

HADASSAH CAPE TOWN

By Helga Sandak-Lewin

Hadassah was born out of need. The need of a group of women who wanted to contribute to the life of their Temple and community but who were restricted because of their own lifestyles. Their days were taken up by their work or occupation and therefore they could not join the Sisterhood activities

This group started meeting in the late 1980's and tried out different names. In 1990 the Constitution was finalized and Hadassah became an affiliate of Temple Israel and an evening partner to the Sisterhoods. It is an "umbrella" organization as it has members who were originally from both Green Point and Wynberg. Now, with the establishment of the West Coast community, members from there have joined us as well. Venues for our monthly meeting alternate between the three centres.

The mission statement of Hadassah is to promote friendship and fellowship among our own community and a caring outreach to the wider community. We chose the name 'Hadassah' as that was the Hebrew name of the Persian Queen Esther, a Jewess who used her courage, beauty and wit to save her fellow Jews from destruction. A true heroine and one we wished to honour.

The number of women serving on the committee has never been very large but our contribution has been substantial.

Hadassah inaugurated the communal dinners at which each person contributes towards the meal. We called them "Pot-Luck Suppers". Over the years we have held many interesting and innovative functions contributing to both our Temples coffers as well as supporting other worthwhile causes while encouraging friendship and fellowship amongst all those participating.

Some of our more memorable functions were the Symposium on Menopause held at the former Nico Malan Opera House and Theatre in the foyer where we produced a play performed by Temple members, while the audience enjoyed both an excellent meal and the entertainment.

We have had many types of dances ranging from national themes to fancy dress and "Progressive" parties which moved from venue to venue in a bus and culminated at the Temple Hall.

Hadassah ran a literacy school at our Wynberg premises for some years.

Our relationship with the other Sisterhoods has always been excellent. We help each other and then work together for the same function, prime examples being the Annual Temple Fete and Yom Ha'atzmaut.

We welcome the addition of new members to perpetuate our ideals.