (The Mercantile Press, Port Elizabeth, 1935), written by Mark Lazarus in 1935 with background details to the trial, a transcript of the proceedings, commentary and his role as a witness for the prosecution. *The Sunday Express* reported on 4.4.1937 that Inch was due to be released nine days' hence from the Baviaans Reformatory and planned, after remaining in Pretoria for several weeks, to organise a large Greyshirt antisemitic drive on the Rand.

⁶⁵ *Die Waarheid*, 11.9.1936.

⁶⁶ See especially correspondence between Von Moltke and Dr Malan in the DF Malan Collection, Files 1/1/1088, 1/1/1091 and 1/1/1154: letters dated 4.9.1934, 20.9.1934 and 15.11.1935 respectively.

prohibiting “the assembly of a public gathering in any place within the town or district area of Cradock advertised as a Greyshirt meeting.” Alexander was referring to a massed Greyshirt rally convened by Von Moltke where, he wrote, “the usual abuse of Cabinet Ministers, and unwarranted and unrestrained attacks on the Jewish community took place.”

Prior to the meeting vans were driven through the streets, the occupants shouting: “We defy the police and the Magistrate – a meeting at all costs!” On the appointed day, the police force under its commandant was in attendance, but failed, noted Alexander, to prevent the illegal gathering. Speakers addressed the crowd from a public platform erected in front of the Town Hall. They proclaimed that their battle would only terminate when the Greyshirt flag fluttered high above the Government Buildings in Pretoria and Cape Town. Alexander urged Smuts to administer justice against “such open defiance.” He added that people were already claiming

that von Moltke is in a position to defy the Government of the country, and children in the schools are openly discussing the matter, to the detriment and alarm of the Jewish scholars.

He informed Smuts that, despite the ban, a similar meeting was held in Samenkost (in the Cradock magisterial district) where the police were also present. The only gratifying feature for Alexander, however, was that both the English and Afrikaans newspapers at Cradock had given unqualified disapproval of these activities.⁶⁷

Open defiance of the authorities by the Greyshirts was common. In June 1934, with judgement in the Greyshirt Trial still pending, von Moltke and Inch wrote a lengthy letter in trenchant and accusatory terms to Smuts in his capacity as Minister of Justice, referring to the “Jew-controlled Press of our Jew-ruled country”. They accused the Cradock Magistrate and, by implication, Smuts, who had personally “vested special authority” in the magistrate under the Riotous Assembly Act to prevent the rally from taking place, and went on to admit openly:

⁶⁷ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book 1932-1934*, C (iii)/II, Alexander to Smuts, 8.5.1934. See also Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, pp.169-170.

We defied the said Magistrate's proclamation and duly held our meeting as advertised and ...you and the Magistrate were severely taken to task for your audacity to humiliate free born Sons of South Africa by branding them as Common Traitors.

The meeting, they noted, was conducted "in a most orderly manner... [as] we enforce Fascist discipline at our meetings." They referred in the letter to Smuts' "Jew friends", mocked Smuts for being "styled the 'Soldier-Statesman' [obviously] by some humourist," said they were "quite prepared to sacrifice our BLOOD (*sic*)" for South Africa and concluded the letter with "Hail South Africa, our treasured Homeland."⁶⁸

It appears, thus, that on some occasions the arm of the law failed to quell the exuberances of the Greyshirts. This was not, however, always the case. Earlier in the year, for example, the South African Police Force had been instrumental in clipping the wings of what was to have been a Greyshirt gathering in Port Elizabeth;⁶⁹ and a short while later they intervened in a free-for-all which broke out between young Jews and Greyshirts at a massed Greyshirt meeting held in a capacity-filled hall in Port Elizabeth.⁷⁰ The leaders of Port Elizabeth Jewry had issued a public statement appealing to the community at large to assist in combating the anti-Jewish activity rampant in the city, the spirit of which, they contended, "was clearly a foreign importation... which must be distasteful to every healthy-minded South African."⁷¹ The constabulary had been forewarned about the meeting by General Smuts, who maintained direct contact with all police units in South Africa, but failed to prevent the clash.⁷²

It is apparent that the Greyshirt Trial stimulated the acceleration of Shirtist activities in other centres too. A meeting held in Cape Town at the Koffiehuis in June 1934,

⁶⁸ The letter, titled *Hints to our 'Soldier-Statesman'*, was addressed to The Rt Hon Genl J C Smuts, Minister of Justice, dated 15.6.1934, and printed by *The Report* [also known as *Die Rapport*], Aberdeen, Cape, for J von Moltke, Russel Road, Port Elizabeth. [A copy is housed at the Institute for Contemporary History, University of the Orange Free State, in a folder titled P24.327.]

⁶⁹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book 1932-1934*, letter to Mr [Adolph] Schauder, dated 18.1.1934. In further letters to Schauder dated 23.1.1934 and 24.1.1934, Alexander urged the leadership of Port Elizabeth Jewry not to attend Greyshirt meetings and to "keep our young men under control". He pointed out, too, that meetings could not be legally prevented. See also *The Cape Times*, 15.1.1934 for a report of the meeting.

⁷⁰ *The Cape Times*, 30.1.1934.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book 1932-1934*, letters addressed to Messrs Lazarus and Schauder, 26.1.1934.

and attended by approximately 600 people, was addressed by Weichardt, J H H de Waal Jnr, and Mr F Toit. All seven 'lieutenants' appeared on the platform in Greyshirt garb. Attendants and ushers also wore uniforms. Offensive language appears to have been the order of the day, and the attacks levelled were confined primarily to the Jews. The enthusiastic audience responded to the antisemitic utterances with 'Hails'.⁷³ Similarly, mass meetings and protests against the banning of Greyshirt meetings were held in Paarl. At one such affair 1,700 people participated. When the police attempted to expel the crowds which had gathered at Van der Poel's Place (an outspan in the centre of the town) the Greyshirts forcibly resisted, and violence broke out. Weichardt, who was to have addressed the gathering, was prevented from doing so, but he received the desired publicity in the newspaper headlines on the following day.⁷⁴ These clashes, however, appear to have discouraged town councils in other centres from permitting Greyshirt public meetings, and applications to hold such gatherings were refused by the town councils of Simonstown, Oudtshoorn and Calitzdorp. Nevertheless, Maritz and Weichardt succeeded in addressing an assemblage of 2,000 Greyshirts on 5 July 1934 in the Paarl Town Hall. Paarl was a Greyshirt stronghold, and despite the objections lodged to the town council by a deputation of local Jewish citizens, the meeting was held as planned.⁷⁵

These occurrences were not confined solely to the Western and Eastern Cape Provinces, but organised on a national scale, although the Cape was the hub of Greyshirt activities. Indeed, anti-Jewish influences were at work throughout the Union. This is characterised by events in Vrededorp, Johannesburg. As early as February 1934, uniformed "troops" led by Mr G Mulligan held antisemitic meetings where offensive language was frequently used with reference to the Jewish community. On one occasion fighting broke out between Jewish youngsters and Mulligan's supporters; the police, however, intervened.⁷⁶ The same group had planned another open-air meeting to take place on the 15 February 1934. Some 25,000 leaflets were printed and a huge attendance was expected. However, Morris Alexander informed Smuts of the proposed gathering, and on 12 February the

⁷³ *The Cape Times*, 12.6.1934.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.6.1934.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, See editions from 20.6.1934 to 6.7.1934. [References to Greyshirt activities in Paarl.]

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.2.1934.

General banned the meeting.⁷⁷ *Die Waarheid* took fearful exception to this, and in a number distributed soon after the banning order levelled a strong attack against the Jews. “Who,” asked the writer, “are the diasporic Jews that they can claim a ... right to enter other countries and buy them body and soul? ...Mr Jew Alexander can only judge a country’s greatness by its business prosperity.”⁷⁸ Anti-Jewish agitation in Vrededorp did not subside, however, and as late as November 1936, evidence is found of undercurrents of antisemitism in that area.⁷⁹

The Greyshirt organisation made significant advances between 1933 and January 1937 – the latter date being the turning-point in the so-called Jewish Question, when antisemitism became a significant political issue. By December 1936, virtually all other anti-Jewish movements had either amalgamated with Weichardt and his fellows, or had lapsed into a state of quiescence. The Greyshirts were thus by this stage the principal if not the sole actors of the extreme Right on the antisemitic platform, notwithstanding, of course, the various existing Nazi groups. The extent of their activities was considerable. “We regret to have to record,” declared the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, “that the organised anti-Jewish agitation which first arose in the country in 1933... is continuing unabated. Most of the individuals who were associated with these activities at their inception have continued to take the lead.”⁸⁰

By October 1936, the Greyshirts, by extending their facilities, had established an Organisation Department under Dr L E Webster, which dealt specifically with the distribution of propaganda, the establishment of new ‘cells’, and the organisation of public meetings. It will suffice to record here the schedule of meetings during part of the closing months of 1936. Between 15 August and 3 September, Weichardt addressed seven public meetings in the Western Cape; 14 such meetings were scheduled to take place in Natal between 28 September and 17 October; and in the

⁷⁷ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book 1932-1934*, C (iii)/II, letters to Mr Goodman dated 9.2.1934 and 12.2.1934.

⁷⁸ *Die Waarheid*, 23.3.1934.

⁷⁹ In an article in *Die Vaderland*, 3.10.1936, Dr P V Pistorius discusses the appalling conditions among the poorer classes of Vrededorp. He refers to “een Jood wat ‘n hele blok huise het... (one Jew who had an entire block of houses.)

⁸⁰ The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council for the period 21st May, 1935 to 31st May, 1937*, to be submitted to the 12th Congress at Bloemfontein, 30th May and 31st May, 1937, p.16.

Orange Free State four public meetings were publicised for the week following 18 September.⁸¹

By the end of 1936, Louis Weichardt was able to conclude:

... there are abundant indications that our party (*sic*) is about to make a strong and rapid advance. A new edition of the Constitution and Programme of Principles of the Party has just been published and has been very favourably received. Everywhere our meetings are crowded and our message is eagerly welcomed by the people. The Jew-controlled press, of course, denies us publicity, except where it is to our detriment, but this conspiracy of silence is really to our advantage in the long run, for it provides the people with practical proof of the nature and degree of the Jewish domination to which they are subject.

A specially encouraging fact is the extent to which the intelligentsia and the working classes are embracing the ideals of National Socialism. Large numbers of professional men, university professors, lecturers and students, civil servants, school teachers ...belong to the Party, if not as open, at any rate as secret, members. The workers, too, despite all attempts of the Jews to catch them with the poisoned bait of Communism and Bolshevism, are everywhere getting their eyes opened. Largely through the efforts of our members and supporters, the Jew-controlled and Communist-infested South African Labour Party is being rapidly disintegrated, and I have strong hopes that before long the workers as a body will have rallied to our banner.

Taking all things into consideration, I have no hesitation in saying that victory is definitely in sight, though it will doubtless be some time before we are actually entrusted with the reins of power. One of our greatest sources of strength is to be found in the utter degeneracy of South African politics and political life. The people as a whole are heartily sick of the old parties with their empty talk, lying promises, hypocrisy and corruption. All these parties are, to a greater or lesser extent, mere tools in the hands of the Jewish Moneypower (*sic*), and their parliamentary representatives are, with certain notable exceptions of course, busy feathering their own nests at the country's expense. The people, however, are rapidly becoming awake to all this, and every such awakening brings fresh support to the South African National Party.⁸²

Weichardt's grandiose pronouncements may have smacked of hyperbole, but they were not without considerable truth. By the end of 1936, antisemitism, augmented by the proliferation of Nazi influence, had made rapid inroads in South Africa and was well-entrenched in the extremist elements of Afrikanerdom.

⁸¹ *Die Waarheid*, 11.9.1936 and 2.10.1936.

⁸² Weichardt, 'National Socialism in South Africa', *Fascist Quarterly*, October 1936, pp.559-561.

CHAPTER SEVENTHE POLITICS OF THE RIGHT – AND COUNTERACTION

Even prior to the Aliens Act of 1937, when antisemitism assumed increasing political overtones, the official political parties and political pressure groups of the Union had become fully enmeshed in the so-called Jewish Question. In this respect, the responses of the Jewish community, the Dutch Reformed Church, political organisations and sections of the non-white community as well as the Prime Minister are particularly instructive. Of equal significance was the relationship between the Afrikaner Right and the Radical Right. The platform of the Right, represented by Dr Malan's Purified National Party, and that of the Shirt movements, representing the Radical Right, was similar, and it was thus quite natural that a loose alignment of sorts developed between the two organisations. Asked at an open-air meeting in Lichtenberg what his attitude to the Greyshirts and Blackshirts was, Dr Malan was reported to have declared:

I agree with them as far as their fight against parasitism is concerned, and I support them in respect of their prohibiting immigration from Europe. Another thing we have in common is that we deplore the boycott of Germany.

However, Malan maintained that the platform of his party was far more flexible than that of Weichardt's, because the Nationalists did not condemn the parasitism of only *one* race.¹ Advocate J G Strydom, National Party Member of Parliament (and, as noted earlier, a South African Prime Minister during the Apartheid era), went a step further when he declared that the different Shirt groups "aim at the same things as we do, but go about it in the wrong way." To prevent a breach in the ranks of Afrikanerdom, he suggested the formation of a United Front, comprising all members of the Shirt organisations and all followers of the National Party.² H S Terreblanche, however, argued that the Malanites were moving towards a policy of antisemitism

¹ *The Star*, 21.8.1936. See also *Die Volksblad*, 21.8.1936. References to the 'Boycott Issue' in the press, the D F Malan Collection, the Morris Alexander Collection, and the *Minutes of Meetings of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies* are prolific. See also the following 1936 press reports - South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Digest*, Press Reports 1-3; 5-10, 12-15; 23; 31; 49; 54-55. [Reference to the 'Boycott Issue' and its ramifications is made later in this study.]

² *Die Vaderland*, 29.10.1936, and *Die Volkstem*, 30.10.1936.

only because they were beginning to realise that the anti-Jewish slogan appealed to a large proportion of the electorate.³ Terreblanche, however, was wrong. Antisemitism was not simply a ploy by the Malanites to garner votes, but an intrinsic element in the world view of hardline Afrikaner nationalists. Indeed, at the Transvaal Congress of the Nationalist Party, held towards the end of October 1936, the opinion was expressed that Jews should not be permitted to join the ranks of the Party, and it was decided to submit a resolution to this effect to the Federal Council of the Party.⁴ This resolution was later to appear as an entrenched clause in the Nationalist Party's political platform. Thus Saron:

Towards the end of 1936 there were unmistakably signs that the official Opposition Party, the Nationalist Party, was moving towards an anti-Jewish policy. Finally the Party incorporated avowedly anti-Jewish planks in its official platform...enunciated in the 1938 election manifesto...⁵

There was evidence of a flirtation between the followers of Malan and Weichardt as early as January 1936, when Weichardt stood as a Greyshirt candidate in an Eastern Cape Province parliamentary by-election for the Port Elizabeth North seat – a constituency comprising 7,884 voters all, of course, whites. The Malanites did not present a candidate. They apparently instructed their supporters, many of whom would otherwise have voted for Weichardt, to cast their votes for the Independent Labour candidate, C A Retief, in an attempt to wrest the seat from Smuts' United Party. Weichardt thus only garnered 8.4% of the votes but may have gained more had Malan's first priority not been to ensure that the seat did not fall to the United Party. The latter, however, won the by-election, held on 22 January 1936, by a mere 90 votes.⁶ Some three months later Smuts expressed concern, in a private letter to Sarah Gertrude Millin, that the antisemitism of the Nationalists had “become worse owing to the fear of the German-Jewish influx” – an “imported storm” – and to which he referred as a “groundless fear of a Jewish invasion” He pointed to “serious political developments, especially in the Cape where good seats were lost at Provincial elections because voters feared they were going to be swamped by “this

³ *Terre-Blanche*, September 1936.

⁴ *Die Volksblad*, 31.10.1936.

⁵ G Saron in Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.383.

⁶ L T Weichardt Collection (PV 29), Press Cuttings, *Port Elizabeth Advertiser*, 24.1.1936; *Eastern Province Herald*, 28.1.1936.

Jewish influx from Germany.” Smuts argued that Dr Malan had been influenced by this development “to come into the open with an anti-Jewish program”, adding that “the Greyshirts I suppose will now become a part of the National Party.”⁷

Despite the flirtation and a potential rapprochement, a political marriage between the Right and the Radical Right – between Malan’s Gesuiwerdes and Weichardt’s Greyshirts – was never consummated.⁸ There is nevertheless no gainsaying that the two shared an affinity, to say the least, for Nazi ideology, and for an ideology marked by antisemitism. However, the populism of the Greyshirts and their call for a fascist system of government were not deemed by Malan to be a suitable model for South Africa. Unlike Weichardt, Malan never rejected the parliamentary system. He also objected to the Greyshirt’ use of the Swastika because, like the Union Jack (to which he also objected), it was a foreign symbol.⁹ Thus negotiations regarding administrative cooperation between the Purified National Party and the Greyshirts did not reach fruition.¹⁰ In a letter sent to Weichardt on 25 October 1937 by F C Erasmus, MP, secretary of the Gesuiwerdes, stating that the negotiations between the two parties were over, Erasmus declared that the Nationalists sincerely appreciated “the useful work done by the Greyshirts in one important respect...that they have permanently drawn the attention of the people to the Jewish problem which”, he noted, “has assumed very threatening dimensions.”¹¹ Hancock in fact notes that while Malan refused to have official dealings with Weichardt, the National Party “showed where it stood” when the decision was later taken by the

⁷ S G Millin Collection (A 539), File C1. Letter from Smuts to Millin, 18.4.1936.

⁸ See early reports in L T Weichardt Collection (PV 29), Press Cuttings, about a possible alliance between Weichardt and Malan: *Die Burger*, 14.4.1937 (press cutting 66) and *The Star*, 13.4.1937 (press cutting 54.) The latter newspaper, under the heading ‘Greyshirts and Nationalists: Offer of a Compromise Rejected’, noted that at the three-day Greyshirt Congress held in April 1937, Weichardt argued that in his negotiations with Malan, he would not countenance a country run along political lines because “the leader must be the highest authority.”

⁹ *The Cape Times*, 3.11.1937.

¹⁰ Cecil Lyons, Chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, acknowledged this in a letter to Alexander. Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List 1V, No. 24, Lyons to Alexander, 15.2.1937.

¹¹ See Hagemann, *Antisemitism in South Africa During World War II*, p.267. For reference to the failure of a pre-election pact between the Purified National Party and the Greyshirts and the correspondence between F C Erasmus and W R Laubscher, secretary of the Greyshirt organisation, see *The Cape Times*, 3.11.1937.

Gesuiwerdes in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal to exclude Jews from membership.¹²

Furlong holds that a combination of “the complex and sometimes indirect influences” of the Afrikaners who identified with the Radical Right “pushed Afrikaner nationalism into accommodating aspects” of the latter ‘movement’.¹³ However, while the Malanites had become increasingly radicalised and authoritarian, and had unofficially jumped onto the antisemitic bandwagon by the end of 1936, the United Party, which of course also comprised of many Afrikaners, had maintained a steady opposition to the Shirt movement. “We must cut off the head of this viper,” declared Colonel D Reitz, Minister of Agriculture, “before it creeps out of its hole, because there is a danger of this irresponsible agitation spreading...”¹⁴ This, generally speaking, was the attitude of members of the Government, and General Smuts – as has been shown – who remained an ardent antagonist of the anti-Jewish movements.¹⁵

The Central Party also expressed its unqualified support and sympathy for the Jewish community and its opposition to extremist Afrikaner nationalism. Through its official organ, *Die Volk*, the party published a series of articles under the heading of “Pasop” [Beware], attacking the Shirt movements.¹⁶ In an interview with *The Friend*, Dr Colin Steyn, a leading member of the Central Party, stated categorically that his party was opposed to all Shirt movements, and that no Blackshirt or Greysshirt would be tolerated within its ranks.¹⁷

Prior to 1937 the Church also adopted an openly pro-Jewish stand. As early as November 1933, *Die Kerkbode*, official organ of the Dutch Reformed Church, denounced the ‘persecution’ of the Jewish community, stating that it was

¹² W K Hancock, *Smuts, Fields of Force, 1919-1950*, p.290. [This is the only apparent reference to the decision by the Orange Free State branch of the National Party to exclude Jews from membership in that province. Hancock does not cite a source.]

¹³ P J Furlong, ‘Apartheid, Afrikaner Nationalism and the Radical Right: Historical Revisionism in Hermann Giliomee’s *The Afrikaners*’, in the *South African Historical Journal*, 49:1, 2003, p.211.

¹⁴ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Digest*, Press Report Number 6, 1936.

¹⁵ See statements quoted earlier in this study; also the report of Smuts’ speech made at Roodebank on 1.12.1936, featured in *The Star* of even date.

¹⁶ See *Die Volk*, issues 18.6.1936, 25.6.1936, 2.7.1936 and 9.7.1936.

¹⁷ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Digest*, Press Report Number 4, 1936.

anti-Christian.¹⁸ In a report of the “Dutch Reformed Mission to the Jews” (the Jode-Sending) submitted to the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Cape, attention was drawn to the wave of antisemitism sweeping South Africa. The report deplored this and stated that it was the bounden duty of Christians to eradicate such racial hatred and dissension.¹⁹ Similarly, the Witwatersrand Church Council passed a resolution in February 1937 condemning antisemitic activities as “actions based on race prejudice [which] are contrary to the spirit of Christ,” and deprecating “in the strongest terms the antisemitic propaganda which is being disseminated through certain channels in South Africa.” The Council went on to establish a sub-committee to meet with a sub-committee representing the South African Jewish Board of Deputies for the purpose of creating goodwill between Gentiles and Jews.²⁰ Thus, apart from the occasional exception,²¹ the Church during the first few years of organised antisemitism in the Union had chosen a path which was singularly sympathetic to the Jewish community. Yet, this was not always what it appeared to be, as noted later in this study, when the Transvaal Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church was to leave it to the Christian conscience of its members to decide the justification or otherwise of supporting the anti-Jewish movements of the Right and Radical Right.²²

Other recognised public institutions and members of South Africa’s European and non-European population were similarly responsive to the anti-Jewish elements in the community. Letters constantly appeared in the press either denouncing the activities of Weichardt’s and Malan’s followers or eulogising them. Well-known public personalities such as Leslie Blackwell and Professor Benjamin Farrington were quite open in their contempt for the right-wing movements. The last-named was by no means alone in his plea for the establishment of anti-Shirt movements to

¹⁸ *Die Kerkbode*, 8.11.1933. See also *The Cape Times*, 13.11.1933; and Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book, 1932-1934*, letter to the Reverend Meiring, 10.11.1933.

¹⁹ *Die Burger*, 22.10.1936.

²⁰ *Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 14.4.1937. This resolution was given wide publicity in the press. See *The Friend*, 10.3.1937; *Daily Dispatch*, 8.3.1937; *Eastern Province Herald*, 8.3.1937; and *The Pretoria News*, 6.3.1937.

²¹ In a letter to a Mr McGregor, c.18.5.1934, Morris Alexander cited the case of a Dutch Reformed Minister who had appeared on the platform at a Greyshirt meeting in Port Elizabeth. Alexander expressed the fear that the members of the public would form the opinion “that the Church sympathises with the Greyshirt antisemitic campaign, which we know is not the case.” (Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book, 1932-1934*). [Alexander’s optimism, as noted later, was ill-conceived.]

²² See Chapter 10.

South African Jewry was the non-European communal leader, Dr I Abdurahman²³ who, together with advocates Harry Snitcher and I W R Silke, were involved in the Anti-Fascist League – an organisation formed in Johannesburg in mid-1933 to combat Nazi influence in South Africa. The League also had branches in Cape Town, led by Messrs G Botha and M Holland, and in Durban.²⁴ Similarly, an organisation styling itself the League Against Fascism and War (S.A.) published populist-style material to combat fascism and antisemitism. Typical of the group's invective was an eight-page pamphlet published in the decade before the Second World War, aimed at convincing South Africa's workers of the evils of Nazism and antisemitism while making a somewhat bizarre accusation that the Nazis were fomenting a world-wide conspiracy to exploit all workers:

“The ‘shirt’ movement throughout the world is the tool of the big capitalists and large landowners, by whom it is financed and controlled. The real rulers of Germany are Thyssen and Krupps, the Armament Manufacturers and the big bankers, large landowners and financiers. Hitler is only their tool. The big capitalists, who squeeze the last drop of blood out of hundreds of millions of people, are afraid that the masses will rise against them, so they get hold of these demagogues and finance them to set up organisations and carry out extensive propaganda, preaching to the ‘real’ friends of the people.

The Greyshirts-Blackshirts style themselves ‘National’ but they work not in the interests of their nationals but in the interests of German Imperialism. They call themselves ‘Socialist’ but they are the tools of the big capitalists, and the sworn enemy of the workers. They call themselves ‘Democratic’ but their rule is a dictatorship of terror. They call themselves ‘Christian’ but in Germany where they are in power, they persecute the Christian religion.

How can such bluffers be trusted? The Greyshirts openly acknowledge Germany, and not South Africa, as their Fatherland, and Hitler as their supreme ‘Leader’. The Blackshirts, on the other hand, pretend to be loyal South Africans. It is well known, however, that the ‘shirt’ movements throughout the world are inspired, controlled, and financed by Hitler's Foreign Propaganda Office...”²⁵

In the war of invective and counter-charge it was to the common masses that both sides – antisemites and their antagonists – tended to appeal. And the natural form of

²³ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book, 1932-1934*. Letter to Dr I Abdurahman, 8.1.1934. Alexander thanked Abdurahman for denouncing antisemitism in a letter to *The Eastern Province Herald*, 4.1.1934.

²⁴ *The Cape Times*, 14.1.1935 and 8.2.1935.

²⁵ League Against Fascism and War (S.A.), *Blackshirts! Greyshirts! Hunger! Slavery! Oppression and War!* pp.1-2.

their appeal, blunt and unsophisticated, was usually in keeping with general populist propaganda.

Members of the town council of Cape Town, too, alarmed at the number of antisemitic meetings being held throughout the Cape Peninsula, adopted the following recommendation:

That it be an instruction that in future no municipal premises be leased to any organisation, body, section of the community or person, whose interests and activities are, or may be calculated to give rise to any friction between sections of the community on racial lines...²⁶

The day following the statement issued by General Smuts, in his capacity as Minister of Justice, condemning the penetration into South Africa of Nazi antisemitism, ²⁷ Morris Alexander wrote from Cape Town to the Johannesburg - based chairman of the South Africa Board of Deputies expressing grave concerns about Nazi propaganda and urging the Board to implement counter-propaganda measures:

The Nazi antisemitic propaganda has given us a great deal of trouble down here [in the Cape Province]. As it came into the open, we had to meet it likewise, and the leading articles in *Die Burger*, *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times* as well as the interviews did a great deal of good. The ramifications of the propaganda are innumerable and the situation is still full of anxietyThe time has arrived for a forward policy, particularly among the poor, Afrikaans – and English – speaking. Literature dealing with Hitlerism – short and snappy – must be circulated in both languages. I believe the Relief Committee for the Victims of German Fascism are doing good work in this connection in Johannesburg. I am glad Smuts made a satisfactory statement at last. We also had to deal with the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* – a reproduction of this poisonous work in *The Cape*, a weekly newspaper. It has been tackled successfully by us and tomorrow I understand there will be a withdrawal in the same paper.

Alexander went on to suggest distribution of *The Times'* publication addressing the fact that the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, one of history's best-known antisemitic publications, was a forgery. He urged the South African Jewish Board of Deputies to contact its London-based counterpart with a request to forward copies of

²⁶ *The Cape Argus*, 28.8.1936.

²⁷ The text of Smuts' statement, issued on 1.11.1933, appears earlier in this study.

The Times' refutation,²⁸ to be used "to combat any further resurrection of the Protocols."²⁹

Although individual Jews were prepared to attend Greyshirt meetings and to indulge in fisticuffs, the Jewish communal leadership continued to urge restraint. Alexander's letter to Adolph Schauder (1880-1968), chairman of the Eastern Province Jewish Board of Deputies and, variously, City Councillor and Mayor, reflects the general approach adopted by the Jewish community:

"If you are getting advice to encourage our young men to go to Greyshirt meetings and break them up - ignore it- it is bad advice. They must be told to keep away, and exercise restraint"³⁰

Like Alexander, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies consistently counselled restraint in the face of demands for a more 'activist' policy against the anti-Jewish provocation.³¹ The Board was sometimes criticised for adopting a 'soft-option' policy involving public education, pamphleteering and public meetings rather than attending the meetings of the Shirt organisations *en masse* and attempting to break them up if need be.³²

It was alleged – and possibly with considerable justification – that Jewish businessmen were boycotting German goods because of Germany's treatment of her Jewish population. Jewish council members of the Johannesburg Municipality were accused in a leading article published in *Die Volksblad*³³ of discriminating

²⁸ *The Truth about the Protocols: A Literary Forgery from The Times, 17th and 18th August, 1921.*

²⁹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book 1932-1934 (BC 160)*, C (iii), II, Alexander to Hillman, 2.3.1933. See also Alexander's letter to Goodman of even date, urging "an open forward policy." In an earlier letter to Goodman, dated 27.10.1933 and also appearing in *Letter Book 1932-1934*, C (iii), II, Alexander notes that, acting on the latter's instructions, he had – together with the Rev. A P Bender – called on the Attorney General, acquainting him "fully with the local Nazi propaganda", at which the Attorney General had said that he would contact the police. In his letter to Goodman, Alexander also referred to his interviews with *Die Burger*, *The Cape Times*, and *The Cape Argus*, expressing satisfaction with their leader articles and stressing (without much foresight at that point) that the antisemitic movement "has reached its high-water mark and will soon become ineffective."

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Alexander to Schauder, 2.2.1934. In a private letter to Adolph Schauder, dated 8.12.1933 Alexander refers to the increase of antisemitic propaganda "under Weichardt and Co" in Cape Town, Parow, Stellenbosch, Malmesbury and elsewhere, but states that Weichardt's meetings should be ignored as "any virulent interference plays into his hands."

³¹ See *Jewish Affairs*, March 1973, p.70.

³² See for example *The Anti-Nazi*, 17.2.1934.

³³ *Die Volksblad*, 13.7.1936.

against Germany in the acceptance of tenders. At a Congress of the Cape Agricultural Association, held at Aliwal North towards the end of August 1936, a resolution was unanimously passed urging the Government to take steps to prevent businessmen from boycotting German goods. The boycott, it was argued, particularly affected the wool-growers, as Germany bought a considerable amount of wool from South Africa. Indeed, Germany was one of South Africa's best customers, and commercial discrimination against her could possibly be to South Africa's detriment.³⁴ Major Guy Featherston argued, however, that any decrease in German imports could not be attributed to the alleged boycott of German goods by Jewish traders, but could only be ascribed to economic factors.³⁵

According to the minutes of the twenty-ninth session of the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, Mr C te Water of South Africa said that the discrimination by South West African Jewry against German trade had set in motion a counteraction against the Jews in the Mandate.³⁶ Thus resentment against the Jews over the Boycott issue did exist in some quarters,³⁷ substantiated by a resolution discussed at the Congress of the Cape Nationalist Party (held in Worcester between 30 September and 2 October 1936) exhorting party members to buy only from businessmen who stocked German goods.³⁸ Further expressions of disapproval directed against the Jews over the boycott issue were voiced at a meeting of the Farmers' Union in Jamestown,³⁹ and at the Congress of the United Party, held in Bloemfontein.⁴⁰ A leading article in *Die Burger* held that by boycotting German

³⁴ *Die Burger* 29.8.1936. See also *Die Volksblad*, 28.8.1936 and 29.8.1936.

³⁵ *The Star*, 10.9.1936.

³⁶ *Rand Daily Mail*, 10.9.1936.

³⁷ A one-page untitled and undated document among Eric Louw's papers – E H Louw Collection (PV 4), File 89 – alludes to the existence of a "Jewish Committee" which threatened Jewish businesses and firms owned by non-Jews that sold German goods. This appears to be the only documented reference to the alleged committee. The same file, however, also houses two documents, the first in the form of a letter and the later document titled 'Non-Sectarian Boycott Committee', dated February and April 1936 respectively. Both carry the signature of W H Andrews. The documents claim the existence of a non-sectarian organisation, based in London with South African branches, sponsored by the South African Trades and Labour Council, promoting the boycott of German goods and services. The letter, addressed to the Cape Textile Company in Maitland, states: "At a recent conference the South African Trades and Labour Council which has an organised trade union membership throughout South African of some 70,000 members, has resolved to establish a Non-Sectarian Boycott Committee with branches in all the principal centres in order to set up a rigid boycott of all German goods and services".

³⁸ *The Cape Argus*, 22.9.1936.

³⁹ *Die Volksblad*, 8.10.1936.

⁴⁰ *The Friend*, 29.10.1936

products, South African Jews were triggering a backlash of resentment and antisemitism.⁴¹

Occasional criticism notwithstanding, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies nevertheless led the fight against antisemitism. It did not pose as a political body, but as an organisation representing South African Jewry, intent on protecting the interests of the community. Gustav Saron contends that "it was their right and duty to frustrate any attempt which might be made to interfere with the full citizenship rights which South African Jews had always enjoyed."⁴² As noted earlier, however, the Jewish leadership never expressed these sentiments with respect to the citizenship rights of non-white sections of the population.

As early as 29 May 1933, Morris Alexander, at that stage Chairman of the Cape branch of the Jewish Board of Deputies, organised a mass meeting in Cape Town's City Hall in an attempt to counter the spread of antisemitism. Despite attempts made by Dr H D Bodenstein (General Hertzog's Secretary for External Affairs who was reputed to have strong pro-German leanings) to persuade Alexander to cancel the arrangement, the meeting was held. "From that hour", wrote Enid Alexander, "the war between the South African Nazis and the local Jewish community was on."⁴³ The strategy adopted by the Board, however, was not to advocate violence, echoing sentiments expressed early by Alexander. When one Mr P Siebenaller wrote to Alexander suggesting that the Board countenance the use of violence against the Shirt movements, the latter replied that such "proposals sound to me quite crazy. I strongly disapprove of violence. Antisemitism must be met by constitutional methods."⁴⁴

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies embarked on a vigorous campaign to enlighten the masses. In 1934, it established a Publicity Department with Mr S Franks as Chairman and Mr G Saron as Secretary. The work of this department, however, became so extensive that in July 1936, when Mr Saron

⁴¹ *Die Burger*, 12.6.1937.

⁴² Saron and L Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.385.

⁴³ Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, p.116.

⁴⁴ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book, 1932-1934*, BC 160 C (iii), II, M Alexander to P Siebenaller, 8.6.1934.

assumed the General Secretaryship of the Board, Dr H Sonnabend was employed to conduct the Publicity Department's affairs. The result was the publication and distribution of a considerable number and variety of pamphlets and informative documents. In addition, information was handed from time to time to the Jewish and non-Jewish press. Foremost among the activities of the Publicity Department was the reproduction – in both official languages – of *The Truth about the Protocols*⁴⁵ - articles which appeared in *The Times* in 1921 proving that the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were a literary forgery. The Shirtists had made great currency from the frequent publication of extracts from the *Protocols*, reproduced either in pamphlet form or books such as Maritz's *My Lewe en Strewe*, and J H H de Waal's *My Ontwaking*.⁴⁶ Also published and widely distributed in both languages was the brochure entitled *The Anti-Jewish Movements in South Africa*, compiled by Messrs Saron and Sonnabend. This publication was intended to provide the community at large with a documented account of the growth of antisemitic influences in South Africa between 1933 and July 1936. At the same time, the Publicity Department undertook to reprint Dr Louis Herrman's work, *The History of the Jews in South Africa*, to enable "a large circle of persons to receive a reliable record of the part played by the Jews in the history of the Union."⁴⁷ Indicative of the type of pamphlet distributed during this period attempting to vindicate the Jewish community is one entitled *Gryshemde onder Verhoor: Gryshemptaktik Blotgelê*. Printed in 1936 in simplified Afrikaans, this seven-page publication exposes the findings of the Greyshirt Trial and at the same time reveals the legal action which proved the

⁴⁵ *The Truth About the Protocols: A Literary Forgery*, from *The Times*, 16th, 17th and 18th August, 1921. Reprinted c.1936 by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. For further information on the Protocols, see, *inter alia*,; United States Congress – Senate: Committee on the Judiciary: *Protocols of the Elders of Zion: A Fabricated "historic" Document* (Published by the U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964); S Dark, *The Jew Today* (Ivor Nicholson and Watson, Ltd, London, 1933) pp.20, *et seq*; and C Sykes, 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion', *History Today*, Volume 17, Number 2, 1 February 1967 (History Today Ltd., London), pp. 81-88.

⁴⁶ J H H de Waal, Jnr, *My Ontwaking*. (The writer of the present study retains a handwritten English translation of *My Ontwaking* ['My Awakening'] on file.) For some of Maritz's attacks on the Jews, see *The Cape Times*, 15.7.1938 (at a meeting held in the Vryheid area he referred to the Jews as exploiters and the root of all evil); and *The Cape Times*, 14.11.1938 (at a poorly attended meeting in Pietersburg he charged that Jews were satanic and that Christians should not associate with them.)

⁴⁷ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report submitted to the Twelfth Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, pp.27-28.

Protocols a falsification.⁴⁸ It was probably published by the Jewish Board of Deputies.

Leaders of the Jewish community took every opportunity to address the public. At the end of December 1933, Alexander, in a confidential letter addressed to prominent philanthropist and social reformer, John David Rheinallt Jones (1884-1953) of the Institute of Race Relations, wrote:

We are combating antisemitic propaganda by all legitimate means. It is too widespread to ignore. An attempt is being made to introduce propaganda among the Poor Whites, the Coloured people... and the Natives.

He asked Jones to assist in arresting the spread of Nazism so that the public would see that not only South African Jewry was doing so. He suggested that Christian leaders be approached to deliver sermons; that articles be written to inform the country of the valuable work rendered by its Jewish population; and he asked Jones to arrange for "well-known Christian intellectuals" to deliver lectures on the evils of racial hatred. A week or two later Alexander himself lectured to a Coloured Conference at Cape Town on Race Relations. He considered this a most important undertaking in view of the attempts made to introduce antisemitism among the Coloured community.⁴⁹

The intensity of the anti-Jewish agitation from nationalist quarters had been made possible largely because there were no lawful means preventing libellous or injurious attacks upon sections of the Union's population. Although the laws of libel prevented such attacks upon individuals, a section of the community injured in a similar manner had no redress in the law courts. Beyond issuing one or two public warnings that legislation might become necessary unless the activities of agitators stopped, and beyond enforcing in a very few instances the Riotous Assemblies Act and thus banning would-be anti-Jewish meetings, the authorities had taken no official action.

⁴⁸ South African Jewish Board of Deputies: *Greyshirts on Trial: Greyshirt Tactics Exposed - Gryshemde onder Verhoer: Gryshemptaktiek Blootgelê* (South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg, c.1934-1935).

⁴⁹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book, 1932-1934*, letters dated 28.11.1933 and 2.1.1934.

This attitude was openly construed by the Greyshirts as an indication of the sympathy of the Government for their cause.⁵⁰

A major task of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies throughout this period was the propagation of anti-defamation legislation implicit in which would be the recognition that the State is duty-bound to protect not only the rights of the individual against libellous utterances, but also the individual as a member of a group, linked together by race, creed or any other bond. At the Tenth Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies held in Durban on 6 and 7 August 1935, the need for such legislation was strongly expressed, and the following resolution was passed:

This Congress, in the cause of racial peace, is of the opinion that the Executive should approach the Government and pray for legislation to make it a criminal offence to publicly libel with legal justification, or excuse any Nationality, Race or Creed likely to expose persons belonging to such Nationality, Race or Creed to hatred, contempt or ridicule.⁵¹

Initial attempts by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies to persuade the Government to introduce anti-defamation legislation had been unsuccessful. In October 1933 Morris Alexander and the Reverend Bender had called on the Attorney-General to discuss the need for such legislation. Some two weeks later, in a letter to a certain Mr Cohen of Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, Alexander had declared that the Government had taken the matter into consideration. A visit by a group of Jewish Members of Parliament to General Smuts in February 1934, however, bore no fruit.⁵² Smuts received further deputations on 5 May and 7 June 1934, and in January of the following year the President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies made representations to Jan Hofmeyr, Minister of the Interior. On each occasion, memoranda were submitted expressing the need for anti-defamation legislation, but with little result.⁵³ A deputation to Prime Minister Hertzog, held in the Prime Minister's rooms on 22 April 1936 and led by Alexander, urged the Prime

⁵⁰ See *Die Waarheid*, 29.5.1936, p.4.

⁵¹ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Tenth Conference of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, p.4.

⁵² Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), *Letter Book, 1932-1934*. Letters dated 27.10.1933, 13.11.1933, 31.11.1933 and 6.2.1934.

⁵³ The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council for the period 1st July, 1933 to 30th April, 1935 to be submitted to the Eleventh Congress at Johannesburg, 19th and 20th May 1935*, p.12.

Minister to consider seriously legislation similar to that promulgated in Holland, New Jersey and elsewhere, “to make punishable as a criminal offence the publication of statements injurious to or defamatory of a group or section of the population of the Union.” While expressing some support for anti-libel legislation, stating that the issue was “receiving the serious consideration of the Government”, that the Justice Ministry would need to deal with it and thanking the deputation for furnishing Dr Bodenstein, Secretary to the Prime Minister and Secretary for External Affairs, with examples of legislation in other countries, Hertzog did no more.⁵⁴ In a lengthy letter sent to Hertzog at the beginning of July 1936, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies summarised the history of its representations to the Government in relation to the need for anti-defamation legislation, arguing that “grossly defamatory statements continue to be made and cannot be dealt with under the existing laws” and requesting that appropriate legislation be introduced.⁵⁵

The response, however, was actually penned by Bodenstein under the Prime Minister’s instruction. While assuring the Board “that the Government will not allow any wrong to be done to South African Jewry, and that where required, it will equally, with any section of the community, receive the fullest protection”, he concluded with an ominous message for South African Jewry. The letter is reproduced here *in extenso* as it is a document which reflects most clearly Prime Minister Hertzog’s relationship with South African Jewry:

... it must be admitted [wrote Bodenstein] that the events of the last two years have given the Government much food for thought and the Prime Minister feels compelled to bring to the notice of the South African Jewish Community certain aspects of the position. Things have happened and are taking place in the Union, which amongst the non-Jewish community, have given rise to a strong feeling of discontent with the conduct of South African Jewry and which, it is felt, are, in no small measure, responsible for the anti-Jewish feeling complained of. There is a fast-growing conviction that members of the Jewish Community in the Union, in order to promote the interests of the Jewish race, whether in South Africa or elsewhere, do not hesitate to avail themselves of measures and means in direct conflict with the interests of the rest of the population and of the state. This sort of grievance with the

⁵⁴ *Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, special meeting, 26 April 1936.

⁵⁵ J C Smuts Collection (S.1), Vol. CXXIII, File 44. Copy of letter dated 1.7.1936 sent on behalf of the President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Siegfried Raphaely, to Prime Minister Hertzog.

non-Jewish section of the population has on more than one occasion been pointed out to leaders of the Jewish people by the Prime Minister, and the warning expressed that if persisted in it must inevitably alienate the good feeling of the rest of the community towards the Jewish section, and could not be approved of by the Government. With respect to this question, there are two matters which more especially have engaged the attention of the Government. The first is one which has already been raised in the discussions in Parliament, viz. the indiscriminate immigration into the Union of Jews from foreign parts. As this matter has already been remarked upon in Parliament, I need say no more about it here. The second is the boycott of German goods, which is still being actively pursued. With respect to this matter, you will readily realise that it is difficult for the rest of the community to understand why they should be called upon by South African Jewry to make sacrifices for people in foreign lands who are not their fellow subjects, but complete strangers both to them and to South Africa. There is not the least doubt in the mind of the Government that it is in the interests of the Jews themselves to realise the gravity of the situation occasioned by the conduct complained of, and the dangers to which persistence in such a policy necessarily must expose South African Jewry.

It will be readily felt, that a section of the community cannot continue wilfully to pursue a policy which is detrimental to the interests of the Union as a whole and which threatens peace and order in the State, as is the case with the boycotting of German goods by South African Jews, in spite of this approval by the Government and economic injury to the rest of the community, without incurring the resentment of the rest of the population. When, therefore, the Jewish Community, in spite of provocative conduct by fellow Jews of the kind referred to, appeals to the Government for assistance against possible acts of molestation, your Committee will appreciate that the Government is bound to give its attention to all the aspects of the situation and to consider in how far, and for what, measures ought to be taken, in order to safeguard the interests not only of South African Jewry, or any other section of the community, but also those of the people of the Union as a whole.⁵⁶

The message from the Prime Minister was clear: Jewish support for the boycott of German goods, and Jewish opposition to restrictions placed by the Government on the entry of Jews into South Africa, were deemed measures which were decidedly un-South African. For the Jews, the veiled threat may have appeared reminiscent of Malan's interview with *Die Burger* in November 1931 in the aftermath of the Quota Act's promulgation. Neither Smuts nor Hofmeyr would have written in that vein. Hertzog, however, while "disclaiming antisemitism",⁵⁷ had given full support to the

⁵⁶ Ibid., File 53, letter from H D J Bodenstein on behalf of Prime Minister Hertzog to Siegfried Raphaely, President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, 19.8.1936. [Extracts from this letter appear in Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, p.63.]

⁵⁷ Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, p.63. [Hertzog, for the most part, played his cards carefully. For example, when he received a letter about "the danger looming ahead" regarding Jewish

1930 Quota Act, demonstrated a sympathetic attitude to Germany both prior to 1939 and up until his death in November 1942,⁵⁸ and demonstrated clearly during the parliamentary debate over the 1937 Aliens Bill that, insofar as Jewish immigration was concerned, his sympathies continued to accord with those of the Malanites.⁵⁹

Regardless of Hertzog's response, the demand for anti-defamation legislation did not subside. In November 1936 the South African public became even more aware of the necessity for introducing such legislation when the Public Order Bill was introduced in the British House of Commons on 10 November following a series of violent acts and a clash on 4 October of that year - subsequently dubbed 'the Battle of Cable Street' - between the Metropolitan Police, the British Union of Fascists, local Jewish groups and others in London's East End, which housed a large Jewish population. This measure, soon to be enacted, forbade the wearing of uniforms signifying association with political organisations, and generally rendered it defamatory to make oral or written attacks upon the fair name or reputation of an individual. The basis of the Bill, as both King Edward VIII and Stanley Baldwin pointed out, was that freedom depended upon mutual tolerance between individuals or groups of individuals. The British Government had by the Act curbed to some degree the extremist activities of Sir Oswald Mosely and his British Union of Fascists.⁶⁰

The demand for the introduction of similar legislation in South Africa arose among sections of both the Jewish and non-Jewish population. Under the heading of "Intolerance Must Be Stamped Out", Arthur G Barlow, Labour MP and journalist, wrote that the time had arrived for the Government to tighten up the Act dealing with

propaganda in South Africa, accusing Jews – "this fiendish minority enters the vitals of our national life" – of causing the Spanish Civil War and spreading their propaganda "into the native locations" – he simply acknowledged receipt of the letter without comment. See J B M Hertzog Collection, (a.32), Box 62(viii), 'The Jewish Question', H Classe to Prime Minister Hertzog, 29.9.1937.

⁵⁸ Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, pp.85; 154-156; 199-200.

⁵⁹ This is discussed in a succeeding section of this study.

⁶⁰ *The Rand Daily Mail*, 4.11.1936. See also *Die Vaderland*, 30.10.1936. The legislation, embodied in the Public Order Act 1936, became effective in the United Kingdom from 18 December 1936, eight days after the abdication of King Edward VIII. See H Defries, *Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews, 1900-1950* (Frank Cass, London and Portland Oregon, 2001), p.124; and M Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts! Fascists and Fascism in Britain between the Wars* (Random House, London, 2006), p.6. See also R Benewick, *Political Violence and Public Order: A Study of British Fascism* (Allen Lane, London, 1969), *passim*. [The legislation appears online at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Edw8and1Geo6/1/6> (accessed 30.6.2013)]

criminal libel, because attacks were being made against the Jews, liberty was being turned into licence, and the Jewish people as a community had no legal redress.⁶¹ South Africa's English press generally appears to have been greatly in favour of such legislation. On 12 November 1936, both *The Friend* and *The Cape Argus* expressed support for such a measure. The leading article in the first-mentioned newspaper concluded:

We in South Africa, who have seen similar tendencies at work in our midst, will observe with the utmost interest the methods followed by a leading democratic state in the fight against political licence and social anarchy.⁶²

Of interest is a cartoon which appeared in *The Sunday Times* which, alluding to the English legislation banning organised Shirtism, contains the following dialogue:

John Bull: 'Take away those filthy garments from my hedge'.
General Hertzog to Smuts: 'I suppose we ought to pluck up enough courage to do the same'.⁶³

In February 1937, several members of the United Party signed a Round Robin in the House of Assembly⁶⁴ requesting the Government to introduce a Bill for the protection of the community, based upon the lines of the recent British Act.⁶⁵ It was argued that such a law would dampen the spirits of the Greyshirts.⁶⁶ However, the

⁶¹ *The Sunday Express*, 1.11.1936.

⁶² *The Friend*, 12.11.1936. See also The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Digest*, Press Report Number 55, 1936.

⁶³ *The Sunday Times*, 8.11.1936.

⁶⁴ The request to sign the Round Robin, penned by Morris Alexander, read: "At present any person can with impunity grossly libel any race or group of persons. Should the Government introduce legislation punishing libels of races or groups of persons, in the same way as libels of individual members of such race or group, would members be prepared to support such legislation? If so, please sign opposite their names." By 19 February 1937, Alexander had procured 71 signatures out of 122 members of the United Party. See letter from Morris Alexander to Cecil Lyons, Chairman of the Executive Council of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, 19.2.1937, and Lyons' response of 24.2.1937, Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List IV, No.24. See also letter from Alexander to Colonel Stallard, 7.4.1937, Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), Jewish Board of Deputies Miscellaneous File 1906. 1937-1939, requesting the Dominion Party's support for anti-defamation legislation. Further correspondence on the anti-defamation issue appears in earlier letters from Alexander. See Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (iii), List II, *Letter Book 1932-1934*, letters to Hillman (13.11.1933), Cohen of Bulawayo (13.11.1933) and Schauder (24.1.1934).

⁶⁵ *Patria*, 10.9.1937 Article titled "One Hundred MPs Sign Jewish Round Robin. Will Support Jew-Bill Next Session. Blackmailed by Jewish Deputies." (See copy housed in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), South African Jewish Board of Deputies Miscellaneous File 1906. 1937-1939). The article in *Patria*, styled 'organ of the South African Fascists', claimed that the South African Jewish Board of Deputies had organised the Round Robin. (The Board certainly supported it fully, if unofficially.)

⁶⁶ *The Sunday Tribune*, 14.2.1937.

Cabinet, either because of Hertzog's attitude or for reasons unknown, continually evaded the issue.⁶⁷ Smuts had in fact demurred early in March 1936 about the efficacy of anti-defamation legislation,⁶⁸ fearing that such measures would be counter-productive by making martyrs of the ultra-Right.⁶⁹ Some five weeks later, Sarah Gertrude Millin wrote to Hofmeyr, in the hope that the Government would relent and enact anti-vilification legislation, at the same time protecting itself from libel:

Is it too late in the day for Parliament to pass Bills about such things as race libels? If only the United Party would see that race libels are ammunition against themselves – the chief ammunition! ⁷⁰

Her plea was in vain.

A revealing light was cast upon this issue in August 1939, when Manie Maritz (author – as noted earlier ⁷¹ – of the antisemitic book *My Lewe en Strewes*) was brought to trial under South West Africa's Criminal Amendment Act, Ordinance 13 of 1933, and Section 4. This Act provided that:

Any person who utters any word or performs any other act whatsoever with the intent to provoke feelings of hostility between different races of the community, shall be guilty of an offence.⁷²

While this Ordinance had received the approval of the Government of the Union in its capacity as the Mandatory Power, South Africa itself had enacted no legal measures

⁶⁷ The J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1), File Dh, 1937-1939, contains an undated and unsigned two-page document in six sections, entitled *Text of Proposed Legislation to Deal with Criminal Injuria and Criminal Defamation of Groups or Sections of the Population of the Union*. The same folder houses another document with a section headed "explanatory notes," also undated and unsigned. If indeed legislation was drawn up towards the end of the decade, it was not enacted.

⁶⁸ Cecil Lyons, in a detailed letter, urged Morris Alexander to secure 100 signatures to the Round Robin, and suggested that at some stage members of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies should meet with "the Generals" [Hertzog and Smuts] on the issue of group defamation. He also suggested a meeting with Smuts and a "large number" of the members of the Executive of the Cape Committee of the Jewish Board of Deputies, having "a really heart to heart talk with [Smuts]...and asking for his advice." Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List 1V, No.24, Lyons to Alexander, 15.2.1937.

⁶⁹ S G Millin Collection (A 539), File C1. Letter from Smuts to Millin, 18.4.1936.

⁷⁰ J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1), File Ga, Millin to Hofmeyr, 21.3.1937.

⁷¹ See Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

⁷² South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council*, June 1937 to May 1940, p.27.

imposing penal sanction upon the dissemination of racial propaganda and other activities subversive to the peace, order and good government of the country. The Greyshirts and their fellow counterparts were thus well within the framework of the law; their greatest task was, therefore, not to overcome any legal technicalities impeding their activities, but to gain public approval and support for carrying out their expressed aims.

The growth of organised antisemitic agitation had thus, by January 1937, increased considerably. The influence of Nazism, the prevalent economic situation and the ongoing militancy of Afrikaner nationalism, notwithstanding the failed rapprochement between the Purified National Party and the Greyshirts, had created an atmosphere in South Africa conducive to attacks on the Jewish community. Juta in fact contends that the “new brand” of nationalism led by Malan after 1934, together with his Gesuiwerde colleagues, was “hard, sectional, uncompromising, dictatorial, anti-English, Calvinistic and Christian-National.”⁷³ He could just as easily have added ‘antisemitic.’ Apart from a few utterances and occasional repressive measures at lively Greyshirt meetings, Hertzog’s Government assisted little in stemming the antisemitic tide. Open identification and sympathy with the Jewish cause might have implied losing the support of the electorate. Although the general public was rather apprehensive of the antisemitism of the Shirtists and of certain members of the Purified National Party, the Government appears to have been wary of countenancing what was becoming an increasingly popular movement. The ambivalence if not veiled hostility of the Dutch Reformed Church towards the Jews was also of significance to an increasingly concerned Jewish community. The result was that a large proportion of the Jewish community was living in an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty,⁷⁴ a situation which was further exacerbated by the revival of the anti-Jewish immigration campaign by the Gesuiwerdes towards the latter half of 1936, to be discussed in the section of this study which follows.

⁷³ C J Juta, ‘Aspects of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1900-1964’, p. 298.

⁷⁴ See A Z Berman’s diagnosis of South African antisemitism in *The Cape Times*, 20.10.1936.

CHAPTER EIGHTANTISEMITISM AS A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL FACTOR

When Hitler came to power in 1933, German Jewry fell victim almost immediately to the racial doctrines of the Nazis. Consequently, there was a large exodus of German Jews from Europe, a considerable number of whom headed for South Africa. Since 1930, all would-be immigrants to the Union were required to comply with the regulations imposed by the Immigration Quota Act of 1930. This legislation had effectively prevented the influx into the Union of Eastern European and Palestinian Jews considered by the authorities to be both unassimilable and undesirable. Germany, however, fell outside the ambit of the Quota Act's specifications, and consequently German immigrants escaping from Hitler's regime began to arrive in South Africa in increasing numbers. There were no specific legislative barriers to their entry, other than the regular provisions of the 1913 Immigration Act with which they naturally had to comply.

Between 1933 and 1936, 6,132 German immigrants entered the Union. Of these arrivals, 3,626 were Jews. From the figures which follow it can be seen that, while the numbers fluctuated, and while the percentage of non-Jews over Jews was far greater, in the year 1936 there was an unprecedented influx of the latter into the country.

German immigration to South Africa, 1933-1936¹

	<u>1933</u>	<u>1934</u>	<u>1935</u>	<u>1936</u>
Number of non-Jews	438	574	575	919
Number of Jews	204	452	421	2,549
Total	642	1026	996	3468

¹ Saron and Hotz, *The Jews in South Africa*, p.379; Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, p.185; South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Immigration of Jews into the Union*, p.15. (See also Round Table, *The Round Table*, Volume 27, No.107, June 1937 (Routledge, London and Abingdon, Oxfordshire, Carfax International Publishers), pp.669-670; Sergio Della Pergola and Allie A Dubb, 'South African Jewry: A Sociodemographic Profile', in D Singer, D (ed.), *American Jewish Year Book 88* (Jewish Publication Society and American Jewish Committee, Philadelphia and New York, 1988), p.66; and M Arkin, (ed.), *South African Jewry: A Contemporary Survey* (Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1984), p.9.

During the latter half of 1936 there was mounting agitation in the Union from the Afrikaner nationalists, particularly the Purified National Party, and from the extreme Right, represented by the Shirt movements, for the restriction and even cessation of Jewish immigration.² Increased pressure, especially from the Malanites, was placed upon the Government to introduce legislation “to check the Israelitish invasion.”³ Since immigration was a national issue over which the political parties were most concerned, the Jewish Question was projected into the political arena. The promulgation of the Aliens Act⁴ in January 1937 and the political disquiet surrounding the legislation serve as a paradigm for the emergence of rampant antisemitic agitation in political circles, spearheaded by Malan and his followers. They were to place pressure on a somewhat reluctant Government, compelling it to introduce further immigration restrictions but voicing considerable dissatisfaction that the restrictions were not sufficient to curb Jewish immigration completely.

On 16 June 1936, a debate on immigration took place in the House of Parliament, during which strong opposition to further Jewish immigration was expressed by Dr Malan and several of his followers. In the course of the debate, Malan moved a resolution calling for “early and adequate measures to prevent the further influx of Jewish immigrants and, in addition, to impose certain restrictions on aliens” – further evidence of Malan’s anti-Jewish proclivities. When he promulgated the Quota Act in 1930, he was critical of the character of Eastern European Jews and spoke about their lack of assimilability and undesirability. Neither he nor his fellow Nationalists made mention of German Jewry at that stage, perhaps because German Jews were not yet migrating to South Africa in significant numbers. Not so, however, in the mid-1930s. German Jews by and large were urbane, educated migrants, so that the arguments adumbrated by Malan against Jewish migration in 1930 could hold little water in 1936. Nevertheless, his opposition to further Jewish immigration was vociferous and vehement, reflecting yet again that his antisemitism – and that of his supporters – was integral to his political and philosophical *weltanschauung*. The Government, however, held at that stage that no new immigration legislation was

² Some discussion of the debate and analysis of the Aliens Bill which follows were developed by the writer in Cohen, ‘Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa’, chapter 4.

³ Walker, *A History of South Africa*, p.664.

⁴ Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Aliens Act, No.1, 1937.

necessary,⁵ although the pressure was mounting. In a letter to Hertzog, for example, the writer I D B Lötter complained that the Jews and Asians who, he held, were streaming into the country, were oppressing the Afrikaners daily and plunging them into conditions of poverty and unemployment.⁶ At the same time, Malan remained adamant, and at a meeting in Wolmaransstad some two months hence, he again enunciated his Party's immigration policy.⁷ The anti-Jewish immigration cry was taken up by other Purified Nationalists, and in August 1936 the Parow Branch of the Party, under the chairmanship of P G Sinclair, passed a resolution urging the Government to put paid to the entry into South Africa of undesirable immigrants such as Jews.⁸

During September and October of that year the National Party began to increase its anti-Jewish propaganda. Meetings were organised, such as the one held at Stellenbosch where Malan contended that immigration to South Africa was being fostered by an organised Jewish "geldmag" and that the Government had done nothing to remedy the situation.⁹ These remarks were followed by antisemitic letters to the press.¹⁰ Dr Malan, however, denied that his policy was tempered by antisemitic motives. At a meeting in Porterville he declared, *inter alia*, that the

National Party was not anti-Jewish, as a Jew could not help being born of his race. But where the percentage of Jews was too high in a country, there was antisemitism.

Immigration restrictions, he argued, would eradicate anti-Jewish sentiment.¹¹

⁵ *Hansard*, Vol.27, 1936, col.6356, *et seq.*

⁶ "...sodat ons eië land en nasie in armoede en werkloosheid stort." See I B D Lötter to Prime Minister Hertzog, 20.6.1936, JBM Hertzog Collection (a.32), Box 62 (viii). The same file contains a letter to Hertzog from L L Tomlinson of Swellendam, dated 22.10.1936, asking him to put a stop "aan die toestrooming van Jode in ons Vaderland" – to the influx of Jews into the fatherland – arguing that the Jews undermine the country's Christian character, and fearing that Afrikaner children will become "die houthakkers en water drears van daardie immigrante" – the hewers of wood and drawers of water [an allusion to Joshua 9:21, implying labourers and menial drudges] of the Jewish immigrants. The file also houses a telegram from Abram Sparks of Harrismith in the Orange Free State, the text of which reads: "Humbly beseech you as one of your supporters to prevent more Jews from settling in the Union [to ensure] self-preservation for our children and future generations."

⁷ *The Rand Daily Mail*, 18.8.1936.

⁸ *Die Burger*, 15.8.1936.

⁹ *Die Volksblad*, 23.9.1936. ['Geldmag' – financial (money) power.]

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.9.1936. Letter written by one G J van Zyl (Marquard) entitled "Die Dreigende Gevaar." [The Imminent Danger.]

¹¹ *The Cape Argus*, 8.10.1936. See also *The Cape Standard* (newspaper of the Coloured community of Cape Town), 19.10.1936.

The Malanites derived considerable support for their policy from other sections of the Afrikaner community. *Die Republikein*, a newspaper sponsored by a number of pro-German intellectuals in the Union, fully supported the Nationalists.¹² *Die Burger*, too, advocated the complete cessation of organised Jewish immigration, for which it placed the blame on the Government.¹³ Towards the end of the year, when the crisis over Jewish immigration was reaching its climax, a number of well-known professors, principally from the University of Stellenbosch, championed the stand taken by the National Party on the immigration question. Similarly, the Greyshirts came out with widespread propaganda against the Jewish immigrants, and offered as their solution to the problem the establishment of a Jewish colony in the Kalahari Desert.¹⁴

On the other side of the coin, there were people who staunchly advocated the continuation of Jewish immigration to the Union. General Smuts, in the course of an address to the South African Federated Chambers of Industries, stated that South Africa required immigrants from Western countries in order to reinforce her population. "We cannot afford to put an embargo on immigrants," he said.¹⁵ This opinion was endorsed by Patrick Duncan, MP.¹⁶ Similar views were also expressed by C J Sibbett in his address at the annual meeting of the 1820 Memorial Settlers' Association in Cape Town. Sibbett outlined the necessity for new immigrants, and extolled the calibre of the German Jews who had arrived in the country.¹⁷ Sections of the South African Press were also, to some extent, favourably disposed towards Jewish immigration, notably *Die Vaderland*¹⁸ and *Die Volksblad*.¹⁹

¹² *Die Republikein*, 19.8.1936 and 28.8.1936.

¹³ *Die Burger*, 28.10.1936.

¹⁴ *Die Waarheid*, 2.10.1936. (Cited by Cohen, 'Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa', p.105.)

¹⁵ *The Rand Daily Mail*, 9.9.1936.

¹⁶ *The Sunday Express*, 11.10.1936. [Patrick Duncan followed the United Party line and supported Smuts until his appointment in April 1937 as Governor-General, a position he held until 17 July 1943, and during which period he stood above party politics. Of interest, however, is a private letter he wrote to Lady Selborne on 10 January 1935 in which he stated: "I am not antisemitic. I have many Jewish friends whom I like and admire but something in me revolts against our country being peopled by the squat bodied, furtive eyed, loud voiced race... In a big population they would be lost and negligible but we have too many of them." Cited by Bradlow, *Immigration Into The Union, 1910-1948*, p.205.]

¹⁷ *The Cape Times*, 30.10.1936.

¹⁸ *Die Vaderland*, 10.8.1936.

¹⁹ *Die Volksblad*, 2.11.1936.

A floodlight was thrown on the immigration issue in October 1936, when it was reported that a steamer (the 'SS Stuttgart') was due to arrive in Cape Town on 27 October, with 537 German-Jewish refugees on board. It was understood that these immigrants were mainly trained craftsmen, tradesmen and professionals sent out under the auspices of 'Der Hilfsverein.'²⁰ They hoped to arrive in South Africa three days prior to the date on which a set of new immigration regulations were to come into operation. The steamer was in fact chartered, as Louis Hotz notes, because regular shipping to South Africa at that time "was heavily congested" and it would have been impossible for more than a fraction of the would-be German Jewish immigrants to make their way to South Africa in the short time available had they awaited a regular passage.²¹

Under the system to become effective from 1 November 1936, financial guarantees provided by certain organisations on behalf of prospective immigrants would not be accepted unless the would-be immigrants assured the immigration authorities that they had definite employment of a reasonably secure nature awaiting them on arrival. Each migrant was also required to pay one hundred pounds sterling on disembarkation, in cash, a catastrophic stipulation since refugees from Germany were only permitted to depart with ten Reichsmarks – the equivalent of one pound sterling...²² These regulations had evoked widespread criticism. *The Cape Argus* argued that permission to enter the Union now depended solely on the discretion of the immigration officer at the port of entry and implied that this was unjust. *Die Burger*, on the other hand, articulating a Malanite view, stated that the new immigration regulations were merely a half-hearted, dishonest and hypocritical attempt rather than a concerted effort on the part of the Government to stem the organised immigration of German Jews.²³

As the date for the arrival of the 'Stuttgart' drew nigh, tension increased. According to Hepple, "there was an immediate antisemitic outburst by the Nazi Greyshirts and

²⁰ 'Die Hilfsverein der Deutscher Juden' was an organisation which assisted the immigration of German refugees.

²¹ L Hotz in F H Sichel (comp.), *From Refugee to Citizens: A Sociological Study of the Immigrants from Hitler – Europe Who Settled in Southern Africa* (A A Balkema, Cape Town, 1966).p.16.

²² *Die Vaderland*, 13.10.1936. See also Hotz in F H Sichel (comp.), *From Refugee to Citizen*, pp.16 and 21.

²³ *The Cape Argus*, 3.9.1936; and *Die Burger*, 3.9.1936 and 21.9.1936.

the Nationalists.”²⁴ At the University of Stellenbosch a group of students held a meeting at the Dagbreek Residence, where it was decided to hold a march to protest against the arrival of the immigrants.²⁵ A week before the ship was due to dock, a telegram was sent to the Prime Minister by Dr B M Krantz and a considerable number of Durban residents. The cable read: “The undersigned protest most strongly against landing Union harbours undesirable immigrants from chartered steamer ‘Stuttgart’.”²⁶ A petition signed by 68 people from North Paarl sent to Hertzog four days before the ship docked, opposing the 537 Jewish immigrants on board, read: “Ons vertrou dat ons volksleiers stappe sal doen om dit te verhoed,” and concludes: “Ons generaal sal ons sekerlik nie teleur stel nie!”²⁷

On Monday evening, 26 October, a protest meeting was held at the Koffiehuis, Cape Town, under the auspices of the Greyshirt organisation. A large audience attended, among whom were several students from the University of Stellenbosch. According to a report in *The Jewish Chronicle*, “the usual fervent diatribes against the Jews” were made. Owing to a rumour that the ‘Stuttgart’ had arrived seven hours earlier than scheduled, about 1,000 people rushed to the docks at 11.00pm. The ship, in fact, only arrived the following morning as planned, and the demonstration which was to have taken place fizzled out, aided by inclement weather. Only about 200 people were at the quayside when the ship berthed, and these consisted mainly of porters, plain-clothed policemen and officials. A dozen or so demonstrators did turn up, however, but merely “gave vent to a few rude cries and some half-hearted raising of their arms, more amusing than alarming.”²⁸

Despite the failure of the demonstration, anti-immigration agitation increased in intensity after the Stuttgart’s arrival. At this stage a group of well-known academics and prominent individuals entered the fray, swelling the ranks of the increasing number of protagonists of restricted immigration. Prominent among this group were

²⁴ Hepple, *Verwoerd*, p. 219.

²⁵ *Die Burger*, 19.10.1936.

²⁶ J B M Hertzog Collection (a. 32), Box 62 (viii), telegram from Dr Krantz to Prime Minister Hertzog, 20.10.1936, and Hertzog’s acknowledgement of receipt thereof, 21.10.1936. See also *Die Republikein*, 23.10.1936 and *Die Volksblad*, 24.10.1936.

²⁷ Translation: “We hope that our national leaders will take steps to prevent this [and that] our general will certainly not disappoint us!” J B M Hertzog Collection (a.32), Box 62 (viii). Telegram to Prime Minister Hertzog dated 22.10.1936.

²⁸ *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 30.10.1936. See also *The Star*, 27.10.1936.

Dr J Basson and Dr T E Dönges of Cape Town, and Mr Frans Joubert of Paarl. The 'Stuttgart' had barely been twelve hours at the Cape Town docks when a well-attended protest meeting was held at Stellenbosch. In opening the meeting, Dr Basson proposed the following resolution, later carried unanimously:

This public meeting, held on the 27th October, 1936, at Stellenbosch, convened by students and other interested persons, and attended by some 1,500 persons, expresses its strongest protest, in the interests of the older South African inhabitants, against the unrestricted and undesired Jewish mass immigration to South Africa, and appeals to the Government to put a stop to this organised mass immigration by means of legislation and other measures. This meeting wishes to draw the attention of the Government and the Jewish inhabitants of South Africa, in whom the solution of this question primarily rests, to the fact that the antisemitic movement, which has already reached considerable dimensions in South Africa, and which may cause serious disturbances in the life of the community of this country, is only aggravated by this mass immigration.

Dr Basson addressed what he deemed to be the overriding influence of the Jews in trades and professions, which, he said, was to the detriment of the Afrikaner. He argued that if the Afrikaner wanted to build up his own State, he should not be prepared to tolerate foreign, unassimilable elements. Dr Dönges took this a step further by contending that the mass arrival of German Jews into the Union was a form of colonisation. He went on to warn that a storm was approaching and that it was therefore the task of responsible men to take matters into their own hands. Professor C G W Schumann, who spoke somewhat later, dealt with perceived economic aspects of the problem. The danger of the Jews, he said, was the fact that they formed a separate economic unit and that they never laboured with a spade: "The Afrikaner has no town tradition yet, and in order to find employment, he must move towards the town. The Jew as a foreigner makes this difficult for him." He added that the Jews always remained foreigners, were unpatriotic, and could not take part in building national traditions. Yet, he expressed strong disapproval of any form of racial persecution, advocating instead "co-operation and self-control" as "a means by which we can reach our ideal."²⁹ After the resolution was passed, a 'continuation committee' was elected to keep in close contact with further

²⁹ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Digest*, Press Report Number 15, 1936. A full report of this meeting also appeared in *Die Volksblad*, 28.10.1936. Shorter reports appeared in most of the other daily newspapers.

developments regarding the immigration issue, and to ensure that the resolution was carried into effect. It was also decided to send a telegram to the Prime Minister.³⁰

Strident protests against the attitude of the professors towards the Jews, and their perceived interference in public affairs, followed. In a letter to *The Cape Argus* a Jew exclaimed that, if the promoters of the meeting were so interested in the welfare of the older Jewish inhabitants of South Africa, they should have raised their voices earlier against the antisemitic propaganda in this country.³¹ The writer of a leading article in the same newspaper declared that the “one object of the meeting was to whip up feeling against Jews in general,” while the other “was to whip up feeling against the Government.”³² The editor of *The Jewish Chronicle* was even more outspoken in his comments: “Even when the future historian comes to feel pity for the Nazi Storm-Troopers,” he wrote, “the Nazi Professor will still make him sick.”³³

A spate of protest meetings then occurred. On 28 October, some 600 people attended a meeting in Potchefstroom. The principal speaker was Mr F J Labuschagne, a senior lecturer at the Potchefstroom University College. The meeting’s final resolution read:

This meeting... wishes strongly to protest against the wholesale influx of Jews into our country by utilising the last opportunity under the present favourable Immigration Act.

We wish further to point out this state of affairs to the Government, with a direct request to put a stop to this undesirable immigration from which we, as Afrikaners, disassociate ourselves because:

- (1) we regard the Jew, on account of his antecedents, as an undesirable alien;
- (2) of his religion;
- (3) the impossibility of blood mingling;
- (4) the impossibility of cultural co-operation; and
- (5) they will not be an asset to South Africa in commerce.³⁴

³⁰ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Digest*, Press Report Number 15, 1936.

³¹ *The Cape Argus*, 30.10.1936.

³² *Ibid.*, 28.10.1936.

³³ *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 29.10.1936.

³⁴ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Digest*, Press Report Number 15, 1936.

Further protest meetings were held in Woodstock and Observatory on 2 and 3 November respectively.³⁵ At a meeting on 4 November, held in the Paarl Town Hall under the aegis of the Nationalist Party, Dr Dönges and Dr Verwoerd once again spoke at length on the ‘menace’ of Jewish immigration. Verwoerd informed the 1500 audience that the anti-Jewish protest movement had been conceived by him and his colleagues at Stellenbosch long before the ‘SS Stuttgart’ had been chartered. A few days hence Verwoerd and five fellow professors went in deputation to the Smuts-Hertzog Government to make further protests.³⁶ The professors once again held a meeting – this time at Caledon on 7 November – where Dr C G S de Villiers declared that the Jews pouring into South Africa were the worst type of Jews. He added with apparent concern that the day was not far off when there would even be Jewish professors in the universities.³⁷ At a meeting of the National Party, held in Worcester towards the end of November, Dr Verwoerd told the 2,000 persons present that the ‘Professor Campaign’ was in the interests of all European South Africans. He denied that his designs, and the designs of his fellow-professors, were antisemitic.³⁸ Further meetings were held in Malmesbury on 7 and 29 November, and Bethlehem on 28 November.³⁹

Of considerable interest is the dialogue which ensued during this period between the professors and Hofmeyr who, at that stage, held joint portfolios as Minister of Education and Minister of the Interior. In an address at a South African College dinner, Hofmeyr had criticised the attitude adopted by the professors to the Jewish Question, and contended that, in their capacities as academics, they should have kept out of politics.⁴⁰ In a joint reply, published in *Die Volksblad*,⁴¹ the professors in turn criticised the intolerant attitude adopted by Hofmeyr towards them in his

³⁵ *Die Burger*, 5.11.1936.

³⁶ Hepple, *Verwoerd*, p.220; Bunting, *The Rise of the South Africa Reich*, p.59.

³⁷ *Die Volksblad*, 13.11.1936.

³⁸ *The Cape Argus*, 23.11.1936.

³⁹ *Die Waarheid*, 13.11.1936; *Die Burger*, 30.11.1936; and *The Natal Advertiser*, 30.11.1936. The resolution carried at the second meeting, addressed by Professors Basson, Verwoerd and Dönges, held at Malmesbury and quoted in *Die Burger*, is of particular interest. Implicit in the resolution was a statement that the Jews were intent only on serving the interests of their co-religionists, as opposed to the interests of South Africa. South African Jews were thus deemed to represent a power base which was directly in conflict with the welfare and progress of the Afrikaner nation.

⁴⁰ The notes to which Hofmeyr referred in his address are housed in the JH Hofmeyr Collection, A1: File Dh, 1934-1936. The undated document refers to the “insidious growth of antisemitism” and makes reference to the nationalist professors’ “racial crusade” held to be antithetical to “South Africa’s tradition as a tolerant democratic liberty-loving community.”

⁴¹ *Die Volksblad*, 23.11.1936.

capacity as Minister of Education, while in his capacity as Minister of the Interior he had been most tolerant towards Jewish immigrants, even though he had voted for the 1930 Quota Act. Defending their actions, the professors declared that they had taken the initiative principally because the students, who feared that Jewish competition would make it almost impossible for them to practise in the professions for which they were preparing themselves, had pressed for their help. They then challenged Hofmeyr to write to the Stellenbosch University Council if he considered their actions to be contrary to their duties as professors.⁴²

On the same day a three-column article appeared in *The Cape Argus* in which Dr A C Cilliers stated that, because the question of Jewish mass immigration was not a political one, the professors had every right to retreat from the confines of their “midnight oil” and to step “into the breach in a case of national emergency.” Dealing with the charge that the professors were fostering antisemitism, he said:

We repudiate the responsibility for any antisemitism prevalent in the country today. We go further and positively deprecate it. We also subscribe to the doctrine of equal treatment for all European citizens of the country.⁴³

Dr Malan was later to argue in similar vein – that his Party subscribed to equal treatment for all Europeans, only to renege on this doctrine when it came to the Jews.

Cilliers contended that the attitude of the professors was in line with views expressed by Patrick Duncan, Heaton Nicholls and J H Hofmeyr, all of whom disclaimed antisemitism before the Quota Act, but who had said that the restriction of Jewish immigration was necessary.⁴⁴ This was indeed true, albeit before the emergence of right-wing fascist groups in South Africa and prior to the inroads made by Nazism after 1933.

While Professor Cilliers’ letter appeared to be a carefully considered reply to the charges laid against the actions of the professors (*The South African Jewish*

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *The Cape Argus*, 23.11.1936.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Chronicle complimented him on his “commendable restraint”⁴⁵) the same could not be said of the statement made by Professor J Kerr Wylie, Professor of Roman Law at the University of Cape Town. In a letter to *Die Burger* on 23 November, Wylie rallied to the support of the Afrikaner professors. Dealing with the Jewish Question, he declared that the Jews were not part of the South African people, but a strange element which, in race, language, religion and moral upbringing, stood in the sharpest contrast to the South African nation. He claimed that world Jewry formed an internationally organised body, and that the Jews in South Africa sought only Jewish interests and not those of the country. The Jews, he said, took no part in productive work, but only in speculation and money-lending. He maintained furthermore, that propagation of Communism, and the incitement of sedition among the non-Europeans, were attributable to the Jews. *The South African Jewish Chronicle* denounced Wylie’s comments as “crude and unbalanced Greyshirt piffle.” *The Cape Argus* went even further, and claimed that Professor Wylie had “swallowed the whole creed of antisemitism from Herr Goebbels... It is impossible to think of any excuse for Professor Wylie except that his contribution has some value as illustrating how racial prejudice can cloud the brain...”⁴⁶

The professors held the last of their protest meetings at Parow on 12 December 1936. They intimated (correctly, as it turned out) that General Hertzog was in favour of curbing Jewish immigration, and that he admired Hitler and Mussolini. They also made the assumption that legislative measures would soon be introduced to prevent an influx of Jews into South Africa,⁴⁷ and they were not wrong. Professor Basson expressed his wish that the Afrikaners would henceforth acquire release from the stranglehold of Jewish competition: no longer would they be made to endure a forced inferiority, but would now be able to demand equality. Racist views from academics – committed Afrikaner nationalists fiercely protective of their identity – were common. A resolution was subsequently passed, expressing the gratitude of the meeting to General Hertzog.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ibid. Quoted in an editorial.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ General Hertzog’s attitude was subsequently criticised by *The Cape Argus*, 7.12.1936 and *The South African Opinion*, 12.12.1936. The arguments put forward intimated that Hertzog’s policy towards the Jews was tainted by his open admiration for Hitler and Mussolini, a view which is addressed later in this study.

⁴⁸ *Die Burger*, 9.12.1936.

During this period, Dr Malan had not remained idle. The support which he had gained from the professors appeared to have strengthened his resolve, and after the arrival of the 'Stuttgart' he continued to attack the immigration policy of the Government with renewed fervour.⁴⁹ At the Nationalist Party Congress held in Bloemfontein during the second week of November 1936, Malan outlined the main issues he deemed were facing the country, and devoted a large part of his speech to the question of Jewish immigration. He maintained that the mass exodus of Jews from Europe was being directed towards Palestine and South Africa, and that General Smuts and Hofmeyr were encouraging this. There is, however, no evidence to support Malan's claim. Malan said that he would introduce a Bill in Parliament – if the Government should continue to remain passive in the mounting crises – wherein he would propose –

- (1) that only people who could be assimilated by the nation should be allowed to enter the country;
- (2) that Yiddish be not recognised as a European language as far as the immigration laws were concerned;
- (3) that Union citizenship be not granted to any person who belonged to a class described by the law as 'a class which cannot be assimilated';
- (4) that anyone who was not a Union citizen should not be allowed to follow a profession or an occupation or have any interest in property, either as owner or as tenant, without special permission from the Government and under special licence;
- (5) that the Government should have the power to indicate certain occupations in which only Union nationals could be employed;
- (6) and that no-one should be allowed to use a name in business which had not been his before he came to South Africa or which he did not have at a period prescribed by law.

Dr Malan endorsed this statement on policy to a crowd of about 2,000 people at a meeting in Riversdale on 21 November.⁵⁰ *The Rand Daily Mail*, in a forceful leader, accused him of creating a new racial problem in South Africa, maintaining that the Purified Nationalists had launched a campaign against the Jews which "exceeded anything this country had hitherto experienced." The article claimed that Malan's aim

⁴⁹ See Dr Malan's speech at the Congress of the Nationalist Party in the Transvaal, as reported in *Die Volksblad*, 29.10.1936.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.11.1936 and 23.11.1936.

was “to hit the Government through the Jews.”⁵¹ During the same month, in a letter praising Hofmeyr for his just and moral stand against fascist ideology, Sarah Gertrude Millin expressed considerable disquiet about the proliferation of antisemitism in the country and pleaded with Hofmeyr, who she said was “worth half the Cabinet and ... the Cabinet knows it”, to persuade the Government to act against the Right, adding:

The present position is this: Evil has petrified the world...nobody hinders the German Consulate from keeping the Greyshirts in funds; nobody stops the foul anti-Jewish stuff; Malan seizes the profitable opportunity, finds a ready-made anti-Government party at his hand, wins seats on anti-Jew (*sic*) talk...[and] it's human instinct to be allured to the attackers: Votes go to Malan... Why should only the wicked be the attackers? Why should the country think only Malan and Pirow are strong because they are ruthless? Pirow says: This I mean. This I want. This shall be done. Ah, say the people. A leader? Yes, and when Pirow (they say) bangs the table the Cabinet jumps! Good lord, the awe!⁵²

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, concerned in particular at the extent of anti-Jewish resentment fostered by the agitation over the immigration issue, made clear its stand in a public statement issued to the press through the Reuter News Agency on 16 December 1936, and widely publicised by most of the country's leading newspapers. The statement endorsed the support of the Board for selective immigration, but insisted that the criterion for judging a would-be immigrant should be the qualifications and personal merits of the individual, and not the person's racial affinity. The Board vehemently opposed the contention that Jews *qua* Jews should be prohibited from entering the Union. It also controverted the contention that Jews were not assimilable in the sense that they did not identify themselves completely with the South African way of life; and it deplored the activities of those persons allegedly using the immigration of German Jews as grounds for creating ill-will against the Jewish citizens of South Africa.⁵³

⁵¹ *The Rand Daily Mail*, 16.11.1936.

⁵² J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1), File Ga, Millin to Hofmeyr, 27.11.1937.

⁵³ The text of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies' statement was reprinted in full in *The Cape Times*, 17.12.1936. The statement is of particular interest as it throws light onto the general attitude of the Jewish community over the immigration issue. Further comments on this statement, apart from those appearing in the local press, may be found in the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *The Immigration of Jews into the Union*, p.15, *et seq*, and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies *Report of the Executive Council of the Jewish Board of Deputies to the Eleventh Congress*, p.22.

The Board's statement was generally favourably received. The editor of *The Cape Times*, for example, asserted that –

These assurances at once cut at the root of most of the wild and insensate propaganda which, derived from the antisemitism of certain European countries, and more particularly from Germany, there has been an effort to transfer to South Africa... It would be unfortunate if the policy of the Union Government assumed at any time an attitude towards immigration which was based on racial distinction. Nor is it likely that South African policy will form itself on such a basis. So far as the Jewish citizens of South Africa are concerned, there can be no question that they have always contributed greatly to the wealth and resources of this country; nor can their patriotism, when once they have adopted South African citizenship, be called in question. The statement by the Board of Deputies should serve at any rate to remove many misunderstandings out of the sphere of public controversy. They have stated their case dispassionately and without bitterness...⁵⁴

The editor of *The Cape Argus* also responded fairly positively to the statement by the Board, eschewing the antisemitism of the Malanites but nevertheless endorsing the principle of restricting immigration:

With the best will in the world the Union cannot adopt all the victims, whether Jewish or Aryan, of Dr Goebbel's frenzy, and must introduce some form of discrimination to keep the numbers down to reasonable limits. The better atmosphere has been largely created by a new readiness among Jewish leaders in this country to co-operate. Whatever measures are taken, the effect must be in the circumstances to discriminate against Jewish immigration, and at one time any suggestion of the sort was greeted with a storm of protest. Today Jews widely recognise that, although the language of insult is too often employed, there is a solid core of reason in the belief that Jewish immigration on a large scale creates a special problem, because absorption takes time, and that it is to the interest of Jews themselves to put a brake upon it. *The Jewish Chronicle* has long taken a very sane view of the position, and the manifesto, issued by Jewish leaders... puts the coping-stone on the revised Jewish attitude... Admittedly the problem is not easy. We agree with the manifesto, that legislation directed specifically against Jews would place a stigma not only upon them but upon the country which passed it...

The Board of Deputies display a generosity which critics might well emulate in contenting themselves with the remark that the 'agitation has been unworthy of the high standard of humanitarianism and tolerance by which the public life of South Africa has always been distinguished.' Hostile generalisations against Jews, as against any other racial or religious community, are so

⁵⁴ *The Cape Times*, 17.12.1936.

patently deceptive that they can be engaged in by none save the ignorant or malicious. In any case, a solution of the controversy is in its essentials simple. Let the law be amended to impose higher cultural standards upon immigrants... Immigrants of culture, ability and integrity should be encouraged, and though it is natural to prefer that the majority should be of the West European type which forms the foundation of the population, no discrimination on purely religious grounds is either necessary or practicable.⁵⁵

Notwithstanding the protestations and concerns of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and the qualified support it received in the wake of its statement, further restrictions on immigration were imminent. The first intimation that the Government was to alter the existing immigration Act was given by General J J Pienaar in October, at the Transvaal United Party Congress held in Pretoria.⁵⁶ Then, some seven weeks later, General Smuts informed an audience at Standerton that, while South Africa required new immigrants in order to strengthen her population and become a strong nation, it was both desirable and necessary to control immigration – and it was the Government’s intention to do so.⁵⁷ It appeared that Smuts, who had hitherto opposed an embargo on immigration, had little choice but to support the Government in an attempt to forestall attempts by the Right to put a complete stoppage to German Jewish immigration.⁵⁸

Hofmeyr had been aware of General Hertzog’s intention to introduce legislation to prevent ‘unassimilable aliens’ from entering the Union. As early as June 1936, some seven months before the Aliens Act came into force, there is a clear indication that Hertzog had instructed a committee under the chairmanship of Dr H D J Bodenstein, Secretary for External Affairs,⁵⁹ to investigate the immigration issue and that Hofmeyr, although Minister of the Interior, was simply not consulted. The committee’s report discussed the admission into the Union of undesirable persons who may have a disturbing influence on the “relations between employers and employees, whites and blacks, whites and whites and between the Union and foreign

⁵⁵ *The Cape Argus*, 17.12.1936.

⁵⁶ *The Rand Daily Mail*, 9.10.1936.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.12.1936.

⁵⁸ See reference to Smuts’ address to the South African Chamber of Commerce reported in *The Sunday Express*, 10.11.1936.)

⁵⁹ The other committee members were Mr P I Hoogenhout, Secretary for the Interior, Dr J F van Rensburg, Secretary for Justice, Dr A A Schoch, Law Adviser, Department of Justice, Mr A Broeksma, Law Adviser, Department of External Affairs and Mr P F Kincaid, Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic Affairs.

countries – apart from the dangers to which the community is exposed by the influx of criminally-inclined persons.” It referred to aliens, “German Nazis in South Africa and Jews in the Union”, who come to South Africa to propagate and preach doctrines which are irreconcilable with the ideas which underscore the political and economic structure of the community, and those who wish to subordinate the interests of the Union to those of the group to which they belong. In the committee’s discussion of assimilability, it is clearly evident from the recommendations made to the Prime Minister that the aim was solely to exclude Jews.⁶⁰ Here was a Government-established advisory committee, appointed by a Prime Minister who admired the Germans, supporting the ideology of the Malanite opposition.

Hofmeyr was understandably outraged by the committee’s report and for being bypassed, and in an undated memorandum he wrote: “I think I should commence by explaining that the Committee referred to was appointed without reference to me. As Minister of the Interior, I am therefore unable to accept any responsibility for its report.”⁶¹ He then added:

I am driven to the conclusion that the Committee is not really serious in its proposals as far as the exclusion of German Nazis or Communists is concerned. What it is concerned about is the exclusion of Jews. It would have been better if it had said so frankly at the outset. The essence of the Committee’s proposal is really the exclusion of Jews from the Union on the ground of unassimilability.

He noted several inconsistencies in the report which, for example, focused on “diepgaande verskil in godsdienstige opvattinge” (‘profound difference in religious beliefs’) between the potential migrants and, by implication, adherents of the Dutch Reformed Church, and the dangers of intermarriage. It would be interesting, he wrote, “to know whether on these grounds Roman Catholics as well as Jews should be regarded as unassimilable.” The committee had suggested changes to Section 4(1) (a) of the immigration regulations under which Malan had given assurances in the 1920s, as a member of the Pact Government, that there would be no discrimination against European immigrants. “The pledge then given should not now likely be set aside”, wrote Hofmeyr. He also pointed out that the way in which the

⁶⁰ J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1), File Dh, 1934-1936, *Memorandum* dated Cape Town, 8.6.1936.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, document titled *Memorandum* (undated).

suggested legislation was couched by the committee effectively bypassed the Minister of the Interior in the proposed operation of the legislation. “That a committee of officials should propose to side track a Minister in this way is to me inexplicable,” he concluded.⁶²

Department of External Affairs Law Adviser, Mr A Broeksma, offered a no-holds-barred response to Hofmeyr, in a memorandum to Hertzog written without reference to the other committee members, articulating unequivocally views of the Right. He expressed grave concern at the migration of German Jews and fear that those who did not make it to Palestine would head for South Africa which, he held, is deemed a “Jewish country”. He added that given the numbers of Jews intending to migrate to South Africa, this would devolve into “a problem fraught with such potentialities and of such vital concern to the national interests of the Union” for which reason the committee of officials was appointed to examine the existing legislation and suggest steps necessary to cope with the situation. “We are faced”, he wrote, “with a potential ‘invasion’... by Jews from Germany... it may mean... depopulation of certain European countries and swamping of our country.” He then added:

it is my personal view (for what it may be worth) that it is almost obvious that, generally speaking and judging by the characteristics mentioned in our opinion, the Jews are unassimilable... if unchecked invasion by Jews from Germany and elsewhere is further permitted, the problem which is bound to present itself is not the question of their probable assimilability with us but of our probable assimilability with them!⁶³

One may dismiss Broeksma’s belief that South Africa’s non-Jews may have been forced to assimilate with the country’s Jews as either hyperbole or scare tactics, yet his opposition to Jewish immigrants was real. For him, the issue of Jewish migration

⁶² Ibid., document titled *Memorandum* (undated). [The Hofmeyr Papers, A1: File Dh, 1937-1939, contains an article entitled ‘Assimilability’ by Dr Bernard Friedman. Although in the form of a memorandum, the article is apparently from *The Jewish Times*, 22.1.1937. It argues that the Jews were indeed assimilable and reflected the diversity which marked South Africa – diverse elements held together by a common bond of loyalty and diametrically opposed to the fascist concept of a totalitarian state demanding uniformity and a homogeneous community – “one race, one blood, one creed”. The same file contains an Afrikaans document, dated at Cape Town, 25.5.1936, outlining assimilability requirements for migration to South Africa, presenting an argument defining unassimilability, and signed by A Broeksma, together with A A Schoch, G du P Voss and L C Steyn.]

⁶³ J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1), File Dh, 1934-1936, *Memorandum-Immigration*, 15.8.1936, from A Broeksma, Law Adviser, Department of External Affairs to Prime Minister Hertzog, 15.8.1936.

had “become an acute international problem” which may have an effect “regarding the future racial, social and economic structure of white South Africa.”⁶⁴

The rhetoric implicit in Broeksma’s memorandum, possibly inspired by similar views expressed to Hertzog by Eric Louw, who stood at the vanguard of the antisemitic Right, and others,⁶⁵ resonated with the assumptions about the Jews and Jewish migrants endorsed by the Radical Right and must have been of considerable concern to Hofmeyr, more so since Broeksma, a senior Government official, had the ear of a Prime Minister already sympathetic to such views about Jewish immigration. However, before Hofmeyr could take an active stand, Hertzog relieved him of his post as Minister of the Interior – this at the end of November.⁶⁶ His ministerial position was filled by Mr R Stuttaford.⁶⁷ According to Alan Paton, the move was ostensibly not a political one; Hofmeyr was subsequently given the joint portfolios of Mines and Labour, because of the appointment of Patrick Duncan as Governor-General, effective from 5 April 1937. Emil Wiehl, Germany’s Consul-General to South Africa, however, maintained that Hofmeyr, to whom he refers as “that well-known Jew protector”, was moved aside by Hertzog owing to his opposition to stemming German Jewish immigration.⁶⁸ There may be some truth to this. The interchange between Hofmeyr and Broeksma had taken place but a few months before the Aliens Act came into force in February 1937, yet Duncan only assumed the Governor-Generalship in April 1937, nine weeks later. *The Natal Witness*, for example, held that “there is a faint suspicion in the minds of many that Mr Hofmeyr is losing the patronage of General Hertzog, and that this is one way of pleasing that section of the community who object to Mr Hofmeyr’s liberal attitude towards to the

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ On 26 March 1936, Dr H D J Bodenstein sent a memorandum, a copy of which is housed in the J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1), File Dh, 1934-1936, from the Department of External Affairs, attaching yet another document signed by P F Kincaid, Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic Affairs. Also attached was a lengthy document entitled *Memorandum on European Emigration to South Africa for Submission to the Hon The Prime Minister*, dated February-March 1936, and drawn up by Eric H Louw, H D van Broekhuizen, A Heymans, C T te Water and S F N Gie. Writing from Europe, the signatories stated, in phraseology similar to that subsequently evoked in Broeksma’s personal memorandum to Hertzog, that “in these circles South Africa is sometimes referred to as ‘a Jewish country’ . These are the *ipsissima verba* of one German Jew in conversation with the South African Consul-General in Hamburg: ‘There are two Jewish countries; the one is Palestine, the other is South Africa’ ”. The memorandum states that very similar views had been expressed by Berlin Jews wishing to migrate to South Africa.

⁶⁶ *The Friend*, 30.11.1936.

⁶⁷ A Paton, *Hofmeyr* (Oxford University Press, London, 1964), p.256.

⁶⁸ Citino, *Germany and the Union of South Africa in the Nazi Period*, p.87.

immigration legislation.”⁶⁹ Given Hertzog’s sympathy with the Right’s stand on Jewish immigration, noted elsewhere in this study, this conclusion is not unfeasible. Paton may have been wrong.

Needless to say, the decision of the Cabinet to introduce the Aliens Bill is doubtless attributable to the mounting pressure exerted upon it during the preceding months. Its introduction was no doubt calculated to cut the ground from under the feet of Dr Malan and his followers and thereby to reconcile public opinion towards the Government. By introducing a selective system of immigration designed to ensure that all would-be immigrants were ‘desirable’ and ‘assimilable’, and by refraining from tainting the Act with the trappings of discrimination on racial grounds, the Government hoped to placate the majority of the populace – Jewish and non-Jewish – at one and the same time. Needless to say, the legislation “in fact, if not in form”⁷⁰ discriminated against potential Jewish immigrants. And, the urgency for such legislation became even more pressing when it was reported that 300 German Jewish refugees had left Europe on the Italian super liner, the ‘SS Duilio’, in the third week of December 1936 bound for South Africa’s shores.⁷¹ On 23 December posters were displayed in Bloemfontein stating “meer Jode stroom die Unie binne” (more Jews streaming into the Union.)⁷² The Cape Jewish Board of Deputies held that the Afrikaans press⁷³ had exaggerated the figures considerably but resolved not to make a public statement.⁷⁴

When Dr Malan outlined his proposed bill to restrict Jewish immigration at the Nationalist Party Congress held in Bloemfontein during November he was making no idle threat. On 29 December a Bill drawn up by Malan and printed in *Die Burger* on Christmas morning⁷⁵ was published in the Government Gazette, incorporating all

⁶⁹ *The Natal Witness*, 30.11.1936. See also W k Hancock, *Smuts, Fields of Force, 1919-1950*, p.290.

⁷⁰ Hancock, *Smuts, Fields of Force, 1919-1950*, p.290.

⁷¹ See *Die Volksblad* and *Die Burger*, 22.12.1936.

⁷² South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Digest*, Press Report 23, 1936.

⁷³ See *Die Burger*, 22.12.1936 and *Die Volksblad*, 22.12.1936.

⁷⁴ *Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 22 December 1936. The Board’s secretary reported that there were only 150 German Jews on board of whom 25 were tourists holding return tickets, and that there were 20 “Quota cases”. The number of German Jewish immigrants was actually, according to the Secretary, about 120.

⁷⁵ *Die Burger*, 25.12.1936

the points enunciated at the Bloemfontein Congress.⁷⁶ However, on 11 January 1937, three days after the opening of the Parliamentary Session, the Government forestalled this measure by giving notice of the Alien's Bill which, unlike Dr Malan's proposed legislation, was aimed at controlling the influx of all undesirable aliens into the Union, as opposed to would-be Jewish immigrants only. Somewhat thwarted in his attempt, Malan gave immediate notice in the House of a motion of censure on the Government because of the latter's delay in preventing the influx of Jews.⁷⁷ The South African Jewish Board of Deputies had planned to request an interview with Malan, but after the details of his proposed legislation were printed in *Die Burger*, the idea was shelved.⁷⁸

In response to the Government's notice, Dr Malan moved a motion of censure on 12 January 1937, asking the House to express its disapproval of the Government's neglect to take early and adequate measures –

- (a) to prevent the further influx of Jewish immigrants and especially the so-called German refugees...;
- (b) to prevent the immigration of persons or races such as, amongst others, the Jewish, who cannot be readily assimilated...;
- (c) to abolish Yiddish as a specially recognised European language, the knowledge of which is sufficient for immigration purposes...

The list was somewhat longer, the remainder being in like vein. Introducing the motion, Dr Malan said that stringent legislation was required to offset the Jewish "influx" into South Africa, and that this could be effectively achieved by amending Section 4(1)(a) of the existing immigration legislation. Without mentioning the Jews by name –reminiscent of Malan's 1930 Quota Act – the amended Act would then empower the immigration authorities to refuse entry to all Jews intending to settle in the Union. He went on to deny that his actions had been prompted by the German Nazis or the extremist anti-Jewish organisations which existed in South Africa. Defending (or perhaps justifying) himself against the charge that his motion of censure was, in essence, anti-Jewish, Dr Malan declared:

⁷⁶ National Party, *The National Party and Jewish Immigration* (Head Office, National Party CP, Cape Town, 1937), p.3.

⁷⁷ *Hansard*, Vol.28, 1937, col.9, *et seq.*

⁷⁸ *Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 29 December 1936.

I have been reproached... that I am now discriminating against the Jews as Jews. Now let me say frankly that I admit that it is so, but let me add that if you want to effectively protect South Africa against the special influx from outside, it must inevitably be done.⁷⁹

According to Malan, South Africa had a Jewish problem, and the only way in which good relations between all sections of the population could be maintained was to specify that the problem was essentially a result of Jewish immigrants entering the Union, and consequently to close the doors of entry to them. Barring the entry of Jews would ensure that the control of South Africa's commerce and industry did not fall into their hands, and in consequence antisemitism with all its ramifications would be considerably reduced. South African Jewry, he argued, was intimately connected with organised international Jewry, and as a coherent racial community, the Jews were unassimilable, forming within the country itself an *imperium in imperio*.⁸⁰

Replying to the motion before the House, Mr Stuttaford, Minister of the Interior, declared:

I appreciate that the whole intention of his motion is unabashed racialism. It is an appeal... to the least creditable instincts of our people... that does not, I am sorry to say, do much credit to the Hon. Member for Calvinia (Dr Malan). Every paragraph in this motion is a hit against the Jews.⁸¹

Stuttaford proceeded to quote from speeches made by Dr Malan during the debate on the Quota Bill in 1930. He argued that seven years previously Malan had advocated for South African Jewry "full equality in every respect and every opportunity which every other section enjoys;" now in 1937, as leader of the Opposition in the House. Malan had changed his attitude, and instead expounded an anti-Jewish view, largely as a political expedient and in complete contradistinction to his earlier, more liberal utterances. Stuttaford also attacked Dr Malan on the question of the assimilability of the Jew, and contended that the Jews of South Africa were entirely assimilated in the national life of the country, citing various examples to support his thesis.

⁷⁹ Hansard, Vol.28, 1937, col. 39.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, col. 40 *et seq.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, col. 51.

The speakers who addressed the House subsequently execrated the remarks made by Dr Malan. Mr W B Madeley, whose singularly pro-Jewish attitude had not altered since 1930, stated that “the roots of the emotion that has caused this motion lie deep down in... bitter racialism.” The Jews, he said, were an example to the rest of the country, and not only was Jewish immigration to South Africa proportionately insignificant (he quoted the recent census figures to prove that the relative rise in Jewish immigration was of no consequence) but more Jews should be encouraged to settle in the country. He went on to slate Dr Malan for frankly and openly placing himself seemingly at the head of the Greyshirt Movement, and declared that as the leader of the Opposition Party who hoped someday to rule South Africa, if Dr Malan’s present ideology was the sort of policy which would one day form the foundation of this country, “then I say God help South Africa.”⁸²

After Mr C W A Coulter (member for Cape Town, Gardens) had admonished Dr Malan for his attempt to deprive South African Jewry of the fundamental rights of citizenship, and of attempting to differentiate between citizens of the country on the basis of race and religion,⁸³ Dr Karl Bremer then spoke out in support of the motion. He stated that the attitude of the Nationalists was not in any way motivated by racial hatred, but was designed purely to defend the basic racial composition of South Africa’s population, and “to interpret in the House what, according to our definite conviction, is the feeling of the population of South Africa.”⁸⁴ South Africa, he said, had more than its proportion of Jews which a white country can assimilate. He then suggested an international conference of white nations “which would lay down that all who were driven out of a country would be divided up in proportional parts throughout the world.”

In his to address the House, Morris Alexander claimed that

the whole motion is antisemitic, and it is a curious thing that I am the last remaining member of this House of the old Cape House of Assembly and I have never in all my experience seen this House descend to such a low

⁸² Ibid., cols. 58-60.

⁸³ Ibid., cols. 73-78.

⁸⁴ Ibid., col. 79.

political level, where it is possible for a man, and him the leader of a party, to bring forward something that might be alright in a country built upon hate, envy and jealousy...⁸⁵

Alexander maintained that Dr Malan's prime intention was "to get a few miserable votes" – for this purpose, he claimed, Malan had formerly attacked "the Englishman, the Native and the Coloured" – and now he was attacking the Jew. He maintained that "if Dr Malan was honest in his statement that he is not antisemitic, he would never have published [his proposed]... Bill, nor would he have inserted the clause abolishing the privileges which Yiddish had in being counted as an (*sic*) European language." Alexander attempted to trace the transformation which had taken place between 1929 and 1937 in Dr Malan's attitude towards the Jews. He quoted from Malan's speeches and also from private correspondence which had ensued between the two of them, to illustrate that Malan's openly anti-Jewish attitude in 1937 was in complete contrast to his former attitude, when he had sung the praises of the Western Jew as being both a desirable and an assimilable individual. Alexander went on to refute the charge that the South African Jewish Board of Deputies openly encouraged Jewish immigration to South Africa, and read to the House some of the private correspondence between the Board of Deputies, the 'Hilfsverein' organisation, and the Council for German Jewry in London to demonstrate that the Board itself completely rejected the idea of fostering Jewish immigration to South Africa.⁸⁶

On the following day, Wednesday 13 January, the Aliens Bill was read a second time. The Bill, said the Minister of the Interior, aimed at repealing the Quota Act, which was ineffective as it applied only to certain countries. It was based instead on "the selective principle," implying that only persons who would strengthen the South African nation, and who would within a reasonable period of time become assimilated into the population of the country, could enter the Union as immigrants. Stuttaford denied that the measure was directed against German-Jewish refugees. The Bill, if enacted, would invest full powers in a Selection Board, thereby granting it absolute discrimination in the selection of immigrants. This was not to be based on racial grounds, he said, but rather on

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, cols. 82-83.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, cols.83-92.

the good character of the applicant, his likelihood of ready assimilation with the European population and of becoming a desirable citizen within a reasonable time, and the fact that he is not harmful to the economic and industrial welfare of the country and is not likely to pursue a vocation in which, in the [Selection] Board's opinion, there are sufficient numbers engaged.⁸⁷

Malan was not satisfied with the Bill, because in its present structure it would not prevent the Jews fleeing from Germany from coming to South Africa. If the Bill was not aimed specifically at stopping the influx of German Jews, then, stated Malan, it was a "pure pretence;" if on the other hand it was indirectly aimed at the Jewish refugees, then

why not have the courage to say so plainly? Is it not better to play open cards with the Jewish race in connection with this matter? So far as I am concerned, my attitude in connection with this Bill is that I would like to stop that particular immigration from Germany... because there are too many Jews here – too many for South Africa's good, and too many for the good of the Jews themselves. And accordingly, I say clearly whom I want to see excluded, and I do not try to hide the matter in any way.⁸⁸

Malan expounded at some length on the reasons for Nationalist opposition to the Government's Aliens Bill. He then moved an amendment, without success, that the Order for the Second Reading be discharged, and for the Bill to be referred to a Select Committee which would, *inter alia*, make adequate provision for the discriminatory measures, specifically against potential Jewish immigrants, which he, Malan, had postulated in his motion of censure.⁸⁹

Morris Kentridge, who had led the attack in Parliament against Malan in 1930, proceeded to attack Malan's proposed amendment. He was in complete agreement, he declared, with immigration selection based on the principle of quality vis-à-vis quantity, but would not support legislation which discriminated against Jews as Jews. He also pointed out that Dr Malan's contention that 95% of the German immigrants entering South Africa during 1935 were Jewish was fallacious, quoting statistics to illustrate that Malan had exaggerated the figures to support his arguments, and that

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, col. 108.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, col. 112.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, col. 118.

the highest percentage of German Jews (as opposed to non-Jewish Germans) arrived in South Africa only during October 1936. This figure represented 76% of all German immigrants entering South Africa during that month, and was abnormally high because

a number of people who would normally not have rushed into South Africa, but who might in a period of months or of years have come into the Union, felt that on account of the new regulations they must make an effort to come in before 1 November.⁹⁰

Mr M J Van den Berg followed Kentridge, arguing that the Malanites' attitude to the entire Jewish Question was prompted by antisemitic and therefore anti-Christian notions.⁹¹ Paul O Sauer replied on behalf of the Nationalists, challenging the last two speakers with the argument – as Dr Malan had done the day before – that where there is more than a certain percentage of Jews in a country, the Jews “begin to form a state within a state” and the inevitable upshot is antisemitism. “We have the right,” he maintained, “to feel that there are sufficient Jews in South Africa at the moment and that it is undesirable that more should come in...” He added that the anti-Jewish movement in South Africa was rapidly increasing, and that such a state of affairs would continue to exist until the necessary steps were taken to restrict the number of Jewish immigrants entering the Union.⁹²

On Thursday 14 January the debate moved into its third day with a resumption of the discussion on Dr Malan's proposed amendment. After Mr C P Robinson had made a somewhat emotional plea for all parliamentarians – regardless of political affiliations – to look upon the refugees from Nazi Germany with sympathy,⁹³ and after Dr J H H De Waal⁹⁴ had replied with possibly the most antisemitic speech delivered in the House of Assembly since Mr MacCullum's address in 1930, General Smuts delivered a carefully crafted speech. The Bill, he said, aimed at welcoming all desirable immigrants, but would effectively exclude “the unwanted... the flotsam and

⁹⁰ Ibid., cols. 119-120.

⁹¹ Ibid., col. 128 *et seq.*

⁹² Ibid., cols 136-137.

⁹³ Ibid., col. 143 *et seq.*

⁹⁴ Ibid., cols. 146-150. [Dr J H H De Waal was the father of J H H De Waal Jnr, author of the antisemitic book, *My Ontwaking*. Both men were prominent Greyshirts leaders. See col. 185 (Ibid.)]

jetsam that might flow to our shores.”⁹⁵ As he had previously stated, Smuts again warned that it was hazardous for South Africa to close the doors to white immigration, as this would endanger the narrow, exiguous basis on which South Africa’s white population existed. He also denied emphatically that the Bill was especially directed against the Jews.

There will be no discrimination on racial lines – none whatever. This Bill is not directed against any particular race, but against all undesirables who do not comply with the conditions which are laid down in this Bill. Whether a man is a Jew or a Gentile, whatever his race may be, or whatever his religion may be, or whatever his outlook may be, if he can comply with the conditions laid down, he will be welcome.

Smuts went on to criticise the Malanites for using antisemitism as a pawn in the national political arena. “I never thought that I would live to see the time,” he exclaimed,

when a political party in this country... should ever have so far forgotten themselves and forgotten the true interests of South Africa, as to take up this unsavoury and discreditable course.⁹⁶

The debate that afternoon appears to have been somewhat heated. The Labour Party and others in opposition were outspoken in its criticism of the Government, and even more critical of the anti-Jewish platform adopted by the Purified Nationalists. Messrs W B Madeley, C W A Coulter, C F Stallard, J Christie, D Burnside and M J Van den Berg all pledged their opposition to the measure on the grounds that there was no necessity for such hasty legislation. They argued that the Government had been forced into introducing the Bill, and that the rate of immigration to the Union did not warrant it. They expressed the fear too, that it was dangerous to invest absolute power in an Immigration Selection Board, the decisions of which were not subject to reconsideration in the courts of law, and which might be used by the party in power as an instrument to further its own political ends. The criticism was also made by the Labour Party – as Mr Christie pointed out – that the Bill was “so designed that it can be used in the towns to tell the Jewish people and their friends that it will help them” and “that it can be used on the platteland [the rural

⁹⁵ Ibid., col. 152.

⁹⁶ Ibid., col.156.

areas or country districts – the backveld] to tell the people that it will be applied against the Jews.”⁹⁷

Speaking on behalf of the Socialists, Duncan Burnside, like his colleagues, admonished the Government for succumbing to Nationalist pressure, and then turned to attack Dr Malan and his fellows:

This debate is a very important occasion, because it marks the formation of another new party... a South African Nazi Party. I, myself, have always had considerable suspicions that the Leader of the Opposition was being pushed into the Nazi position, not so much by some of his young followers, but by the political situation which demanded that they must find some cry on which to delude the people of the countryside. Watching very carefully, I have seen the Leader of the Opposition gradually come nearer and nearer to the Nazi position, and today, in the shape of this comprehensive amendment... he has undoubtedly shown to this House and has shown to the people of South Africa that he is an ardent disciple of this particular form of politics which found its origin under Herr Hitler in Germany. There is no need for the Hon. The Leader of the Opposition to deny it.⁹⁸

Implying that Malan was now responsible for the formation of a South African Nazi Party was undoubtedly far-fetched, and even stating, as Burnside did, that the “Greyshirt Party has now become an integral part of the party which is led by the Hon. Member for Calvinia (Dr Malan),”⁹⁹ may have been an exaggeration. Yet there is certainly a modicum of truth to his comments, particularly with respect to the Greyshirts who shared anti-Jewish sentiments with the Nationalists.

Earlier in the debate, Dr De Waal had asked why the Jewish MPs had opposed the Quota Bill in 1930, but were supporting the Government over what was surely a further attempt to restrict Jewish immigration. Messrs Van der Merwe, Christie and Burnside attempted to provide the answer when they stated that the Jews in general were amenable to the new immigration legislation because they feared the pro-Nazi attitude of the Malanites. De Waal, however, had contended that the Jews had given the Government their support because they knew that their influence would dissuade the Selection Board from refusing the applications of all would-be Jewish immigrants.

⁹⁷ Ibid., col. 172.

⁹⁸ Ibid., col. 177-178.

⁹⁹ Ibid., col. 178.

There is no evidence of this. Jewish support for the measure, such as there existed, was based undoubtedly on the fact that the Government's proposed legislation, when compared with that of the Nationalists, was by far the lesser of two evils.

When the debate on Malan's amendment was resumed after the weekend, on Monday 18 January, there was a surprising turn of events.¹⁰⁰ It is apparent from the remarks made by members of the Opposition that Prime Minister Hertzog had not been in the House when General Smuts had delivered his address. For, when General Hertzog rose to address the Assembly, he made a significant blunder. Enumerating the reasons for the proposed immigration legislation, Hertzog stated that "the influx of the Jews is... one of the two immediate causes for the introduction of this Bill" – a fact which his Deputy Prime Minister, Smuts, in his earlier speech, had categorically denied. While Hertzog disassociated himself from the charge that the measure was anti-Jewish, he admitted that by curbing the entry into South Africa of Jewish refugees from Germany, the Government would be averting an increase of antisemitism in South Africa, an argument akin to that of Malan when, as a member of Hertzog's cabinet in 1930, he had introduced the Quota Act. Did the Prime Minister know what had been said by members of his Government earlier on in the debate? Was he perhaps attempting to curry favour with his erstwhile colleagues who were now, with Malan, in opposition, and who held that, with Fusion and the subsequent establishment of the United Party, he had betrayed the cause of Afrikaner nationalism? Hertzog and Malan had been political bedfellows and staunch republicans – and they were later to join together in opposition after the outbreak of the Second World War¹⁰¹ – although after Fusion, Hertzog had hitherto clung assiduously to United Party policy.

As Mr F C Erasmus, and after him Mr J G Strydom pointed out, the reasons given by the Prime Minister for the introduction of the Bill were not only diametrically opposed

¹⁰⁰ The remarkable incident, discussed here, is recorded in Hansard, *Ibid.*, cols, 262-272.

¹⁰¹ General Hertzog, who opted for neutrality in September 1939 against a parliamentary majority which voted in favour of declaring war against Germany (South Africa declared war on 6 December 1939), duly resigned and with Dr Malan, announced the formation of the *Herenigde Nasionale Party* (Reunited National Party), also known as the *Volksparty* or *People's Party*. The HNP, as it was commonly known, was formalised officially on 29 January 1940, under Hertzog's leadership with Malan as his deputy. The breach between the two Afrikaner nationalist leaders, though healed, was short-lived. Hertzog soon fell out with Malan over the latter's extremist views, and retired from politics at the end of 1940.

to those given by the Minister of Justice and the Minister of the Interior, but were largely synonymous with those held by Dr Malan in his opposition to the Bill. According to Strydom, General Smuts “turned scarlet while the Prime Minister was speaking.” Referring to the speech which the Prime Minister had just made, Strydom declared that it was “certainly one of the most astonishing speeches which has yet been made in this House.” He went on to add that Hertzog’s speech had illustrated a complete contradiction inherent in the Government’s immigration policy, and he was just about to ask the Prime Minister whether “he also was inspired by racialism in 1930,” when the Prime Minister walked out of the House.¹⁰²

While there is ample evidence that Hertzog generally opposed Malan’s politics during the 1930s, he admired the Germans and had scant time for the Jews. Like Malan, Hertzog was a passionate Afrikaner – Hancock notes that he was “the main political creator of nationalist Afrikanerdom.”¹⁰³ Antisemitism, however, was not part of his political *weltanschauung*, despite his admiration of Hitler, his uncritical attitude to Nazism and his belief during the 1930s that the Nazi Government was not ill-treating the Jews. He certainly was not in favour of Jewish immigration.¹⁰⁴ However, there is no basis to Selwyn James’ argument that the long-serving Prime Minister was a fascist simply because in Hertzog’s view, expressed in 1933, the Nazi revolution was being conducted in such a way “that in a few years you will find it has been of great benefit to Germany and to the whole world.”¹⁰⁵ Hertzog was after all a

¹⁰² See Cohen, ‘Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa’, chapter 4, in which the debate was analysed and this incident – Hertzog’s ‘blunder’ – was first discussed. (Enid Alexander in *Morris Alexander* [1953] p.187 makes oblique reference to it.) In her 1995 dissertation, *The South African Jewish Board of Deputies and Politics, 1930-1978*, Atalia Ben-Meir writes: “It is not clear if Hertzog’s speech was a blunder or a deliberate articulation of policy” (p. 77, footnote 112) and then implies in a succeeding footnote (p. 77, footnote 114) that it may indeed have been deliberate in order to accord with general anti-Jewish public feeling. It certainly was not so. The incident simply demonstrated that Hertzog was unaware of the thrust of the United Party’s approach to the proposed legislation and that his sympathies, though unarticulated, may have been somewhat in accord with those of the Malanites insofar as the ‘Jewish Question’ was concerned. Emil Wiehl, German Consul General, believed that Hertzog had actually done his party a good turn by pointing out “the idiocy” of the Bill. Wiehl also held that the Jews in the United Party supported the Government over the Bill as “the Government had made secret concessions to them – a fanciful assumption which smacks of conspiracy theory. See Citino, *Germany and the Union of South Africa in the Nazi Period*, p.89.

¹⁰³ Hancock, *Smuts, Fields of Force, 1919-1950*, p. 297.

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter 8 of this study. [Once in opposition after the outbreak of the Second World War, Hertzog and Malan presented a draft policy to the Federal Council of the Herinigde Nasionale Party – the Reunited National Party – on 28 October 1940, committing the party to end all further Jewish immigration, to introduce an occupational permit system for foreigners, and to protect South Africa’s ‘own original white population group’ against ‘unfair competition’. See Hepple, *Verwoerd*, p.84.]

¹⁰⁵ James, *South of the Congo*, p. 83

Germanophile, yet he did not embrace Nazi ideology. Even his motion of 4 September 1939 for South Africa to opt for neutrality at the outbreak of the Second World War, during which he referred to “Hitler’s innocence,”¹⁰⁶ does not place him in the political camp of the Greyshirt ideologues or of the Malanite Right.

Hofmeyr, who a member of Hertzog’s cabinet could not criticise the Prime Minister publicly for his admiration of Hitler, nevertheless did so privately. In a letter to Sarah Gertrude Millin, he confessed:

My blood boils more and more as I read of new antisemitic excesses in Germany and Austria. Sometimes I wonder whether I should not be gloriously indiscreet and say exactly what I think about Hitler’s policy in this respect. Then no doubt the PM [Hertzog] would send an apology to Germany and I would have to resign.¹⁰⁷

In an earlier letter he commented that “Hertzog steadfastly refuses to believe that the Germans, in whom he still has a pathetic confidence, really are ill-treating the Jews!”¹⁰⁸

Hertzog’s blunder – openly endorsing further restrictions to be placed on Jewish immigration, sharply contradicting stated Government policy articulated earlier by Smuts - prompted a spate of anti-Jewish addresses from the Nationalist benches. At the forefront was A L Badenhorst, who declared on behalf of the Nationalists that

we are not against Jews as Jews, but the Jew does not assimilate himself with us, and do you know what is the worst thing about the Jewish immigrants: They do not have our religion; they do not believe in my Saviour and in my church, and on Sundays they take my children to go fishing along with them.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Hancock, *Smuts, Fields of Force, 1919-1950*, p. 321.

¹⁰⁷ S G Millin Collection (A 539), File C (i), Hofmeyr to Millin, 19.6.1938. [The late Dr Louis Herrman, historian of the early years of South African Jewish history (Herrman, *The History of the Jews in South Africa, from the earlier times to 1895*), in a reply to a questionnaire from the writer, 28.1.1975, wrote that “it was a belief that Hertzog favoured the Nazis.”]

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Hofmeyr to Millin, 16.6.1938.

¹⁰⁹ *Hansard*, Vol.28, 1937, col. 273-274.

Other Nationalist members spoke in like vein, ¹¹⁰ notably Mr C H Geldenhuis. Similar anti-Jewish sentiments were also expressed by Malanites during the Senate debate on the legislation. A day after the Bill had been read a third time in the Legislature, Senator Visser argued that “there is a limit to the number of Jews that we should have in South Africa... the Jews are “a race of people who live for themselves and are contained within themselves in a state of isolation from the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic South Africans.” ¹¹¹ He concluded by saying that the ideals which the Jews hold are certainly not the ideals that the vast majority of the people of South Africa would like to see maintained, adding that

the ethics of the Jewish race are not the same as the ethics of the Christian people. It is a matter of ethics and, therefore, I say it would be a danger to allow a race with the peculiarities of the Jewish race to come here in such large numbers as to upset the balance and interfere with the ideals which the members of the South African nation have formed for themselves... I am told that the Jewish bible prohibits the Jews from assimilating with other nations.¹¹²

Like Badenhorst, who had earlier spoken in the Legislature, Visser’s anti-Jewish diatribe had discernible theological overtones. In his summation, Stuttaford maintained that the object of the Bill was neither to prohibit the immigration of Jews, nor to promote it, but simply to control and to regularise the migration of persons hoping to settle in the Union. The Government was in favour of immigration as such, he said, as long as it was controlled. In the vote which subsequently followed, Dr Malan’s amendment was defeated by 91 votes to 18, and the second reading of the Bill was accepted by 84 ayes to 28 noes. On the latter vote, the Labour Party members chose to join the ranks of the Nationalists, and voted against the Government, in their belief that there was simply no need for further immigration legislation. ¹¹³

In the Committee Stage (20 and 21 January), the Malanites endeavoured to amend the Bill in such a way that further Jewish immigration would be prevented. Support

¹¹⁰ Discussed in Cohen, ‘Anti-Jewish Manifestations in the Union of South Africa’, chapter 4.

¹¹¹ *The Senate of South Africa: Debates* (Official Reports), January-May, 1937. 28 January 1937, col.78.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, cols.78-79.

¹¹³ *Hansard*, Vol.28, 1937, cols.257-338.

for this came from extra-parliamentary sources. The National Party in the Frankfort constituency, for example, inveighed against the influx of Jewish immigrants with a plea to close the gates.¹¹⁴ The Government, however, refused to accept the amendments proposed by the Nationalists.¹¹⁵ Finally, on 27 January, after the Bill had been read a third time, ¹¹⁶ it was enacted, to become law from 1 February 1937.

The question of the Bill's intention was now more significant than ever. Was it in fact indirectly aimed at keeping prospective Jewish immigrants out of South Africa, or was it directed exclusively against 'undesirables'? D W Krüger, writing in 1958, maintains that "although Jews were not specifically referred to in the Act, the intention was clearly to exclude as many of them as possible."¹¹⁷ An article in *The Round Table*, however, written some two decades earlier, contended that while "the Government congratulated itself on having forestalled a piece of purely racial legislation," and while "its spokesmen admitted that the new immigration law would be applied primarily against the Jews during the next few years," it nevertheless "declared that it (i.e. the Act) could and would be used equally against any other immigrants whose entry was considered prejudiced to the welfare of the Union."¹¹⁸ If, however, it was the Government's aim to put an end to the Malanites' attempts to curb Jewish immigration altogether – and this appears to have been the Government's real intention – then it certainly succeeded, Yet it came at an expense to the Jewish community on two fronts: the gates to Jewish migrants from Germany were all but closed at a time when Jews were leaving Germany in the wake of the Reichstag's antisemitic Nuremberg Laws, promulgated some fifteen months prior to South Africa's Aliens Act; and the failure of the Government to close the gates completely simply served to fuel the antisemitism of the Afrikaner Right and the Radical Right. In a letter to Hofmeyr, Sarah Gertrude Millin lamented the passage of the Bill – "the shutting out [of] the unfortunate immigrants who can do nothing but jump into the sea – there is no land for them on God's earth." She concluded by

¹¹⁴ J B M Hertzog Collection (a.32), Box 62 (viii), telegram from Venter, Secretary of the National Party, Frankfort constituency, to General Hertzog, 21.1.1937.

¹¹⁵ *Hansard*, Vol.28, cols.392-489.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol.28, 1937, cols.703-746.

¹¹⁷ D W Krüger, *The Age of the Generals*, p.175.

¹¹⁸ *Round Table*, *The Round Table*, Vol.27, No.107, June 1937, p.671.

saying to Hofmeyr that she was glad he was “in the cabinet to fight from within...you carry heavier ammunition that way.”¹¹⁹

Elements outside the House also called in question the actions of the Government, which suffered some sharp rebukes from the press on several accounts: It had left the word ‘assimilability’ undefined; the Immigration Selection Board’s decisions were to remain final; and no reasons were to be given for the refusal of a person’s application to enter South Africa as an immigrant.¹²⁰ Yet the Malanites were even more severely criticised for their pronouncements and for their attempts to enact legislation aimed specifically at Jews. They were blamed by some for ‘going Nazi’, and for relying on the anti-Jewish slogan in order to curry favour with the electorate.¹²¹ Yet, they were defended by others on the grounds that the principles which they held were not deemed to be based upon racial prejudice but rather in the interests of South Africa.¹²²

It is noteworthy that, immediately after the enactment of the Bill, the Labour Party published a pamphlet – *The Case for Tolerance: being the parliamentary speeches of Duncan Burnside, MP, on the Aliens Bill*. This publication aimed to demonstrate not only that the Act was unjust and that the governing United Party should be held to account – Burnside spoke of “a craven surrender on the part of the Government to the Nazi tendencies of the Nationalist Party”¹²³ – but that Malan and his followers were racists. Malan’s earlier suggested amendment, to introduce discriminatory measures against prospective Jewish immigrants, was “Hitlerism”, said Burnside, adding as he had done previously that behind the Purified Nationalists were other antisemites – implying the Greyshirts – who were doing “the dirty work for the South African National Party.”¹²⁴ Burnside expressed amazement to find that Smuts, the Minister of Justice and Deputy Prime Minister who had always been a staunch

¹¹⁹ The JH Hofmeyr Collection, A1. File Ga. Letter from Millin to Hofmeyr, 12.3.1937.

¹²⁰ See *The Cape Argus*, 23.1.1937; *The Friend*, 14.1.1937; and *The Daily Dispatch*, 18.1.1937. Louis Hotz notes that “notwithstanding all attempts to have it [i.e. the term ‘assimilability’] defined, it remained a vague and elastic phrase, to be interpreted at the Board’s discretion.” See Hotz in Sichel (comp.), *From Refugee to Citizen*, p.18.

¹²¹ See *The Sunday Times*, 17.1.1937 and *The Forward*, 15.1.1937.

¹²² *Die Burger*, 11.1.1937.

¹²³ D Burnside, *The Case for Tolerance: being the speeches of Duncan Burnside, MP, on the Alien's Bill* (Mercantile-Atlas Printing Company, Pty., Ltd., Cape Town, 1937), p.5.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.3.

champion of liberty and liberalism, supporting a bill “aimed at the Jew.”¹²⁵ The Purified Nationalists, on the other hand, responded by publishing, in both official languages, a pamphlet titled *The National Party and Jewish Immigration*.

There is little doubt that with the debate over the Aliens Bill, Malan and his parliamentary supporters “had gone over, lock, stock and barrel, to antisemitism.”¹²⁶ By the beginning of 1937, therefore, both the forces of the Radical Right and the Right had more or less coalesced, despite ideological differences, and were ranged against the Jewish community of South Africa. Fuelled by a militant Afrikaner nationalism and augmented by the inroads of National Socialism, antisemitism was now a full-blown political issue.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.4.

¹²⁶ Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, p.195, quoting from an April 1937 edition of *The Cape Argus*.

CHAPTER NINETHE AFTERMATH OF THE ALIENS ACT: ANTISEMITISM A POLITICAL
FOOTBALL OF THE AFRIKANER RIGHT

If it was the Government's intention to limit German Jewish immigration by means of the Aliens Act, to which Richard Feldman referred as "this hallmark of antisemitism... anti-Jewish legislation on the Statute Book",¹ then it was largely successful.² For, whereas 3,411 German Jews entered South Africa between 1934 and 1936, only 1,722 entered the country in the three-year period following the enactment of the law. On the other hand, the number of non-Jewish Germans entering the Union during the same period decreased from 2,068 between 1934 and 1936, to 1,283 during the three years prior to the Second World War.³ While these statistics appear to indicate that all German immigrants – regardless of race – were selected on the principle of 'assimilability',⁴ South African Jewry expressed considerable disquiet about the comparatively large proportion of Jews refused entry into the country, and over the hardships suffered by prospective immigrants. As early as March 1937, six weeks after the Aliens Act became law, the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies noted:

Nearly all immigrants were permitted in on temporary permits. They will have to make application for permission to remain under the new Aliens Act, and a very large percentage will have to return to the country of embarkation.⁵

¹ Richard Feldman Collection (A 804), Fad 1, clipping from *The Zionist Record*, 29 1.1937.

² Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing: The Story of South African Zionism*, p.319.

³ Figures calculated from those cited in Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa: A History*, pp.379-380.

⁴ The J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1), File Dh, 1937-1939 houses a document titled 'Operation of Aliens' Act – February 1st 1937 to 31st December 1938: Where Alien Immigrants Come From'. The following figures in the document encompass the period from 1 February 1937, the date on which the Aliens Act came into operation, through to 31 December 1938 (a two-year period). Of the 6,351 applications granted, there were 2,306 from Germany and 2,120 from the Netherlands. Except for 241 from Czechoslovakia and 237 from Lithuania, the other figures were very low indeed. Of the 6,351 applicants, Hofmeyr noted in handwriting, 1,746 were Jews or "aliens of Hebrew origin". 5,323 applications were rejected. Of those rejected, 3,275 – a disproportionately large number – were "from persons of Hebrew origin." Of the 2,306 Germans entering the country between 1 February 1937 and 31 December 1938, 1,185 were Jews. Here, Hofmeyr's pencilled statistics differ in small measure from those published almost two decades later by Saron and Hotz (*supra.*) Of the 2,130 migrants from the Netherlands, only six were Jews. Of the Lithuanians, 220 out of 237 were Jews.

⁵ *Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 14.3.1937.

Many immigrants who had made inquiries at Union consulates or legations overseas, and who had been told that there was no difficulty in being admitted to South Africa, were gravely shocked when, on arrival, they were admitted on temporary permits only.⁶ It was reported that a number of refugees who had arrived in South Africa and who were faced with the possibility of being sent back to Germany and consequently interned in concentration camps, committed suicide.⁷ As late as 25 November 1938, little more than a fortnight after the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in Germany and Austria which witnessed the murder of almost 100 Jews, the destruction of about 1,000 synagogues, damage or destruction to some 7,000 Jewish-owned businesses and the incarceration of an estimated 30,000 Jews in Nazi concentration camps, the Nationalist daily, *Die Burger*, while sympathising with the plight of the Jewish victims, argued that South Africa had no place for more Jews (“nie plek vir meer Jode...nie”). The editorial, referring to the Jews as constituting undesirable (“ongewenste”) elements wherever they resided, urged the government to close the ports to Jews, concluding that those who wished the Jews to come to South Africa were doing the country no favour.⁸

It has been shown that, prior to the Aliens Act, the National Party had moved closer than ever towards the Greyshirts. After the votes had been counted and the debate on the immigration issue in Parliament had terminated, the Nationalists took a step further in the direction of the South African Nazi organisations and began using the Jewish Question to an increasing extent in their political campaigns. On 19 February 1937, Duncan Burnside observed:

⁶ *The Rand Daily Mail*, 13.7.1937. Report of a lecture delivered by Dr F Petzall under the auspices of the Independent Cultural Association. L Hotz notes that in its first year the effect of the Act was to reduce the number of Jewish immigrants to 113 adults and 13 children. Additionally, some 500 permits were issued to wives, minor children, aged or destitute parents and near-relatives to join settled immigrants. In all, 481 Jews were admitted into South Africa from Germany in 1937 and 238 in 1938. As a result of representations by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies to the Minister of the Interior, the situation was alleviated to some extent for those who had been caught unawares by the hurried passage of the Act and for refugees who were in South Africa on temporary permits awaiting to take up permanent residence at the time of the introduction of the legislation. See Hotz in Sichel (comp.), *From Refugee to Citizen*, p.18.

⁷ *The Sunday Tribune*, 27.6.1937.

⁸ *Die Burger*, 25.11.1938.

The similarity between the Malanite tactics in South Africa and Hitler's tactics in Germany cannot be ignored, nor can the undoubted assistance rendered... to the Nationalist Party by the Greyshirt Movement.⁹

In an anti-Nazi pamphlet published within a year or two of the political conflict over the Aliens Act, A P Van Heerden came out in full sympathy with Burnside's statement, claiming that "net soos Hitler en Weichardt, gebruik Malan nou die kreet 'weg met die Jode'." ¹⁰

These accusations appear to have had some foundation. Le Roux notes that with the eye on the forthcoming 1938 elections there was already "sprake van saamwerking...toenadering" – talk of cooperation and rapprochement – between the Malan and the Greyshirts based essentially on their common approach to the Jewish question.¹¹ Alarmed at these developments, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies convened a conference in Johannesburg to consider methods of combatting the increasingly strident antisemitic forces emanating from both the Right and Radical Right.¹²

On 23 February 1937, Dr Malan, addressing a meeting at Paarl, called upon English- and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans to unite against the Jews by forming a 'United Nordic Front', and to boycott the Jews in trade, commerce and the professions. The Provincial Elections were in the offing, and Malan was vehemently accused of pandering to the racial doctrines of the Nazis.¹³ At the Greyshirt

⁹ Burnside, *The Case for Tolerance: being the speeches of Duncan Burnside, MP, on the Alien's Bill*, preface page.

¹⁰ [Translation: "Just like Hitler and Weichardt, Malan now uses the cry, 'away with the Jews'."] A P Van Heerden, *Fascime – Italië! Duitsland! Suid-Afrika?* (Nasionale Pers, Beperk, Kaapstad, c.1937-1938), p.22.

¹¹ J H Le Roux, 'Die 'Gesuiwerde' Nasionale Party, 1935-1940', (MA, University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein, 1972), p.362.

¹² Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List IV, No.24, 'Report of the Conference of Propaganda and Publicity Committees Held in Johannesburg on 13th and 14th March 1937'. Twenty-seven delegates, from Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and the Orange Free State, attended. Cecil Lyons chaired the conference.

¹³ *Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 14.3.1937; *The Cape Argus*, 24.2.1937 and 27.2.1937; *The Natal Advertiser*, 27.2.1937; and *The Sunday Times*, 28.2.1937. *The South African Opinion*, 6.3.1937 devoted a lengthy editorial to Malan's 'Nordic Front' speech at Paarl, arguing that Malan, by endorsing antisemitism, notwithstanding his lack of sympathy for Fascism and Nazism, was effectively allying himself with the Greyshirts whose sole plank in their political platform was antisemitism. At the same time, an article published in Round Table, *The Round Table*, Volume 27, No.107, June 1937, pp.441-442, held that the Nationalists

Congress which opened in Pretoria on 13 April 1937, Weichardt actually informed the delegates that he had been approached by the Nationalists in an attempt to arrive at some sort of ‘compromise’ between the two organisations.¹⁴ In a letter to *Die Burger*, A J Louw stated that Weichardt had informed him that Dr Malan had approached the latter with a proposed election agreement between the two Parties.¹⁵ Under the suggested arrangement – which Weichardt is reported to have refused – the National Party would give the Greyshirts a free run in 12 constituencies and in exchange the latter would not compete with the Nationalists in any other constituency. *Die Vaderland* reported further rumours of a proposed Greyshirt-National Party political ‘alliance’, suggesting that the Malanites had offered a seat in the Cape Province to H S Terblanche, leader of the anti-Jewish People’s Movement.¹⁶ Malan was subsequently accused, in a leading article in *The South African Opinion*, of seeking an ally, of whom the Greyshirts appeared to be the most logical, “in order to climb the ladder to reach Government heaven.”¹⁷

The imputation that the National Party had gone over to antisemitism “lock, stock and barrel” is further supported when, in 1937, the Party founded its first official organ in the Transvaal – *Die Transvaler*. Dr Hendrik F Verwoerd, who had fervently opposed Jewish immigration to South Africa, became its first editor – after relinquishing his professorship in the Psychology Department at the University of Stellenbosch. In his first editorial, under the heading ‘Die Joodse Vraagstuk Besien Vanuit Die Nasionale Standpunt – ‘n Moontlike Oplossing’ [‘The Jewish Question viewed from the Nationalists’ Standpoint – a Possible Solution’],¹⁸ Dr Verwoerd attacked the Jews, claiming that there existed a conflict of interest between the disadvantaged Afrikaner majority and a privileged Jewish minority. The Jews, he argued, were disproportionately represented in industry, commerce and the professions, rendering the Afrikaners handlangers – subordinates. Younger

“who...had thrown themselves wholeheartedly into the antisemitic campaign”, were able to do so by encouraging ongoing anti-Jewish agitation in the wake of the recent arrival of the ‘SS Stuttgart’.

¹⁴ *The Star*, 13.4.1937.

¹⁵ *Die Burger*, 3.5.1937.

¹⁶ *Die Vaderland*, 31.5.1937

¹⁷ *The South African Opinion*, 14.11.1936.

¹⁸ *Die Transvaler*, 1.10.1937. Editorial. For an English translation (from the archives of *Die Transvaler*) by Jan Schaafsma and James Myburgh: www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/.../en/page71639?oid. See also Bunting, *The Rise of the South Africa Reich*, p.61.

generations of Jews, according to Verwoerd, were crowding the Afrikaners out of the professions and businesses, giving the Jews a chokehold on the 'continued existence' of the Afrikaners. These commercial enterprises and industries were in the hands of vreemdelinge – strangers – English-speakers and latterly, mostly Jews – people who fostered a completely foreign atmosphere in their activities, despite the fact that they owed their existence to a population which was mainly Afrikaans-speaking. Verwoerd's view was that the so-called 'Jewish Question' and the Afrikaners' clash or conflict (botsing) with the Jews would only disappear when the Afrikaners gained their fair share ('regmagtige aandeel') and sufficient control (voldoende beheer) of commerce, the professions and industry in proportion to their percentage in the white population. He thus recommended legislation to ensure that the Afrikaners obtained a share of the 'major occupations' according to their proportion in the white population. To this end, he stated, a future National Party government would refuse to grant Jews further trading licences until the Jewish proportion was brought back in line with their proportion – about 4% – of the white population. For Verwoerd this was "ewewigtige verspreiding" – balanced distribution.

Verwoerd, however, went beyond arguing for what was effectively a quota on Jewish involvement in industry, commerce and the professions, accusing the Jews of being opportunistic, insular and – to all intents and purposes – disloyal to South Africa:

The majority of the Jewish community does not live with the Afrikaner, nor do they share their ideals for the future of their country and people. Jews do show an interest in events in the political arena, but with an eye to personal advantage. Backed by capital accumulated from the exploitation of the country's resources, the Jewish community has become involved in the political struggle. The English press and political parties have been used to try and exert influence on governments of the day. No Afrikaner dare underestimate their political activities, which are aimed at hindering the cause of nationalism, and which must, by necessity, sharpen the 'botsing van belange' (clash of interests.). Of course, nobody should lose sight of the fact that this clash of interests, which has grown over the years, remained unnoticed at the outset. It only entered the nation's consciousness to its full extent, after it had been in existence for some time.¹⁹

Die Transvaler, notwithstanding its open antisemitism, accused the Jews of refusing

¹⁹ Ibid. [*Die Transvaler*. Editorial]

to advertise in its columns. Soon thereafter, the publication threatened that a boycott by the Jews of Nationalist newspapers would lead to open warfare.²⁰

Verwoerd endorsed the establishment of Nazi-inspired South African movements such as the Greyshirts, at the same time justifying Afrikaner opposition to Jewish immigration on the basis of the character of the would-be immigrants rather than because they were Jewish – an obvious attempt to eschew the charge of antisemitism:

The developments in Germany, and the establishment of organisations in this country which have found their inspiration there, have helped to make Afrikaners aware of the situation which already exists in the Union. The attitude towards immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe in 1926-'30 is proof that the situation was not properly grasped before. Despite intercession by prominent Jews, the general population's protest against the newcomers was not based on their Jewishness, but rather because they were an illiterate and undesirable class of persons who had also been turned away by other countries, such as the United States.

Verwoerd was an extremist Afrikaner nationalist and an antisemite.²¹ Although his sympathies rested with the Nazis – Hepple certainly provides compelling evidence to support this contention²² – his antisemitic views were integral to his philosophy and manifest long after the defeat of Nazism. Verwoerd's views accorded with the ideological thrust of so many right-wing Afrikaner nationalists and with those, like Weichardt and his followers, who occupied the ranks of the Radical Right. Veteran South African journalist, political commentator and sometime political correspondent for *The Sunday Times*, Stanley Uys, noted that “like so many racialists”, Dr Verwoerd – remembered as the man who conceived and implemented Apartheid in South Africa – had his early racist training in antisemitism. Verwoerd's assurance that ‘the

²⁰ Ibid., 18.11.1937 and 25.11.1937. Cited by Hepple, *Verwoerd*, p.223.

²¹ It is surely one of history's ironies that, on the morrow of Verwoerd's assassination in September 1966, *The South African Jewish Times* and Orthodox Chief Rabbis in Johannesburg and Cape Town, together with the Senior Rabbi of the Progressive Jewish Community, heaped accolades on the late Prime Minister, as Jews gathered in their thousands to attend religious services. Verwoerd was referred to by Chief Rabbi Bernard Casper as “a man of valour” and by Rabbi Arthur Super as “one of the greatest, if not the greatest Prime Minister South Africa has ever produced... Here was a man, who, like Moses of old, had led his people through the Promised Land after sixty years of wandering. He had the courage and the strength to establish the Republic of South Africa and so dissolve in one act the old heritage of hatred, communal jealousies, blurred loyalties, old grudges and past grievances which were preventing South Africa from becoming one nation.” Hepple, *Verwoerd*, p.229.

²² Ibid., pp.208–219.

nationalist does not hate the Jew' ²³ was contradicted, at least insofar as he was concerned, by a string of articles published by *Die Transvaler* during the Second World War.²⁴ Equally instructive is Verwoerd's well-documented and tempestuous relationship with South African Jewry, together with his attitude towards the State of Israel, during his tenure as Prime Minister from 1958 to 1966, the year in which he was assassinated.²⁵ During the Second World War, on 13 July 1943, Verwoerd was found guilty in a lengthy judgment of more than 25,000 words by Justice P Millin who said that "he [Verwoerd] did support Nazi propaganda, he did make his paper [*Die Transvaler*] a tool of the Nazis in South Africa, and he knew it."²⁶

On 25 October 1937, F C Erasmus, Secretary of the National Party, and over a decade later a Minister in Dr Malan's cabinet, addressed a letter to W R Laubser, Organising Secretary of the Greyshirts, in which he wrote:

My Party is glad to give expression to the sincere appreciation of the useful work done by the Greyshirts in one respect, namely, that they have very pertinently drawn the attention of the people to the Jewish problem which has, indeed, assumed very threatening dimensions. We consider that a service has been done to the nation which deserves recognition and perpetuation. On the other hand, we think that identification of this service with the Nazi or Fascist Movements, as in the case of your Party, can only retard this service and do harm to the objective in view.²⁷

²³ *Die Transvaler*, 1.10.1937. Editorial. For an English translation (from the archives of *Die Transvaler*) by Jan Schaafsma and James Myburgh, see www.politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/.../en/page71639?oid.

²⁴ S Uys, 'Dr Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd, Prime Minister of South Africa', *Africa South*, Volume 3, Number 2, January-March 1959 (Africa South Publications, Pty., Ltd., Cape Town), p.1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.3. Uys noted that during his period as Prime Minister, Verwoerd was unable to conceal his antisemitism and had even suggested that he had been denied justice in the 1943 court case (*supra*) because Justice Philip Millin, the presiding judge, was a Jew. During the 'East Affair' of 1961, Dr Verwoerd attacked the Jews after Israel had voted in October of that year to support the United Nations General Assembly's censure of a speech by Eric Louw defending apartheid. For the correspondence between A S A East and Prime Minister Verwoerd, see D Weiner, *South African Jewry: A Minority Group in an Apartheid Society*, Appendix VII (BA Honours Research Essay, University of Cape Town, 1973), pp.150-153.

²⁶ Uys, 'Dr Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd, Prime Minister of South Africa', *Africa South*, Volume 3, Number 2, January-March 1959, p.5. See also Bunting, *The Rise of the South Africa Reich*, p.64. Giliomee contends that Verwoerd did not subscribe to either Nazism or racism. Rather, as "a social engineer" he had "a mission, ready to call for state intervention if the society developed in what he thought was the wrong direction." See Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p.416.

²⁷ Bunting, *Ibid.*, p.62; Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, p.196; and *World Conference of Christians and Jews (held at Oxford, July 1946): Memorandum Submitted on Behalf of the South African Delegates on Problems Arising from the Inroads of Nazism on Contemporary Thought and Practice in South Africa, 27 June, 1946*, p.8. It is of interest to note that, in quoting this letter, Bunting only quotes the first portion.

The Greyshirts' endorsement of the principle of dictatorship²⁸ was certainly the point of departure between the Right and the Radical Right. *Die Transvaler* put it succinctly: Weichardt advocated a political system in form and substance in which the leader and the state are one and the same.²⁹ Malan on the other hand never rejected the principle of parliamentary democracy. With the failure of the discussions between the right-wing Purified Nationalists and the ultra-right Greyshirts, Weichardt became bitter, threatening to strike out at the Malanites.³⁰

The interest shown by the Greyshirts in provincial and parliamentary by-elections indicates that the movement was becoming increasingly political. In the Natal Provincial Elections, Dr Stoffberg (who had assumed the leadership of the Greyshirt Party in 1936 in that Province after R K Rudman, who attacked the Jews almost without surcease throughout his political career, had joined the Purified Nationalists³¹), stood for election in Vryheid as an Independent; and C J W Adendorff, another prominent Greyshirt, stood as an Independent in Newcastle.³² In the Vrededorp by-elections in March, the Nationalist candidate, J L Brill, made repeated reference to the Jews in conducting his election campaign,³³ and was offered the full support (and votes) of their organisation by the Blackshirt leaders, H S Terblanche and C Havemann.³⁴ Brill won the election by a majority of 475 votes. *Die Vaderland* commented that the Nationalist candidate was victorious because he had received about 600 votes from the ranks of the Shirt movements.³⁵ The Purified Nationalists' general election prospects were given a further boost with

²⁸ See Le Roux, 'Die 'Gesuiwerde' Nasionale Party, 1935-1940', p.363.

²⁹ "...in vorm en wese...waar die leier die party en die party die staat is". *Die Transvaler*, 4.11.1937. A similar view appeared in an earlier edition of *Die Transvaler*, 3.11.1937, reproduced in O Geyser (comp), *Dr H F Verwoerd die Republikein: Hoofartikels uit Die Transvaler, 1937-1948* Tafelberg – Uitgewers, Kaapstad, 1972), p.14. The editor (Verwoerd) wrote that the National Party in the Cape was correct in refusing to offer the hand of friendship to a movement the character and basis of which were destructive. ["Die Nasionale Party van Kaapland het reg gedoen om nie die hand van vriendskap aan te neem nie van 'n beweging wat hom in sy karakter en grondslae sou aangeval en probeer vernietig het."]

³⁰ "... daardie politieke jakkalse gaan ek die hardste slaan". [I shall hit those political jackals hardest.] *Die Transvaler*, 3.11.1937.

³¹ *Die Volksblad*, 31.8.1936 reports Rudman's admission into the Malanite ranks.

³² South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Digest*, Press Reports, Report Number 9, 1936.

³³ *The Rand Daily Mail*, 19.3.1937.

³⁴ *Die Volksblad*, 10.3.1937.

³⁵ *Die Vaderland*, 11.3.1937.

the victory of T C J Erasmus in the Bethal provincial election which preceded the 1938 national elections.³⁶

In the period following the Aliens Act, the attitude of the powerful Dutch Reformed Church towards the Jews also underwent a transformation. Undercurrents of animosity towards the Jews became apparent as early as February 1937³⁷ and, whereas the Dutch Reformed Church had openly condemned antisemitism in 1933,³⁸ the Synod of the Transvaal branch of the Church meeting in Pretoria in April 1937 resolved, in response to prevalent attitudes towards the Jews,³⁹ that “persecution of any section of the community does not carry with it the approval of the Synod.” The generalisation, however, carried with it a rider which stated that “where anti-Jewish movements are launched for economic or other reasons, the Synod wishes to leave it to the conscience of its members to decide how far such movements are justified or not.”⁴⁰

While historian Eric Walker maintains that the Church had taken a ‘middle line’ on the antisemitic issue,⁴¹ the critics of the day were quite outspoken over the resolution. It was construed by some as a tacit connivance at antisemitism, and openly condemned as favouring the racialist campaigns of Dr Malan. Given the widespread condemnation of the resolution, it is not surprising that the Natal Dutch Reformed Synod, meeting in Pietermaritzburg in April 1937, deleted from its agenda the item concerning the Jews.⁴² However, the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Orange Free State, a stronghold of Afrikanerdom, was undeterred and adopted a report in the same month by 64 to 61 votes that the Jews were not God’s Chosen People: “There is only one Chosen People of God...that is the Church, or

³⁶ Le Roux, ‘Die ‘Gesuiwerde’ Nasionale Party, 1935-1940’, p.361.

³⁷ See *Die Burger*, 23.2.1937, which reports the various resolutions to be submitted by the Pretoria Ring of the Dutch Reformed Church to the Synod, due to meet on 7 April 1937.

³⁸ Reference to this is made earlier in this study.

³⁹ *World Conference of Christians and Jews (held at Oxford, July 1946): Memorandum Submitted on Behalf of the South African Delegates on Problems Arising from the Inroads of Nazism on Contemporary Thought and Practice in South Africa, 27 June, 1946*, p.23.

⁴⁰ Saron and Hotz (ed.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.384. See also *Die Vaderland*, 22.4.1937, *Die Volksblad*, 24.7.1937, and South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Press Report 39, *Press Digest*, 1936.

⁴¹ Walker, *A History of South Africa*, p.664.

⁴² *The Cape Argus*, 27.4.1937 and 30.4.1937; *The Natal Advertiser*, 30.4.1937; *Die Volksblad*, 1.5.1937; and *The Sunday Tribune*, 2.5.1937.

the Kingdom of Christ".⁴³ Although the period of the Second World War falls beyond the chronological scope of this study, it is germane to a discussion about the Dutch Reformed Church's attitude to the Jews to record that, in April 1943, by which time the fate of European Jewry in the 21 countries occupied by Nazi Germany was well-known, the Church produced a report accusing South African Jews of pro-Communist propensities⁴⁴ and demanding a quota system for the admission of Jews in every country in the world. The Jews to be admitted under such a quota would merely be tolerated as 'guests' in their host countries.⁴⁵

Prominent individuals such as Jan Hofmeyr, whose deeply held Christian commitment underscored his political philosophy, expressed concern that a Christian community could countenance antisemitism in any form. In his 1945 Hoernlé Memorial Lecture he argued that

the antisemitism of our day, which has rightly been called the new barbarism, is essentially un-Christian – it is in conflict with all that is of permanent value in our culture and civilisation. ...To me it is a never-failing source of wonder, how people in this country and in other countries, who profess Christianity... can also preach and practise antisemitism. To the extent to which a nation accepts antisemitism it is un-Christian and uncivilised⁴⁶

Intensified anti-Jewish campaigns continued unabated during 1937. At the beginning of the year a new antisemitic publication, *Patria*, appeared, claiming to be the official organ of the South Africa Fascists.⁴⁷ Commenting on this, the Jewish Board of Deputies declared:

⁴³ *World Conference of Christians and Jews (held at Oxford, July 1946): Memorandum Submitted on Behalf of the South African Delegates on Problems Arising from the Inroads of Nazism on Contemporary Thought and Practice in South Africa, 27 June, 1946, p.234.*

⁴⁴ A report submitted on 26 June 1939 to the German Foreign Office by Ambassador Leitner, Germany's Ambassador to South Africa, stated that the Afrikaners "appeared to be following the lead of the Dutch Reformed Church, which attacked the Jews as agents of the spread of Communism." See Citino, *Germany and the Union of South Africa*, p.222.

⁴⁵ See Hagemann, *Antisemitism in South Africa During World War II: A Documentation*, Simon Wiesenthal Annual, Volume 4, p.279.

⁴⁶ Hofmeyr, *Christian Principles and Race Problems*, p.19.

⁴⁷ The first issue of *Patria*, edited by J Von Moltke, who was convicted in the 1934 Greyshirt Trial, was published on 30 January 1937. The *Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 12 July 1937, record that Huguenot Drukkery, printers of *Patria*, had become insolvent and that the publication of *Patria*, mouthpiece of Von Moltke, was suspended.

The appearance of this publication is significant, because of the widespread distribution which it apparently enjoys – indicating considerable financial backing – and its reproduction of all the libels and calumnies which are the stock-in-trade of the professional Nazi propagandists. Particularly dangerous is the utterly absurd and wholly unfounded identification which is generally claimed between Jews and Bolshevism.⁴⁸

Indeed, styling itself as “an organ for racial fascism in South Africa,” *Patria* attacked the Jews, blaming them, *inter alia*, for causing the Anglo-Boer War, and alleging in a number of articles that Russia and the Communist Party were controlled by the Jews.⁴⁹ In a letter to *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, *Patria*'s editor, Von Moltke, stated that as early as 2 December 1936 he had approached the Prime Minister with an appeal –

to introduce a motion during the present session of Parliament for the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the activities of the 'Broederbond', the 'New Guard' and the 'South African Jewish Board of Deputies', to determine the extent to which these bodies, associations or organisations are a danger to the nation as a whole. If desired, the 'Greyshirt' movements, under which the South African Fascists also fall, can be included as well. As far as the Fascists are concerned, they have nothing to conceal, but much to show up.

Von Moltke maintained that the South African Jewish Board of Deputies feared an investigation of its activities, afraid to face the truth. “The Jew conquers with the lie,” he claimed, “but the truth kills.”⁵⁰ The letter was evidently prompted by an editorial printed in *The South African Jewish Chronicle*,⁵¹ calling upon the Government to institute a commission of inquiry into the anti-Jewish organisations of South Africa, particularly with a view to establishing the source of their funds. Von Moltke again made a counter appeal at a meeting in Paarl on 6 May 1937, after which a resolution was carried calling upon the Government to inquire whether the Jews in the Union deserved the right of South African citizenship.⁵²

⁴⁸ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Committee to the 12th Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, p.17.

⁴⁹ See, for example, the second issue of *Patria*, 19.2.1937.

⁵⁰ *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 7.5.1937. Also published earlier in *Patria*, 21.4.1937.

⁵¹ *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 19.4.1937.

⁵² *Die Burger*, 29.5.1937.

During the latter part of 1936, and the period following the Aliens Act, the most noteworthy development in the anti-Jewish movement was undoubtedly the increased emergence of antisemitism as a political issue. The question of Jewish immigration to South Africa had been instrumental in effecting the metamorphosis. One of the features of this period was the appearance of Greyshirts as candidates at municipal, provincial and parliamentary by-elections. On the other hand it could be argued that

the resounding defeats administered to all these candidates for public honours indicated that the vast majority of South African people will hold no truck with this type of person and recognise the menace of the un-South African and un-Democratic doctrines which they preach.⁵³

The transformation which the National Party underwent was even more pronounced: the Malanites had begun to make full use of the antisemitic football in the Nationalist press, in Parliament, on political platforms and at their Party Congresses. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, which had assiduously attempted to combat the rising tide of antisemitism,⁵⁴ certainly had cause – if not justification – for stating in 1937 that “all this recent and painful history has come as a grievous and bitter disappointment to the Jews in South Africa...”⁵⁵ On the other hand, while many South Africans, and public figures in particular, had with considerable conviction spurned the antisemitism of the Nationalists and the Shirtists, no one could fail to recognise the extent to which antisemitism had made its appearance on South Africa’s political stage. The importance of the Jewish Question as a political issue was only too clearly revealed in the closing years of the decade.

⁵³ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report submitted to the Twelfth Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 1937, p.18.

⁵⁴ In her study of the role of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in South African politics over a 48-year period, Atalia Ben-Meir contends that the Board’s public relations’ efforts did not have the desired effect, during the 1930s at any rate, as they failed “in mitigating antisemitism and...forestalling anti-Jewish legislation”. See Ben-Meir, *The South African Jewish Board of Deputies and Politics, 1930-1978*, p.380. To pass such critical judgement on the Board, which fought untiringly against the inroads of antisemitism and which garnered, with considerable success, the support of leading politicians and many of the country’s influential people in all walks of life, fails to do justice to the Board’s efforts, certainly during the period covered in the present study. Had Ben-Meir consulted the vast Morris Alexander Collection and the documents of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, she may have concluded that there are criteria to judge the work of the Board other than the Board’s failure to forestall immigration legislation or to eradicate antisemitism – a task clearly beyond any communal institution.

⁵⁵ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report submitted to the Twelfth Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 1937, p.18.

CHAPTER TENTHE CLOSE OF THE DECADE

By the end of 1937 antisemitism had become a national issue, and in the two-year period immediately prior to the Second World War, the anti-Jewish agitation showed no sign of abating. Characteristic of the anti-Jewish manifestations in the period following the Aliens Act and the outbreak of war was the continued battle between the Greyshirts and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. At the end of 1937, in view of the persistent conflict between the Jewish community and its critics, the Board once again deemed it necessary to present a statement setting out the attitude of the Jewish community. In the manifesto, which was granted extensive coverage in the English and Afrikaans media, the Board explained that it was not a political body and that the Jewish community did not represent a political unit. It denied the allegation that South African Jewry sought “political revenge for the Quota Act of 1930,” and recalled the fact that after the passage of the Act, many individual Jews had continued to support the Government of the day, and had associated themselves with the political party which had encouraged the legislation. Replying to the charge that the Jews were particularly unfriendly towards the Afrikaners, the Board declared that

In the conviction that in the destiny of South Africa lies the co-operation of all the elements which make up the nation, Jewish South Africans have never sought or had occasion to identify themselves with one group to the exclusion of another, and still less to identify with one group in antagonism to another... So far from proving that the Jewish community have been antagonistic towards the Afrikaans-speaking community, South African history furnishes abundant evidence of the friendly co-operation that has always existed between them... Apart from its injustices to the Jew, the growth of antisemitism in South Africa would be a grave social and political disaster to the country. It would impede its economic progress; it would lower the standards of its public life; it would disrupt the unity of the nation; and finally it would strike at the roots of our traditions of liberty and democracy.¹

Given the intensification of antisemitism over the previous two years, the Board was obviously concerned both to defend the Jewish community and to counter the

¹ The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council, June 1937 – May 1940*, pp.19-20.

charges from the Right. Along with its manifesto, the Board confronted Dr Malan privately, taking issue with him and the National Party for pursuing what had become, to all intents and purposes, official antisemitic Party policy. In December 1937, Gus Saron wrote to the Opposition leader in trenchant terms:

The Jewish citizens of South Africa ...have noted with deep regret and concern the expressions of unfriendliness towards them which have been voiced during the past months by the leaders ... of the National Party, and in resolutions adopted at its conferences. The inevitable effect of this has been to create in the minds of both Jewish and non-Jewish citizens the impression that the National Party is embarking upon a policy of fostering ill will against the Jewish citizens of the Union, and is aiming at discriminating between them and other South Africans.²

The Board's letter to Malan – who barely a month later claimed that the Purified National Party was the only element in Parliament with the courage to tackle the “Jewish problem” properly³ – and its public manifesto may have been prompted in part by a series of events which unfolded at the end of 1937 and which witnessed a significant clash between the Board and members of the Radical Right.

Between 8 June and 11 June 1934, a large number of documents, primarily copies of correspondence, had been stolen from the office of the Cape Committee of the Jewish Board of Deputies, located in the South African Reserve Bank Buildings in Cape Town. Soon afterwards Von Moltke announced in his newspaper,⁴ *Patria*, the forthcoming publication of a book entitled *The Jews of South Africa*, in which these documents were to be reproduced.⁵ One of the stolen letters was subsequently read out by one of the defendants at the Greyshirt trial in August 1934: apparently the

² Morris Alexander Collection (BC160), C (i), Jewish Board of Deputies, Miscellaneous File 1906. 1937-1939, letter from Secretary of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies to Dr Malan, 15.12.1937.

³ *The Cape Times*, 25.1.1938.

⁴ In the edition of *Patria*, issued on 12.2.1937, Von Moltke claimed responsibility for all political articles (unless otherwise stated) in *Patria*.

⁵ Bold announcements about the projected publication of the book and details of its proposed contents appear on page 4 of a supplement to *Patria*, 30.1.1937, and on page 9 of *Patria*, 19.2.1937. The newspaper outlines the contents of the book. An article by Von Moltke in the latter edition states: “I have charged South African Jewry [in *The Jews of South Africa*] with having perpetrated a series of the most abominable crimes against our land and our unsuspecting people. I have supported my indictment with positive, irrefutable, damnable proofs.”

theft had taken place with a view to producing a piece of evidence during that trial.⁶ Von Moltke's intention to attack the Jews was clearly reflected in a speech he delivered on 23 November 1937 in the Town Hall in Smithfield, Orange Free State to a large audience, among whom were many school students. Afrikaners, he claimed, were the pioneers of South Africa but the Jews had exploited the land. Their right to South African citizenship, he argued, should therefore be contested. He promised that his forthcoming book, *The Jews of South Africa*, "sal die Jood aantoon in sy eie spiegel van ondermyning van die Volk" – that it will demonstrate to the Jews, through their own mirror, as it were, how they had undermined the Afrikaners. Jews, he added, were permitted entry into South African organisations yet denied others the right of membership in their organisations. He went on to accuse the Jews of serving as spies and abusing their citizenship rights and maintained, therefore, that they should be denied the rights of citizenship including the franchise, *inter alia*. He concluded with reference to a so-called 'Jewish conspiracy', evident in every area of South Africa's national life, and went further than he had done at Paarl on the 6 May that year, calling upon the government to establish a commission of enquiry with full powers to investigate the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in order to ascertain whether it was conspiring against the state and whether Jews should be entitled to South African citizenship.⁷

Fearing that extracts from the documents would be deliberately torn from their context in order to convey a sinister and false picture of the activities of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, the Executive Council of the Board resolved to have the publication of the book interdicted.⁸ Proceedings were instituted in the

⁶ On 17 March 1937 Cecil Lyons wrote to Woolf Harris, Chairman of the Cape Committee of the Jewish Board of Deputies. Attached to the letter was a detailed seven-page document entitled 'Instructions to Counsel'. Lyons asked Woolf to hand these instructions, which had been prepared by Gustav Saron, to Senior Counsel in Cape Town to use as a basis in the trial of *Patria*. See documents housed in Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List IV, No.24.

⁷ See Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), Jewish Board of Deputies, Miscellaneous File, 1906; 1937-1939, typescript submitted by Joseph Segall, Smithfield, Orange Free State, to Morris Alexander, titled 'Rapport van 'n Vergadering gehou in die Smithfield Stadssaal op 23ste November 1937, deur Mnr. J. Von Moltke' [Report on a gathering held in the Smithfield Town Hall on 23 November 1937, by Mr J von Moltke]. The verbatim report is in Afrikaans. See also Segall's covering letter accompanying the report and dated 27.11.1937, in which he confirms that he had attended the meeting and that, given the extreme "hurt and upset" of the Jews of Smithfield, he intended to discuss Von Moltke's comments with the Minister of Justice on the latter's visit to Smithfield, scheduled for 4 December, 1937. See also letter in the same file from Gustav Saron to Morris Alexander, 6.12.1937.

⁸ See *Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 22 December 1937. [The Chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, at that stage Cecil

Supreme Court, Cape Town, by Mr I M Goodman, Secretary of the Cape Committee of the Board, and various affidavits were submitted to the Court. On 22 February 1938, Mr Justice Centlivres, with Mr Justice Howes concurring, granted the interdict restraining Von Moltke from publishing either the documents or any information derived therefrom.⁹ In dealing with allegations which had been made by Von Moltke against the Board and the Jewish community, the Court said, *inter alia*: “I have read through that list very carefully and I must say that the ground of defence seems to my mind to be absolutely fantastic.”¹⁰ On the following day *The Cape Argus* added that Von Moltke’s affidavit “afforded valuable proof in readily accessible form of the mental derangement that lies behind the Greyshirt movement.”¹¹

During this period, the Greyshirts appeared to attack the Jewish community with intensified enthusiasm,¹² and the increase in anti-Jewish activities – particularly in the political sphere¹³ – prompted the South African Jewish Board of Deputies to retaliate by disseminating a considerable amount of literature in the form of counter-propaganda.¹⁴ A feature of the period was the establishment of a good-will movement “to maintain and promote good relations between Jews and non-Jews, to spread knowledge concerning the factors (social, economic and others) which lead to friction”¹⁵ and to combat the rising tide of antisemitism.¹⁶ This movement – ‘The Society of Jews and Christians’ – was established at a meeting held in July 1937 at

Lyons, apparently wrote to Prime Minister Hertzog on the eve of his departure for an overseas trip to alert him of the Board’s concerns over the issue of the stolen documents, at the same time apprising him about the antisemitic activities of the Greyshirts and Blackshirts as well as the distribution of imported anti-Jewish propaganda from Europe. The first page of the seven-page letter, filed in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List IV, No.24, is missing, but from the contents of the letter one can clearly discern the addressee and the intent.

⁹ Details of the proceedings are outlined in considerable detail in the following publications: *The Cape Argus*, 6.1.1938; *The Star*, 6.1.1938; *The Cape Times*, 6.1.1938 and 23.2.1938; and *Die Burger*, 25.2.1938, which also records the fact that Von Moltke had dissolved his organisation with the intention to throw in his lot, together with his followers, with Dr Malan.

¹⁰ The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council, June 1937 – May 1940*, pp.19-20.

¹¹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (iii), Box 1934 – December 1941, newspaper clipping, *The Cape Argus*, 23.2.1938.

¹² See Vatcher, *White Laager*, p.62; see also *Die Waarheid*, 14.1.1938.

¹³ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council, June 1937 – May 1940*, pp.31-32.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.26. A good account is given here of the nature and increase of Shirtist activities during the closing years of the decade.

¹⁵ From the Constitution of the Society of Jews and Christians, in *The Society of Jews and Christians, Some Facts about the Society*, Publication No.2 (The Society of Jews and Christians, Johannesburg, c.1938).

¹⁶ A Paton, *Apartheid and the Archbishop: The Life and Times of Geoffrey Clayton* (David Philip, Publisher, Cape Town, 1973), p.83.

the Methodist Central Hall, Johannesburg.¹⁷ Its formation was prompted by a formal resolution condemning antisemitism and calling upon all Christians to oppose it which was passed by the Witwatersrand Church Council¹⁸ earlier in the year. Among the immediate signatories to the principles of the Society were such prominent citizens as the Right Rev G H Clayton, Bishop of Johannesburg, Chief Rabbi Dr J L Landau, Mr Acting Justice Schreiner, Professors R F A Hoernlé and I D MacCrone, Mrs S G Millin, G Saron and Dr H Sonnabend.¹⁹

Addressing the first Annual General Meeting of the Society, held on 19 November 1937, the Hon Jan H Hofmeyr said that the Society

has set itself the task of combating antisemitism, which, if it were allowed to grow in South Africa, would sully and dishonour our good name as a nation... It must be realised that you cannot keep one section of the community down without hampering the development of the community as a whole... If the Jew, by waving a magic wand, were to be removed from South Africa, the shock to the culture and prosperity of the country would be irreparable.²⁰

In 1938, the life of the existing Parliament expired, and the date of the next General Elections was set for May of that year. The growing popularity of the Right was of considerable concern to the Jewish community, Already in February 1937, some 16 months prior to the General Elections, Alexander expressed these concerns to Cecil Lyons, Chairman of the Executive Council of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies:

¹⁷ Copies of the 'Minutes of the Society of Jews and Christians, 1938-1940' are housed in The Archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Cape Committee, Cape Town. For references to the activities of the Society in 1938, see *inter alia*, *The Star*, 15.6.1938, *The Daily Mail*, 15.6.1938, *The Daily Express*, 14.6.1938, and *Die Transvaler*, 15.6.1938.

¹⁸ See *The Friend*, 10.3.1937; *Daily Dispatch*, 8.3.1937; *Eastern Province Herald*, 8.3.1937; and *The Pretoria News*, 6.3.1937. Reference to the resolution of the Witwatersrand Church Council was made earlier in this study.

¹⁹ *The Rand Daily Mail*, 28.5.1937. See also Paton, *Apartheid and the Archbishop*, p.83. Here Paton points out that Clayton, like Hoernlé, scorned demagoguery and deemed antisemitism to be a "moral offence...an extreme vulgarity."

²⁰ The Society of Jews and Christians, *The Society of Jews and Christians, Some Facts about the Society*, Publication No.2, p.3, *et seq.* The *Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies* of 28 September 1938 record favourable progress in the establishment and work of the Society of Jews and Christians. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Digest*, Press Report 94, 1938, reports on the editorial in *Wu's Views*, the publication of the Johannesburg-based University of Witwatersrand, 2.6.1938. The editorial covered a meeting of The Society of Jews and Christians held on 25 May 1938, endorsing Hofmeyr's comments at the Society's Annual General Meeting and stating that "antisemitism is un-South African and is foreign not only to our national spirit and traditions, but to the spirit, traditions and characteristics of our University."

The next Election will, in my opinion ... be one of the bitterest that has ever been fought and very grave issues depend upon it. Should Dr Malan make any substantial progress next time – there is in my opinion no chance of his coming into power at the next election – then, to my mind, the way would be cleared for his eventual success and coming into power as Prime Minister at the Elections after next... the Jewish question will be the principal matter for discussion at the next Election, as Dr Malan and his followers realise it as the only valuable and profitable political counter they have so far succeeded in using.²¹

Alexander was to be proven correct on both counts – that Malan would eventually be appointed Prime Minister, and that antisemitism would underscore the election campaign of the Nationalists. He was not the only person who held the latter view. In May 1937, a year before the General Elections, the editor of *The Sunday Tribune*, analysing the prospects of the forthcoming elections, predicted that “unless Malanism and Nazism can be checked by a vigorous United Party campaign, the General Elections will set a new record in racial acrimony and bitterness.”²² Indeed, on 1 November 1937, *Die Transvaler* launched its pre-election anti-Jewish agitation, calling for a quota system limiting the number of Jews in certain trades and occupations, suggesting proportional distribution of Jews in all spheres of commerce, and demanding the denial of trading licences to Jews until every section of the population had been given its proper share.²³ This cry was soon to be echoed by the Nationalists in their election campaign.

In the months of intense political activity preceding the General Elections, ample use was made of antisemitic slogans by Shirtist agitators and National Party candidates. The Jew was dubbed ‘Communist’; he ‘dominated’ trade; he was ‘opposed’ to the Afrikaner; and he was ‘unnational’. There were strident calls for the cessation of further Jewish immigration and demands for planned economic discrimination against the Jews.²⁴ D J Mostert, Nationalist politician, penned a nine-point document – a veritable diatribe against Jewish migrants – entitled ‘Daar is Geen Plek

²¹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List 1V, No.24, Alexander to Lyons, 17.2.1937.

²² *The Sunday Tribune*, 23.5.1937.

²³ Bunting, *The Rise of the South Africa Reich*, p.59; South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council, June 1937 – May 1940*, p.18.

²⁴ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council, June 1937 – May 1940*, p.18.

vir Immigrante in die Unie Nie', claiming that the country first had to become united and strong before absorbing foreign elements.²⁵

In the lead up to the 1938 elections *The Cape Times* reported that during the course of an address at Citrusdal in the Western Cape, Dr Malan had said that the Aliens Act was about as useful to keep the Jews out of South Africa as a sieve was to stop the East wind, adding that he had been assured by travellers that the boats arriving at Cape Town were full of Jews, an argument to which the statistics gives the lie. The only way to stop South Africa being overrun by Jews, contended Malan, was to vote for the National Party.²⁶ He opened his pre-election campaign almost a year prior to the elections with an address to a large meeting in Pretoria on 23 May 1937. After a general attack on the United Party and the Government which he called obsolete, he dealt at some length with the question of the Jews, continuing with his familiar theme that South Africa had already too many Jews. To garner the support of English-speaking voters, he argued that English-speaking South Africans were systematically being excluded from commerce by the Jews.²⁷ Burnside, in a series of articles, accused Malan of "banging the antisemitic drum." "Hate breeds hate", he wrote, adding that

in addition to being anti-British and antisemitic, the Purified Nationalists have during the last few months become openly and blatantly anti-Asiatic, anti-coloured, anti-native and as a fitting gesture ...anti-Roman Catholic.²⁸

With the General Elections in the offing, the antisemitic populism of the Radical Right was a common feature. Weichardt, in an address to the Sons of England, called for "a public enquiry into the Jewish question", an opportunity to "bring Jewry to trial" so that the Jewish issue would be decided by "the public will."²⁹ In January 1938,

²⁵ D J Mostert Collection (PV 16), File 4, Undated document (c.1937-1938), entitled 'Daar is Geen Plek vir Immigrante in die Unie Nie', ('There is no place for immigrants in the Union.')

²⁶ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (ii), Box 1934 December 1941, Folder 29 1938. *The Cape Times*, 26.3.1938, press clipping. The newspaper reported that, during question time, Malan said that Nationalist supporters did not boycott Jewish traders as there were no other traders from whom people could purchase goods – an obvious fabrication.

²⁷ *Rand Daily Mail*, 23.05.1937.

²⁸ Duncan Burnside, in the first of a series of articles to appear in *The Sunday Express*, 23.5.1937.

²⁹ *The Cape Times*, editorial, 14.1.1938. (The writer, G H Wilson, criticised Weichardt for being blatantly antisemitic.) Weichardt had previously addressed the Sons of England. In an address on 12 January 1934, four years earlier, he had railed against the so-called "Jewish System". See *Minutes of Special Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 13 January 1934.

several months before the elections, the Blackshirts commenced an official publication titled *Die Leier* (The Leader) which committed the movement to “fight the Jews and their hirelings and others of the Communist creed,” and accused the Jews of Bolshevism, Communism, Capitalism and plotting world domination – familiar features of the antisemitism which characterised the rhetoric of the Radical Right.³⁰ In May 1938, Afrikaner extremists erected posters throughout South Africa warning against inter-marriage, and when they were criticised for having adopted the Nazi concept of a ‘pure race’, they attributed all such opposition to the Jews.³¹ Without a shadow of doubt, “in the General Elections, Nationalist antisemitism played a prominent part.”³²

An article in *The Round Table* stating that antisemitism was in the political “forefront” predicted that it would bulk large as a significant factor in the 1938 General Elections. It went on to argue that the United Party’s position was a strong one, but that over the Jewish Question some Government members sympathised with Malan’s well-organised Purified National Party opposition:

Antisemitism, too, is looming upon our political horizon, and this election will see an unprecedented use of the Jews as a scapegoat for all the ills of our national life. Up until recently, anti-Jewish agitation was maintained solely by what everyone regarded as a foreign political importation, the Greyshirt organisation. But the Nationalists realised the political value of antisemitism during the provincial council elections last year, when the ‘S S Stuttgart’ arrived during the election campaign with a few hundred German Jewish immigrants aboard. The National Party raised loud antisemitic cries and reaped a rich harvest. The leader of the Nationalists [Dr Malan], who was, until a few years ago, an unequivocal champion of the Jews, has stolen the thunder of the Greyshirts and is now leading the campaign of antisemitism, which is proving a most effective move in present conditions in Africa... It is a measure of the anti-Jewish feeling that Jews have been excluded from Nationalist party membership in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.³³

It is, however, difficult to assess whether there was indeed a marked degree of sympathy among United Party MPs for Malan’s stance on the Jewish Question. If indeed an element of such support existed, Malan attempted to capitalise on it. In a

³⁰ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Press Report 78, *Press Digest*, 1938.

³¹ Vatcher, *White Laager*, p.61.

³² Walker, *A History of South Africa*, p.645.

³³ Round Table, *The Round Table*, Vol.28, Number 109, October 1937, pp.194-195

speech at Graafwater, he affirmed that his party was the only political party in the country with the courage to stop the entry of Jews into South Africa.³⁴ Several days later, at Piquetburg, he stated that his party would propose legislation whereby Jews who had come to South Africa but who had not yet received citizenship should never be accorded that privilege: they would, he maintained, be regarded as unassimilable. Behind every Jew, he said, stood organised Jewry. He accused the Jews of acquisitiveness (“inbesitneming”), ‘overcoming’ others systematically (‘stelselmatig’), and of forming a separate, united racial ‘compact’ (“aaneengeslote”). Under his projected legislation they would not be allowed to follow any occupation without a special permit. During his speech, while criticising Weichardt for his pro-fascist policy, he gave the Greyshirt leader credit for what he deemed to be Weichardt’s positive policy of antisemitism.³⁵ The United Party was quick to counter this with a pre-election Afrikaans publication entitled ‘Gesuiwerde Bewerings Weerlê’,³⁶ a 29-page pamphlet, 15 pages of which contained Malan’s pro-Jewish statements made over the years juxtaposed against his antisemitic pronouncements.³⁷

In March 1938, the Malanites issued their official Party Manifesto, outlining their program and approach to issues of national importance. Under the heading ‘Immigration and the Jewish Question’, the Manifesto read:

While the Party in general welcomes the immigration of suitable Europeans, it will, with an eye to South Africa’s specific problems, take steps to put an end to further immigration of Jews, to oppose the change of names, to exercise stricter control over naturalization, and to bring into existence an occupation permit system for unnaturalised foreigners...³⁸

This was Malanite antisemitism fully exposed. After the votes had been counted, the election having been held on 18 May 1938, the United Party was returned to power with 111 seats. However, it lost seven seats to the Malanites, after holding 118

³⁴ *Die Burger*, 22.1.1938.

³⁵ See *Die Transvaler*, 26.1.1938; and quotations from *Die Burger* in South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Press Report No 73, *Press Digest*, 1938.

³⁶ Translation: Purified [Party’s] Allegations Refuted.

³⁷ The pamphlet, ‘Gesuiwerde Bewerings Weerlê’, obviously pre-election propaganda, is undated. The pamphlet is housed in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), List IV, Items. 18.

³⁸ The South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council, June 1937 – May 1940*, p.20; and E Alexander, *Morris Alexander*, p.198.

seats in the previous Parliament.³⁹ While these results indicated clearly that the majority of the electorate did not identify itself with the racial doctrines of the Purified Nationalists, it is significant that the latter had gained a total of 11 seats. In effect, the National Party, which had “shifted considerably to the right”⁴⁰ since Malan had broken away from Hertzog in 1934, had garnered a quarter of a million votes – a significant number – their support increasing since the previous election by 91,756 votes. This, argued Le Roux, represented a victory for Afrikanerdom.⁴¹

G D Scholtz maintains that “by die algemene verkiesing... het die Jodedom as een groot geheel sy steun aan die Verenigde Party geskenk”⁴² – that in the General Elections the Jews voted for the United Party with one voice. In light of Malan’s policies, the Jews’ support for the Government was understandable. Immediately after the elections *Die Burger* made great currency out of this, attributing to ‘Hoggenheimer’⁴³ the victory of Hertzog and Smuts. Given the comparative paucity of Jewish voters in South Africa, this could hardly be true. However, in light of the open antisemitism which marked the Purified Nationalists’ election campaign (in a speech on the eve of the elections, Hofmeyr accused “the official [Purified Nationalist] opposition [of] directly and indirectly ...peach[ing] the evil doctrine of antisemitism” and of aiming to persecute the Jews of South Africa⁴⁴), it is understandable that Jews would not vote for Malanite candidates. Max Melamet, who served both the Cape and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in several capacities between 1938 and 1955, argued that in the 1938 (and 1948) elections Jewish support for anti-Malan candidates “was not a reflection of hostility towards the legitimate aspirations of Afrikaner nationalism, but rather a rejection of the claim that any aim or programme proclaimed in the name of Afrikaner nationalism was self-validating and entitled to override the legitimate interests of any

³⁹ J C Smuts (Jnr.), *Jan Christian Smuts* (Cassel and Co Ltd, Cape Town, 1952), p.371. See also Le Roux, ‘Die ‘Gesuiwerde’ Nasionale Party, 1935-1940’, pp.385-387.

⁴⁰ Furlong, *Between Swastika and Crown*, p.118.

⁴¹ See Le Roux, ‘Die ‘Gesuiwerde’ Nasionale Party, 1935-1940’, p.419. Le Roux’s statistics are derived from *Die Volksblad*, 21.5.1938.

⁴² Scholtz, *Dr Nicholaas Van der Merwe, 1880-1940*, p.376.

⁴³ See Vatcher, *White Laager*, p.62.

⁴⁴ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(ii), Box 1934 – December 1941, Folder 29-1938, press cutting from *The Indian Opinion*, 15.4.1938.

other section of the population (the Jews for instance.)”⁴⁵ This argument – Melamet wrote in 1973, 25 years after the Nationalists were in power and Apartheid policies were well entrenched - is characteristic of Jewish apologetics (“to override the legitimate interests of any other section of the population” is euphemistic) which often marked the decades which followed the accession to power of the National Party in May 1948 and which only terminated in 1994 with the end of Apartheid.

The National Party persisted in retaining anti-Jewish planks in its official platform, and in 1941 the Federal Council of the Party reaffirmed more fully the 1938 Manifesto. In 1943 the National Party in the Transvaal banned Jews from joining its ranks, even though Malan, soon to become Prime Minister, had earlier, at a well-attended meeting held at the Pretoria City Hall on 27 April 1938, possibly as a pre-election ploy, denied that his party was established on racial lines and that *anyone* who subscribed to his party’s policies was free to join.⁴⁶ This ban, which to all intents and purposes was already in place after the Transvaal National Party had met formally in October 1936,⁴⁷ included a ban on Jewish membership of the National Party in the Orange Free State, as noted earlier, and remained part of the Nationalists’ official policy until 1951.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ M Melamet, ‘Reflections by a Former South African: The Turbulent Thirties’, *Jewish Affairs - 70th Anniversary of South African Jewish Board of Deputies : Monthly Journal of The South African Jewish Board of Deputies* (Johannesburg, March 1973) p.38.

⁴⁶ *The Rand Daily Mail*, 28.4.1938; *Die Vaderland*, 28.4.1938. *The Jewish Chronicle*, 22.4.1938 had published an address by the President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Mr Maurice Franks, KC, a few days earlier, titled ‘The Present Position of SA Jewry’. Franks said that he regretted the antisemitic growth in the National Party under Malan. He referred to the sudden *volte face* of the Nationalists towards the end of 1936, quoting Malan who had stated in Parliament in mid-1936 that “all Europeans in this country ought to stand on an equal footing, political or otherwise... “If there are any complaints against the Jews, if it is said that they are parasites or a danger economically, then I say that there are also others who are parasites...” Franks juxtaposed this by quoting Malan’s subsequent statement made at a conference in the Orange Free State in November 1936 that his party’s policy was one of discriminating against the Jews.

⁴⁷ Stultz, *Afrikaner Politics in South Africa, 1934-1938*, p. 45. In a letter to Richard Feldman dated 29.11.1937, A Z Berman refers to the *de facto* decision of the Malanites to refuse the Jews membership of the National Party. “We must not allow ourselves”, he wrote, “to be mass-manoeuvred into a state of war with the ‘Dutch’ [Afrikaners]. This is precisely what Malan is aiming at, and if we accept it we are doomed.” Richard Feldman Collection (A 804), File Ad3.

⁴⁸ Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.384; Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich*, p.64. A carbon copy of a document in the archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Reference Files, 300-399: File Number 311.12, titled ‘Banning Of Jews As Members Of The Transvaal H.P. (Herenigde Party)’, outlines the history of the ban placed on Jews as members of the National Party in the Transvaal. Tracing the history, the document quotes from several newspapers commencing with *Die Burger* of 31 October 1936 through the war years and beyond. What is of particular interest is the correspondence, as late as December 1950, between Bernard A Ettlinger, President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies from 1942 to 1951, and J G Strydom, South Africa’s Prime Minister from 1954 but at that stage a minister in Malan’s cabinet. In a letter to Strydom

When the South African Parliament met in session on 3 February 1939, one of the first issues which arose was the time-worn question of Jewish immigration. On 6 January, Mr Eric H Louw, former South African Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, England, France and Portugal, gave notice in a Union Gazette Extraordinary of his intention to introduce a Private Bill in the forthcoming Parliamentary session to be entitled 'Aliens (Amendment) and Immigration Bill'. After a formal First Reading, this measure was debated at the Second Reading on 24 February, 17 March and 14 April. The Bill sought, *inter alia*, to stamp all Jews as 'unassimilable', and to prohibit further all Jewish immigration; to deprive unnaturalised aliens who had entered the country since 1 January 1930, of their immigration permits; and to place Jewish aliens in an exclusive category, granting them permits to 'sojourn' in the Union, which might be cancelled at any time.

Introducing his Private Bill,⁴⁹ Louw (Nationalist MP for Beaufort West) denied that he was actuated by either fascist or racist motivations, and declared that his measure was "fully backed by the National Party." As a "leading spokesperson of antisemitism among Malan's Purified Nationalists,"⁵⁰ there is little doubt that he had Malan's backing, yet introduced the Bill in his private capacity. "I have", he said,

acted solely as a South African, as a member ... of one of the two sections of our population in South Africa whose forefathers were the pioneers of this country who built up South Africa and made it what it is today. I am a member of one of those two sections that are going to remain in South Africa.⁵¹

dated 21 December 1950, Ettliger argued, just as Jewish leaders had argued in the 1930s and onwards: "We view it [the ban imposed by the Transvaal National Party on Jewish membership] as a slur upon the Jewish community and as a derogation from the principle of equality of all citizens in the political life of our country, and we are convinced that its removal would make for better inter-group relations." Ettliger's reference to "equality of all citizens" was obviously only a reference to whites.

⁴⁹ Eric Louw's Private Bill is reviewed in Cohen, 'Anti-Jewish Manifestations In The Union of South Africa', chapter 5.

⁵⁰ Furlong, *Between Swastika and Crown*, p.51.

⁵¹ *The Jewish Problem in South Africa*, speech delivered by Eric H Louw in the House of Assembly on 24th February 1939 (Nasionale Pers Beperk, Cape Town, 1939), p.3. [In 2012, Sacred Truth Publishing, based in Tennessee, USA, reproduced the complete *Hansard* text of Eric Louw's address, titled 'The Jewish Problem in South Africa: A Speech Delivered by Eric H(endrik) Louw, M.P., in the House of Assembly on 24th February, 1939'. The publication, in which Louw's speech was reprinted, comprises seven articles, all of which constitute a diatribe against the Jews of South Africa. Articles include 'The Jewish Role in South Africa's Political Unrest', 'The Boer War: How the Jews Seized South Africa', and 'Africa's Kosher Press'. For the reproduction of the text from *Hansard*, see R A Balaicius (comp. and ed.), *The Jews and South Africa* (Sacred Truth Publishing, Mountain City, Tennessee), pp.81-114.]

Louw went on to accuse the Jews of undue influence in the press and argued that he was “convinced that if it were possible to remove Jewish influence and Jewish pressure from the press and from the news agencies the international outlook would be considerably brighter than it is today.”⁵² In his view,

Communism, since its earliest days [was] linked with Jewry. This has been denied by the Jews but such denial is not in accordance with the facts ... The Jews were the people who conceived the idea of Communism, and it was by the Jews that Communism was directed and is still being directed today. That is perfectly comprehensible because Communism is international and a Jew is international in his outlook... That the Jew is not assimilable has been shown from the records of history and it is also admitted by the Jew himself... This Bill discriminates against the Jewish immigrant and Jewish alien because, owing to certain racial characteristics it creates a problem in any country as soon the Jewish population exceeds a certain percentage of the total... In South Africa the Jewish population has already reached that percentage and consequently we have with us today a Jewish problem which must be squarely faced.⁵³

Louw’s Bill, “the most clearly antisemitic piece of legislation in the Union’s history”,⁵⁴ was antisemitic in the extreme and was introduced at a time of increased anti-Jewish agitation from the Afrikaner right-wing. Its principal feature, as he noted, was embodied in Section 4 subsection (i) which provided that no applicant for immigrant status “who is of Jewish parentage shall be deemed to be readily assimilable.” Louw frankly admitted that discrimination against the Jews as both aliens and immigrants existed, yet exonerated himself from the accusation that he was antisemitic. He declared that the people who posed as friends of the Jews in fact discriminated against them on a social level, whereas, unlike these people, he had “never yet in private conversation spoken of a Jew as a ‘Yid’.” This was clearly disingenuous: Louw could hardly exonerate himself from the charge of antisemitism, given the nature and intent of his proposed legislation.

On the question of assimilability, Louw contended that Jewish history is testament to the inability of the Jew to adapt to his environment. The ‘adaptation’ of the diasporic

⁵² Ibid., p.4.

⁵³ Ibid., pp.5-7.

⁵⁴ Citino, *Germany and the Union of South Africa*, p.215. [See pp.215-222 for German Ambassador Leitner’s response to Louw’s proposed bill.]

Jew was, he said, merely a façade. The Jew, he charged, is firstly “loyal to his own people, loyal to Israel⁵⁵ (and) is concerned mainly with his own personal and material interests.” His control of finance and business, argued Louw, together with his monopolising influence, domination of the professions and hold on the wholesale and retail trade endangered the existence of South Africa. He continued in this vein, with echoes which had come to the Right’s antisemitic rhetoric, concluding with an admonition to the Jewish Members of the House and to South African Jewry generally:

In your own interests, beware that you do not put anything in the way of the tackling of this problem. I say to you, read the history of your own race, and be satisfied with the numbers that you have in the country today.⁵⁶

In the same manner in which Dr Malan had been criticised for proposing anti-Jewish legislation, so too was Eric Louw slated for being blatantly racist. Stuttford, as Minister of the Interior, launched the attack. He was followed by Jan Hofmeyr, who stated that Louw’s Bill was contrary to the most cherished traditions of South Africa, namely freedom and tolerance. Assimilability, said Hofmeyr, did not imply uniformity, but unity and a readiness to serve South Africa.⁵⁷

There is no doubt that the South African Jewish community was gravely concerned. Six days before the Bill’s Second Reading, Saron wrote to Hofmeyr on behalf of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, plying him with detailed arguments for use in attacking Louw’s Bill, and at the same time expressing the fear that Louw, according to rumour, planned to make reference to antisemitic publications such as

⁵⁵ ‘Israel’ in this context implies world Jewry since the State of Israel only came into being some nine years later.

⁵⁶ *The Jewish Problem in South Africa*, speech delivered by Eric H Louw in the House of Assembly on 24th February 1939, pp.1-15. [The cover of the booklet contains the following quotation from a speech made by Dr Malan in the House of Assembly on 12 January 1937: “South Africa has a Jewish problem, and we cannot deal with it effectively, unless we name it specifically, and face it squarely.”] There is a congratulatory note signed by ‘Johann’ in the E H Louw Collection (PV 4), File 2, which, according to the archivist at the Institute of Contemporary History, Bloemfontein, where the Collection is housed, relates to Louw’s Private Bill. The note reads: “Eric, pragtig. Dit kon nie beter gedoen gewees het nie. Jy het die Huis se aandag van die begin tot die eind gehad.” [‘Eric, beautiful. It could not have been done better. You had the attention of the House from beginning to end.’]

⁵⁷ Speeches in Parliament on the Bill are reproduced in the following publication: United Party, *The National Party and Jewish Immigration: being the speeches delivered in the House of Assembly in opposition to Eric Louw’s Bill* (The [United] Party, Cape Town, 1939), pp.1-31.

The *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* and Henry Ford's antisemitic *Dearborn Independent* in support of the proposed legislation.⁵⁸

Kentridge addressed the House somewhat later, and levelled a rather vicious attack against Louw's Bill. "If", he exclaimed,

you are honest in your desire to safeguard the interests of the poor whites... and to raise the standard of life of the poor Afrikaner in South Africa, you will not do it by a policy of prejudice, or by throwing a few Jews to the dogs for them to fight over. You will not do it by creating racial hatred.

Several members of the Government arose in turn to accuse Louw and the Nationalists of propagating anti-Christian doctrines. "If Christ were to come to South Africa," declared Dr W Steenkamp, under the proposed legislation

He would be hounded from our doorsteps because He is a Jew and is poor. Hounded by whom? He would be hounded out by a nation that prides itself on its Christianity, and hounded by a party which styles itself 'The Christian Nationalist Party'.

Mr A Goldberg MP noted that Louw had frequently accused the Jews of being Communists, but when convenience dictated, this accusation gave way to the cry that the Jews were the pillars of finance, the arch-capitalists. Louw, he implied, had overlooked the fact that the Jews in the main could not be both the capitalists of the world and at the same time the progenitors of that political faith which sought to destroy private capital.⁵⁹ Louw was subsequently accused of attacking the Jews unjustly, of being "rabidly antisemitic,"⁶⁰ being "guilty of the grossest misrepresentations, half-truths and distortions of fact,"⁶¹ and of delivering a speech which was little more than an "antisemitic tirade."⁶² *The Cape Times* called the

⁵⁸ J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1), File Aa: General correspondence and political career, 1915-1948. Saron to Hofmeyr, 18.2.1939. [File Dh 1937-1939 of the Collection contains a typescript article titled 'The Coming Session: A Plea' (The Zionist Record, 10.2.1939) critical of Louw's Private Bill. It may possibly have been drafted by Hofmeyr.]

⁵⁹ United Party, *The National Party and Jewish Immigration: being the speeches delivered in the House of Assembly in opposition to Eric Louw's Bill*, pp.1-31.

⁶⁰ Kentridge, *I Recall*, p.270.

⁶¹ Morris Kentridge in an address to the Jewish community in Worcester. *The Cape Times*, 27.2.1939, newspaper clipping, Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (ii), Box 1934 – December 1941, Folder 30 – January – June 1939.

⁶² Kentridge, *I Recall*, p.273.

measure “draconian...arbitrary and stupid”, more so because of Louw’s attempt to define Jewish parentage and thereby exclude Jews from South Africa whose fathers were Jewish but whose mothers were Gentiles.⁶³

Hofmeyr was close to the mark when he wrote that Louw’s bill was “clearly an attempt on the part of the National Party to ‘cash in’ on the antisemitic sentiment which had been sedulously stimulated throughout South Africa by its new-found allies, the Weichardts *et hoc genus omne*.” In his view the adoption of antisemitism by the Purified Nationalists as part of their political program had removed antisemitism from the demagogue of the ‘shirt’ type, and given it political respectability. Malan, he argued, had “openly accepted the principle of discrimination in relation to Jews legally resident in South Africa.”⁶⁴

Needless to say, Louw’s Bill, “a definitely and unashamedly antisemitic instrument,”⁶⁵ was defeated by 81 votes to 17. Even some Malanites chose to vote against it. Furlong refers to the measure as “unvarnished racial antisemitism”, even more draconian than the Nazis’ Nuremberg Laws of 15 September 1935 in its attempt to define a Jew.⁶⁶ It had been introduced at a time when Hitler had come to be regarded with keener suspicion by the world at large, and a measure which smacked of Nazi ideology received little sympathy from the general public. Yet, for the Jews, it left a bitter taste. Furthermore, as *The Round Table* noted, the Bill won for the Gesuiwerdes support in the rural areas of the country, “where antisemitic feeling [had] become a far from negligible factor.”⁶⁷

⁶³ *The Cape Times*, 27.2.1939 (editorial), newspaper clipping, Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(ii), Box 1934 – December 1942, Folder 30 – January – June 1939.

⁶⁴ J H Hofmeyr, ‘Antisemitism’, *The Forum*, 24.6.1939 (Printed by Messrs Hortors Ltd, Harrison Street Johannesburg, for the Proprietors and Publishers, THE FORUM (Pty) Ltd, Jubilee House, Johannesburg), p. 14. [*The Forum* was an independent, weekly publication, advertised as ‘South Africa’s First National Review’. The inaugural Editorial Council consisted of J.P. Cope (editor), Arnold Miller (Assistant Editor), T.J Haarhof and S H Frankel (Directors and Associate Editors. The archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies houses the series from 1938 to 1942. Copies are also housed in the South African Library, Cape Town.]

⁶⁵ Round Table, *The Round Table*, Volume 29, No.115, April 1939, p.636.

⁶⁶ P J Furlong, ‘Apartheid, Afrikaner Nationalism and the Radical Right: Historical Revisionism in Hermann Giliomee’s *The Afrikaners*, in the *South African Historical Journal*, 49:1, 2003 (UNISA Press, Pretoria), p.217.

⁶⁷ Round Table, *The Round Table*, Volume 29, No.15, April 1939, p.636. [Four months after the defeat of Eric Louw’s Private Bill, agitation from right-wing quarters to place restrictions on the Jews of South Africa continued unabated. This was exemplified in a flyer titled ‘Have We a Jewish Problem?’, arguing that the Jews should not be “considered an inherent section of the South African nation” by virtue of their “origin, religion, traditions and ... philosophy of life”; that legislation was required to curb

The intense nationalist fervour which marked the establishment, early rise and history of the Ossewa Brandwag (Ox-Wagon Sentinel), a populist organisation based on the doctrines of 'Afrikaner – Volkseenheid' (national unity) – is beyond the scope of this study.⁶⁸ It nevertheless requires brief mention within the context of radicalised, extremist Afrikaner nationalism since its establishment took place some months before the *terminus ad quem* of the study, and its leading votaries were by and large also protagonists of the Right and Radical Right of antisemitism in South Africa.⁶⁹

The movement was born out of the Centenary Celebrations of the Great Trek held in December 1938. "It is difficult," declared one of its members,

for people outside the Afrikaans-speaking orbit to appreciate the emotional result of the 1938 Centenary, the 'Symbolic Trek', on the Afrikaner heart. To us it was not a Centenary, but a revelation.⁷⁰

An exclusive Afrikaner nationalism, a deepening national self-consciousness, and a sense of Afrikaner distinctiveness⁷¹ gave rise to an organisation which, by

Jewish predominance in commerce, industry and the professions; and that as the "Jewish race is firmly entrenching itself as employers of the Christian races (*sic*) in the Union...the time has arrived for organised propaganda in support of Christian firms." The flyer, which advertised a meeting of the Junior National Party, to be held in North Paarl on 25 July 1939 and to be addressed by Gesuiwerde MPs, is housed in the E H Louw Collection (P4), 107, 1939.]

⁶⁸ A considerable number of references to the Ossewa Brandwag, including a copy of the organisation's constitution (*Die Ossewabrandwag: Konstitusie* (Nasionale Pers, Beperk, Bloemfontein, nd), consulted as part of this study, appear in the Bibliography of this thesis.

⁶⁹ For a succinct overview of the movement's formation and history, see Juta, *Aspects of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1900-1964*, Chapter X, 'The Action Front: The Ossewabrandwag 1939-1946', pp.235ff. See also the extensive study by C Marx, *Oxwagon Sentinel: Radical Afrikaner Nationalism and the History of the Ossewa Brandwag* (University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2008) – a 2008 translation by Margot Pakendorf Schultz and Sheila Gordon-Schröder of Marx's *Im Zeichen des Ochsenwagens: Der radikale Afrikaaner-Nationalismus in Südafrika und die Geschichte der Ossewabrandwag*, published in 1998 by LIT Verlag, Berlin. See also S Uran, *Afrikaner Fascism and National Socialism in South Africa: 1933-1945*, Chapter VII, Part 1, pp. 282 *et seq.* For a succinct historical perspective of the movement's impact, see A P J Van Rensburg, 'Die Simboliese Ossewatrek van 1938', *Historia*, Volume 17, No. 1 March 1972, UNISA Press, pp. 32-46.

⁷⁰ Ossewa Brandwag, *Some facts about the Ossewa Brandwag, Propaganda Refuted* (Pro-Ecclesia Drukkery (Emds), Beperk, Stellenbosch, 1944), p.7.

⁷¹ For a detailed discussion of the philosophy of the Ossewabrandwag see N G S van der Walt, *Die Republikeinse Strewe: Dryfere Probleme Binne Die Suid-Afrikaanse Politiek, 1902-1961* (D Phil, Postuum, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1968), p.184ff.

November 1940, claimed 200,000 adherents.⁷² Marx describes it as “the biggest mass movement of Afrikaner nationalism”, so strong that it attracted many thousands to its meetings in reasonably small communities like Rustenburg, Springs and Bellville.⁷³ The Ossewa Brandwag was professedly a cultural movement, but because of its powerful influence, soon took on a distinctively political hue.

The movement was established in Bloemfontein in October 1938 shortly before the Centenary Celebrations, by Colonel J C C Laas, with the Reverend C R Kotze as its first Chairman.⁷⁴ Laas was later forced to resign, and Dr J F J (Hans) Van Rensburg assumed the leadership on 10 December 1940, inaugurated as Kommandant-Generaal on 15 January 1941.⁷⁵ The expressed aim of the Ossewa Brandwag was

die bestendinging van die ossewa – gees in Suid-Afrika, die handhawing, die uitbouing en die uitleweng van die traditiesies en beginsels van die Dietse Afrikaner, die beskerming en die bevordering van die Godsdienstig – kulturele en stoflike belange van die Afrikaner, die aankweek van vaderlands – liefde en nasionale trots...⁷⁶

Based on a system of selective membership and planning to establish a Christian-National dictatorship for Afrikaner South Africans, the Ossewa Brandwag strove to rid South Africa of so-called ‘alien’ peoples such as Jews, Greeks and Indians.⁷⁷ Aiming at “die ineenstorting van die demokrasie,”⁷⁸ and the establishment of an all-Afrikaner (“alles wat Afrikaner is”) republic,⁷⁹ the movement

⁷² Vatcher, *White Laager*, p.65. Christopher Marx estimates that the organisation soon numbered 300,000. See C Marx, ‘The Ossewabrandwag as a Mass Movement, 1939-1941’, *Journal of South African Studies*, June 1994, Vol.20, Issue 2 (UNISA Press, Pretoria), p.2.

⁷³ Marx. *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ M Roberts and A E G Trollip, *The South African Opposition*, The South African Opposition (Longmans, Green and Co, Cape Town, 1947), pp.73-74. Vatcher, however, maintains that the Ossewa Brandwag was only established in February 1939. See *White Laager*, p.65. (This may be correct, in view of an article in *Die Volksblad*, 6.2.1939, outlining the aims of the newly established organisation.)

⁷⁵ *Die Volksblad*, 6.2.1939.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* [General translation: The perpetuation of the ox-wagon (i.e. Voortrekker) spirit in South Africa, maintaining, expanding and giving expression to the traditions and principles of the Pan-Dutch Afrikaner, protecting and promoting religious worship (along with) the cultural and material interests of the Afrikaner, the cultivation of love for the fatherland and national pride.]

⁷⁷ See du Toit Malherbe *Afrikaner-Volkseenheid*, a 58-page pamphlet, *passim*.

⁷⁸ Translation: The collapse of democracy.

⁷⁹ J F J Van Rensburg, *Die Ossewa Brandwag*, OB - Uitgewes, Nr 3 Voorinligtingsdien van die Ossewa Brandwag (np, April, 1943), p.1.

had strong Nationalist – Socialist overtones,⁸⁰ its claim to be a non-political organisation but a mere façade.⁸¹ The movement's Nazi character was reflected in the antisemitic tone it adopted, the establishment of 'stormjaer' [storm trooper-like] units, the use of the swastika and eagle as emblems, the obligation of members to swear oaths of allegiance to the leaders, the fact that it too was a uniformed movement, and the pro-German stand it took when the Second World War broke out.⁸² Oswald Pirow referred to its adherents as the "storm-troopers of Afrikanerdom."⁸³ In his memoir, Van Rensburg illustrates clearly the close affinity between the Third Reich and the Ossewa Brandwag.⁸⁴ This was underscored in 1940 in an address by the Reverend J D Vorster, leading member of the organisation in the Cape, to the Afrikaanse Nasionale Studentebond:

Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' shows the way to greatness – the path of South Africa. Hitler gave the Germans a calling... we must follow his example, because only by such holy fanaticism can the Afrikaner nation achieve its calling. The Afrikaner must destroy capitalism. A Republic is practically an accomplished fact... The basis of this Republic will be that the Afrikaner will no longer co-operate with the Englishmen... There will be a new 'Great Trek', but this time it will not consist of Afrikaners but of Jingos and Jews.⁸⁵

As soon as the Second World War broke out in September 1939 and South Africa joined the allied war effort, General Smuts made concerted efforts to crush the Nazi

⁸⁰ Minutes of meetings of the Ossewabrandwag, in the J F Van der Merwe Collection (PV 103), File 1/2/2/1/1, Ossewa Brandwag, 29.6.1939-7.6.1952, provide an insight into the movement's nature and purpose. See also E H Louw Collection (PV 4), File 90, 'Ossewa Brandwag documents'.

⁸¹ R H Kiernan, *General Smuts* (George G Karrap and Co Ltd, London, 1948), p.156.

⁸² Vatcher, *White Laager*, p.66. See also Marx, 'The Ossewabrandwag as a Mass Movement, 1939-1941', *Journal of South African Studies*, June 1994, Vol.20, Issue 2, pp.1-25.

⁸³ *The Rand Daily Mail*, 14.1.1941. See also Marx, 'The Ossewabrandwag as a Mass Movement, 1939-1941', *Journal of South African Studies*, June 1994, Vol.20, Issue 2, pp.1-25.

⁸⁴ H Van Rensburg, *Their Paths Cross Mine*, (CNA, South Africa, 1956), *passim*. For the speeches of Dr J F J (Hans) Van Rensburg, see The J D Jerling Collection (PV 158), File 28, pamphlet titled *Lewenspeskrywing en drie toesprake*. [Lit. 'Life Writings and Three Speeches']. Van Rensburg is denoted in the text as the 'Leier van die Gedissiplineerde Afrikanerdom' [Lit. 'Leader of disciplined Afrikanerdom'.]

⁸⁵ Quoted in Sachs, *The Choice Before South Africa*, p.59. See also Vatcher, *White Laager*, pp.63-64. [J D Vorster, Dutch Reformed Church clergyman, brother of future South African Prime Minister, Balthazar Johannes Vorster (1915 1983), received a prison sentence during the Second World War for conveying information about allied shipping movements to the Germans. The extremism, anti-liberalism and racism of Balthazar Johannes Vorster, who was interned in a detention camp between September 1942 and February 1944 and thereafter placed under restrictions, has been well documented. He became Prime Minister of South Africa in 1966, ending his political career by serving as South Africa's President, 1978-1979. An article by Diana Powell in *The Sunday Times*, 21.4.1974 on the eve of the 24 April 1974 elections carries a headline which reads, 'Vorster denies he was pro-Nazi'.]

enemy from within. Emergency Regulations were issued granting the Government power to deal effectively with the Nazi threat. A march on Johannesburg and Pretoria was suppressed, and Nazi agents, Greyshirts and certain members of the Ossewa Brandwag were detained.⁸⁶

In 1939 the Greyshirts began to withdraw from the political stage, probably because of a decision taken at their Congress in March that individual Greyshirts should join the National Party. During the War, the Shirt movements went underground because their Nazi sentiments did not conform to the anti-Hitlerism of the day.⁸⁷ Notwithstanding the Greyshirts' decision to lie low, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies apparently saw fit to pursue Weichardt and his fellows and 'to expose them'. A flimsy untitled typewritten document, dated 2 July 1940 (by hand) and probably prepared by a Johannesburg-based member of the Board and earmarked for Morris Alexander, clearly illustrates this. Seeking information, the document read in part:

"(1) Louis Weichardt's history – [the] date and place of his birth – [and his] birth certificate, if possible. I believe his name is not Weichardt and that is the name of his stepfather. I understand that he was taken to Germany at an early age where he received a German education and that ultimately he was interned by the German Government and was released on condition that he fought in the German Army. This also applies to his brother Carl.

(2) Similar information with regard to Carl Weichardt. He was convicted in Johannesburg for perjury and failing to keep proper books. If you have the dates of these convictions please let me have them. After these convictions *Die Waarheid* sought to rehabilitate him and in doing so published a defamatory article in respect of which I got the person defamed to take action. *Die Waarheid* paid £100 and costs. If you have it please let me have the relevant copy of *Die Waarheid*. Failing that you might let me have the pleadings which were filed in the Supreme Court of Cape Town during last year: in the case of Franks – v – the Printers of *Die Waarheid*.

⁸⁶ Kraus, *Old Master: The Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, p.348. During the War, approximately 10,000 South African Jews served in the country's armed forces. Hundreds lost their lives; hundreds more were wounded; and many served with distinction and were duly acknowledged for so doing. See South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War II* (Eagle Press Ltd, Johannesburg, 1950), *passim*. Professor J. L. Gray of the Department of Social Studies of Witwatersrand University also makes reference to South African Jews' significant contribution to the county's armed forces during the Second World War. See J L Gray, 'Are We Playing Hitler's Game?' *Common Sense*, May 1942, p.7.

⁸⁷ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Report of the Executive Council, June 1937 – May 1940*, p.26.

- (3) All information with regard to Inch, and particularly the date and nature of his conviction at Grahamstown and also the sentence [i.e. at the Greyshirt Trial, 1934.]
- (4) All similar information with regard to Zuidmeer, who was the Greyshirt leader at Paarl. [His] full name and all information you have with regard to Professor Bohle...
- (5) [The] full name and address and details regarding the conviction [at the Greyshirt Trial, 1934] of Von Moltke, nationality and place of birth.
- (6) Similar details with regard to De Waal Junior, with special reference to the period of publication of *Mij [My] Ontwaking*.
- (7) The names of the various organisations under which the Greyshirts are doing propaganda work.
- (8) The names and details regarding all persons, particularly those of German and Africaander (*sic*) origin, who are associated in any way with the Greyshirt movement.
- (9) All such information as you may think necessary for a comprehensive exposure of these people.
- (10) Similar information is required with regard to Professor Wylie, Professor of Roman-Dutch Law at the Cape Town University.”⁸⁸

A letter to Morris Alexander, dated 11 April 1940 and initialled by Gustav Saron, also indicates that, at the end of the 1930s, Jewish community officials actively attempted to pre-empt what they perceived as the Greyshirt menace. Saron provided information about five people who would possibly furnish information “against W [Weichardt]” in a pending trial in Cape Town. He listed Dr O.M. Gericke, Isak Zuidmeer and Frikkie du Toit, the latter two individuals, as noted elsewhere in this study – ‘storm-troopers’ of Weichardt. He also mentioned a Miss A. Marshall, whom Saron stated had commenced teaching in the Cape Peninsula but whom Alexander, in a marginal hand-written comment, noted was “believed to be [a] Nazi spy, now in Holland.” Saron also listed “a certain Dr Roehnes,” believed to be an engineer who served as “the intermediary between W [Weichardt] and the Cape Town German consulate.”⁸⁹

Despite the Greyshirts’ decision taken at their Congress in March 1939 to reduce their involvement in South African political life, occasional reports appeared that the movement was undergoing reorganisation. Circulars posted in Cape Town in May 1940 invited former members to re-join the organisation and announced the

⁸⁸ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), Jewish Board of Deputies File 4, July, 1939 – July, 1942.

⁸⁹ Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C (i), Jewish Board of Deputies File 4, July, 1939 – July, 1942. G S [Gustav Saron] to M Alexander, 11.4.1940.

proposed publication of a list of non-Jewish professional, commercial and industrial undertakings. “More than ever”, stated one circular, “we wish to impress on all English – and Afrikaans – speaking South Africans ...only to support non-Asiatic undertakings.” Another flyer stressed that the Greyshirts were being organised on a non-party basis and appealed for financial support “for the express purpose of drawing the people’s attention to the Jewish question, which we hold is the direct cause of wars, Bolshevism, economic manipulation, racialism and undermining our faith, culture and traditions.”⁹⁰

While Marcia Gitlin argued that the Greyshirts and their counterparts in other Nazi-based populist groups were generally spurned and derided by the more enlightened elements of South Africa society,⁹¹ and L M Jonck claimed that the Greyshirts were not much of a political force – “het nie juis 'n krag in ons politiek geword nie”⁹² – Professor Edgar Brookes, respected South African historian, political scientist and liberal, expressed a contrary and far more accurate view. He maintained that

although no political party of standing would commit itself officially to an anti-Jewish position, and although educated opinion is not likely to fall into the grosser forms of anti-Jewish prejudice...there is a very considerable underground propaganda at work, which is having on 'the man in the street' a greater influence than is sometimes realised.⁹³

Brookes’ evaluation was accurate. Even if members of the public did not choose to don shirts or to become card-carrying members of the Greyshirts and their counterparts, the evidence of antisemitic activities during the nineteen thirties, essentially in Afrikaner nationalist circles, and the extent to which they occurred is overwhelming. Hermann Buhr Giliomee, leading South African historian and political studies academic, has claimed that the Greyshirts had “but a fleeting impact on the Afrikaner nationalist movement.”⁹⁴ While this may be true in the long term, their impact on the Afrikaner population and on the Afrikaner nationalist movement during

⁹⁰ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *Press Digest*, Press Report 192 [Report from *The Natal Mercury*, 23.5.1940.]

⁹¹ Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing*, p.318.

⁹² L M Jonck, ‘Afrikaner-Republikanisme’, (MA, University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein, 1955), p.82

⁹³ Cited in Gitlin, *The Vision Amazing*, p.318, from an article in *The Vineyard*, a publication of the National Anglican Church.

⁹⁴ Furlong, ‘Apartheid, Afrikaner Nationalism and the Radical Right: Historical Revisionism in Hermann Giliomee’s *The Afrikaners*’, in the *South African Historical Journal*, 49:1, 2003, p.214.

the 1930s was certainly significant. In the context of the present study, there is incontrovertible evidence that Weichardt and his followers – members of the Shirt and other racist movements constituting the Radical Right – were antisemitic. They were Afrikaner extremists, their nationalism fuelled by the National Socialism which they preached openly.⁹⁵ Thousands of articles published in the English-and-Afrikaans language press, hundreds of anti-Jewish meetings, a plethora of literature and the increasingly close links forged between the Shirt movement and both the Purified National Party and the German Nazis attest to the proliferation of antisemitism. Brookes, however, was wrong on one count: Malan's Purified National Party was a political party of standing (as was its successor, the Herenigde Nasionale Party, in the 1940s) and it did adopt an official antisemitic platform some three years prior to the outbreak of the Second World War.⁹⁶

On 11 November 1944, Louis T Weichardt was interned, and was only released in February 1946.⁹⁷ By 1950, the Greyshirt movement had lapsed into obscurity, and most of the remaining members, at a request made by Weichardt after the 1948 elections, joined the National Party, which had assumed power in May of that year.⁹⁸ Sixteen years later, however, an article appeared in *The Sunday Times* reporting that former Greyshirts had established a secret organisation styled 'Die Nuwe Wag' ('The New Guard'),⁹⁹ an offshoot of the 'Ruiterwag' ('Rider Guard'), a clandestine pro-Afrikaner and anti-Communist organisation which was disbanded in 1968.¹⁰⁰ According to the article, it advocated an ideology based on National Socialism and fascism, and was strongly antisemitic. Weichardt was not a member and was

⁹⁵ See World Conference of Christians and Jews (held at Oxford, July 1946), *Memorandum Submitted on Behalf of the South African Delegates on Problems Arising from the Inroads of Nazism on Contemporary Thought and Practice in South Africa*, 27 June, 1946, p.7.

⁹⁶ The adoption by the Gesuiwerdes of an official antisemitic policy is discussed earlier in this study.

⁹⁷ *The Cape Times*, 12.2.1946. [There were certainly active members of the Greyshirt movement in 1946. The writer has in his possession a Membership Card ('Lidmaatskaart') of the Suid Afrikaanse Nasionaal Sosialistiese Bond (Greyshemde) No.14342, issued from the movement's Cape Town headquarters to 'Mr J.C. Browning of 64 Braemar Crt., Goldrush Str., Hillbrow, Johannesburg', dated 13.2.1946 and signed by Theo Huize on behalf of the 'Hoofsekreteraris'.]

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.5.1950. [On 17 March 1947 the Greyshirts were re-formed and assumed a new nomenclature – the Blanke Werkersparty (White Workers' Party). See P H Coetzee, *Partypolitiek In Suid-Afrika Sedert 1910: 'n Historiese Staatsfilosofiese Studie* (MA, University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein, 1952), pp.82-83.]

⁹⁹ *The Sunday Times*, 14.7.1968. [At about the same time, a series of antisemitic *Boomerang* publications, enjoying free circulation, were produced. There is no evidence that these publications were produced by former Greyshirts.]

¹⁰⁰ *Dagbreek en Landstem*, 12.5.1968; *The Sunday Times*, 12.5.1968.

apparently regarded with disdain by some of the group leaders who had once served under him because, by joining with Malan and the National Party, he had given tacit approval to democratic institutions. With Dr Malan as undisputed leader of the National Party and Prime Minister of South Africa from May 1948, and Louis T Weichardt serving as a National Party member of the Senate, the men who had stood during the years before the outbreak of World War Two at the forefront of the Afrikaner nationalist Right and Radical Right had joined forces. Malan was to implement and formalise South Africa's authoritarian and racist Apartheid system, while Weichardt, in his capacity as a Nationalist Senator, was to join with his fellow Nationalists and endorse Malan's policies.

CHAPTER ELEVENREFLECTIONS: DR D F MALAN AND THE MALANITES

Mainstream Afrikaner nationalists, unlike the Greyshirts, never formally adopted the doctrines of National Socialism of the Radical Right as part of their political ideology. Yet they “experimented with [those] ideas and certainly accepted the antisemitic assumptions attendant upon them.”¹ This was certainly true of H F Verwoerd, Eric Louw, Oswald Pirow, and for a large number of other followers of Dr Malan, among them influential Malanite leaders. Consequently, the lines of demarcation between the Radical Right and the Right were sometimes blurred.

Among the Afrikaner nationalist leadership, whom Vatcher deems to have been hardline antisemites (for Vatcher, Afrikanerdom and antisemitism appear to be synonymous) there were future cabinet ministers, prime ministers and a state president.² Some of these leaders, like Pirow, who had met Hitler in 1933 and again in 1938 and who established the pro-fascist Nuwe Orde (New Order) organisation in 1940³ shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War, nevertheless invariably defended themselves against the charge of Nazism.⁴ In September 1938, for example, Pirow stated in Parliament that he was neither pro-Nazi nor anti-Nazi.⁵

¹ Shimoni, ‘The Jewish Community And The Zionist Movement In South African Society (1910-1948)’, p.414.

² Vatcher, *White Laager*, p.61.

³ The nature and activities of the Nuwe Orde, which operated as a group within the Herenigde Nasionale Party - the opposition party established by Hertzog and Malan after Hertzog lost the prime ministership in September 1939 - falls beyond the *terminus ad quem* of the present thesis.

⁴ See Chapter 6 of this study in which the *Herrenvolk* philosophy – the doctrine of racial superiority – is discussed with respect to the votaries of Afrikaner nationalism; see also Professor Arthur Keppel-Jones’ comment recorded in that chapter in which he claims that the *Herrenvolk* doctrine was ingrained in the psyche of leading Afrikaners.

⁵ See J G Strydom Collection, (A2), Box 146, Item 266, typescript. Item titled ‘Pirow – Demokraat: Pirow se Verklaring op 7/9/38 (*Hansard*: Kolom 2349). “Ek is nie Pro-Nazi nie- en nie Anti-Nazi nie – ten emale ten gunste van ons Demokratiese stelsel en ek maak (my) nie warm nie oor wat in ander lande gebeur nie. Laat ek dit sê: Daar is seker dinge wat ons in die Nazi-leer kan bewonder – net soos daar is seker dinge in die Kommunistiese leer is wat ons kan aanneem.” [Pirow – Democrat: Pirow’s Statement on 7/9/1938 (*Hansard* Column 2349). I am not Pro-Nazi – and not Anti-Nazi – I am entirely in favour of a Democratic system and I do not get upset over what happens in other countries. Let me say this: There are certain things which we can admire in the Nazi doctrine – just as there are certain things in the Communist doctrine which we can adopt.]

This simply belies the truth.⁶ Furthermore, his policy of classifying South African Jewry into three classes or groups as a solution to the country's so-called Jewish Problem, smacked of antisemitism. He argued that under his New Order, a small group of Jews who had assimilated with the Afrikaners should receive full South African citizenship provided that they fulfilled requirements which he would then specify, among them appearance before a competent court to prove they had assimilated completely with the Afrikaner population. A second group – those Jews who had arrived in South Africa before the First World War, who were born in the country or who had lived in South Africa in the Boer Republics prior to the Anglo-Boer War - would not be entitled to citizenship, remaining aliens with the rights of residence subject to their good behaviour. Their right to trade or to pursue a profession would be subject to an occupational quota. Jews who had entered the country after 4 August 1914, the date on which the British Empire declared war on Germany, together with their children who may have been born in South Africa, would be regarded as 'forbidden immigrants' without citizenship rights. The right of residence and the right to pursue a trade or profession would be subject to the decision of a special court.⁷

Juta averred that in the National Party hierarchy there was no dearth of supporters of Hitler. "Antisemitism thrived in many places," he wrote, and "Hitler's criticism of British democracy tasted like nectar to his followers in the Union." He added, somewhat hyperbolically, that "almost every Nationalist leader during World War Two saw himself as the South African Führer. Some even adopted the title 'Hoofleier' or 'Die Leier'." ⁸ While one can discount such hyperbole, one cannot dismiss lightly the views of a seasoned historian like Giliomee who maintains that the antisemitism of Afrikaner nationalists in the late 1930s was no worse than earlier antisemitic predilections which existed in the Afrikaner nationalist camp, or that nationalist leaders like Verwoerd only embraced 'traditional rural economic

⁶ Oswald Pirow's extremist nationalist views, his Nazi predilections and his antipathy for the Jews are treated elsewhere in this study. See especially Chapter 6. For details of the Nuwe Orde, see Uran, 'Afrikaner Fascism and National Socialism in South Africa', pp. 348 *et seq.*

⁷ See *The Zionist Record*, 20.9.1946 which quotes from the first issue of Oswald Pirow's publication, *Die Nuwe Orde*.

⁸ Juta, 'Aspects of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1900-1964', p.301. ['Hoofleier' – Chief Leader; 'Die Leier' – the Leader.]

antisemitism' temporarily.⁹ These views have little substance. It is acknowledged that by the 1930s hostility towards the Jews was based in part on economic considerations, yet the fact remains that this hostility was not simply triggered by economic factors but was rooted in the Afrikaners' ideology of race, Calvinist theology and nationalism - "primarily ... product(s) of exclusivist or 'Volkish' ideas."¹⁰ By the same token, it is facile to accept Saron's simplistic conclusion that "the emergence of active antisemitism" was merely the sign of a period of crisis occasioned by "political, ideological, and spiritual turmoil" which coincided with "the years during which Nazism flourished".¹¹

Dr Malan stood at the forefront of the antisemitism which unfolded in South Africa during the period encompassed by this study. W K Hancock, Smuts' biographer, maintained that "Malan was not personally antisemitic, but politically he drew profit from antisemitism."¹² It is certainly true that Malan was a political pragmatist and an opportunist, but to dismiss his antisemitism on such grounds is facile. Edna Bradlow was also generous in her portrayal of Malan. She held that Malan apparently resorted to racism simply "to deflect political support from the 'Shirt' movements so that the [Purified] National Party could be the chief representative of the *Volk*", for which reason such prejudice was widespread among Afrikaners.¹³ There is little evidence, if any, to support this view.

Unlike Smuts, who attempted to build a South African nation, Dr Malan and his fellows, according to Juta, intended to build a separate Afrikaner nation,¹⁴ certainly before Malan assumed the Prime Ministership in 1948. His pronouncements, proposed legislation and political policies, irrespective of the influence of Nazism, were both antisemitic and racist, undoubtedly underscored by a deep commitment to Calvinism, the Dutch Reformed Church and the biological theories of racial

⁹ Furlong, 'Apartheid, Afrikaner Nationalism and the Radical Right: Historical Revisionism in Hermann Giliomee's *The Afrikaners*', in the *South African Historical Journal*, 49:1, 2003, p.216. See also Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp.417-418.

¹⁰ Shain, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa*, p.145. [Shain demonstrates clearly that economic issues formed part of antisemitic rhetoric long before the 1930s and notes that it was sustained despite an upswing in the country's economy.]

¹¹ Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.382.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.290.

¹³ Bradlow, 'Anti-Semitism in the 1930s: Germany and South Africa', *Historia*, 2 November 2004, pp.56-57.

¹⁴ Juta, 'Aspects of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1900-1964', p.27.

superiority which underscored the ideology of Christian Nationalism. His attitude towards the Jews, clearly evident in the years which preceded the inroads of Nazism into South Africa, was also predicated on the belief in the divine right to be Afrikaners – that Afrikanerdom, as noted earlier, was not the work of man but a creation of God and thus the highest work of art of the Architect of the centuries.¹⁵ It was noted, too, that Malan acknowledged that the Radical Right had done yeoman's service to South Africa by alerting the country to the so-called Jewish threat, but that he believed there could be no cooperation between the Purified Nationalists and the Greyshirts owing to his opposition to totalitarianism and "to the importation of foreign ideologies to South Africa."¹⁶ This, however, does not exonerate him from the charge of antisemitism. It is true, as Juta notes, that "an impartial reading of Malan's pre-war, war time and post-war speeches makes one come to the conclusion that he was not a Nazi as has been alleged, but many of his followers were."¹⁷ Juta adds, however, that "it is significant ... that the leading National Socialists in South Africa were also nationalists who joined the National Party after the war."¹⁸

On 7 December 1943, Dr A H Jonker, editor of *Die Suidersstem*, leading figure in Afrikaans cultural life and a Member of Parliament delivered an address on the occasion of the Jewish day of mourning for the victims of Nazism. In his address, titled 'The Nazi Within', Jonker argued that it is difficult to separate antisemitism from Nazism:

It is wholly impossible to be an antisemite and an anti-Nazi at the same time, because antisemitism is the seed from which the whole Nazi doctrine of race superiority grew, and the root which sustains its growth and endurance to this very day... Today it is impossible to divorce the Nazi doctrine from the seed of its beginning, the soil in which it grows, the poison from which it sucks and regenerates its venom – namely, antisemitism.¹⁹

¹⁵ See Chapter 6 of this study.

¹⁶ Korf, 'D F Malan: A Political Biography', p.362. Korf, who in the abstract to her 2010 doctoral dissertation states that Malan's racist policies were "fluid", makes scant mention of the Jews other than in the context of Malan's relationship with Weichardt, See pp. 359 -362.

¹⁷ Juta, 'Aspects of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1900-1964', p. 295.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

¹⁹ A H Jonker Collection (PV 42), File 24, 'The Nazi Within', pp.6-7. [Jonker subsequently published an Afrikaans version of his address: A H Jonker, *Die Nazi Binne Ons: 'n Boodskap aan sy mede-Suid-Afrikaners onlangs uitgesaai in Afrikaans en Engels* (Uitgegee deur die skrywer en gedruk deur Unie-Volkspers, Beperk, Kaapstad, c.1943-1944).

Jonker's observation was certainly applicable to the extreme Right and to many leading Afrikaner nationalists and their followers. It was nevertheless not true of others. Dr Malan, for example, eschewed Nazi ideology *per se*, yet embraced antisemitism.

While Malan was not a Nazi, there were those, however, who concluded that he was sympathetic to Nazi ideology. In an article titled 'Dr Malan's Daring Defence of Nazism' by 'A Student of Politics', the writer states, albeit with some degree of exaggeration, that Malan

stands revealed as the willing dupe of the ceaseless Nazi propaganda... conducted for some years in the Union... In Dr Malan's utterances we see how great has been the influence of Nazi propaganda in this country on warped and biased minds... Dr Malan's defence of Nazism throws a fierce light on the moral weakness of his position. It seems almost unbelievable that an intelligent man, an ex-Minister of Religion, should dare to vouch for Hitler's Christian principles

The writer then quotes leading South African mining magnate, financier and sometime politician Sir Abraham ('Abe') Bailey (1864-1940) who claimed that, in Malan's eyes, Hitler was almost a Christian hero.²⁰ Such conclusions, while often sensationalist and inaccurate, were not uncommon. For example, an article titled 'One Aim, One Outlook, Three Führers! Nazi Models and South African Imitations' by 'A Political Observer,' is scathing in its attack on Malan, *inter alios*:

Malan has acquired a full mastery of the Nazi phraseology and rhetorical technique. The linking-up of everything he wishes to combat into one phrase is Hitler at his best.²¹

There are writers like Dr Korf who gloss over Malan's anti-Jewish agitation. In her doctoral dissertation on Dr Malan, Korf only makes brief mention of anti-Jewish manifestations in South Africa during the *inter bellum* period, and exonerates Malan from the charge of antisemitism. She argues, for example, that Malan perceived the Greyshirts to be a German-inspired organisation, and "nothing more than a copy of

²⁰ *The Cape Argus*, 25.10.1939.

²¹ A Student of Politics [anon], *Common Sense – Journal to Promote Goodwill*, September 1941 (South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg), p.14.

Hitler's National-Socialist Party.”²² This perception is as simplistic as her conclusions that “Malan's views on the Jews were...fluid”²³ and that his “brief spell of antisemitism” was simply political opportunism. These views belie the facts. Neither did he dismiss the Greyshirts out of hand as simply a “copy” of Hitler's Nazism; nor was his antisemitism merely a “brief spell.” While it may indeed have involved political opportunism, it was much more.

Historian Dunbar Moodie also makes light of Malan's antisemitism. He quotes from Malan's speech in Parliament delivered on 16 June 1936, during which he said that “all who are white” deserve to stand on an equal footing, including the Jews.²⁴ Based on this statement, seemingly, Moodie concludes that “the upsurge of antisemitism was a definite source of embarrassment to Dr Malan.”²⁵ He also implies that antisemitism in South Africa only really emerged in the late 1930s “from grassroots pressure rather than from the initiative by the [National Party] leaders,”²⁶ and defends Malan by claiming that he and his colleagues in the Cape had offered strong opposition to the ban on Party membership imposed on Jews by the Transvaal branch of the Party²⁷ while the Cape branch never denied membership to Jews. Moodie's views are fanciful, and akin to his conclusion that antisemitism was a much muted theme in the 1938 General Elections.²⁸

South African author Alan Paton was far closer to the mark. In a reference to the 1930s, he wrote:

It was an ugly time for Jews. South Africa had always seemed to them a haven in a cruel world, but now they could not be sure. Every new arrival of the Jewish immigrants, fleeing from Europe while there was yet time, added fuel to the antisemitic flames, which were assiduously fanned by Malan and his Purified Nationalists.²⁹

²² Korf, ‘D F Malan: A Political Biography’, p.360.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.359.

²⁴ Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, p.166.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.65.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.167.

²⁷ *Ibid.* [There does not appear to be evidence in the literature reviewed for this study to support Moodie's argument that Malan and the National Party branch in the Cape offered strong opposition to the Transvaal Party's ban on Jewish membership. Moodie merely quotes a newspaper article by C W M Toit, published in *Die Vaderland* 10.10.1937, to support his comment.]

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.168.

²⁹ Paton, *Apartheid and the Archbishop*, p.83. [Paton added that many Nationalists admired Hitler, and many of them also sympathised with Hitler's hatred of the Jews.]

There is no gainsaying that Dr Malan's antisemitism was informed to some degree by his membership of and ideological commitment to the Broederbond,³⁰ a powerful, flourishing and influential secret racist and quasi-religious organisation established in 1918 as the Jong Zuid Afrika [Young South Africa]. Formalised as the Broederbond in 1920, the exclusively male organisation, based on Calvinist principles, consisted of hard-line nationalist Afrikaner extremists, among them leading members of the Right such as J G Strydom, Dr N J van der Merwe, C R Swart, H F Verwoerd, T E Dönges, Eric Louw and Malan.³¹ The Broederbond (a Bond of Brothers) "was born out of the deep conviction that the Afrikaner nation had been planted in [South Africa] by the Hand of God destined to survive as a separate people with its own calling."³²

Writing in 1966, Juta described the organisation as rigid and unbending,³³ claiming that it had become "the brain centre of ...organised Afrikaner nationalism."³⁴ Almost every South African Prime Minister, until the collapse of the Apartheid regime in 1994, was a member of the Broederbond. Hertzog and Smuts were notable exceptions. According to Smuts, the Broederbond was "a sinister secret society whose ambition it was to rule South Africa"³⁵ He saw the Broederbond and the Purified Nationalists as "two opposite sides of the same coin: the Broederbond was the party in action underground; the [National] party was the Broederbond pursuing its aims in public."³⁶ In Hertzog's view,³⁷ Malan and his "lieutenants" were "super-nationalists" who,

³⁰ See Le Roux, 'Die 'Gesuiwerde' Nasionale Party, 1935-1940', p.54.

³¹ For discussion of the close relationship between the Purified National Party and the Broederbond, see Le Roux, *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56; p.151 *et seq.*

³² Statement by the Broederbond chairman and secretary, and cited from *Die Transvaler*, 14.12.1944, by D O'Meara, 'The Afrikaner Broederbond 1927 - 1948: Class Vanguard of Afrikaner Nationalism', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 3, 2, 1977 (online publication by Taylor & Francis consulted), p.170. [Attributed to the General Secretary of the Broederbond, the statement also appears in *World Conference of Christians and Jews (held at Oxford, July 1946): Memorandum Submitted on Behalf of the South African Delegates on Problems Arising from the Inroads of Nazism on Contemporary Thought and Practice in South Africa, 27 June, 1946*, p.13.] For a comprehensive study of the Broederbond, see C Bloomberg, *Christian Nationalism and the Rise of the Afrikaner Broederbond in South Africa, 1918-1948* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1989).

³³ Juta, 'Aspects of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1900-1964', p. 27.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁵ Hancock, *Smuts: The Field of Force, 1919 -1950*, pp. 287-288.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.288.

³⁷ See report and analysis of Herzog's well-documented Smithfield address of 6 November 1935 in which he attacked the Broederbond, and Malan in particular, in I Wilkins and H Strydom, *The Broederbond* (Paddington Press Ltd, New York and London, 1979), pp. 53 – 60; see also W A De Klerk, *The Puritans in Africa* (Rex Collings, London, 1975), p. 114; *The Natal Mercury*, 8.11.1935 (Hertzog's address is quoted here in full); and *The Star*, 7.11.1935.

during the 1930s, had politicised a hitherto cultural organisation: for them the ultimate destiny of Afrikanerdom was the complete domination of South Africa by the Afrikaner people under the policy of *Baasskap*. Hertzog held that there was “no doubt ... that the secret Broederbond is nothing less than the Malan-led Purified National Party busy working secretly underground and that the Purified National Party is nothing but the secret Afrikaner Broederbond which conducts its activities on the surface between the two.”³⁸ Juta argued that this was indeed the case, and noted that the Purified Nationalists never denied the assertion.³⁹

By early 1939, in the wake of the intense patriotic fervour which followed the Great Trek Centenary Celebrations of December 1938, Malan - “riding the crest of a great Afrikaner wave”⁴⁰ and having expressed his support for Eric Louw’s ‘Aliens (Amendment) and Immigration Bill’⁴¹ – had continued to sustain his invective against South African Jewry. The Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies’ minutes record an address delivered by Malan on 6 November 1939 in which he referred to “the Jewish problem which hangs like a dark cloud over South Africa.” The minutes also record Malan as stating that behind “organised” South African Jewry stands organised world Jewry. The Jews, he is reported to have said, had “robbed the [South African] population of its heritage” so that “the Afrikaner resides in the land of his fathers, but no longer possesses it.”⁴²

Malan had shown his anti-Jewish colours far too frequently. Even after the outbreak of war, speaking in the House of Assembly, he said that the Jews “in no sense can be regarded as part of the permanent population of South Africa.” They have “remained unassimilated, and ... will remain so in South Africa.”⁴³ During a speech on the war issue he was reported to have said, that “ons verwerp die Brits-Joodse

³⁸ *The Natal Mercury*, 8.11.1935. [*Baasskap* - ‘boss-ship’ - is loosely defined as the whites’ domination of the non-whites.]

³⁹ Juta, ‘Aspects of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1900-1964’, p.57.

⁴⁰ Hancock, *Smuts, Fields of Force, 1919-1950*, p. 296.

⁴¹ See Chapter 11 of this study.

⁴² *Minutes of Meeting of the Cape Committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies*, 12 November 1939. William Henry Vatcher cites an article from *Die Volksblad*, 11.7.1939, in which Dr Malan was reported to have expressed these sentiments in a speech delivered in Bloemfontein, the heart of Afrikanerdom, on 10 July 1939. See Vatcher, *White Laager*, p.61.

⁴³ See Rubin, ‘Afrikaner Nationalism and the Jews’, *Africa South*, April – June 1957, p.29.

demokrasie,”⁴⁴ while during an address delivered in Stellenbosch on 24 March 1941, recorded in *Die Burger* on the following day, he “demanded the liberation of the country from ‘unafrikaner’ (i.e. Jewish) influence.”⁴⁵ In 1944, notwithstanding the fate of European Jewry, Malan levelled an invective against the Jews. Speaking in Parliament on 29 February, he said:

[Jews] are loyal to the country in which they reside so long as things go well, but they shake the country’s dust off their feet as soon as things do not go well; then they make a fresh start in some other country, and there they are again just as loyal until things go wrong.⁴⁶

Seven months before he became Prime Minister at the end of May 1948, Malan was interviewed extensively by *Die Burger* about his attitude and that of the National Party to the Jews. Asked to respond to the accusation that the National Party was anti-Jewish, Malan replied that there were indeed those within the Party who were anti-Jewish, but added that the charge of antisemitism could equally be levelled at Smuts’ ruling United Party, accusing the latter of “underground anti-Jewishness.” He held, however, that the National Party as such was not anti-Jewish, overlooking the fact, conveniently or otherwise, that the ban on Jewish membership instituted by the Transvaal branch of the Party several years previously was still in place. Malan argued that neither antipathy nor hate were the motivating factors in the National Party’s approach to the Jews but rather “national problems that link up with our [country’s] race relations” which, in the nation’s interests, require resolution. Asked to explain why he believed there was a Jewish problem, Malan responded:

I am tempted to ask whether there could still be anyone today who doubts the existence of that problem. The whole international world is in daily commotion because of it, and looks for a solution, both as individual countries as well as collectively. The fact is that the Jewish people have no National Home and as soon as their numbers in any country exceed a certain percentage of the population, it creates a race problem there. Antisemitism is the inevitable result. This fact, however much it may be deplored, is generally acknowledged...In South Africa we reached that limit already a considerable time ago, and our older generation that remembers the friendly relations of

⁴⁴ [Translation: We reject the British-Jewish democracy.] *Herenigde Nasionale Party, Eenheid, Vryheid en Reg!*, c.1941, p.6. See also Vatcher, who quotes in some detail Malan’s anti-Jewish pronouncements on the eve of the Second World War, in *White Laager*, p.61.

⁴⁵ See Hagemann, *Antisemitism in South Africa During World War II*, p.275.

⁴⁶ Cited in Rubin, ‘Afrikaner Nationalism and the Jews’, *Africa South*, April - June 1957, p.29.

earlier days, observes very clearly the difference. We have in South Africa enough race problems indeed and the National Party feels that it would be a faint-hearted neglect of our duty towards our country and posterity if we were to allow another [problem] to be added...I stand for putting a stop to further Jewish immigration... [and] if further Jewish immigration must be stopped, it ...can happen without putting an offensive stigma on the Jewish race as a race.

Malan went on to say that while the National Party was not contemplating “internal discrimination” against the Jews of South Africa, he “openly warned that if the influx of Jews was not stopped in time...internal protective measures would become irresistible.” He added, in response to a question about “the common opinion” that the Jews as a community tended to exploit other sections of the population ⁴⁷ – a view which Malan said was substantially justified – that his Party planned “to eliminate parasitism from our economic life” and to ensure that Afrikaners would secure their “rightful portion” in commerce and other fields. With respect to the forthcoming General Elections in May 1948, Malan said he would welcome the Jews’ support, while accepting that it may not be forthcoming to any degree. However, he issued a veiled warning, maintaining that if the Jews’ “chosen leaders are going to call up the Jews as Jews...to fight the National Party, this certainly will not be the best way to further their interests as a race. The Jews today need friends and not political enemies.” ⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Antisemitism was manifest principally among the Afrikaans-speaking section of the population. In a survey by S N Herman, *Report of a Survey on Antisemitism in South Africa*, conducted under the auspices of the Psychology Department of the University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg, 1944), it appears that anti-Jewish feeling among the English-speaking section of the South African community was very limited and, primarily, took the form of social discrimination against the Jews. [See also S N Herman, *The Reaction of Jews to Anti-Semitism: A Social Psychological Study Based Upon Attitudes of a Group of South African Jewish Students* (Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1945).]

⁴⁸ South African Jewish Board of Deputies, covering note titled ‘General Matters’, from the Secretary, Cape Town, to the General Secretary, Johannesburg, 30 October 1947, File I.C.C. No. C.4640 – ‘National Party and the Jews’. Citations (*supra*) are from translations of the article in *Die Burger*, 30.10.1947, ‘National Party’s Attitude Towards Jews. Policy Explained By Dr Malan’. The article is attached to the covering note. The file also contains an almost exact translation of the self-same article which appeared in *Die Transvaler* of even date under the heading, ‘Dr Malan And The Jewish Problem.’ A front page report of the interview - a verbatim translation – appeared in *The Cape Times*, 30.10.1947, under the heading, ‘Nationalist Party Not Antisemitic: Malan’.[It can be assumed that the interview was pre-planned by Dr Malan in the lead-up to the 1948 general elections, since the articles in both newspapers appeared, with detailed quotations by Dr Malan from parliamentary speeches which he no doubt had to hand during the interview, on the self-same day in the leading Cape and Transvaal Afrikaans newspapers (*Die Burger* and *Die Transvaler*), both of which staunchly supported the National Party.]

Malan had made these comments in October 1947, seven months before the National Party's victory in the 1948 elections. These views were clearly anti-Jewish, reflecting sentiments which had long characterised his antisemitic rhetoric. It is instructive, however, that, given his pragmatism, once he was firmly in power as Prime Minister of a National Party government, Malan no longer pursued a policy of antisemitism. In a carefully formulated policy on the eve of the May 1948 general elections, he stated that while his Party still adhered to the view that there should be no more Jewish immigration into South Africa, Jews would be permitted entry into the country for "the religious and cultural needs of the community,"⁴⁹ a rather nebulous statement. Once secure in his position as Prime Minister, he reaffirmed this policy but added tellingly that he "looked forward to the time when there would be no further talk regarding the so called Jewish Question in the life and politics of this country." Malan thus began to inaugurate "a gradual process of rapprochement between newly empowered Afrikaner political and intellectual circles and the Jewish community."⁵⁰ When the State of Israel became a reality on 14 May 1948, one of the first acts of the Malan Government was to accord the fledgling Jewish state *de jure* recognition.⁵¹ Dr Malan undertook an official visit to Israel in 1953, and was the first head of a foreign government to do so.⁵²

In his study of Jews in Apartheid South Africa, Shimoni notes that, as South Africa's first Apartheid Prime Minister, Malan's primary concern was "to get the country back for the Afrikaner *volk*."⁵³ To do so, he undoubtedly needed to gain as much support as possible from all sections of the white electorate, including Jewish voters, and no longer needed to invoke antisemitism to garner support from sections of the Afrikaans-speaking population. Gilbert noted that after the 1948 victory of the National Party, Afrikaner antisemitism "abated almost immediately after the new government took office," dissipating "in the wake of a new push for unity among 'Europeans'."⁵⁴ Local political considerations certainly played a part in Malan's change of views with respect to the Jewish community. So too did the general

⁴⁹ Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, pp.386.

⁵⁰ Shimoni, *Community and Conscience*, p. 22.

⁵¹ Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p. 387.

⁵² Shimoni, *Community and Conscience*, p.25.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵⁴ Gilbert, 'Jews and the Racial State: Legacies of the Holocaust in Apartheid South Africa, 1945-1960', *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 16, Number 3, Spring/Summer 2010 (New Series), p.46.

acknowledgement that after May 1948 the question of Jewish immigration to South Africa had been resolved with the establishment of a Jewish state in Israel. For the Jews of South Africa it was perhaps serendipitous that Malan's ascent to the prime ministership occurred within less than a fortnight after Israel gained independence. "Fortune", notes Shimoni,

had provided Dr Malan with a unique opportunity to prove his goodwill to the Jews, for he had come to power at a point in time almost exactly convergent with the establishment of the State of Israel. He knew only too well that the overriding concern of the South African Jewish community was to help the embattled new state... [Furthermore], the revision of his former views appears to have been mediated by a genuine admiration for the courage and achievements of the young State of Israel.⁵⁵

Jewish historian Howard Sachar contends that as Prime Minister, Malan embarked on his Apartheid agenda, no longer discerning a need gratuitously to alienate the Jews, a powerful middle-class element, particularly in 'white' Johannesburg. Thus, in discussions with the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Malan emphasised that he was uninterested in any further talk about the "so-called Jewish question." Immensely relieved, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies was prepared to meet the government more than halfway. Even as the Nationalists muted antisemitism as an issue in public life, argues Sachar, Jewish spokesmen learned to remain silent on the government's emerging program of discrimination against non-white races.⁵⁶

In May 1949, a year after the National Party assumed government, Gustav Saron presented a paper at the biennial congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in which he not only remarked that there is no "royal road" for integration in South Africa, but that "the Jewish community dare not and must not be integrated with only *one (sic)* of the two European cultures." The Jewish community, he said, should take cognisance of the "trend...towards the increase of the Afrikaans-speaking section of the community" and thus ensure integration into "a

⁵⁵ Shimoni, *Community and Conscience*, pp.23; 25.

⁵⁶ H M Sachar, *A History of the Jews in the Modern World*, (Alfred A Knopp, New York, 2005), pp.664-665.

bilingual society...without any reference to party politics.”⁵⁷ The tone of appeasement implicit in Saron’s statement – with Malan and the National Party now in government, and the absence of any reference to a relationship with the non-white community – is instructive. The Jewish community, as noted, had never associated the racism to which the Jews were subjected with acts of discrimination against the non-whites, and continued to make ethical compromises as a precondition for social acceptance.

Writing in 1956, Edwin (‘Ned’) Stanton Munger reported that Dr Malan’s name had recently been inscribed by South Africa’s Jewish leadership in the Jewish National Fund’s ‘Golden Book of Israel’ with an inscription in Afrikaans which translated, read: “To Dr Daniel François Malan, Prime Minister of the Union from July 1948, to November 1954, inscribed by South African Jewish friends and admirers of Dr Malan.” He was also presented with a silver plate engraved with the words: “To a great Afrikaner, promoter of good relations between Jews and Afrikaners, and a true friend of the land of the prophets.”⁵⁸ Given Malan’s antisemitic record, this sycophantism from a Jewish community that prior to 1948, and certainly during the 1930s, waged a well-orchestrated battle against the forces of antisemitism, reflects a radical change in the attitude of the Jewish leadership towards Malan. In 1955, Dr Malan declared that the Jews could “fruitfully be utilised in the upbuilding of a true and inwardly united South African nation.”⁵⁹ In the same year he wrote that “the amazing adaptability of the Jewish race... makes it possible for them to fit themselves into the national structure of the various countries in which they have to live.”⁶⁰ It is indeed one of the ironies of South African history that Malan, who had stood at the forefront of the antisemitic movement for some two decades, was to offer the hand of friendship to the Jews. He has been correctly described by Furlong as “an experienced professional who...had learned to balance ideological principle

⁵⁷ G Saron, *The Revolution in Jewish Life: An Address at the 17th Biennial Congress of the S.A. Jewish Board of Deputies, May 1949*, (South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg, 1949), p.14.

⁵⁸ E S Munger, ‘*The Jews and the National Party : A Letter from Edwin S Munger, Stellenbosch, South Africa, February 14, 1956*’, *African Field Reports 1952-1961: American Universities Field Staff* (C Struik, Cape Town, 1961).

⁵⁹ *The South African Jewish Chronicle*, 17.6.1955.

⁶⁰ I Abrahams, *The Birth of a Community* (Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, Cape Town, 1955). Foreword by Dr Malan, p.xii.

with a hard-nosed awareness of political reality.”⁶¹ It may be more accurate to argue that, once firmly in power, he was willing to sacrifice, rather than balance, ideological principle on the altar of political pragmatism.

National Party hardliners, however, were less pragmatic. Strydom, Louw and others refused to budge on the Jewish issue for several years. Despite the collapse of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy and despite widespread knowledge of the horrors of the Holocaust, when it came to the Jews, a group of die-hard Afrikaner nationalist leaders remained obdurate, reluctant to extend the hand of friendship.⁶² In 1946, for example, at a time when expressions of antisemitism had become unfashionable, Eric Louw was to write:

If the Jews can manage to find a country of their own anywhere, we shall certainly place no difficulties in their way, provided that country is not too near South Africa.⁶³

It was only in 1951, with a merger between the National Party and the Afrikaner Party of Nicolaas Christiaan Havenga that in an effort to prevent a political schism, Strydom agreed to the removal of the ban on Jewish membership of the Transvaal National Party.⁶⁴ In February 1955, as Dr Malan’s successor to the Prime Ministership, Strydom, the self-same nationalist leader who had stood four-square behind Malan in the 1930s and beyond and who had dubbed the British system of government the “kanker van Britse-Joodse kapitalisme”,⁶⁵ stated in an interview with the Jewish press that Jews were equally entitled to all the privileges of citizenship.

The National Party, which had attained power under Malan, had thus extended the hand of friendship to the Jews, for the present. These developments are significant in the context of the present study because they contrast markedly with the intensity

⁶¹ Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, p.237.

⁶² Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience, 1910-1967*, pp.163-168; also Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, p.207

⁶³ See Bunting, *The Rise of the South Africa Reich*, p.64. According to Giliomee (*The Afrikaners*, p.418), once the National Party gained power in 1948, Louw quickly shed any vestiges of antisemitism.

⁶⁴ Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.387.

⁶⁵ [Translation: ‘The cancer of British-Jewish capitalism’.] Quoted from *Die Burger*, 2.12.1940 by A H Jonker in an undated memoir titled ‘Die Bloedloose Revolusie’ [The Bloodless Revolution], A H Jonker Collection (PV 42), File 24.

of Afrikaner antisemitism which characterised the inter-war period. Several other factors serve to highlight the contrast, over and above the changes in Malan's attitude towards the Jews – his *volte face* - once he held the reins of power. These factors include the urbanisation of the Afrikaners over the previous decade or so and the increasing emergence of an Afrikaner middle class; ⁶⁶ the defeat of the Nazi and fascist forces, once supported by hardline Afrikaner nationalists, which saw an end to the Second World War; and the news about the extermination of European Jews during the Holocaust and the “wilful amnesia” ⁶⁷ about the Nazi period which subsequently engulfed South Africa.

⁶⁶ See R Shaskolsky, 'An Examination of the Factors Leading up to the HNP Victory of 1948' (BA Honours Extended Research Essay, University of Cape Town, 1960), *passim*.

⁶⁷ See Gilbert, 'Jews and the Racial State: Legacies of the Holocaust in Apartheid South Africa, 1945-1960', *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 16, Number 3, Spring/Summer 2010 (New Series), p.32.

CONCLUSION

The primary focus of this study was twofold: to explore the nature of antisemitism which proliferated in South Africa between the two World Wars, specifically the extent to which it was a foreign import, particularly after 1933, and the extent to which it was grounded in Afrikaner nationalism. The dissertation explored a number of key questions bearing on the central argument of the thesis: the affinity of leading Afrikaner nationalists with the fascist ideology of the *Herrenvolk*; the place of Calvinist theology in the anti-Jewish predisposition of the Afrikaner Right and the Radical Right; the function of antisemitism in South Africa during the period under review; the critical role in the politics of antisemitism of Dr D F Malan as a leading member of the government and, later, as leader of the Purified National Party opposition; the response of the Jewish leadership to racism directed not only at the Jewish community but towards the country's non-white population; opposition to antisemitism from the Afrikaner ranks; and the increasing intensity of antisemitism in South Africa in the years prior to the advent of Nazism.

South African antisemitism during the *inter bellum* period lay squarely with the Afrikaner nationalists, especially after 1930, its roots firmly embedded in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. This perception, in large measure, serves as a point of departure for the present study.¹ One can accept Hofmeyr's comment, made in 1945, that "it is with the seeds of Nazi propaganda that antisemitism took on a particularly aggressive form."² One can also acknowledge that the National Socialists found fertile soil in South Africa, "transforming the nature and magnitude"³ of antisemitic agitation. Yet the archetypal stereotypes of the Jews which have characterised prejudice against the Jews over centuries, already embedded in South Africa, had become increasingly manifest after the mining boom during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The alleged involvement of migrant Jews in the 1922 upheavals on the Witwatersrand, the anxiety over increased Jewish migration

¹ See the introductory chapter to this study

² J H Hofmeyr, *Christian Principles and Race Problems: Hoernlé Memorial Lecture 1945*, p.18. See also *World Conference of Christians and Jews held at Oxford: Memorandum Submitted on Behalf of the South African Delegates on Problems Arising from the Inroads of Nazism on Contemporary Thought and Practice, 27th June, 1946*, p.18.

³ Shain, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa*, p.142.

in the 1920s, the effects of the economic depression which followed the Wall Street crash in October 1929 and other factors discussed in detail in the earlier chapters of this study led to increasingly open manifestations of antisemitism several years before Nazism made inroads into South Africa. A significant contribution of this study has been to demonstrate that right-wing and die-hard Afrikaner nationalists had no need to appropriate National Socialism in order to give expression to antisemitism.

The pivotal role of Dr Malan in the programmatic antisemitism which unfolded in South Africa in the decade or more prior to the outbreak of the Second World War is not reflected, to any degree, in historical works hitherto published. Yet, as this study has served to demonstrate, Malan was a central figure in the anti-Jewish agitation in South Africa. It was Malan who masterminded the 1930 Quota Act which purposely and effectively curbed Jewish immigration to South Africa from Eastern Europe and Palestine three years before Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. The present study makes this manifestly clear, demonstrating from documentation housed in the D F Malan Collection that the 1930 Quota Act to restrict Jewish immigration was carefully planned by Malan, the then-Minister for Immigration, in the strictest confidence as early as November 1929, contrary to beliefs held by some scholars that the decision to introduce the legislation was a sudden one, prompted by the failure of the Nationalists to win the Bethal by-election held eleven days prior to the introduction of the Bill. This study also demonstrates that Malan's interview with *Die Burger* in November 1931 was not simply an isolated outburst against the Jews; rather, it fuelled an already increasing groundswell of antisemitic sentiments, exacerbated further by the devastating effects of the Great Depression on the Afrikaner population. As noted, these developments spearheaded by Malan, controvert the common view that it was Nazi ideology and the impact of Nazism which were responsible for the antisemitic manifestations in South Africa during the seven years prior to the Second World War.

There is no gainsaying that Afrikaner nationalists "absorbed the influence of Nazi ideas," yet Nazism was never appropriated wholesale or without qualification by

Afrikaner nationalists.⁴ Several scholars, as noted earlier, have discussed the relationship between Afrikaner nationalism and Nazism between 1933 and 1945, among them Uran, Bunting, and Vatcher. Gilbert has extended the discourse, albeit briefly, and has examined the relationship between the ideology of fascism and racism in South Africa during the 15 years following the end of World War Two. By far the most scholarly study, however, is the work carried out by Furlong, which covers the period from Hitler's appointment as German Chancellor in 1933 to the end of the war. However, it is the relationship between Afrikaner nationalism and fascism which is of central concern to these scholars, including Furlong, rather than the function of antisemitic rhetoric and the interplay between antisemitism and an increasingly militant Afrikaner nationalism. It is this perceived lacuna in the current historiography which has been a significant focus of this dissertation.

A key concern of this study was thus the nature of Afrikaner nationalism. In a perceptive essay, René de Villiers, former editor of *The Star*, seventh generation Afrikaner and a member of the Progressive Party opposition in the South African Parliament during the Apartheid era, explained that the Afrikaner people had long felt a threat to their national identity and to their distinct and separate existence, both from within and beyond South Africa's borders. The perceived threat – fear of domination or absorption, or being 'ploughed under', as Afrikaners expressed it – was greater among the Afrikaners than among almost any other nation, contended de Villiers, reflected in the "almost paranoiac persistence with which some enemy or threat or peril appears in the story of Afrikaner nationalism."⁵ This of course did not apply to all Afrikaners, since no section of South African society was completely homogeneous. Indeed, as this study has demonstrated, there were many leading Afrikaners – academics, professionals in public life, parliamentarians in the United Party, the Labour Party and the Central Party, and others - who opposed the antisemitism of the right-wing Afrikaners and the Shirt movements. Overwhelmingly, however, with the development of a group consciousness and a national cohesion

⁴ Shirli Gilbert makes this observation with regard to the *post bellum* period in South Africa (1945-1960) and specifically the Apartheid regime, yet it could be equally applicable to the six years prior to the outbreak of war. See Gilbert, 'Jews and the Racial State: Legacies of the Holocaust in Apartheid South Africa, 1945-1960', *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 16, Number 3, Spring/Summer 2010 (New Series), p.37.

⁵ R de Villiers, 'Afrikaner Nationalism', in M Wilson and L Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa II* (Oxford University Press, London, 1971), p.365.

with its own “distinctive philosophy and way of life,” the Afrikaners developed a “defensiveness which manifested itself in various ways.”⁶ Afrikaner nationalists, particularly those with extremist views, claimed for themselves personal and group freedom which they were often loath to extend to others for fear of losing their distinctiveness. To this end, in an attempt to preserve the Afrikaners as a distinct, exclusive and separate national entity, their leaders often played on the emotions of fear and prejudice.⁷ Racism towards outgroups was frequently the upshot in South Africa, “where racial attitudes... were almost indigenous and where it was easy to arouse racial consciousness and racial antipathies towards other groups of the population.”⁸ Moreover, since Afrikaner nationalism was organic rather than artificial, as noted earlier, and underscored by Christian Calvinism, it was not possible for other ethnic groups to join.⁹ A *Herrenvolk*-like ideology was thus characteristic of Afrikanerdom long before the advent of Nazism, as Hannah Arendt, the German-American political thinker, noted in 1959.¹⁰

Antisemitism served to accentuate the particularism of Afrikaner nationalism and the exclusiveness of Afrikaner identity, especially among right-wing Afrikaners. It also provided a focus for the frustrated, impoverished and especially the unskilled Afrikaners in the country's rural areas – people who suffered considerable privations in the wake of the Great Depression. Isolation from urban culture accentuated the Afrikaners' sense of difference from the rest of the world, causing them to cling tenaciously to their national identity as Afrikaners, to perceive themselves as South Africa's true pioneers, and frequently to regard others as 'aliens'.

Classical scapegoatism - reflected *inter alia* in the prominence of the Hoggenheimer caricature - became increasingly manifest in South Africa, especially after the 1922

⁶ Ibid., p.366.

⁷ Ibid., pp.373-374..

⁸ *World Conference of Christians and Jews (held at Oxford, July 1946): Memorandum Submitted on Behalf of the South African Delegates on Problems Arising from the Inroads of Nazism on Contemporary Thought and Practice in South Africa, 27 June, 1946, p. 26.*

⁹ Herman and Shimoni, *The Jewish Community In The Apartheid Society of South Africa: Study Circle On Diaspora Jewry In The Home Of The President Of Israel*, p.33.

¹⁰ Arendt maintained that “in contrast to the Nazis, to whom racism and antisemitism were major political weapons for the destruction of civilization...racism and antisemitism [were] a matter of course and a natural consequence of the status quo in South Africa. They [i.e. racism and antisemitism] did not need Nazism in order to be born.” See H Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (André Deutsch Limited Publishers, London, 1968), pp.205-206. [The quotation also appears in Arendt, *The Burden of Our Time*, pp., 205-206)

uprising on the Witwatersrand, and was a common feature of the antipathy directed towards the Jews in the decade prior to the outbreak of war in 1939. An attack on the Jews, accused of not being 'ware Suid Afrikaners' - true South Africans - served to bolster the Afrikaners' sense of identity. By the same token, accusations levelled at the Jews for being Communists in a country where Communism was anathema and where fear of the inroads of Communism was palpable served to highlight the conservative inward-looking nature of Afrikanerdom. Allegations that the Jews were pro-British enabled their detractors to accuse them of disloyalty to South Africa and more particularly to the Afrikaners' republican ideal.

The Jewish Question, and particularly the issue of Jewish immigration, became an increasing feature of political discourse, used by the Afrikaner Right and Radical Right as a political means to garner votes, especially among the disaffected. Gilbert shares a similar view. She holds that

even though prejudice against non-whites was widely shared among the white electorate, antisemitism became one of the means through which parties in the 1930s sought to lure right-leaning chiefly Afrikaner voters and thus became ... an issue of sustained attention.¹¹

The overwhelming support of the South African Jewish community for the South African Party and, later, for the United Party, and the Jews' gravitation towards the English-speaking section of the population was yet a further reason for Afrikaner nationalists, in their attempts to preserve and enhance their own identity, to encourage measures directed against the Jews. In a country where racism flourished and served political ends, antisemitism was yet another proverbial string in the bow of those who endorsed an ideology of racism: in a climate of discrimination based on colour and race which had long existed in South Africa, prejudice against a minority such as the Jews - notwithstanding the obvious paradox that the Jews were whites and part of the privileged minority - can be more easily understood. Most Jews were comparatively late arrivals, many of them recent immigrants generally successful and prominent in the professions, academia, and the country's commercial life. Jews tended to maintain their own communal identity and to enjoy their own institutions,

¹¹ Gilbert, 'Jews and the Racial State: Legacies of the Holocaust in Apartheid South Africa, 1945-1960', *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 16, Number 3, Spring/Summer 2010 (New Series), p.37.

and were non-Christians. They were thus targets for the frustrated and disaffected, and particularly for those wedded to the theology of Calvinism, the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism, and committed to establishing a separate independent Afrikaner nation rather than a South African nation. For the Jews, however, as Saron acknowledged, “the general cultural and political climate in South Africa, which emphasised the separateness of the various racial and cultural groups of the population, favour[ed] the perpetuation of a Jewish group existence.”¹²

The robust responses to antisemitism by the leadership of the Jewish community to the intensification of antisemitism is demonstrated in this thesis, recorded especially in archival documentation, public pronouncements, deputations to government and material produced by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and its affiliates. Extensive use of the rich documentation in the Morris Alexander Collection, the papers of the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies, archival collections in South Africa’s main centres and the print media afforded a deeper understanding of the relationship between the leadership of the Jewish community and the forces arrayed against South African Jewry, as well as the nature and function of antisemitism in South Africa during the period under review. Access to primary sources, *inter alia*, also afforded the opportunity to present a detailed chronicle, discussion and analysis of antisemitism in South Africa between the two World Wars.

While combatting perceived injustices and racism levelled at South African Jewry, the leadership of the Jewish community, however, remained impervious to the rank racial discrimination perpetrated against the oppressed non-white sections of South African society by the white minority, with which the Jewish community aligned itself. As noted, the leaders of the Jewish community never associated the Jewish situation with racism directed against the non-whites. Indeed, there is no evidence in the documentation consulted for this study that representatives of the Jewish community ever protested against injustices, legislative or otherwise, levelled against South Africa’s non-white majority: outside the economic sphere the Jews’ only contact with the non-whites within the white oligarchy was in terms of a master-servant relationship. For the Jews, the demarcation between racism against non-whites and antisemitism was clear and

¹² Saron and Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa*, p.398.

unequivocal. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies confined itself throughout the period to attempts to protect the interests of the Jews. It never articulated a specific policy towards South Africa's complex racial issues during the *inter bellum* period and, as noted, maintained that Jews participated in the country's political life as individual citizens and not as members of the Jewish community; they were free to promote the principles of justice and tolerance in race relations in accordance with their personal political convictions and understanding of the tenets of the Jewish tradition. In a reference to the first decade or so of Apartheid, Shirli Gilbert notes that "relatively few Jews were willing to identify direct parallels between antisemitism and anti-black racism in South Africa."¹³ Her comment could apply equally to the period with which the present study is concerned.

This dissertation commenced with brief reference to several different forms of antisemitic thought – theological, economic, nationalist and race-based prejudice. These antisemitic typologies, which may be isolated for conceptual purposes although in reality they are frequently intertwined, were evident in Afrikanerdom well before the advent of Hitler and Nazism and reflective of the nativism which characterised many Afrikaners – and certainly the extremists in Afrikaner ranks. These forms of antisemitism were clearly manifest during the period encompassed by this study. At the core of Afrikaner nationalism, however, was religion. Indeed, along with race, ethnicity and political expedience, argues Rupe Simms, Afrikaner intellectuals of the Dutch Reformed Church employed Calvinist theology, later to be translated into "the ideological bedrock of Apartheid as a ruling-class philosophy." By believing that they were divinely elected, Afrikaners justified their quest for hegemony together with an implacable belief in white supremacy. Consequently, their theology authenticated and "validated their superiority" not only in relation to the non-white population but also with respect to Jews and others who were classified officially as Europeans but who were not Afrikaners.¹⁴ Abraham Jonker, an Afrikaner who combatted antisemitism in his capacity as writer and as parliamentarian, wrote that where antisemitism existed among the Afrikaners, it did indeed spring from "spiritual, religious, ethnological [and] racial sources", fuelled by "economic and

¹³ Gilbert, 'Jews and the Racial State: Legacies of the Holocaust in Apartheid South Africa, 1945-1960', *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 16, Number 3, Spring/Summer 2010 (New Series), p.54.

¹⁴ R Simms, 'Black Theology, A Weapon in the Struggle for Freedom: A Gramscian Analysis', *Race & Society*, Volume 2, Number 2, 2000 (Elsevier Science Inc., New York, 2000), pp.171-173.

financial rationalisations and jealousies” to fulfil a political need.¹⁵ This thesis has emphasised the critical role played by the theological underpinnings of Afrikaner nationalism, hitherto given scant attention in the historiography of the period in question with respect to the antisemitism of the Right and the Radical Right.

The populist and political antisemitism which was given practical expression by Afrikaner nationalists and the extreme Afrikaner Right was a leitmotif which did not end in 1939 with the outbreak of the Second World War. Manifestations of anti-Jewish prejudice were clearly evident in South Africa during the Second World War among Afrikaner nationalists in well-patronised antisemitic organisations and during the period following the end of the war. These developments, however, fall beyond the parameters of this study.

¹⁵ A H Jonker Collection (PV 42), File 24, article in typescript form titled ‘Jews and Afrikaners: What Are the Relations Between Them Today?’ Article dated 30.6.1950 and prepared for publication in *Jewish Affairs*.

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- C(i) : Seven box files containing material on the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, 1903-1946. [Alternative library inventory code: List III, No.3, (a)-(g)].
- C(ii) : Five box files containing material on South African Jewish Board of Deputies and other Jewish affairs in manila folders, numbers 1-59.
- C(iii)/II : Letter Books, 1925-1932 and 1932-1934.
- C(iii)/III,5 : Minutes of meetings and miscellaneous items.
- C(iii)/III,8 : Desk Note Book for 1938.
- C(iii)/III,10 : Pamphlets on Jewish affairs and antisemitism in South Africa.
- C(iii)/IV,1.1-1.2 : Desk Note Books for 1932 and 1933.
- C(iii)/IV,14 : Minutes of the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies 1935-1937.
- C(iii)/IV,16 : Press cuttings.
- C(iii)/IV,18 : Pamphlets on antisemitism and Nazism.
- C(iii)/IV,24 : Documents on antisemitism in South Africa.

(b) Donald Molteno Collection (BC 579).

The following documents from the files of the Civil Liberties Association were consulted:

- Memorandum Submitted By The Civil Liberties Association On The Internment Of Anti-Fascists (with Annexures). [c. November-December, 1940].
- Report of a delegation of citizens received by Mr. H. Lawrence Minister of the Interior (6th December, 1940) on the question of the Government's Internment Policy).
- Résumé Of Proposals Relating To The Government's Internment Policy To Be Submitted to the Honourable The Minister Of The Interior On Friday The 6th Day of December, 1940 at 10:30a.m.

(c) University of Cape Town

Council Minutes : 31 January 1928 – 7 December 1928.

3. The Archives of the Cape Town Jewish Museum, Cape Town.

(a) Alfred Philipp Bender Collection (199 B).

I-II : General articles and press cuttings on South African Jewry.

(b) Historical Files.

200R : Antisemitism (General).

300 : Antisemitism in South Africa.

580 : Nazism and the Jews.

4. The South African Library, Cape Town.

(a) Cape Times Clipping Files.

: Jews in South Africa.

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: Politics (Union) General - to 1945.

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5. The Archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Cape Committee, Cape Town.

- : Minutes of Meetings, 1934-1942.
- : Minutes of the Society of Jews and Christians, 1938-1940.

6. The Archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg.

Reference Files.

- 100A-135.1 : Jewish orientation towards Afrikaners.
- : South African Jewry - historical, political, economic and sociological aspects.
- : Statistics and immigration.
- 209-270.6 : Antisemitic allegations and general antisemitic pamphlets.
- : Antisemitic movements in South Africa.
- : Organised resistance to antisemitism in South Africa.
- 300-399 : Antisemitic books, newspapers and pamphlets.
- : Pro- and anti-Nazi trends in South Africa.
- : South African political parties, organisations, ethnic groups, movements and institutions, and antisemitism.
- B543.6-
B547A : Nazism and Nazi espionage in South Africa.
- 600-699 : The Goodwill Movement, inter-faith and inter-racial relations in South Africa.

7. The University of the Witwatersrand Libraries, Johannesburg.

(a) Richard Feldman Collection (A 804).

- Ab2 : Correspondence with newspaper editors, 1931-1950.
- Ad1 : Jewish Board of Deputies, 1937-1951.
- Ad3 : Antisemitism in South Africa.
- Bb2 : Notes on Jewish subjects.

- Cb 1952 : Typescripts and mimeographs.
Cc 1958 : Typescript articles (published).
Fad 1 : Press cuttings (Jewish), 1917-1952.

(b) J H Hofmeyr Collection (A1)

- Aa : General correspondence and political career, 1915-1948.
Ga : Correspondence with S G Millin, 1924-1948.
Dh : Antisemitism, 1934-1936; 1937-1939.

(c) S G Millin Collection (A 539)

- C1 : Letters from J H Hofmeyr, 1924-1948.
: Letters from J C Smuts, 1926-1950.

(d) Ossewa Brandwag Collection (A 726).

- A : Memoranda.
B : Printed items.

8. The Archives of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, New York.

[Photocopied material]

- (a) Articles published in the USA on antisemitism in South Africa.
(b) Cuttings from USA newspapers on antisemitism in South Africa.
(c) Pamphlets and leaflets published by South African anti-Jewish organisations.

9. The Government Archives Depot, Pretoria

(a) J B M Hertzog Collection (a. 32)

- 29 : Political affairs, 1929-1931.
33 : Political affairs, 1936-1937.
51(s) : National Socialist Bond.
52(i) : Secret organisations.

62(viii) : The Jewish Question.

(b) J C Smuts Collection (S.1)

CXVI/49 : Jewish immigration.

CXXIII/44,46,
48,50-53 : Jewish immigration; antisemitism in South Africa and
South West Africa.

CXXIV/13,33 : Aliens Bill and Report of the South West Africa
Commission, 1936 (annotated).

CXXIV/2 : The Blackshirts.

(c) J G Strydom Collection (A2)

146 : National Socialism.

149-150 : Republikeinse Order.

158 : Immigration.

183 : Pamphlets - Greyshirts and Nuwe Orde [New Order].

10. J S Gericke Library, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch.

D F Malan Collection (MS1)

- Immigrasie en Emigrasie [Immigration and Emigration]
- Jode [Jews]
- Joodse Vragstuk [Jewish Question]
- Sundry Documents : Letters, notes, pamphlets, telegrams, South African Jewish Board of Deputies.
- Voksraad/Parliament.

B. Published.

1. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies : *Reports of the Executive Committee to Congress, 1923; 1929-1951; 1967.*

II. DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL: GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

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[Available in the Morris Alexander Collection (BC 160), C(ii) Box 1934-Dec. 1941, Folder 30, January-June, 1939].
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B. Parliament

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