

JEWISH AFFAIRS



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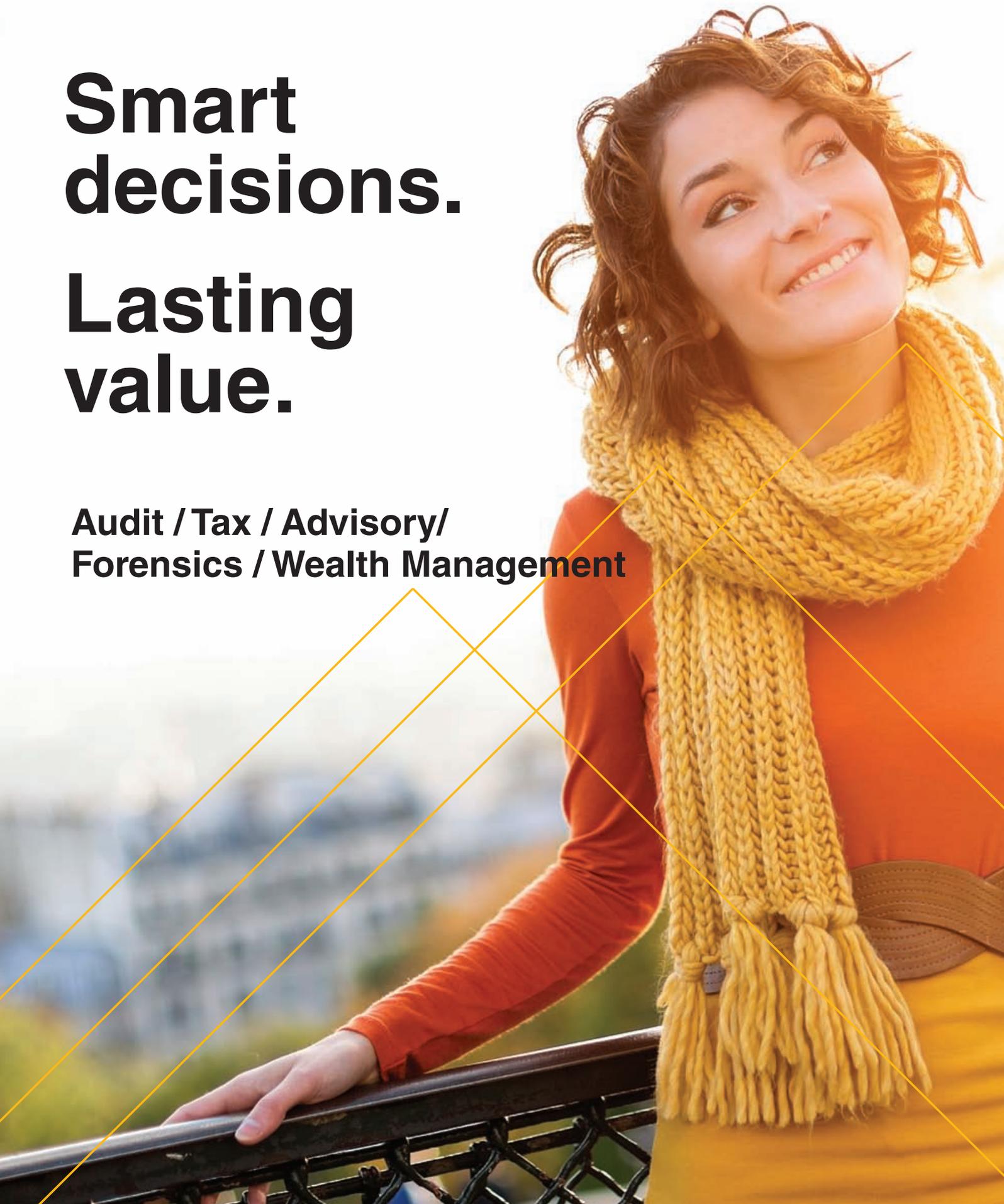


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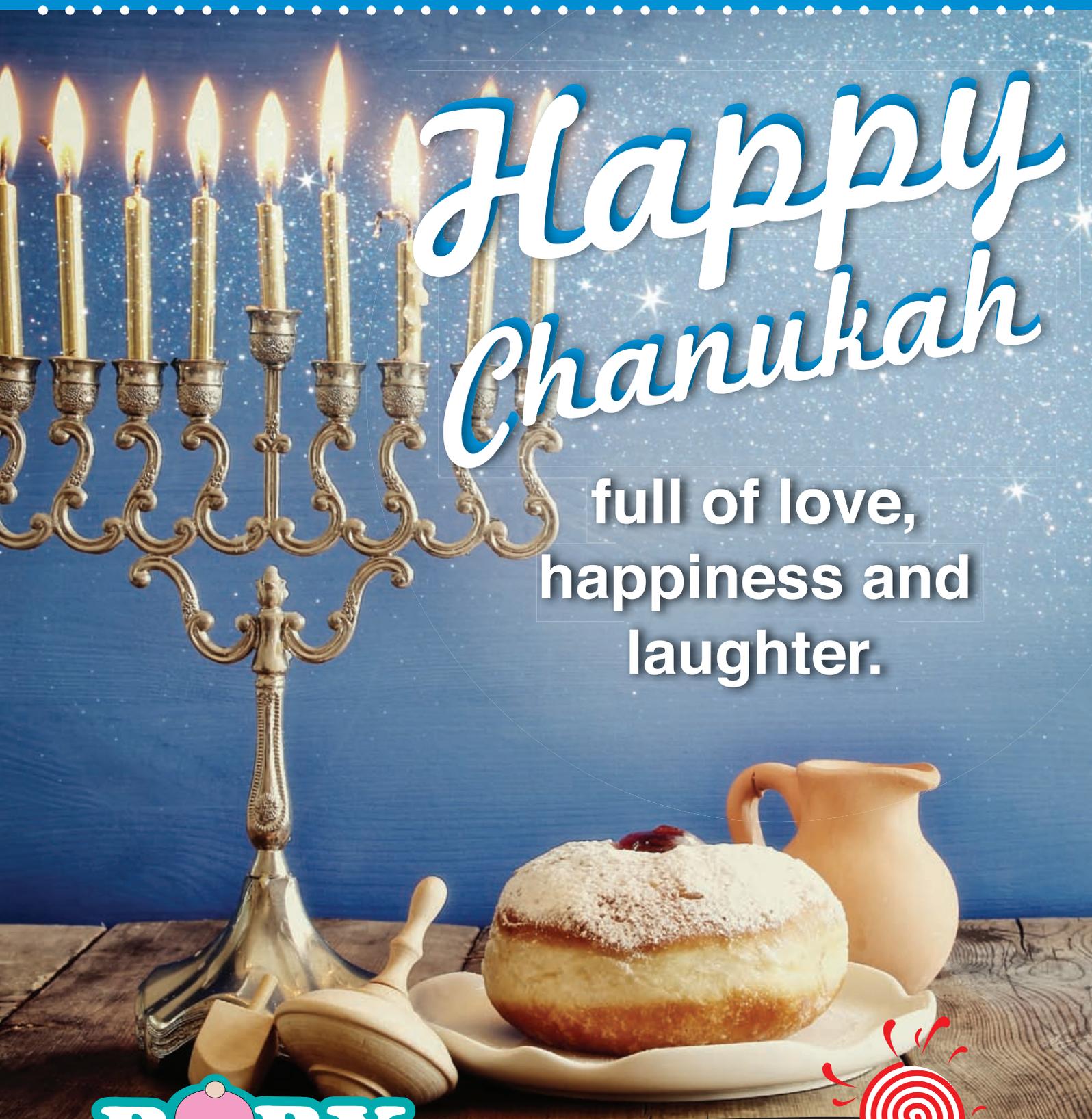
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JEWISH AFFAIRS

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In publishing JEWISH AFFAIRS, the SA Jewish Board of Deputies aims to produce a cultural forum which caters for a wide variety of interests in the community. The journal will be a vehicle for the publication of articles of significant thought and opinion on contemporary Jewish issues, and will aim to encourage constructive debate, in the form of reasoned and researched essays, on all matters of Jewish and general interest.

JEWISH AFFAIRS aims also to publish essays of scholarly research on all subjects of Jewish interest, with special emphasis on aspects of South African Jewish life and thought. Scholarly research papers that make an original contribution to their chosen field of enquiry will be submitted to the normal processes of academic refereeing before being accepted for publication.

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JEWISH AFFAIRS

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Editor: David Saks

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Happy ChanuKia.



The Power to Surprise

To all our Jewish friends, may you be blessed with good health, peace and a surprisingly happy life.

A BRIEF JOURNEY THROUGH FRENCH JEWISH HISTORY

*

Bernard Katz

From the time of Julius Caesar's conquest in 58-51 B.C.E. until the invasion of the Barbarians in the 5th Century, Gaul – as France was originally known – was a province of the Roman Empire. The earliest evidence of a Jewish presence there concerns an isolated individual, Archelaus, the ethnarch of Judea, who was banished by Augustus in 6 C.E. to Vienne.¹ His brother Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, was exiled to Lyon by Caligula in 39 C.E.² A story which had been thought to be a legend claimed that after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. the Romans filled three ships with Jewish captives, which arrived in Bordeaux, Arles and Lyon. Recent archaeological findings, however, suggest that there might be a basis for this legend. Objects identified as Jewish because of the menorah portrayed on them have been discovered around Arles (1st, 4th and early 5th Centuries) and in Bordeaux (3rd and early 4th Centuries).³ Written sources affirm that during the Roman period Jews had been present in Metz (mid-4th century), Poitiers (late-4th Century), Avignon (late-4th Century) and Arles (mid-5th Century).⁴ After 465 C.E. evidence of Jewish existence in France is abundant.⁵

The Heroic Age of Franco-German Jewry

According to the Jewish historian Irving Agus, only five to ten thousand Jews survived the persecutions and forced conversions between the 4th and 8th Centuries in France, Germany and Italy.⁶ At the time this constituted half of one percent of world Jewry. By the 20th Century, however, their descendants numbered twelve million and constituted more than 80% of the Jewish people. Agus asserts that this small group of survivors (“very unusual and very remarkable individuals”) possessed two very rare qualities, namely commercial ability and wealth on the one hand and tremendous dedication to the study and practice of Judaism on the other.⁷ Agus asserts further that the parent group consisted of two groups. The first comprised Jews, most

probably enterprising individuals engaged in international commerce, who had migrated to Italy prior to the two great revolts against Rome.⁸ The second were captives from the revolts and in the main zealous rebels against the Romans.⁹ They included scholars of the Oral Law.¹⁰ According to Agus, it was this combination of high intelligence and wealth which enabled these people to survive centuries of hardships.¹¹

Charlemagne (768–814) was favourably disposed to Jews, inviting them to settle in his territories and freely practice their religion. Under the Carolingians (his descendants), Jews enjoyed complete judicial equality.¹² Agus describes the 9th through the 11th Centuries as the heroic age of Franco-German Jewry, during which Jews could practice their religion freely and openly, and organise their lives as an autonomous self-governing group.¹³ The most important reasons for the great success achieved by Jewish merchants and exporters and importers of goods in this period was the fact that Jews could travel much more easily than Christians and in comparative safety.¹⁴ In the pre-Crusade period Jews were politically free, religiously autonomous, economically successful and culturally the most progressive group in Europe.¹⁵

Impact of the Crusades and Expulsion

This advantageous position changed with the onset of the Crusades. Although the First Crusade (1096-99) had little immediate effect on the situation of French Jewry, it was in France that the first killings and forced conversions took place, namely in Rouen and Metz.¹⁶ Jews lost their monopoly on international trade as Christians began to master this skill in the 12th and 13th Centuries and became more involved as traders with consumers.¹⁷ Before the First Crusade moneylending was almost non-existent; amongst the more than 300 Responsa from the pre-Crusade period there is hardly a case of a Jew who was a professional money lender.¹⁸

By the end of the 13th Century the Jewish population of France could have been as high as 100 000.¹⁹ Following a series of persecutions, expulsions and readmissions

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the ‘definitive’ expulsion of Jews from France took place in 1394. After Provence was incorporated into France in 1481, Jews were expelled from there as well. Hence, by the beginning of the 16th Century there were practically no Jews within the present borders of France other than in Alsace and Lorraine, Avignon and Comtat Venaissin and the county of Nice.²⁰

Impact of the French Revolution and Napoleon

On the eve of the French Revolution in 1789, about 40 000 Jews lived within the borders of what is today France. No single French Jewish community could be said to exist; rather, Jews lived in four separate and distinct communities. In Alsace and Lorraine were 30 000 mostly poor but strictly observant Ashkenazi Jews whose ancestors had been inherited by France in 1648 as a consequence of the Treaty of Westphalia.²¹ Centred in Bordeaux were about 5000 Sephardi Jews who were of Marrano origins and who had arrived under the guise of Portuguese merchants. This group was highly acculturated and were permitted to live in France because of their utility as providers of credit.²² In the Comtat Venaissin, a territory centred round Avignon and owned by the Holy See until incorporated into France after the Revolution lived about 2500 Jews. Jews began migrating from the three established centres from the beginning of the 18th Century and on the eve of the Revolution about 500 were living illegally and semi-clandestinely in Paris, albeit with increasing security.²³

As a result of the Revolution and the Napoleonic era the Jews of France and Western Europe were granted rights as citizens with equality before the law, and no longer subject to oppressive taxation and enforced residential restrictions.²⁴ The granting of full citizenship rights did not occur immediately after the Revolution and it was somewhat of a struggle given opposition from the deputies from Alsace and Lorraine. Nevertheless, full equality was ultimately achieved on 27 September 1791. In his address to the National Assembly Clermont-Tonnerre, a strong supporter of Jewish equality, said the now famous words, “To the Jews as a Nation, nothing; to the Jews as individuals, everything.”

Napoleon’s attitude towards the Jews is complex and evolved over time. An announcement dated 22 May 1799 reads, “Bonaparte has published a proclamation in which he invites all the Jews of Asia and Africa to gather under his flag in order to re-establish the ancient Jerusalem.” Although the exact text of this proclamation has never been found and some scholars view it as

a propaganda manoeuvre and dismiss it completely others argue that it is the forerunner of political Zionism. What is undisputed is that in the initial years of his rule nowhere does Napoleon appear as hostile to the Jews.²⁵ It is therefore surprising that within a few years his attitude changed towards one of hostility. In a letter to his brother dated 6 March 1806 he refers to Jews as “the most despicable of men.”²⁶ Contemporary witnesses agree that this change of attitude was connected to the complaints against the Jews arising from their moneylending activities. By the end of the 18th Century 400 000 peasants and landowners were heavily indebted to a few thousand Jews.²⁷ It was during Napoleon’s stay in Strasbourg on 23 and 24 January 1806 on his return from Austerlitz that he decided to take action on the Jewish problem. In a speech in the Conseil d’Etat on 30 April 1806 he accused Jews of being “a nation within a nation.”²⁸

Napoleon established an Assembly of Notables tasked with answering twelve questions, including whether Jews regarded France as their country, whether the laws of France were legally binding on them, whether Jews could marry non-Jews and whether usury to non-Jews was permitted. These were not innocent questions and Napoleon was probing what he considered to be the problematic aspects of the relationship of Judaism to the state. Simon Schwarzfuchs has written that these were all leading questions aimed to compel Jews to choose between their religious law and their duties of patriotism.²⁹

In their preamble the commissioners defined themselves as “French deputies professing the religion of Moses” and proclaimed their adherence to the Talmudic principle that the law of the land is the law – “*Dina d’Malkhuta Dina.*” The last two questions concerning whether Jewish law permitted usury from Jews and whether from Gentiles, which was aimed at establishing whether Jews had a double standard of morality, proved to be the most challenging. The deputies skilfully (or ingeniously) asserted that the law allowed for commercial loans to foreigners but not to Gentiles living amongst the Jews. Paula Hyman comments that taken together, the responses of the Assembly constituted a new definition of Jewish identity in the modern world.³⁰

Napoleon expressed his satisfaction with the results of the Assembly and decreed that a session of the Sanhedrin, consisting of 71 members, two-thirds of whom were to be rabbis, be called to ratify the decision of the Assembly and give it rabbinic authority. The Sanhedrin duly ratified the responses of the Assembly and in April 1807 it was dissolved.

On 17 March 1808 Napoleon issued three decrees. The first two were administrative. The autonomous communities were replaced by a central consistory and for each department having at least 2000 Jews a local consistory would be established. The new system for the first time brought together all Jews in France under a central organisation. This constituted a recognition of Judaism as a religion, centralizing its organisation and placing it under government control, a model similar to that set up for Protestants (with Catholicism recognised as the main religion).³¹ The third decree became known as his “Infamous Decree”, for it undermined the equal rights that Jews had previously been granted by imposing restrictions on commerce and moneylending for a period of ten years. It effectively placed the Jews on probation and greatly diminished the admiration most Jews had hitherto felt for Napoleon.³² In 1831 a law was promulgated that rabbis, like ministers of Christian religions, were to be paid by the state. This system remained in place until the separation of church and state in 1905.

In the words of Howard Sachar, “For better or worse the Jews had made their entry into Western society.”³³

Schwarzfuchs concludes that despite Napoleon’s hostility to the Jews in general, and his “Infamous Decree” in particular, it cannot be denied that his reorganisation of Jewish life, which implied the definition of Judaism as a Christian-like religion, represented a remarkable attempt to solve the problem of Jewish existence in the modern world. The old model of Jewish autonomy organisation was rejected and replaced with a new model which admitted the existence of a rabbinate in charge of religious life but without absolute authority and which attempted to find a balance between Judaism and the modern world.³⁴

Even after their emancipation, French Jews remained dispersed and small in number. It was only after 1848 that they began to make significant contributions in the spheres of social, economic, political and cultural life in France.³⁵ Famous French Jews include Pissarro, Soutine, Chagall and Modigliani (Art), Offenbach (Music), Rachel and Sarah Bernhardt (Theatre), Henri Bergson, Marcel Proust, Andre Maurois and Elie Wiesel (Literature), Leon Blum, Pierre Mendes-France and Simone Veil (Politics) and Andre Citroen (Business).

The Dreyfus Affair

The French army officer Alfred Dreyfus (1859-1935) was one of many Jews who took advantage of the opportunities emancipation

had afforded. Hyman observes that “neither Germany nor Austria could have had a Dreyfus Affair, since no German or Austrian Jew had achieved a parallel position in their respective armies.”³⁶ The ‘Dreyfus Affair’ began with Dreyfus’ arrest on charges of espionage in 1894 when he was accused of authoring a handwritten note containing French military secrets. Although the handwriting bore little resemblance to that of Dreyfus, the latter was nevertheless found guilty of treason and sent to Devil’s Island. It was only five years later, in 1899, that he was pardoned and it took a further seven years for him to be fully cleared.

The pivotal role in leading the campaign to exonerate Dreyfus was undertaken by his elder brother Mathieu. A turning point was the publication by Emile Zola of his indictment of French justice under the famed title ‘*J’Accuse*’ in George Clemenceau’s newspaper *L’Aurore*.

The conflict generated by the Affair became far greater than merely that of Dreyfus’ guilt or innocence – it became a fight between two distinct political outlooks. In the aftermath of the Affair, the progressive left faction was victorious in the election of 1906. Paul Johnson is of the view that French Jews ultimately paid a high price for the victory of Dreyfus. Although the Dreyfusard victory restored Jewish optimism in the French state it also caused antisemitism to be institutionalised with the establishment of a pro-fascist anti-Semitic League. This ultimately became the most vicious element of the Vichy regime and helped send tens of thousands of Jews to their deaths.³⁷

In his book *Dreyfus: A Family Affair, 1789–1945*, Michael Burns traces six generations of the Dreyfus family from the French Revolution until World War II. Their family history parallels, reflects and illuminates the history of the Jews of France during that period.³⁸

Abraham Dreyfus, Alfred’s great-grandfather, was born in 1749 in the village of Rixheim in southern Alsace. A kosher butcher and moneylender, he married Brandel Meyer from nearby Mullheim on the German side of the Rhine. Their son Jacob became a peddler and moneylender and later invested in small properties. Seeking improved economic prospects he relocated his family to Mullhouse, one of Alsace’s main cities and a centre for the textile industry. Jacob’s son Raphael worked as a commission agent, a middleman between textile manufacturers and their customers. Eventually, he purchased a cotton mill, which resulted in the family becoming economically well-off.

The loss of Alsace and Lorraine to Prussia in 1870 resulted in many Jews from there,

including Alfred and his older brother Mathieu, relocating to Paris. The Dreyfus family were staunch French patriots and Alfred called the loss of the provinces his “first sorrow.” He joined the army and became a captain. He was described as having much talent but little grace, being distant and disliked, as well as envied because of his family’s wealth. Alfred and his son Pierre served in the French army during World War I and both survived. Less fortunate were his brother Mathieu’s son and son-in-law, both of whom perished as did many other close relatives. World War II caused further devastated the Dreyfus family. Alfred’s favourite grandchild, Madelaine, fought in the Resistance and died in Auschwitz in 1944.

The Holocaust, the French and the Jews

Of the approximately 330 000 Jews living in France in 1940 some 77 000, around 24%, perished in the Holocaust. The attrition rate amongst the 135 000 non-French born Jews was much higher, between 41–45% compared to the 9–12.6% of French-born Jews.³⁹

In her book *The Holocaust, the French and the Jews*, Susan Zuccotti concludes that while the Germans bear the primary responsibility, the French government in Vichy and many French civilians must share the burden of guilt. She is particularly damning of the Vichy regime, noting that its officials began preparing racial laws even before any had been decreed by the Germans and that Vichy police interned foreign Jews at a time when their counterparts in the occupied north remained free. Furthermore, Vichy officials ordered French police to round up mostly foreign Jewish men in Paris in 1941 and made no protest when they were deported in March 1942. In July 1942 they ordered the arrests in Paris of more foreign born Jews, this time including women and their often French-born children. Prior to these arrests Pierre Laval, head of the Vichy government, had urged the Germans to deport the children, before the Germans had decided what to do with them. Furthermore in July 1942 the Vichy government supplied the Nazis with foreign Jews from the free zone, where Germany did not as yet have jurisdiction. Vichy also supplied manpower to make arrests and deportations possible as the Germans were understaffed and functioned poorly without help.⁴⁰

Zuccotti also addresses the converse of the terrible death rate – that 250 000 or 76% of the Jews survived. She argues that part of the explanation for this lies in geography (France being a large country with extensive tracts of remote, often mountainous terrain favourable to hiding). Also, in comparison

to Holland and Belgium proportionally less German personnel were employed relative to the size of the country and population. The fact that 50 000 Jews lived in the south east in the Italian occupation zone between November 1942 and September 1943 also affected the survival rates by buying some time.⁴¹

Zuccotti maintains that attitudes within the non-Jewish community was an important factor in the survival rate, with many Jews being saved thanks to the assistance of the French population, and also because many French citizens at least turned a blind eye to those activities. She quotes the historian and former Jewish Resistant Leon Poliakov, who in 1949 wrote of “the good sense...the profound humanity of the immense majority of the French people.”⁴²

Zuccotti also quotes from an interview in 1990 which she had with a Mrs Leiris, a French Protestant who had worked for the Red Cross and had looked after Jewish children. An anguished Mrs Leiris asked rhetorically, “How was it possible? How could French gendarmes have rounded up even Jewish children alone without their families? How could they have forced those children, abandoned by the world, into dark and crowded freight cars bound for Auschwitz?” Zuccotti then put to Leiris the reverse question “How was survival possible, since the national and municipal police were so implacable, the Vichy policy so vicious, and the French people unsympathetic?” Leiris responded “But not all were...Those who survived did so because the prevailing climate was rather more sympathetic than hostile.”⁴³

On 16 July 1995, newly elected president Jacques Chirac pronounced that France must take full responsibility for the deportations of its Jews during World War II. Francois Hollande speaking at 70th commemoration of the Vel d’Hiv roundup in Paris in 1942 said, “...13 152 men, women and children....were interned in Drancy....A clear directive had been given by the Vichy administration.... We owe the Jewish martyrs the truth...the truth is that no German soldiers - not a single one - were mobilized at any stage of the operation. The truth is that this crime was committed in France by France.”

Relations between Israel and France

In the years 1956–64, France rather than the US was Israel’s strategic ally.⁴⁴ At the time, the only large-scale source of heavy weapons for Israel was France as America had an embargo policy which Prime Minister Ben-Gurion believed would not be reversed. Two camps existed within the Israeli establishment – one favouring a

French orientation supported by Ben-Gurion, Shimon Peres, Moshe Dayan, Ezer Weizmann and Chaim Herzog and the other favouring an American orientation supported by, amongst others, Levi Eshkol and Yitzchak Rabin.⁴⁵

Israeli action in 1956 to break the blockade of Israel-bound shipping in the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran was synchronized with an assault on the Suez Canal by France and Britain. In June of that year, an agreement was reached between Israel and France for Israel to purchase tanks, jets, light weapons and ammunition - at the time this was equivalent to almost 20% of Israel's total budget. This relationship was further strengthened by agreements between 1956-58 to establish a nuclear reactor and to co-operate on the manufacture of nuclear weapons.⁴⁶

Although Israel-US relationship improved during the Kennedy administration, Israel still viewed France as its greatest ally.⁴⁷ It was only after Eshkol became prime minister and met in June 1964 with President Lyndon Johnson that the Israeli-US relationship changed completely. This improvement in the relationship was in part attributed to a, "certain chemistry" between Eshkol and Johnson.⁴⁸ It led to a MOU being signed between the two countries in March 1965, whereby the US pledged to preserve the security of Israel. After the signing of the MOU there could be no return to a French orientation.⁴⁹

In November 1967, a few months after the Six Day War, President de Gaulle, at his famous press conference, announced the formal reversal of France's policy, resulting in a shift towards closer ties with Arab world. He used the unfortunate phrase: "the Jewish people, self-confident and domineering." This statement was made only a few years after hailing Ben-Gurion as "the greatest statesman of the century."

Relations between France and its Jews

France has both the largest Muslim and the largest Jewish populations in Europe. Muslims number between five and six million, amounting to approximately 10% of the total population. This is a result of relatively unrestricted immigration from the former French colonies of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. A consequence of this influx has been the creation of a disaffected class of poor, frustrated and alienated Muslims who live in crime-ridden, violent and effectively autonomous housing projects on the outskirts of French cities - called banlieus.

A number of unsettling incidents for Jews have taken place in France in recent times. February 2006 saw the gruesome murder

of a 23 year-old French Jew of Moroccan descent, Ilan Halimi. In March 2012 three Jewish children and a rabbi in a Jewish school in Toulouse were murdered and in January 2015, in the wake of Charlie Hebdo shooting, four Jews were murdered at the Hypercacher kosher superette. Hundreds of antisemitic incidents, mainly committed by Arab immigrants, are recorded annually. The recent violence may reflect what Michel Gurfinkel calls an "importation of the Palestinian conflict into France."⁵⁰

An opinion poll conducted by The Israel Project cites that one in four French Jews said they have considered emigrating due to worsening antisemitism.⁵¹ This poll has, however, been criticised by CRIF, the main umbrella organisation for French Jewry.⁵² It is nevertheless ironic that at a time when, antisemitism amongst French Christians, as consistently shown in opinion polls,⁵³ has declined to its lowest point in modern history, there is so much pessimism amongst Jews about their future in France. Nicolas Sarkozy was elected president in 2007 and headed up what was perhaps the most philosemitic government in French history. Sarkozy himself has one-quarter Jewish ancestry and a Jewish daughter-in-law.⁵⁴

French Jewish Demography after 1789

The 40 000 Jews who lived in France at the time of the French Revolution increased by natural growth and were augmented by 44 000 European refugees in the years 1881-1914.⁵⁵ By the end of World War I the Jewish population numbered around 150 000.⁵⁶ By the outbreak of World War II, it had more than doubled to 330 000. Between the two world wars France took in more Jewish refugees than any other country in Europe due to its proximity to Germany and its liberal attitude to taking in refugees.⁵⁷ In the three decades after World War II, 290 000 Jews from North Africa relocated to France (25 000 from Egypt, 65 000 from Morocco, 80 000 from Tunisia and 120 000 from Algeria).⁵⁸ By 1968, Sephardim constituted the majority.⁵⁹ In 2013, the Jewish population of France was estimated at 478 000, of whom 283 000 or almost 60% lived in Paris. Only five communities outside Paris comprised Jewish communities in excess of 10 000, namely Marseilles (65 000), Lyon (20 000), Nice (20 000), Strasbourg (12 000) and Toulouse (18 000).⁶⁰

The French Jewish population has been slowly decreasing, primarily due to emigration, mainly to Israel. This reflects the diminished feeling of security amongst French Jews.⁶¹ After surpassing 2000 annually for several years, aliyah stood at 1619 in 2011 and 1653

in 2012. The number who had made or were making aliyah between January and August 2015 was 25% higher than that same period in the previous year - from 4000 in 2014 to 5100 in same period in 2015.

Places of Jewish Interest

The first documentary evidence of Jews living in **Paris** is 582.⁶² In the 12th Century, even before Notre Dame was built on the Ile de la Cite, a Jewish quarter and a synagogue existed there. The Ile de la Cite is the boat-shaped island on the Seine where the origins of Paris are located and was once inhabited by the Parisii tribe which gave its name to Paris. In the 12th Century, Jews were reputed to have owned half the land in Paris.⁶³

Over the main entrance of Notre Dame are two female statues, Ecclesia and Synagoga – representing the church triumphant and the synagogue defeated. Ecclesia stands upright wearing a crown whereas Synagoga is forlorn, blinded and with the tablets slipping from her hand. In 1240 a famous disputation on the Talmud was held in Paris, after which 24 cart-loads of Jewish books were burned in public.⁶⁴

Jewish life in Paris' Marais district can be dated to the beginning of the 13th Century. Since the Revolution, it has been the centre of Jewish Paris. At the heart of the Marais is the Pletzl (Yiddish: 'little square') and Rue des Rosiers. The Marais was one of Paris' poorest areas and served as an entry point for many Jews from Eastern Europe and North Africa. Today, however, concern has been expressed about the decline of Jewish life in the district which, from being one of the poorest areas of Paris, has become very expensive, forcing large numbers of Jews out of the area. Today, the Marais houses the Jewish Museum and the Shoah Memorial, where the names of righteous gentiles and the 77000 Jews killed in the Shoah are listed. The Shoah Memorial contains an exhibit of the cards prepared by Vichy civil servants for the roundup of the Jews of Paris – the most notorious of which occurred on 16 and 17 July 1942, directed by the Nazis and carried out by the French police. On these two days 13 152 Jews were arrested including 4000 children. Before being deported to Auschwitz they were held at detention camps which included Drancy and the Velodrome d'Hiver – this roundup is sometimes referred to as the Vel'd'Hiv roundup.

The magnificent Grande Synagogue of Paris is also known as La Victoire synagogue, after the street in which it is located. Lavishly decorated with marble, stained glass and candelabras, it is often called the "Cathedral Synagogue",⁶⁵ which no doubt it was intended

to imitate. This synagogue was built in 1874 with the financial support of the Rothschild family and claims to be the largest in France with a seating capacity exceeding 1800. Services are conducted according to the Ahkenazi-Alsacian tradition and the synagogue also serves as the official seat of the Chief Rabbi of France. There is a memorial board in the synagogue complex which lists the names of Parisian Jews who died for France in World War I – the list contains approximately 1200 names.

The Louvre contains a treasure trove of antiquities, including the Mesha Stele dating from the 9th Century B.C.E. This features the second oldest reference to Israel outside of the Bible. It records the triumphs of Mesha, king of Moab, over Israel, which the stele claims "has perished forever." The same event is recorded in 2 Kings 3, except that here it is recorded that Israel "smote Moab... [and] destroyed the cities." The stele was first brought to the attention of scholars in 1868 but efforts to purchase it failed and it was subsequently broken into many pieces. Later, about two-thirds of the fragments were found and reconstructed. Fortunately, a paper imprint (or squeeze) had been taken of the intact stele, enabling scholars to fill in the missing text.

The Louvre also contains an exhibition on Palmyra, one of the Roman Empire's major cities in what is now Syria in the first three centuries of the Common Era. The plaque in the section says that a number of exceptionally well preserved mural paintings were found here, notably, in the synagogue. In Hebrew and Aramaic, Palmyra is known as Tadmor and legend has it that the city was constructed by Solomon – this view is supported by Josephus but disputed by modern scholars. In present day Palmyra, there is etched into a doorway of a house the first four sentences of the Shema. Concern has been expressed as to whether this will survive the Islamic State occupation [*See Zvi Gabay's article elsewhere in this issue – ed.*]

At the time of the Revolution there were at most 500 Jews in Paris. By 1939, there were 150 000 – over half the Jews of France.⁶⁶ Today it is estimated that 283 000 Jews live in Paris, making up almost 60% of the country's total Jewish population.

The road from Paris driving east to Strasbourg passes through the **Champagne** region. At the Taittinger Champagne house in **Reims** the company shows a movie which refers to a Thibaut (who lived c.1179-1201) and who brought back from Palestine grapes that were to become the grape variety we today know as Chardonnay. A similar legend has it that the name Chardonnay derives from the two Hebrew words Sha'ar (Gates)

and A-d-o-n-o-y (God). Reims is also famous for its magnificent cathedral, construction on which commenced in 1211. Of special interest in the cathedral are the Chagall stained glass windows. The write-up in the cathedral says that at a time when art was devoid of any biblical content or inspiration Chagall, who was raised on the Holy Book, devoted many of his works to it.

Troyes is also in the Champagne region, to the south of Reims. It is where Rashi grew up and lived. Champagne is wine country, so it is not surprising that Rashi earned his living from his vineyards and the production of wine.

Further along the road towards Strasbourg is the town of **Metz**, capital of the Lorraine region. At the time of the Revolution, it was the cultural centre of Ashkenazi Jews in France. Although Rabbeinu Gershom spent most of his life in Mainz he was born in Metz. He is best known for his decree prohibiting Jewish men from taking more than one wife. The first evidence of Jews in **Alsace** is a report by Benjamin of Tudela (c. 1170) that Jews were living in **Strasbourg**.⁶⁷

The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 marked the end of the Thirty Years' War and as a result thereof France acquired most of the territory of Alsace and Lorraine. Before the Revolution the economic conditions of Jews were precarious and many engaged in moneylending – almost always on a small scale. The majority were hawkers and dealers.⁶⁸ The principal settlements of Jews were near the main towns from where they had been expelled but where they could get temporary admission.

In 1905 France decreed the separation between church and state. At that time Alsace and Lorraine were unaffected by the decree as there were then occupied by Germany. When the two provinces were recovered by France after World War II, in order to conciliate the Catholic Church, the religious structures were retained and continued to receive state financial support. The chief rabbi of Strasbourg, unlike that of Paris, is a functionary of the state, whose salary is paid by the state.

Several of Strasbourg's rabbis and community leaders were active in the Resistance, among them the martyred chief rabbi of Strasbourg Rene Hirschler, after whom a street is named. Strasbourg's community centre, a huge complex, was built in 1958, the old synagogue having been destroyed during the war. It contains four synagogues (including the Grande synagogue de la Paix, the Merkaz shtibl, a Sephardi synagogue and a youth minyan), a nursery school and a primary school. The Grande synagogue de la Paix seats 1700 and claims to be the

second largest synagogue in Europe after Budapest. Strasbourg's Jewish community, like all those of France, has been enriched by the influx of North African Jews. Strasbourg is the only French city where Ashkenazim outnumber Sephardim (by about 3 to 1).⁶⁹

Lyon is home to the third largest Jewish community in France and is considered by many to have been the capital of the Resistance during World War II. Klaus Barbie, aka the "Butcher of Lyon," was Gestapo chief in the town and was the most important war criminal to be put on trial in France. Tracked down by Beate Klarsfeld in Bolivia in 1972 and brought to France in 1983, he was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1987.

The Comtat Venaissin refers to an area within **Provence** including the towns of **Avignon**, **Carpentras** and **Cavaillon** which were owned by the Holy See prior to the French Revolution. In 1498, Provence became incorporated into France, from where the Jews had been 'definitively' expelled in 1394. The Jews were expelled from Provence in 1501. After that date, the only Jews living in southern France were in the Comtat Venaissin and Nice, which were detached from Provence. Many of those expelled found refuge in the Comtat Venaissin and became known as the "*Juifs du Pape*" (Pope's Jews).

The geographical location of Provence between three great intellectual centres – Spain, Italy and Franco-Germany - had a decisive influence in Provence becoming a major center for Jewish learning and literature. Provence had an important influence on the development of the Midrash.⁷⁰ Maimonides began a correspondence with the rabbis of southern France in 1194. Many of these had Spanish origins, including Samuel ibn Tibbon, who translated *The Guide of the Perplexed*. As Jewish scholarship in Andalusia declined, the next great centre of Torah and science rose in Provence.⁷¹ By the 13th and 14th Centuries, probably 15000 Jews lived there.⁷²

The synagogue in Carpentras is the oldest active synagogue in France (and the second oldest active synagogue in Europe after Prague). The edifice was built in 1367 but it was extensively rebuilt in the 18th Century. The complex houses a mikveh, challah bakery, matzah bakery and a beautiful synagogue. The ark contains twenty Sifrei Torah, three dating back to the 13th Century even before the original synagogue was built. Only about 300 Jews live in the town today.

The small, ornately decorated synagogue in Cavaillon was rebuilt in the 18th Century. It has a women's section located below the wooden floor and apparently when the women were disturbing the men by talking too much the latter would stamp on the floor to get them to quieten down. The women's section

was also used to bake matzah. Today the synagogue is no longer used. It houses some historical artefacts, the most interesting of which is a menorah with a seven-branched candlestick, dated as 1st Century.

The synagogue in Avignon, located on Place Jerusalem, was built in 1846, replacing a previous building which had been destroyed by fire. Avignon is home to 2500 Jews⁷³ and hosts an active *minyan*.

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THE FARHUD VS THE NAKBAH

*

Zvi Gabay

During the holiday of Shavuot, Iraqi Jews commemorate the anniversary of the *Farhud* - the riots that took place on the Shavuot of 1-2 June 1941. In the riots, reminiscent of Kristallnacht in Germany, over 150 Jews were murdered, hundreds more were injured, much Jewish property was looted and synagogues desecrated. The memory of the riots remains fresh in the minds of Iraqi Jews.

Similar vicious attacks (*farhuds*) were experienced by almost all Jews who lived in Arab countries. Jews experienced such tragedies in Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Yemen and Egypt in the years following these countries gaining their independence from Great Britain, France and Italy. Unlike the Arabs of Palestine, the Jews in Arab lands did not declare war on their respective countries. They never fought against them, as the Arabs in Mandatory Palestine did against the Jewish villages and communities in kibbutzim, towns and cities throughout the *yishuv*, and afterwards against the newborn Jewish State of Israel. Many of them lost their lives, both before Israel's establishment and in retaliation for Israel's victories over Arab armies in the war of 1948. Some were executed by public hanging (in October 1948, the wealthy Shafiq el Adass was the first to be hanged, in the city of Basra in Iraq, on a false charge of spying for Israel).

The world has heard a great deal about the tragedies that happened to the Palestinian Arabs, termed the '*Nakbah*' ('Catastrophe'), but knows almost nothing about the injustices committed against Jews who lived in Arab countries. What took place in those lands was in effect an ethnic cleansing of the Jewish communities living there. In one country after another, Jews were forced to leave, leaving behind the bulk of their personal and communal assets, including schools, hospitals, synagogues, cemeteries and prophets' graves (some of which have since been demolished by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria). The Arab governments confiscated all their property.

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Attacks against Jews in Arab lands occurred well before the establishment of the State of Israel. In Iraq, persecution began with discrimination in the areas of the economy, education and public life. Afterwards, Arab nationalism ignited the fires of antisemitic rioting, culminating in the *Farhud* of 1941. Similar tragedies befell Libyan Jewry. On 2 November 1945 (the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration), 133 Jews were killed and 400 injured; on the same day in Egypt, many Jews lost their lives and synagogues were set on fire. In November 1947, 100 Jews were murdered in Yemen-Aden.

The war of 1948 led to many more anti-Jewish attacks. In June, scores of Jews were murdered and their property looted in UJda and Jrada in Morocco. Many Moroccan Jews fled to Algeria. Later that year, in the dead of night, a mass expulsion took place in Egypt. There was a horrifying anti-Jewish atmosphere throughout the Arab world, fanned by inflammatory rhetoric.

The combination of xenophobic Sunni nationalism, as witnessed in our own day in most Arab countries and the spread of antisemitic ideologies produced a potent hatred against the Jews. According to the American historian Edwin Black, Hebrew University Professor S. Moreh and Dr Z. Yehuda of the Jewish Babylonian Heritage Centre, this hatred was abetted by Nazis such as the German envoy to Baghdad, Dr Fritz Grobba, and pseudo-religious leaders such as Haj Amin al-Husseini. The latter, who fled from Mandatory Palestine and became head of Hitler's Arabic propaganda department, found in Iraq a convenient venue for his anti-Jewish activities. There he called on Arabs and Muslims everywhere to expel all Jews from their countries. The well-known radio commentator Eliyhoo Nawi, who later became Mayor of Be'er Sheva, recalled a song that was broadcast by Arabic radio stations: "Let the sword speak...to thin out our Jewish cousins..."

Jews were left with no choice but to flee from countries that they had helped to found and, with their contributions to government, economy, medicine, education, literature, poetry and music, to bring into the modern era. Their catastrophe is almost forgotten; it is not properly taught in schools, as the *Nakbah* is being taught. It is not discussed in

the media, nor is it marked either nationally or within the United Nations institutions and UNRWA schools. Very few people anywhere are aware that approximately half of the Israeli population originates from Arab countries, where Jews had lived for thousands of years since being exiled from the kingdoms of Israel and Judea.

Arab propaganda has wisely concealed from international discussions the chapter of population exchange that occurred between Israel and Arab countries during and after Israel's War of Independence. It repeatedly claims the "right of return" for Palestinians Arabs who fought Israel, some of whom fled to the neighboring Arab countries (as per instruction by their leaders). Simultaneously, Arab propaganda has succeeded in ingraining in the general public worldwide the notion that Israeli Jews "have come from Poland and Germany..." while the "Palestinian *Nakbah*", which occurred through the fault of the Arab leadership, is the only disaster that took place upon Israel's establishment.

This historical distortion of the demographic and political reality has occurred in part due to our own fault. Israelis must place the issue of Jews from Arab lands on the agenda in their country as a key part of the history of the people of Israel. A national memorial center should be established for the hundreds of Jewish victims who lost their lives. For the sake of educating future generations, a proper commemoration of the plight and the heritage of Jews from Arab countries should take place. Simultaneously, the issue must be raised in international forums.

The *Nakbah* is marked every year on 15 May – the date of the declaration of Israel's independence - with public demonstrations. These are headed by Arab members of the Knesset who mourn the fact that their predecessors - the former leaders of the Arab community, Haj Amin al-Husseini and his followers - failed in their attempt to wipe out Israel, and organised by NGOS financed by foreign governments who parrot the Palestinian slogans. This noisy campaign receives wide media coverage. By contrast, the disaster that befell Arab Jewry hardly merits any public or media notice. This is despite the fact that its human and physical dimensions were larger than the *Nakbah* (the total number of Jews forced out of their homelands was about 856 000, while the Arabs who left Mandatory Palestine numbered about 650 000 – according to UNRWA statistics). Only on 22 February 2010 was the issue of the Jews from Arab countries placed on the Israeli agenda, with the enactment of The Law of Preservation of the Rights to Compensation of Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries and Iran. The Act states that any negotiations for

the achievement of peace in the Middle East must include the subject of compensation for those Jewish victims. Four years later, on 30 November 2014, a memorial ceremony took place in the President's residence to honor the existence and expulsion of the Jews from Arab countries, according to a law adopted by the Knesset that year.

Under the instructions of the Arab League, Arab governments have perpetuated the misery of the Palestinian refugees, not allowing them to be rehabilitated or to become citizens in their host countries. This is due to the ideology that maintains that rehabilitating the Palestinians would be to Israel's advantage. The Arab League insist that the refugees continue to live on charities received through UNRWA, most of whose funds are donated by the USA and other Western governments. Arab leaders have repeatedly placed full responsibility for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem on Israel. At the same time, Israel never made a serious effort to exonerate itself of this accusation, even though UN Resolution 194 (December, 1948) did not hold it responsible.

Another claim made by the Arab propaganda machine is that the Jews were not forced to flee from the Arab states, where they had allegedly "lived in peace and harmony". Here, a history lesson of the conflict would be in order. Arab propagandists would discover that during the 1947 UN debates on the proposal to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, their representatives (Heykal Pasha from Egypt, Dr. Fadhil el Jamali from Iraq, Jamal al-Husseini, head of the Palestinian Arab delegation and others) not only declared that "the partition line will be a line of fire and blood", but announced that partitioning Palestine would put the Jewish communities in the Arab countries in mortal danger. All acted according to a decision adopted by the Arab League political committee meeting held in Zofar, Lebanon, in September 1947. At that meeting the League further called on all Arab Palestinians to fight the partition plan "with no mercy", promising them financial assistance, arms and fighters in that regard. Further, the League called on its members "to open the gates" for those who might escape the fighting in Palestine. And there were many Arab refugees, despite the fact that some Arabs, particularly in Haifa, were persuaded not to leave.

Immediately after 29 November 1947 – the day that the partition plan passed - Arab gangs attacked the Jewish communities in Palestine while the Arab armies began planning to invade Palestine as soon as the British Mandate expired on 14 May the following year. Simultaneously, the above-noted riots against Jews in Arab countries began.

There were certainly people in the Arab countries who did not support the attacks on the Jews in their midst, but their voices were not heard. Jews were the scapegoats in internecine power struggles between Sunnis and Shiites, just as today Israel is at the center of the struggle between Shiite Iran and the Sunni Arab countries.

Notwithstanding the fact that the human dimensions of the catastrophe suffered by Jews from Arab countries were greater than those of the one suffered by the Palestinians the world's attention has always focused on the latter. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees in 1957 did indeed recognize Jews from Arab countries as refugees, but the UN General Assembly did not pass a single resolution on their behalf. By contrast, more than 160 resolutions and declarations have been passed in support of the Palestinian refugees. This one-sided approach has not solved the problem and indeed has exacerbated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It could be that the Jewish refugees were ignored because they were able to rehabilitate themselves, in Israel and elsewhere, with the conditions of their lives in the transition camps (*maabarot*) becoming a thing of the past. By contrast, all of the UN resolutions and the billions of dollars donated by the international community have not improved

the situation of the Palestinian refugees, who continue to live in appalling conditions (as witnessed during the vicious civil war currently taking place in Syria).

The time has come for Arab leaders to acknowledge the reality created by their wars on Israel. They should cease toying with the possibility of turning back history and stop reciting the "right of return" slogan for Palestinian refugees, thereby sowing illusions in their hearts. In recent years, a process of awakening can indeed be discerned in the Arab world, especially among intellectuals, who recognize that it was not only the Palestinians Arabs who suffered a '*Nakbah*' but that the Jews of the Arab world had their own catastrophe.

A solution to the tragedy of the refugees in the Middle East – Palestinians and Jews – can only be found by looking at the total picture. Any solution must be shared by the Arab states, Israel and the international community. It must be based on President Clinton's proposal in 2000 to establish an international fund to compensate Palestinian and Jewish refugees. In the Middle East conflict, the Palestinians were not the only ones to suffer; the Jews suffered too. Justice must be done, and it must be seen to be done, for both sides, for the sake of a true peace in the Middle East.



BENJAMIN POGRUND'S *DRAWING FIRE*: INVESTIGATING THE ACCUSATIONS OF APARTHEID IN ISRAEL – A SUMMARY

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Rodney Mazinter

Respected commentator and senior journalist Benjamin Pogrund has mastered the art of dissecting received opinion and exposing the truth beneath. His political views while deputy editor of the now defunct *Rand Daily Mail*, a liberal newspaper that was targeted and became a victim of South Africa's apartheid regime, resulted in his doing time in prison. During his tenure as editor of the RDM he fearlessly exposed the iniquities of the Nationalist government and nailed his anti-apartheid colours to the mast.

Reporting on the political scene in South Africa has literally changed Pogrund's life. After his departure from the country he wrote for the *Independent* in London, and the *WorldPaper* in Boston. He has also written for *Haaretz* in Tel Aviv, the *Guardian* in London, *Facta* in Tokyo, the *Star* in Johannesburg and others.

In *Drawing Fire - Investigating the Accusations of Apartheid in Israel* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), Pogrund shows how disproportionate criticism of Israel, particularly the use of the *Israel = Apartheid* analogy, distorts the facts and incorrectly promotes the tendentious, malicious accusation that Israel practices apartheid against the Palestinians.

Pogrund writes: "Israel is relentlessly criticised. Even its right to exist is questioned. However, deconstructing the criticisms reveals that overwhelmingly, they are based on falsehoods, distortions, prejudice or lack of knowledge, ... often emanate[ing] from people...who hate and reject Israel as a Jewish state."

Pogrund acknowledges that "Israel, despite awesome achievements, is not a perfect society." Every country in the world has its problems and a great many are open to the same criticisms leveled at Israel. Israel does much that is commendable but also is

by no means beyond censure. Complicated social interactions set against a backdrop of a state of war with hostile neighbours bring about decisions that impact on its Palestinian inhabitants, sometimes poorly. When the legality of its position is ignored not only by its enemies, but also by the international media, and when Israel's policies relating to settlers in the West Bank do nothing to help its cause, it is not surprising that the malevolent intentions of the Muslim states hold sway.

In this summary, the reader will learn:

- Why it is important to ask and challenge questions, now and whenever hearing, seeing or reading negative reports about Israel.
- The importance, given the negative propaganda about Israel, of not taking news reports at face value and of questioning their veracity by educating oneself on the facts.
- Why helping others understand the true situation depends on informing oneself.
- How to weather poor reporting and form one's own opinions based on relevant and verifiable information.

1. The Beginning

Zionism had its Genesis in a climate of a search by Jews in Europe and Russia for personal actualisation and a desire for freedom from oppression after 1780 years of enslavement, libel, slander, defamation and containment. Lives eked out, existing as second-class citizens in hostile countries gave rise to a stirring that culminated in a strong political move to return to the Biblical and historical homeland of the Jews.

Compared to Europe, the Jewish diaspora lived in relative peace among the Muslims in North Africa albeit as second-class citizens (*dhimmitude*) and were never totally secure.

The stirrings of freedom engendered by the French Revolution kindled Jewish intellectuals appalled by the plight of Jews to write arguing the case for a return to Zion and a rebuilding of *Eretz Israel*. Outstanding among these was Theodor Herzl, whose book *Die Judenstaat* ("The Jewish State")

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galvanized thought in the Jewish communities in the late 19th Century. At first, many Jews were hostile to the idea and remained so in significant numbers until the events in the 20th Century that gave rise to violent antisemitism and culminated in Nazism and the Holocaust persuaded the vast majority of what remained of diaspora Jewry to see a mass move to Palestine (Zionism) as the solution to the Jewish question.

The bonds of a common religion and the Hebrew language that had sustained Jews in the diaspora was also the cement that secured the foundations of what was to become the new state of Israel; a vaguely delineated expanse of land, mainly desert, that described an area on the eastern extent of the Ottoman Empire.

The existence of vast reserves of oil and its growing importance in the mechanized world, the demise after World War I of the Turkish influence followed by Britain's imperfect mandate, the post-war division of Ottoman lands, the formation of new countries arbitrarily established and allocated among the Arab populations, the political maneuverings of firstly the League of Nations, and later the United Nations and, not least, the importation of hatred for Jews from the ravages of World War II, served to prepare the ground for the trauma that marked the advent of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948.

2. Freedom and War

Israel came into being by virtue of a United Nations resolution, passed in November 1947 against a backdrop of violence by Arabs against Jews in Mandated Palestine. On the declaration in May 1948 of the new state of Israel, five Arab armies from surrounding states attacked the fledgling state in a war of 'Annihilation'.

In what some termed God's will and others call *nakba* (catastrophe) the under-prepared, poorly equipped, ill-trained, amateur fighters of Israel prevailed over huge odds, and the new state arrived with a bang and a fanfare. Back-to-the-wall determination and effort brought about the defeat of the Arab armies.

After the war the new state stabilised quickly by firstly installing the trappings of a representative democracy and independent judiciary, and drawing in the disparate fighting groups to form a national army. A UN brokered truce set the boundaries of the warring parties, but brought neither peace nor negotiated borders. In the chaos that prevailed in those beginning years the groundwork was laid for Arab rejectionism and ongoing war by any means, leading to terrorism. The eventual elimination of Israel was enshrined in Arab policy by being

incorporated in the various movements' charter documents and by resolutions by Arab state organisations.

Internal disputes between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews complicated the situation. It took many years for this predicament to settle down into an era of mutual tolerance among Israelis.

This war also marked the start of the Arab refugee problem, with about 750 000 fleeing the new country and the refusal of surrounding Arab states to absorb them.

This state of affairs pertained for twenty years until the Six Day War of June, 1967. A pre-emptive strike by the Israeli air force decimated the Egyptian air force on the ground and a determined land attack drove them out of the Gaza and Sinai. A similar fate befell the Syrians and Jordanians who were driven out of the Golan, Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria (today's West Bank).

Israel offered to return the Sinai and the Golan to Egypt and Syria in return for peace; this search for an accommodation with its enemies, sometimes successful, more often not, continues until this day.

3. Inside the Green Line

Modern Israel began to take shape after the Six Day War and the beginning of a shift from an agricultural to a technological economy. The borders with Egypt and Jordan were established in separate peace agreements; those with Syria, Lebanon and the West Bank were not, and remain an issue to this day.

Israel showed itself to be a democracy as valid in the way it conducted its affairs as any other in the free world. However, like others, it has its imperfections that were exacerbated by a growing terrorist onslaught. This gave rise to a schism that developed between the minority Palestinian Arab citizens and the Jewish majority. Despite this, Israel's democratic pedigree held firm and all citizens enjoyed equal protection from the courts which upheld the founders' determination to make Israel a country that conducted regular elections embodying universal suffrage, sending representatives to a parliament (*Knesset*), a free press and independent courts to which all citizens had access.

Over the years, as Israel continued to battle with terrorism from across its borders, a progressively more conservative *Knesset* was elected, reflecting the fears of the Jews and their demand to be protected by the government. The socialist, agrarian dream of Israel's founders was dismantled on the rocks of modernity and necessity as Israel sought to maintain its edge over its hostile neighbours. This led to social discrimination

against Arabs, something at variance with the vision of Israel's founders.

The debate revolves around religious and secular issues, military service, land ownership and settlements, the latter being a very contentious matter that finds emotional resonance among all the other issues mentioned above.

Despite all the arguments over differences, Israel is far removed from being an apartheid state by any definition or comparison. While there are social divisions that keep groups separate from each other, these are not mandated and enforced by laws and are no worse than can be found in any democratic country one would care to mention. In any event Israel's conduct of its social arrangement is streets ahead of the discrimination found in many of the countries that are Israel's most virulent critics.

4. The Occupation

Israel does itself a serious disservice and lays itself open to criticism and accusations of practicing apartheid by encouraging, or at least tolerating, settlement in the West Bank. At the very least it ties up the army in a difficult and thankless task of providing protection to thousands of Israeli settlers in an area that has been designated as an envisaged Palestinian state that would co-exist in peace with the Jewish state.

There can be little doubt that the Palestinians manipulate the negotiation process to their own advantage and enter into talks with Israel with an insincerity that is breathtaking in its obstructionism, distortions and lies. However, Israel does itself a mischief and Jews in Israel and the diaspora an injury by its lack of patience and disregard for the future and wellbeing of all people living in Israel and in the disputed territories.

There is no other option but a two-state outcome to the conflict. Historical precedent needs to be set aside in the interest of finding peace and Israel should promote it vigorously. It should not face accusations of seeking to annex the West Bank, a solution the modern world will not accept.

5. What Was Apartheid? Are They The Same? Comparing Israel and Apartheid SA

Pogrund spends the next three chapters (forty pages) examining the prevailing governing system of Israel with that of apartheid South Africa. He begins by looking at the philosophy underpinning the system of separating the races that prevailed in South Africa and how a minority grouping of white settlers, sustained by the power of historical

colonialism, kept the black populations under subservience and condemned them to second-class citizenship. This was achieved through laws promulgated in a whites-only parliament and enforced by a white controlled police force.

The subsequent social engineering experiments culminating in 'Grand Apartheid', whereby the land surface of South Africa was divided into self-governing "Bantustans" subservient to the white parliament was rejected by all, including a significant white segment, and was doomed to failure. The entire system and structure eventually foundered on moral and economic grounds.

Pogrund then demonstrates in the next two chapters that in no measure can Israel's governance of its multi-cultural population be compared in any way with the separation pertaining in South Africa. No legal separation exists in law, government, military service, ownership of land and property, education, sport, entertainment, business, or social interaction, nor is any restriction placed on Israeli groups or Israeli individuals of any race, religion or culture, seeking to achieve the highest level possible in these activities. Every Israeli enjoys full, equal and unencumbered citizenship with freedom of movement anywhere in the country, and freedom from fear of being arrested for not carrying the right documents.

It is claimed by critics that Israel and apartheid South Africa both use detention without trial, therefore Israel is apartheid. This is an argument that is both fallacious as it is inaccurate. Every one of Israel's accusers uses detention without trial, yet no apartheid issue is made of that. The USA and other Western countries have also been known to use it on occasions of danger and urgency (Guantánamo Bay). Apart from security issues and precautions common to all countries, Israel's citizens are free and cannot by any definition be considered to be living in an apartheid state.

6. The Critics (1) and (2)

Pogrund points out that, "Israel is relentlessly critici[s]ed. Even its right to exist is questioned. However, deconstructing the criticisms reveals that, overwhelmingly, they are based on falsehoods, distortions, prejudice or lack of knowledge. They often emanate from people with tendentious motives who hate and reject Israel as a Jewish state."

The appellation 'apartheid' is a political ploy used to denigrate Israel despite its impressive achievements and performance as a moral, caring society that holds life dear. It is easily demonstrated that millions of lives throughout the world have been saved and

positively affected by Israel's technological achievements in many fields, including medical, health, water management and IT, and that the country shows an unrestricted willingness to share its knowledge and achievements with the world.

But, like all societies, Israel is imperfect and makes mistakes. It is these errors of judgment and decisions that its enemies latch on to, blow entirely out of proportion, and use to berate her in international forums. These critics can be found in organisations such as the various bodies that go to make up the United Nations, especially the UN Human Rights Council and the skewed representation of Israel's enemies in the General Assembly.

Out of this international campaign against Israel have come disparate bodies from both the extreme left and right such as BDS and neo-Nazi groups that operate on the fringes of normal society. Their mutual target is the State of Israel and their coin is distortion, exaggeration and outright lies. Out of these murky waters has emerged former US president Jimmy Carter, Christine Chinkin, John Dugard, Alister Sparks, Alice Walker, Richard Falk, Ronnie Kasrils and John Pilger. Also counted on the anti-Israel bandwagon are various academics, clerics and politicians, including Alan Boesak and Desmond Tutu.

To the above can be added a truly hostile mainstream and mainly left leaning press, TV and radio, where the concept of fairness and balance in reporting has been discarded. Also, in academia an assortment of vocal, but by no means a majority, of professors and other academics have turned against Israel, jettisoning balance, critical thought and context in their support for the Palestinian cause.

Organisations such as BDS and Palestinian Solidarity Committee have trampled over facts in their rush to condemn Israel and to destroy it. They unblushingly employ distortion, lies and invention to delegitimise the Jewish state, reawakening the ancient blood libels and dusting off the discredited fraud, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. They do not hesitate to disrupt meetings and cultural events to promote their ends.

Added to this motley assortment of critics must be added international political leaders such as Ahmadinejad, Khomeini, Gaddafi, Arafat, Abbas and others, all of whom wage or have waged an unrelenting campaign against Israel.

There is an ongoing, distorted depiction of the non-existence of Israel in schools and among the young from an early age. This denial serves only to raise fears among Israelis that the Palestinians and what they say are not to be trusted and serve only to prepare a growing population for hatred

of Jews, ongoing terrorism and unrelenting war. To compound this perception are the Hamas and PA charters that call for, inter-alia, death to Jews and the destruction of Israel. Iran calls for Israel to be wiped off the map. The intemperate reaction of some Jews has also served to keep the flames of conflict alive and leaders such as Menachem Begin and others have much to answer for in this regard.

7. The Big Issues

The obstacles preventing an accommodation between Jews and Muslims (Israelis and Palestinians) remain complex and daunting. On the surface they appear insuperable. But the alternative is equally, if not more so, unacceptable: endless war, insecurity, killing and an eventual general conflagration. Poggrund lists them as follows:

1. Israel's formation following the resolution of the UN that there should be two states, Palestinian and Jewish, living side by side in peace.
2. The refugees: largely the Palestinians who were not helped or absorbed by surrounding Arab states, but also Jews who were absorbed by the new state.
3. Jerusalem: a very contentious and intractable issue underpinned by religious zealotry, over which both parties are prepared to go to war.
4. Settlements: increasing Jewish settlements mainly in the areas surrounding Jerusalem has become a *cause célèbre* among the Palestinians and the international community.

Poggrund goes into some detail under all of these headings scrupulously setting out the pros and cons of both parties. He believes that these remain the main issues that will have to be addressed in order for an accommodation to prevail.

8. The Way Forward

Poggrund sets out to promote two states, Israel and Palestine, living together in cooperation and peace as the only possible way out of the mess. His view is that Israel, being the more powerful, has more scope for making concessions and should thus do more to lead the way in seeking reconciliation. The obstacles are not conducive to a policy of leaving them be to resolve themselves. A conscious effort must be made to tackle and overcome them.

Is there a lesson to be learned from the South African experience? Poggrund observes: "There is no sentimentality in advocating

peace. The South African experience offers a guide – not false, contrived analogies with apartheid but instead drawing on hard-headed self-interest. Both blacks and whites finally reached the conclusion that they could not go on as before and struck a deal, which is what the Jews and Arabs must do.” He poses the following questions that all people of good will must answer:

1. Is it too late for two states?
2. Are the doomsayers correct?
3. Have the settlements spread so far and wide in the West Bank and East Jerusalem that a viable independent Palestinian state is no longer possible?
4. Has a point of no return been passed?

A one state solution is no solution at all because in any form it means the demise of Israel. Either the influx of Arabs into Israel will presage a swamping of the Jews to the eventual loss of their self-determination. Or if the Jews impose their will by force on the Arabs in the West Bank they will lay themselves open to charges of practicing an apartheid solution and be forced to defend it at great cost in lives and money.

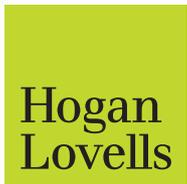
The entire world has a stake in seeing that the conflict in the Middle East does not bring on the Armageddon.

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RABBI B M CASPER AND THE JEWISH INFANTRY BRIGADE IN WORLD WAR 11

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Barbara Rigden

In 1897, the World Zionist Organisation was founded with the aim of re-establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine, then still part of the Ottoman Empire. Using the Jewish population already existing in the territory as a foundation, Zionist pioneers established scattered and generally isolated agricultural communities. In 1917, about 85 000 Jews lived in Palestine, largely comprising families that had been there since ancient times.

During World War 1, a 'Jewish Legion' was formed. It was not officially called this, but the term was used by those who first conceived the idea of securing a Jewish military formation to serve with the British army in Palestine during the war. In Egypt, Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky and Captain Joseph Trumpeldor recruited for war service over 600 Jews who had been expelled from Palestine by the Turks. The recruits were not used in the campaign to liberate Palestine from Turkey, however. Instead, they took part, as the 'Zion Mule Corps', in the 1915 Gallipoli campaign. The unit was disbanded on 26 May 1916.

It was not until much later, after a long political struggle (in which Jabotinsky was the moving spirit), that Jewish volunteers in England were formed into a fighting unit, called the 38th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, and commanded by Colonel Patterson. Another battalion, commanded by Colonel Eleazar Margolin, was recruited in America in 1918. After training at Windsor, Nova Scotia, it was sent to England, then on to Egypt and from there to Palestine. This Battalion was given the name of the 39th Royal Fusiliers. A third Jewish Battalion, the 40th Royal Fusiliers, was recruited in Palestine itself after the British occupation, but the British authorities procrastinated so long about it that the fighting was over before it could reach the front. Jabotinsky records that it had been planned to call the unit 'The Jewish Regiment', with the insignia of

the proposed uniform featuring a Menorah with the Hebrew word *Kadimah* and a blue-white mark on the collar. These efforts were regrettably aborted by the interference of 'assimilationist plutocrats' and it was not until 1919 (after the war) that the Jewish regiments were given a Jewish name and Menorah insignia.

Thus, according to Jabotinsky, the Legion consisted of three '*Gedolim*' - battalions- of the Royal Fusiliers. The battalions were Jewish in fact, if not in name. There was no unified Jewish command or HQ, nor was there a common, recognised, official flag or banner. The only mention of a flag was when the 40th Battalion Royal Fusiliers, on the eve of finally departing for Egypt, assembled outside the synagogue in Tel Aviv on 30 June 1918. There, Dr Chaim Weizmann presented a flag made for it by the woman of Tel Aviv.

The total number of Jews in the three battalions of the 'Jewish Legion' was over 10 000. In 1918, the victorious Jewish legionnaires were amongst those who entered Jerusalem under the command of British Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Edmond Allenby, ending the centuries-old administration by Turkey. Finally, Palestine was freed from Turkish rule! The Jewish Legion was highly praised by Allenby for its heroic stand on the Palestinian front.

In 1917, in terms of the Balfour Declaration, Britain had taken the momentous step of declaring its official support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Soon after the war ended, it was granted a mandate (a temporary right of administration) to take charge of Palestine by the League of Nations. Britain hence became the custodian responsible for the government of Palestine in the period between the First and Second World Wars.

Under the British administration, Jewish immigration continued steadily so that by 1947, the Jewish population had grown to approximately 650 000, compared with an Arab population of over 1 000 000. This influx generated firstly distrust, and then fear on the part of the Palestinian Arabs, and their anxieties were exploited and fired up by their political and religious leaders, in particular Mohammed Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem.

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An estimated 1 300 000 - 1 500 000 Jews served in the Allied forces during World War II. Two days after war broke out on 1 September 1939, at a meeting held at the offices of the Jewish Agency, the General Council of Palestine Jews (*Vaad Leumi*) called for volunteers to register for service. This would be necessary in the first instance to (a) serve the needs of the Jewish community as regards security, economic life, and other public requirements and (b) be at the disposal of the British military authorities in Palestine for such services as might be required.

100 000 men and women eventually volunteered. However, it was felt in the *Yishuv* (community of the Jewish people in Palestine) that their offer was being deliberately ignored. Jewish volunteers wished to form a separate Jewish military unit, but experienced extreme frustration and disappointment as for four years their request was by-passed by various artificial restrictions. These delaying tactics were aimed at appeasing the Arab communities in Palestine, who were putting pressure on the UK government.

Yet in spite of all these set-backs and restrictions, volunteer units of Palestinian Jews were deployed and fought well in North Africa and Italy. By the time of the battle of Al Alamein there were over 20 000 Palestinian Jews, the bulk of whom were in purely Jewish units, serving in the Middle East. These brave 'Soldiers of Judea' saw service in France, England, Greece, Crete, Abyssinia, Libya, Cyprus, Iraq, and Palestine. They took part in the landings on Sicily and Italy and in the subsequent Italian campaign. From Habbaniyah in Iraq to the north of Italy, the trail is dotted with the graves, bearing the Magen David, of the fallen men from these Palestinian units.

The creation of the Palestine Regiment with its three Jewish battalions brought new hope to Palestine Jewry that its sacrifices and efforts would be acknowledged at last. Finally, the dream of the young soldiers of Judea to come face to face in combat with the murderers of their people seemed on the point of realisation. Once again, however, they were to be disappointed and their anticipation and enthusiasm crushed. For three years in the Egyptian desert, they did menial, if necessary work, day in and day out guarding prisoners of war and watching over aerodromes, ammunition dumps, filling factories, stores and docks, big ordnance production and storing garrisons. They experienced no action, no adventure, nothing to relieve the monotony. Their frustrations were further aggravated by a lack of reliable information and horrific unconfirmed rumours

that were filtering in regarding the eradication of Europe Jewry. Many still had family and relatives in Europe.

Reverend Bernard Moishe Casper, the future Chief Rabbi of South Africa, was stationed in Egypt with the First (Jewish) Battalion, Palestine Regiment, at the time of the formation of the Jewish Brigade and was appointed as its senior chaplain. The remainder of this article draws substantially on his book *With the Jewish Brigade* (Edward Goldston, London, 1947), to which the bracketed page numbers that follow refer.

It was the morning of Rosh Hashanah, 20 September 1944. When Rav Casper came out of his tent, he found great excitement amongst the men and a sense that something unusual was happening. Going over to one of the groups, he learned the exciting news. One of the men had heard in a BBC radio announcement that the Palestine Regiment, with its three Jewish Battalions, was to be formed into a Jewish Brigade!

The BBC report was confirmed a week later, 28 September, by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in the House of Commons. With reference to the report, he said:

The British Army in Italy includes also Palestinian units; and here I would mention the announcement, which hon. Members may have read, and which I think will be appreciated and approved, that the Government have decided to accede to the request of the Jewish Agency for Palestine that a Jewish Brigade Group should be formed to take part in active operations. I know there are vast numbers of Jews serving with our Forces and the American Forces throughout all the armies. But it seems to me indeed appropriate that a special Jewish unit, a special unit of that race which has suffered indescribable torments from the Nazis, should be represented as a distinct formation amongst the forces gathered for their [the Nazis'] final overthrow, and I have no doubt they will not only take part in the struggle, but also in the occupation which will follow.

This announcement not only thrilled these 'Men of Judea' of the 'Palestine Regiment' who after over four years of waiting, of frustration found it hard to believe that their dream of confronting the enemy face to face on equal terms as Jews would finally be realised. It sent a message of new hope and pride to Jewry throughout the world. Jews of England and America and other countries of freedom, soldiers fighting all over Europe, were inspired by the news. Very importantly, the news reached the agonised

Jews of 'Hitler's *Gehenna*' (Hitler's Hell) in the ghettos of Warsaw and Kovno, and other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe, instilling in them new courage and hope. Likewise in Palestine, the news that their brothers, after nearly five years of perseverance and waiting, were finally going to be formed into a Jewish fighting force filled the *Yishuv* with pride.

Wrote Rav Casper, "All doubts and speculation ... as to the validity of the announcement were expelled when the Commanding Officer of the Palestine Regiment confirmed the report and said that they were to prepare to move within a few days...all cynicism was blown away and spirits ran higher than ever before in the past! Excitement permeated the whole camp and escalated as neighbouring troops stationed nearby from Tel el Kebir came to exchange the good news and to offer their congratulations and good wishes. Late into the night they all sang songs of the *Moledeth* (Jewish homeland) and danced the *Hora* over and over to exhaustion in brotherhood and solidarity!" (pp 17-18).

The next day, Rav Casper was called to the General Head Quarters and appointed as Senior Chaplain for the first Infantry Jewish Brigade Group Formation. The following week was spent in Palestine consulting with the Chief Rabbi, Jewish Agency, and *Vaad Lemaan Hachayil* (the Jewish Soldiers' Welfare Association). Rav Casper recorded how the subject of the Jewish Brigade dominated public interest and conversations at the many receptions that were given for him throughout the *Yishuv*. His most memorable experience was on the Shabbat morning service, held in the Yeshurun Synagogue in the new quarter of Jerusalem. He was called to the reading of the Torah, and the huge congregation rose and stood in silence as the *Chazan* recited a special *Misheberach* (Blessing) for the *Chayalenu* - Our Soldiers, the men of the Jewish Fighting Force! Afterwards, he was presented with a Sefer Torah for the Brigade, "which was to accompany us on all our journeyings, as the Ark of The Lord went with the Israelitish armies in the days of the Judges" (p19).

In preparation for leaving for Italy at the beginning of October 1944, the units of the Brigade began to assemble and a vast tented camp sprawled over the flat desert sands at Burg El Arab, on the road running between Alexandria and the historic battlefield of El Alamein. The encampment comprised three Jewish battalions, an artillery battery and an HQ with the Brigadier's flag fluttering proudly at top-mast-- a triangular flag with blue and white stripes and a golden Magen David in the centre. A blue and white

shoulder flash with a gold Magen David was also officially authorized. On 31 October, the Jewish Agency announced that the flag and the insignia of the Jewish Brigade had been approved. At last the Jewish fighting forces had their own flag and insignias, signifying their own particular identity and official recognition which they had yearned for and were denied when they fought as the Jewish Legion in World War I! There were also many units of Palestinian Jews fighting alongside the British armies who were later to join the Jewish Brigade in Italy.

One of the first exciting moments was the arrival of the Brigade's new commander, Brigadier E.F. Benjamin, Royal Engineers. He was a Canadian-born Jew, brought up in a completely British environment and with a record of 25 years of distinguished soldiering. There was much speculation amongst the men, whose lingua franca was Hebrew and who were almost entirely Palestinian, whether they would be able to blend together. They came from 54 different countries, including refugees from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and elsewhere, early pioneers from Poland and Russia who had come to Palestine twenty or thirty years earlier, Sabras who had been there from ancient times, dark-skinned Yemenite Jews and black Falashas from Abyssinia. All were moulded as one into the new Palestinian spirit and tradition. Rev Casper comments that it "was a tribute both to the adaptability of these men and to the leadership of Brigadier Benjamin that he was soon assimilated into this amalgam and taught his men to know and respect his military tradition". Included amongst the new commanding recruits were some British non-Jewish officers of different ranks.

The men's enthusiasm and pride was evident at the first brigadiers parade, in which everyone was 'Spit and Polished and Blanched' to perfection. Never had there been a prouder body of troops than these as they marched past the saluting base that memorable day! There was excitement and wild enthusiasm amongst the men who lined the desert roads running through the camp as each fresh convoy of vehicles, guns and armaments arrived. In constant expressions of spontaneous joy, they would break into singing *Am Yisrael Chai* - The People of Israel Lives! - and dance the *hora* (p22).

Correspondents and photographers visiting the camp were amazed at the high morale and eagerness that was everywhere apparent! One commented, "What marvellous human material Europe had cast out of its midst! Men who had been doctors, lawyers, artists, engineers, teachers, men of learning and skill, and had been driven from their land

of adoption by Jew-hatred, were now turning all their thoughts and energies to the task of destroying the spirit of Amalek, the spirit of Pharaoh, Haman and Hitler” (ibid.).



Chaplain B M Casper, Jewish Brigade

Rav Casper recalls the case of Ben Zion Yisraeli and Motke Chadash. One day he received an urgent call to see them, as had both began a hunger strike, having been told they were too old to be sent overseas with a fighting unit. In the army records they were put down as fifty, but in truth both were over sixty. Their indignation would have been amusing had it not been so sincere. Rav Casper was asked to appeal on their behalf, as they had called on their comrades in their kibbutzim to follow their lead and join up in the early days of recruiting, yet were now themselves to be left behind! On Rav Casper's intercession, the commander acceded to the men's wish. Both of them were later joined by their sons, and all did duty together throughout the entire front-line experience (pp22-3).

Before the troops left Egypt they were given an especially touching send-off by the *Yishuv*, with the Palestine Symphony Orchestra coming out to give the men the blessings of the *Moledeth* (the Jewish homeland) in music. A

crowded, improvised sandy 'amphitheatre' was hurriedly constructed, with collapsed trestle tables forming the 'stage' and three-ton trucks forming the three sides of a rectangle. The men crowded almost on top of one another as they listened with rapt attention to *Kol Nidrei*, the Unfinished Symphony and many more classical and traditional musical pieces.

On Tuesday morning, 31 October 1944, the men finally embarked at Alexandria for Italy. The whole ship carrying the convoy was suddenly converted into a "Jewish domain", like a floating Kibbutz: "In no time, all the notices have been transformed into Hebrew, the loud speakers are giving out orders and news-summaries in Hebrew, the ship's orderly room has been taken over by our clerks and the Ship's Daily Routine Orders are issued in Hebrew!" (p24). The crew of the Royal Navy politely looked on at this process of 'conversion' and apart from seeing to their own duties, left everything to the men of the Jewish forces.

On the night before the departure, the men gathered on the quarter-deck. The land could still be seen, although all was dark and the ship was completely blacked out for safety and security. Soon, "a song broke out on someone's lips, and within a few minutes, a thousand voices had joined in the chorus.... we were thinking of Lake Kinneret, of the waters of Tel Aviv beach; of the Emek lying beneath just such a starry sky" (ibid. 24-5). The singing grew in volume and as the men squeezed up into "a massed, rough but harmonious choir". Finally, an order comes for bed: "Clear the decks!" As one man and without being told to do so, they stand to attention and sing *Hatikvah*. "We are on the way to the ghettos and camps of Europe with our message of hope" (p25). Farewell Burg El Arab! Afrique Adieu!

On landing on the shores of Italy, the convoy was transported to the place that had been assigned to the Brigade – a small village high up in the mountains some eighty miles inland from Rome, called Fiuggi. This was to be the men's home for the next four months. The men had to adapt from the extremes of the heat of the Egyptian deserts to the contrasts of an Italian white icy cold winter. It was especially hard for the Sabras and Yemenite Jews, who were experiencing the cold snows of a European winter, high up in the mountains, for the first time. In no time, however, the men adapted and turned this remote village into an outpost of Judea. The Military Police section under Captain 'Danny' Lifschitz, took special pride in making and displaying signs of the blue and white triangular shield with the golden Magen David, in Hebrew and English, which were signposted throughout the whole village

and surrounds within the vicinity.

The prime purpose of being stationed at Fiuggi was for military training. Until then, although the men had been in the infantry units for three or four years, they had for political reasons been denied full training with up-to-date fighting weapons. Their fighting potential had been wasted in Egypt, where they mainly be used for guarding duties and mundane unskilled labour. Now that they were to become part of “the immortal British 8th Army”, it seemed as if the authorities were determined to give them everything needed to fit them in as a front-line force. This needed training, and preparation to which the men rose to the occasion. They worked at their military exercises, training and drilling, with almost feverish intensity. Their one fear was that the final Allied victory might come too soon, before they were ready to strike their blow against the hated enemy (p27).

Amongst the training routines were route marches, shooting practice, learning the intricacies of the Bren carrier, mortar bombs and six-pounders and mastering the art of signalling and decoding messages. Visitors were amazed at the men’s energy and speed of their progress. “Pride in their engines of war” was their first consideration, and the Magen David flash on their mudguards ensured that every vehicle was kept clean. Soon every truck had been given a Hebrew name: ‘Tel Aviv’, ‘Sarah’, ‘Miryam’, and so on (ibid).

Military training was not the only factor on the lives of the men who, after all, were not only soldiers, but first and foremost Jews. Rav Casper relates: ‘Within a very short time after our arrival in Fiuggi ... the village began to take on outwardly a distinctly Jewish character. The Jewish flag flew over our Brigade Head Quarters. Every unit, every officers’ and sergeants’ mess, the men’s dining rooms and billets, all were marked with our Hebrew signs and Magen David. Wherever one went, one heard Hebrew spoken, so that even the Italian peasants and their ‘*Bambini*’ came in a short time to greet us with ‘Shalom’. And of course, the Palestinians do nothing without singing, and the sound of Hebrew songs was ever present. One almost had the feeling of being in a kibbutz or Jewish village in *Eretz*” (p28).

The men responded with intense emotion to any expression of Tarbut (Hebrew culture). This was probably the reaction after the long struggle they had had for the recognition of their self-expression in Hebrew. Here at last every manifestation of their Jewish culture could be freely expressed and was being recognised both publicly and officially. The publication of Orders in Hebrew, the use of

that language, not only as the vernacular, but for word of command in training and later on the battlefield, the Jewish flag, the Magen David everywhere, the publication of their own Hebrew magazines and newspaper, the automatic observance of the Shabbat and Jewish Holy Days, all these formed the atmosphere in which the Brigade lived, and evoked the deep, though never spoken, pride and gratitude of every man (p29).

Shabbat in the Brigade was very important, and deserves a special reference. Rav Casper relates” (p30): “When I discussed with the Brigadier, soon after his arrival, my side of the work, it was agreed that as we were a Jewish formation, the day ‘off’ in so far as it would be possible to have a day off, would always be Saturday. And as soon as we settled down in Fiuggi, orders were given that official training and all work would cease at mid-day on Friday until Sunday morning. Guard duty would be done on a rotational roster as well as any other very essential duties. Friday afternoon was devoted to cleaning-up and preparing to receive the ‘Shabbat Bride’. Those walking through the Main Street at this time would hear, as they passed the shower-baths, “a regular choral recital of Shabbat songs, *Zemiroth* (liturgical songs) and even one or two more liturgically minded individuals trying their hands, or rather their voices, at a *Hashkivenu* (a prayer of the evening service “Cause us to lie down, Oh Lord Our God, in peace...”) or *Lecha Dodi*. A beautiful temporary synagogue had been constructed to resemble an authentic *Beth Hamikdash*, with moveable units forming the base and decorated with beautiful embroidered cloths, candle sticks, wall hangings and the flag of *Eretz* as well as the Brigade flag.



Interior of the synagogue, Fiuggi

As the day drew to a close, a stillness fell upon Fiuggi, and only a few special orderlies - clerks, operators and sentries - could be seen on duty. The synagogue

service over, it was the Rav's privilege to repair to one of the men's messes to recite Kiddush and open the *Mesibah* (Sabbath meal). What a rich site this always was! A few hundred men clean and neat looking seated at the long tables covered with white table cloths (if sheets weren't available, there was always white paper) and bedecked with choicest fruit and nuts that could be sourced from local produce and village markets. On each table burned two candles, with helmets doing service as candlesticks. Invariably the walls were specially decorated too, with a map of Palestine, a photograph of Herzl or Weizmann, one or two Biblical verses and *Tehillim* (Psalms) printed in huge letters by the unit artist. A chapter from the Bible - frequently the week's *Haftorah* - would be read, a lecture, a satire, a revue of the week's Jewish news, songs, and excellent refreshments made up a rich programme (pp30-1).

The men of the Brigade - even the most assimilated - always kept the Shabbat, every Friday night and Saturday. They looked forward to it and it was an integral part of their lives. During the week, units vied with each other in producing the best programme. Each unit had its own *Tarbut* committee which worked continuously, after the day's normal work, to plan the next Friday evening down to the last detail. The men were bonded as brothers, connected to their ancient roots by their traditions and identifying with one another not only as comrades but like family, one people, one nation. They kept the Shabbat. But more important was that the Shabbat kept them!

The Brigade's four-month stay at Fiuggi included two very picturesque festivals - Chanukah and Purim. The Rav recalls: "Chanukah in particular will certainly be long remembered by the men and the local Italian population for many miles around. For, in addition to all the many candles that were lit during the Festival week in every mess, recreation-room and club room in the camp area, our pioneers fashioned a huge menorah out of stout tree-branches and fixed it up on the top of the highest building in the village, so that its lights, which were kindled by electricity every night, were visible for certainly at least twenty miles on the way to Rome" (pp32-3).

Chanukah, meaning 'Dedication', is the Festival of Lights. Symbolically, we are taught that we should be the "light unto the nations", spreading goodness and kindness and working for the upliftment of our fellow man in the service of Hashem. Great rivalry took place between the units for producing the most original form of *Menorah* - indeed, some of the creations might have

been exhibition show pieces! One that Rav Casper particularly remembered was made out of four rifles crossing at the centre, with bayonets fixed onto the barrels so that the big candles could be stuck on to them. Thus to the men it represented the force of the guns ascending and merging to the light of peace and freedom.

The Rav reminisces: "When we opened our Brigade Club and Canteen on the first night of Chanukah, 5705/1944 and the Brigadier concluded his speech with a couple of sentences in 'Ivrit', a thrill as of an electric current seemed to run through the mass of men who crowded the hall. The cheering was terrific, and for a moment it seemed as if the Brigadier was in real danger of being lifted bodily and flung into the air for very joy and excitement" (pp28-9).

Purim unfortunately fell on the day the Brigade was preparing to leave Fiuggi for the front. Preparations were being made the whole of the previous day, packing kit, loading the trucks, fuelling their vehicles and making sure that everything was ready for the move. Although the men were thoroughly exhausted, Rav Casper felt that he couldn't allow the occasion to pass without a reminder of Purim. Word was sent around that at 7.00 o'clock that evening, Purim Eve, there would be a service in the already dismantled synagogue, where the *Megillah* would be read. Hundreds of men squeezed into that room to hear again the Biblical account of how Haman of old was defeated in his design to destroy the Jewish people. Had they come to take courage for the fight they were soon to embark on against the Haman of today?

The Brigade's Hebrew name was *Chativah Yehudith Lochemeth* - 'Jewish Fighting Force' - but it soon became known by its affectionate abbreviation condensing the three words into one: *Chayil* (Valour). A few weeks before the end of the training, a magazine called *Al Hasaf* ('On the Threshold') appeared, produced by the men of the First Battalion. In his foreword for the first edition, Rav Casper wrote: "The thoughts which find expression in this magazine are the thoughts of the soldiers of the Jewish nation standing upon the threshold, on the eve of joining the battle, on the eve of the final overthrow of the Nazi tyranny, on the eve of our meeting with the remnant of Israel in Europe Many of you have already been pioneers in the great and sacred work of reviving our land; now a new pioneering task faces you --- to bring hope, life and new idealism in the rescue and revival to the dry scattered bones of Israel." (p35).

On route to the front, the Battalion reached Rome. There, they found that the great tradition they intended to pursue had

already been built up by other Palestinian units who had preceded them, particular those who had been in the Italian campaign since the landings at Anzio and Salerno. These were chiefly the R.A.S.C. (Transport) and R.E. Companies. The oldest of them, 178 Pal. Coy., R.A.S.C. (commanded by Major Wellesley Aaron, later awarded the MBE) became one of the units of the Brigade as soon as they began training at Fiuggi. This was a company of real veterans, who had been right through the North African campaign from El Alamein to Tunis, and then on to Malta and Italy. They had won praise from Field-Marshal Montgomery, and also had a glorious record of work on behalf of the Jewish communities wherever they had come into contact with them. Rav Casper writes:

These Palestinian troops had a fantastic sense of responsibility. It was amazing what a few companies, each with only about 300 men, had built up. But the strain was extremely heavy upon them, and it was a heaven-sent relief when the entire Jewish Brigade was stationed in this vital area. Some 9000 Jews were still left in Rome! Most of them were without means and desperately in need of even the most elementary necessities of life. Although the American Joint Distribution Committee was set up in Rome, but with all its enormous funds it was hampered by lack of staff, by too rigid an adherence to rules and regulations, by an "assimilationist directorate"; in short by a hopeless lack of personal, lack of an intimate contact with and understanding of the people who needed the help most, and of the urgency of their situation. On the other hand, the Brigade and the other Palestinian units had transport in abundance and, collectively, a few thousand men, every one of whom was burning to do something for his brother-Jews. We re-opened the former Community Jewish Schools and staffed them with teachers in uniform. The hundreds of children who flocked to us there received not only some schooling, but a knowledge of Hebrew and an understanding that the Mother-Home was calling to them (orphans they were in so many cases) from Palestine. And perhaps most important of all, they received some good hot meals....provided by our units" (p36).

The men of the Jewish Brigade and the Palestinian units kept four schools and three *Hachsharah* centres going in Rome and Bari. To do these acts of kindness, "incredible sums of money" were collected from the

men of all ranks from the ordinary private to the most high ranking officers ("Money had no value to them as compared with a little human comfort that they could bestow").

With fund raising for the cause of helping those in need in mind, an informal evening concert was arranged in one of the artillery batteries. Quite unexpectedly in the middle of the proceedings the cook produced "a most terrific, gorgeous cake" - *Uga Lippetim* ("A Cake for Refugees"). The Sergeant-Major (in peacetime, a professor at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem,) took charge at this point, and as a result of the ensuing 'American Auction', the sale of the cake finally realised £150.00. As the O.C. (officer commanding) commented afterwards to Rav Casper, "You bet I ate my five guinea slice of cake b---- slowly!"

Finally, Rav Casper describes the day when the Brigade departed Rome for the front (p38):

And now, try to picture the goodbyes when we left for the Front. As our enormous convoy passed through Rome - the Jewish Brigade on the way to face the enemy - thousands of Jews lined the route for hours, cheering and waving us on with their blessings. "*Shalom, Lehitraot, Be Artzenu!*" ["Farewell! Here's to meeting again in Our Land"] we shouted back, those of us who were not quite overcome by the lump in the throat".

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'A LIGHT UNTO NATIONS' - THE ROLE OF JEWISH BUSINESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

*

Philip Krawitz

Cast your mind back a few years..... As a Capetonian, you leave your Sea Point Apartment designed by Dennis Fabian and built by the Berman Brothers. You hop into your Toyota bought from the Sanks. You pop into Pick 'n Pay, founded by Raymond Ackerman, for some groceries. You're off to Artscape to watch a matinee starring Aviva Pelham in La Traviata. Thereafter you're off to the Spur, created by Allen Ambor (by the way, they now serve kosher burgers.) Tomorrow you'll visit the V&A, where you'll find an outfit for your granddaughter from Jonni Katz's Earthchild. Perhaps you'll even get a chance to get a new down jacket from Cape Union Mart, sneakers from Barry Selby's "The Athletes Foot" or a suit from Arie Fabian's Fabiani. And if you're feeling peckish, you'll grab a cappuccino from Ian Halfon's Balducci. Charge it all to Kantor & Koseff's Investec Card. Fortunately, your Liberty Life Pension cheque, thanks to Donny Gordon, will more than cover your expenses.

Indeed, you could be forgiven for believing that the whole world is Jewish! Nor would you be alone. When I first met Jacob Zuma before he became President, he asked me what the Jewish population was – "around a million, I suppose?" he suggested. Considering that at our peak of around 125 000 we were less than 2.5% of the white population and perhaps half of 1% of the total population, we indeed punch much above our weight.

In truth, a series of at least a dozen articles would be needed to adequately cover this topic. I will simply endeavour to paint broad brush strokes in a small corner of a very large canvas and apologise in advance for leaving out many of the business leaders who have played a vital role in South Africa over the past 175 years. Hopefully, I do not score too highly on the 'faribel' index!¹

I will start with a little about the early pioneers, going on from there to focus on some

Philip Krawitz is a prominent Cape Town businessman and executive chairman of the Cape Union Mart group. Amongst various Jewish communal leadership positions held, he is a former National Vice-Chairman of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies and Chairman of the SAJBD - Cape Council.

of the giants of the 20th Century covering the period when the Jewish population was at its peak and its influence appeared to be at its greatest. Thereafter, I will touch on Jewish contributions in the fields of agriculture, industry and the retail sector, and examine the role of some of our leaders in of organised commerce. I will be able to tell you a little about my own experiences in that regard as a third generation family member of Cape Union Mart. Finally, I will speak about the contribution by Jewish business leaders to the well-being of our country and the Jewish community specifically.

The Early Pioneers

Way back in the mid-19th Century, **Jonas Bergtheil** started accumulating land in the Cape Colony. He soon acquired nearly 200 000 acres and was probably the forerunner of Jewish prominence in the real estate industry. Typically, he paid attention to the welfare of fellow Jews in Europe. He was a strong advocate of immigration to South Africa and brought out forty German families, who founded the New Germany settlement in Natal.

According to Sarah Gertrude Millin, in her role as a social historian, Jews started out as peddlers going "across the veld with a pack of goods on their backs" and reappearing a few months later "with a Cape cart and horse...often they opened a shop". It is true that the legendary Sammy Marks was renowned for literally turning a case of Sheffield knives into a fortune. It is a fallacy, however, to believe that Jewish immigration laid the groundwork for a mainly *smous* (peddling) industry. The bulk of the immigrants were not simply unskilled hawkers earning money by peddling goods. Many came with knowledge of tailoring, textiles and cabinet and shoe making. There were also Jewish blacksmiths, pitch dealers, lime burners, lumbermen, gardeners and dairymen (like Tevya the milkman).

Many immigrants stopped off in London at the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter while waiting for a boat. About 40% were on their way to South Africa, and of these, 90% were from Lithuania. Reports from the

Shelter between 1895 and 1908 showed that of 9408 respondents, 23% said they were in trade and commerce, 29% had been in the garment trades, 9% were shoe and boot makers, 7% were carpenters and 2% were in agriculture. The remaining 27% were butchers, bakers, printers, coopers, barbers, furriers, jewellers, locksmiths, bricklayers, cigar makers and painters.

In a paper given at the first South African Zionist Congress in 1905, Rabbi J H Hertz said that “it was essential that Jews at least should be taught the truth; that they themselves should no longer look upon themselves as interlopers, as exploiters; but rather as active participants in the up building of the national life The smous had used his commercial and entrepreneurial spirit to turn his pack into a village shop, the tailor and cabinet maker had used their skills and entrepreneurial spirit to develop the fashion and furniture industries”.

Port Elizabeth became an important centre of the wool trade, with Jewish merchants, notably the **Mosenthal brothers**, playing a leading role. From bases in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, the Mosenthals set up a chain of trading stations in the interior of the Cape, usually manned by Jewish immigrants whom they had brought out from Germany. In those days there was no ‘JEE’ (Jewish Employment Equity). Jews had to help each other. The Mosenthals helped to stabilise the rural economy by providing long-term credit to storekeepers and, through them, to farmers. Before the advent of commercial banking, the firm’s notes were widely accepted in the development of banking and the financing of diamond and gold mining.

In the 1840s, the brothers **Aaron and Daniel De Pass** from Britain developed shipping, fishing and coastal trading enterprises in the south-western Cape. They also had interests in the newly discovered diamond fields in South West Africa, and Daniel was one of the pioneers of the sugar industry in Natal.

Barney Barnato, possibly the first Jewish tycoon in South Africa, partnered with Cecil John Rhodes to found De Beers Consolidated Mines. The two men controlled the production and marketing of diamonds with a model that has endured to this day. On the discovery of gold in the 1880s, they did much to develop gold mines based on the wealth and skill they had acquired in diamond mining.

It was the legendary **Samuel Marks** and his partner **Isaac Lewis** who established a number of industries in the Pretoria area. Their endeavours covered production of dynamite for the mines, a distillery and even a glassworks. The steel plant which they established in Vereeniging was the forerunner of the State-controlled ISCOR.

The 20th Century

After 1900, myriad Jewish leaders came to the fore in the fields of commerce and industry in South Africa. This was the age of real giants, whose fame and fortune have endured.

Sir Ernest Oppenheimer was born in Friedberg, Germany. He began his working life at 17 with a diamond brokerage in London and five years later, in 1902, was sent to South Africa by his employer. In 1927, he managed to gain control of De Beers and consolidate the company’s global monopoly over the world diamond industry. As an adult, Oppenheimer converted to Anglicanism and was ultimately buried at St George’s Church in Parktown. He was succeeded by his son, Harry, who went on to head up the Anglo American Corporation. Despite his father’s conversion, Harry had both a brit milah and a barmitzvah in the Kimberley synagogue. He converted to Christianity when he married his wife. Despite their conversion, the Oppenheims were often targeted as Jewish stereotypes.

In 1904, **Issy Schlesinger** founded the African Life Assurance Association. In 1949 he passed his empire to his son, John, who went on to become one of the doyens of the entertainment industry in South Africa. **John Schlesinger** was at the centre of the Johannesburg art scene from the 1960s to the 1990s. When he left South Africa in 1979, he donated the bulk of the Schlesinger collection to the University of the Witwatersrand.

If truth be told, though, the real visionary of the insurance industry was **Donald ‘Donny’ Gordon**, who started Liberty Life in the 1950s with initial capital of just R100 000. He had been shocked by the meagre pension of £12 per month paid to his father after decades in productive employment. By the time he retired as Chairman of Liberty Life in 1999, the company was valued at over R40 billion and was the country’s largest listed Life Assurance Company. Gordon’s innovative insurance products, which incorporated growth from equity investments, are probably the reason that many baby boomers are today retiring on decent pension pay outs. He was also the visionary behind the development of Sandton City, one of the world’s most successful shopping centres. In the year he retired, he was named as “The Achiever of the Century in South African Financial Services” by the *Financial Mail*.

In 2005, Gordon was awarded a knighthood by the Queen in recognition of his services to art and business. He also set new standards in the field of philanthropy by donating R100 million to set up the Wits Donald Gordon Medical Centre, the first private

teaching hospital in South Africa. He also established the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) in Johannesburg. The Donald Gordon Foundation, formed in the 1970s, is believed to be the largest private charity in South Africa, with projects in education, welfare, healthcare and wildlife.

Mendel Kaplan became recognised throughout the world as a great business leader, a great philanthropist and a great Jew. He transformed Cape Gate, founded by his father, Isaac, “from a modest business selling products like wrought iron and garden benches into a vast conglomerate producing its own steel”. Cape Gate became one of the largest privately owned companies in South Africa. Kaplan financed numerous philanthropic projects in South Africa, Israel and other Jewish communities around the world. In 1980, together with his brother Robert, he founded the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at UCT. In 2000, the Kaplans established the SA Jewish Museum. The Kaplan’s Foundation has also provided over 2500 bursaries for higher education for the children of Cape Gate’s employees.

As an industrialist, Mendel Kaplan set new standards in terms of corporate social responsibility. Cape Gate provided black employees with a range of services and aid programmes, including a crèche to care for children of employees during working hours, interest-free loans for the purchase of their own homes, and scholarships for tertiary education of employees’ children. Mendel also contributed much to the development of community projects, particularly in Boipatong township, an area from which Cape Gate drew a large part of its labour force.



Mendel Kaplan, zt”l with former Israel Prime Minister and current Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres at the Knesset, 1988.

Although we Capetonians have claimed him as our own, **Eric Samson** spent most of his life in the steel business operating from his

base in Johannesburg. He joined his father’s fencing and wiring business, Pan Africa Staalhandel in 1958, and became managing director of the business in 1965 after it merged with competitor, S Machanick and Co. He then founded Machanick Steel and Fencing – Macsteel. By 1974, he had bought out his partners to become the company’s sole owner. He went on to build Macsteel into an industrial empire across three continents. Before divesting the American operation, Macsteel was one of the largest privately owned companies in South Africa.

Eric and his wife, Sheila, set up the Eric and Sheila Samson Foundation, which has seen the family recognised as absolute leaders in the field of philanthropy. Eric serves on the Board of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, as well as on numerous Jewish communal boards. He has been recognised as a leading philanthropist in the Jewish world by having the title of Honorary Life World Campaign Chairman of Keren Hayesod bestowed upon him. From hospitals to schools to all communal causes and beyond in South Africa, the USA and Israel, the Samson family is regarded as one of the most generous families in the world. Although in so-called ‘retirement’, Eric continues to busy himself with both business and communal endeavours.



Eric Samson with another great businessman and philanthropist, the late Bertie Lubner, zt”l.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the **Gundelfinger, Beare, Moshal, Gevisser** and **Frame** families became legendary for their contributions to the South African economy. The Gundelfingers, who specialised in general importation, ironmongery and wholesale and retail trading, were strong advocates of encouraging local “infant industries” through tariff protection. Karl Gundelfinger was president of the Natal Chamber of industries and later president of the SA Chamber of Commerce.

Aaron Beare joined a small family furniture factory in 1925. Beare Brothers were amongst the pioneers of hire-purchase trading. They added household appliances to their stock and

began to concentrate on retailing. They listed the company in the 1960s. Today, the Aaron Beare Foundation is one of South Africa's largest charitable foundations. Aaron's son, Jonathan, has become a financial giant by investing in numerous companies run by young people, and his involvement in everything from property to the hotel industry, has seen him establish his own independent fortune. Like his father, he is also renowned for his philanthropy.

The Moshals and Gevissers also listed their company and similarly created the Jakamar Trust, which is one of KZN's major charitable foundations. I am privileged to be involved with **John Moshal** on the National Executive Committee of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, and am, as the saying goes, 'blown away' by the hundreds of bursaries awarded by the family, both in South Africa and in Israel.

Philip Frame became a legend in the textile industry after launching his manufacturing operation in Durban in 1928. By 1960, the Frame organisation had become a series of listed major industrial companies operating mills, factories and sales offices throughout South Africa. When Philip Frame died in 1979 the Group's workforce numbered way over 30 000. It is reputed that Frame claimed that sorting out his estate would take as many years as it took to build it!

Now let us look at the Cape. In the early 1900s, **Ellis Silverman** emigrated from Latvia to Cape Town. A qualified tinsmith, he soon began working in Saldanha Bay in a factory making the tin cans used to preserve rock lobster. In 1905, he partnered with a local boat owner, James Kasner, to establish the Saldanha Bay Canning Company. **Robert Silverman**, born Robert Milliner, was adopted by his uncle Ellis at the age of six. He formally changed his surname to 'Silverman'. After service in World War II, he honed his studies in technology and went on to build a fishmeal factory. This became the basis for the growth of the Saldana Bay Canning Company. In the early 1960s, the company acquired a floating fishmeal factory known as the Willem Barendz. This proved to be an extremely successful venture and was listed as W Barendz. Unfortunately, the authorities forced them to give up this venture as the boats were catching too much fish. Robert then partnered with **Rudy Frankel** to form Swafil in Walvis Bay. Politics forced them to exit Namibia in the late 1970s. Today, Saldana Bay Pilchards racks up sales of over 30 million cans per annum. This equates to one tin of pilchards being consumed every second of every day throughout the year by someone, somewhere in South Africa! In the early 1990s, Robert set yet another

example in terms of corporate responsibility by creating a scheme to assist all first time homeowners in his company to buy their own homes. A clinic was established for employees, where they and their children receive primary healthcare. The Silverman family are also recognised for their decades-long involvement with and generous support for Jewish communal causes.

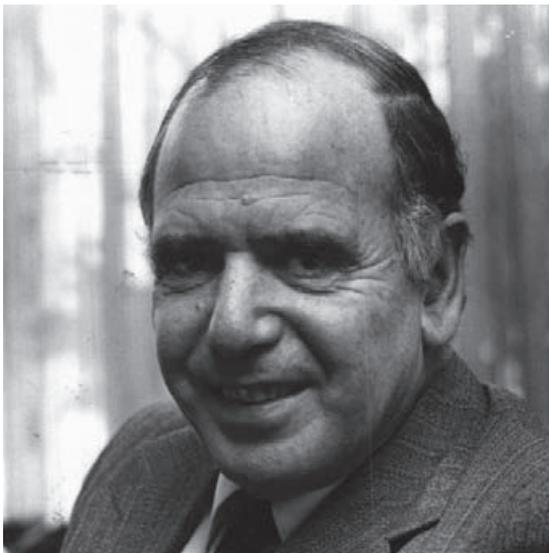
Jewish business leaders in the Western Cape became synonymous with the retail industry. Although it was originally founded by **Max Sonnenberg** in 1931, the late **David Susman** was responsible for building Woolworths into the model company that it is today. Woolworths has been a leader in quality and technology and its "Good Business Journey" has earned it recognition as one of South Africa's most admired companies. It has led the recent charge into overseas markets, where it is achieving considerable success. In the 1948 Israeli War of Independence, Susman served as an officer in the Israeli Defence Force. His lifelong association with virtually every Jewish cause in the Western Cape is evidence of his commitment to the Jewish community. He preceded this writer as chairman of both the United Herzlia Schools and the United Jewish Campaign's Boards of Trustees.

Morris Mauerberger started off selling door to door - mainly at the back doors - of homes in Sea Point. He worked on commission earned by collecting weekly instalments from servants in the various homes. When **Gus Ackerman** needed funds to start a business, he went to Morrie, whose own business had prospered and developed as shippers and traders of stature. Morrie agreed to finance stock to the extent of £1250, but wanted 10% of sales from the new stores. He also funded **Sam Kirsch** and **Leon Segal**, who opened stores of their own. Eventually, the three Mauerberger-funded men went into partnership to launch South Africa's first chain store group. After much debate, and clearly because antisemitism remained a feature of their lives, they decided to call their group 'Ackermans' - a name that could be Afrikaans, coloured or white as easily as it could be Jewish. They introduced the concept of pricing at 1/11 - 1 shilling and 11 pence - because it sounded cheaper than 2/- and also because it obliged sales assistants to ring up the sale and open the till to extract change.

After four years, fifteen stores had been opened and the Group continued to expand thereafter. Greatermans was created to be "Greater [than Acker]mans". A young **Raymond Ackerman** learned important lessons from his UCT lecturer, Professor Hutt, who helped him to formulate his famous

“four legs of the table” business philosophy. Essentially, these covered profits and expense control, giving customers the merchandise they wanted, social responsibility and people, including family and employees.

After opening 89 Checkers stores within the Greenters Group, the 35 year-old Raymond was fired for his revolutionary ideas, especially the concept of price cutting. **Jack Golden** however, was happy to sell to him, for R620 000, the business he had started, a three-store chain called Pick ‘n Pay. The rest is history. Today, Pick ‘n Pay operates some 1200 stores in South Africa, with more than 100 in the rest of Africa. Its turnover exceeds R70 billion and has more than 70 000 employees. Raymond was definitely the father of South African consumerism, and his concept of “The Consumer is Queen” certainly resonated with women. His ongoing fight against price fixing, his battle for lower fuel and bread prices and his introduction of the ‘Hypermarket’ concept made him a legend in his own lifetime.



Retail colossus Raymond Ackerman

Another doyen of the Cape retail scene was **Stanley Lewis**. Jewish traders were often referred to by the derogatory term ‘sheenies’. Accordingly, four of them who got together decided to name the group “Four sheenies”, that is, Foschini! Today, this is an enormous public company, whose board is chaired by **Michael Lewis**, Stanley’s son. They have recently acquired a number of overseas chains and are clearly on their way to becoming an international retailing force to be reckoned with.

Sydney Press joined the Edgars Group as a temporary employee when Edgars moved to Cape Town in 1935. In 1946, Edgars went public following a period of strong growth under Sydney’s leadership. By 1990, the

company’s turnover had reached R2 billion and it has continued to experience stellar growth thereafter. Unfortunately, in the latter years, the Group has performed poorly under new owners, but still remains a major force.

Another significant retail chain, Truworths, is currently headed up by **Michael Mark**, who has set new standards of excellence in the retail arena. Benchmarked against leading international companies, Truworth’s metrics outperform most of its global peers.

In the banking sphere two nice Jewish boys, **Bernard Kantor** and **Stephen Koseff**, created Investec, which has established itself as the leading South African bank catering for high net-worth individuals. They have expanded internationally and are universally recognised for the excellence of their innovative banking and financing products. Another bank with a Jewish founder and an ongoing Jewish flavour is Sasfin, headed by **Roland Sassoon** and his son, Michael.

Take the property field and think of the incredible performance of **Gerald Leissner**, who heads up Apex. Think of the healthcare industry and consider the incredible achievements of **Adrian Gore** in building Discovery into the market leader in its field. For many people, Discovery is their health provider of choice! Like so many of his peers, Adrian continues to take an active role in Jewish communal life and currently plays a leadership role in Jewish education in Johannesburg.

Although his major endeavours emanated from his overseas ventures, one cannot ignore the huge impact of **Natie Kirsh**, who in 2015 was ranked the 435th wealthiest person in the world by *Forbes Magazine*. His empire spans many countries, yet his heart is still very much in South Africa.

The influence of top business leaders like **Brian Joffe**, **Adrian Gore**, **Stephen Koseff**, **Colin Coleman** and others, on the government of the day should not be underestimated - more the pity that their sage counsel is often ignored.

Indeed, in everything from stockbroking to farming to winemaking to retailing, insurance, banking, clothing manufacture or real estate, the Jewish community of South Africa has made a phenomenal contribution.

The “CEOs”

While there has been much recognition of the many outstanding Jewish businessmen, comparatively little has been accorded to the women who have played such important roles in supporting the growth of their husbands’ endeavours. For example, **Wendy Ackerman** has for many years served on the Pick ‘n Pay Board and, as her husband readily

acknowledges, she played an instrumental role in supporting him when he was fired and took the huge risk of starting Pick 'n Pay. In March 2016, Wendy was acknowledged at a special concert marking a milestone birthday. Outstanding artists from around the globe who had benefitted from her largesse were flown in to perform as a 'thank you' to her. For me, the most moving moment was when her daughter, Suzanne, asked all those present in the auditorium who had been helped by Wendy, to stand up. I nearly fell out of my chair when I saw about a third of the hundreds present rising to acknowledge her!

Sheila Samson is another extremely powerful force behind the throne - Eric seldom makes any major move without her. When it comes to philanthropy, Sheila regularly pushes the bounds of Eric's incredible generosity even further.

Indeed, many wives of top business leaders should be termed 'CEO's' - Chief Emotional Officers. They keep the families together and manage inter-generational challenges with their unique EQ's (Emotional Intelligence). Their advice is often invaluable, especially in the field of human resources.

In a number of cases, daughters have stepped into the breach to play leading roles in managing family empires. **Suzanne Ackerman** is Director of Transformation for Pick 'n Pay, and plays a key part in positioning the company for acceptance in the new South Africa.

Alison Katzeff watched her dad, Sam, become a formidable force in the liquor industry with the Drop Inn Group. Although Sam sold out in 1992, the family retained the properties and Alison now manages the family affairs, including their substantial property portfolio. Alison, who has an MBA degree, not only occupies herself with her family interests, but has also taken leadership roles, both as chairman of United Herzlia Schools and as chairman of the United Jewish Campaign. Her feminine touch has brought a whole new dimension to the roles that she has fulfilled and she has once again proved that often the best man for the job is a woman!

Another example of the leading role that Jewish women are playing in the South African business scene is that of **Tanya Golan** who, together with her husband, Hagai, established Portfolio Bureau - a 50% share in the business was recently sold to Anchor Capital. While building a substantial company Tanya, like Alison, still found time to chair United Herzlia School's Board of Governors. In my own business two of my daughters, **Martine Vogelman** and **Amanda Herson**, serve as directors and are active in the Company's operations.

Organised Commerce

One should never forget the contribution made by Jewish business leaders in such leading organisations as the various Chambers of Commerce and Chambers of Industry. **Mike Getz** was a leading light in the Chamber of Industries. Leaders like **Lassie Salber**, **Hymie Wolffe** and **Robbie Stern** each headed up the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce. To their credit, they consistently opposed Apartheid and regularly confronted government in respect of their discriminatory laws. I was proud to be numbered amongst the ranks of such illustrious past presidents and went on to become President of the South African Chamber of Business. When called before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I had the opportunity of presenting evidence of the consistent stand that our Chamber had taken over many decades against racism.

Repairing the World

The role played by **Eliot Osrin**, who served on the boards of many companies such as Clicks, Foschini, Atlas, Board of Executives, Gerber Goldschmidt, Freddy Hirsch, Heneck Sacks, Atlas and others, can never be underestimated. Eliot was amongst those who were instrumental in alerting companies to their corporate social responsibilities and their philanthropic duties. Thanks to him, many top Jewish businessmen were encouraged to set up charitable trusts which today are the lifeblood of Cape Town's Jewish community.

Raymond Ackerman founded the Raymond Ackerman Academy of Entrepreneurial Development and, as previously mentioned, **Donny Gordon** founded the Gordon International Business School at Wits and Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts at UCT. The **Samsons** have funded numerous schools and Eric continues to be involved as a trustee of the Nelson Mandela Fund. Charitable trusts and foundations such as The Jakamar Trust, the Donny Gordon Foundation, The Mauerberger Foundation and The Eric and Sheila Samson Foundation give evidence of the extent to which Jewish business leaders set an incredible example of ongoing philanthropy. Needless to say, the generosity of Cape Town business leaders is the reason why Cape Town has such a well-organised and well-funded Jewish infrastructure. Eliot Osrin persuaded business leaders to set up charitable trusts by assuring them that in so doing they would achieve a little bit of immortality. An example of the truth of this is the fact that while few people remember the businesses started by **Morris Mauerberger**, his name lives on eternally through the Mauerberger Foundation.

My Story

Permit me a moment of self-indulgence as I tell you a little about the Cape Union Mart story. My late grandfather, **Philip Krawitz**, founded P Krawitz and Company in Johannesburg in 1933. He moved to Cape Town in the 1940s and decided to rename his company “The Mart”. The Registrar of Companies felt that was too generic, and suggested “The Union Mart”, acknowledging the Union of South Africa. When that, too, was rejected, he added the prefix, ‘Cape’, and so “Cape Union Mart” was born. My grandfather’s failing health forced my father, **Arthur Krawitz**, to leave his job at OK Bazaars, where **Miller and Cohen** had given him some excellent training. Unfortunately, the war broke out and he was conscripted into the army. When he was demobbed in 1945 he returned to a literally bankrupt business. He pleaded with his creditors to allow him time to repay overdue debts rather than putting him into liquidation and getting a penny in the pound. My late mother worked tirelessly by his side, and together they struggled to get the business back on its feet. We lived in a R20 a month apartment in Sea Point, and my parents shared a third-hand motorcar for more than a decade. Everything my parents had went into sustaining the business.

In 1970, while I was in my final year at UCT, my father suffered a heart attack and, like Bill Gates, Richard Branson and Steve Jobs, I became a university drop-out and went to run the business. My dad was terrified of my ambition and nearly suffered another heart attack when I suggested that we open a second store in Parow. Fortunately, our overdraft was coming down and the building which my dad had bought with no less than four bonds was nearly paid off. This allowed me to use available cash flow to start growing the business. Along the way, we had bought a uniform company which was doing really well and we then purchased the Hepworths manufacturing operation with its 22 workers, to provide us with a regular supply of traffic, fire and security clothing. We named this factory “K-Way” as my dad was always known as “Mr K” and usually insisted on doing things his way.

Fast forward to 2016, and our factory now employs some 230 people and produces more than 500 000 high tech garments per annum. The Cape Union Mart Group as a whole has more than 3000 employees and we have just opened our 200th store. The Group now comprises four chains, namely Cape Union Mart, Old Khaki, Poetry and Tread+Miller – our new baby focusing on urban footwear. As from October this year, we have been the new owners of the children’s clothing chain,

“Keedo”, and its manufacturing operation. We have made the leap from entrepreneurial to professional management by employing a wonderful CEO, by the name of André Labuschagne.

I am still actively involved in the business, but have now dedicated much of my time to both Jewish communal affairs and a wonderful black upliftment organisation, known as Ikamva Labantu.

In summary, Jewish business leaders have unquestionably made a phenomenal contribution to the South African economy. They have created hundreds of thousands of jobs and are known for their high standards of corporate responsibility. Jewish employers are leaders in education and training of their staff, and most are regarded as model employers. Their philanthropic endeavours set new standards of generosity, and despite numerous challenges, they remain committed to the future success of South Africa. Indeed, they have fulfilled the biblical injunction of being a light unto nations and an example for all others to follow.

NOTES

- 1 I thank Gwynne Robins and David Saks for assisting me with the research for this paper.

Best wishes to all
out Jewish tenants,
partners and friends.

Ah Freilichen
Chanukah



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MY UNCLE, THE DOCTOR: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HARTWIG BUXBAUM (Part I)

*

Stuart Buxbaum



Doctor Hartwig Buxbaum (right) and his brother, Gustav, late 1930s

Preamble

Hartwig Buxbaum, a German-born Jewish doctor who immigrated to South Africa in the 1930s, was my late uncle. While I never knew him, he was the hinge, the fulcrum around which much of our family's destiny turned. This article will attempt to re-create, from somewhat meagre sources, his life and times. As will become apparent, he was a courageous man and a dedicated doctor

Stuart Buxbaum holds an honours degree in Sociology from Wits University (1970) and an honours degree in Judaica from UNISA (1984). Employed in the social research unit of the Jewish Board of Deputies in the early 1970s, he subsequently lived and farmed for many years on the Mpumalanga Highveld. He now lives in Johannesburg.

whose life was, in significant parts, dictated by the broad historical thrusts and currents then swirling about Europe and South Africa. Placed centre stage, this is his story, and it is the story too of his grandmother, parents, siblings, sister-in-law and wives. It is the story of those whose lives he helped save, whose lives he touched and whose lives he enriched. It is the story, too, of his human frailties.

The Early Years

Hartwig Buxbaum was the eldest child of Seligmann and Bertha Buxbaum of Beverungen an der Weser, a town in the district of Westphalia, Germany, some 100km south of Hamburg. Shortly after the turn of the century, Seligmann was appointed as the teacher and religio-cultural officer of the Beverungen Jewish community. He held this position until his brief imprisonment after *Kristallnacht* and subsequent immigration, together with his wife, Bertha, and mother-in-law, Karolina Nussbaum, to South Africa in 1939.

In 1908, there were 23 children of varying ages at the Jewish school. The school was housed in the grounds of the town's synagogue, which had been constructed in 1852, and which in its splendour would stand for almost ninety years. It was here that Hartwig (born in 1905) was educated. His brother, Gustav (b 1906), and sister, Sidonie (b 1908), would follow his footsteps at this junior school, under the tutelage of their father, the *Lehrer* (teacher).

The town in which the three siblings grew up had a formal settled Jewish community from around the second half of the 16th Century.¹ Periodic points of conflict between the community and the towns' residents have been chronicled.² In a sly letter of complaint by a resident in 1719, it was observed: "Everyone, both strangers and locals, are amazed at the stately pomp, splendour, wealth and size of the Jews in this minor, small place and maintain also that in the world, to their knowledge, there be no place in which the Jews are permitted such great opportunities as here in Beverungen...."

The intent of the letter is clear. It reflects the resentment that some townfolk at that time felt towards the local Jews and entrenched a stereotype of their exaggerated influence. After the establishment by Napoleon of the Kingdom of Westphalia in 1807, a new constitution was adopted, which inter alia declared (Article 10), "All subjects shall be equal before the law, and the various denominations shall exercise their cult freely".

By the turn of the 20th Century, Jews in the town were accustomed to leading a life well integrated with the general population. So much so that in 1920 Hartwig, still a teenager, met with a number of *fussballbegeisterte junge Männer* (young football enthusiasts),³ in the town's *Cafe Buhre*, and there founded an association for *Bewegungsspiele* (movement games/physical exercise), that became the forerunner of the town's football club, VfB Beverungen. Of the eight friends who met that day in the *Cafe Buhre*, at least four had identifiably Jewish surnames.⁴

By this time (1919-1924), Hartwig had moved on from studying at a Gymnasium in Marburg to the König-Wilhelm-Gymnasium in Höxter.⁵ Between Beverungen and Höxter, in the Westphalian countryside, lay the small towns of Blankenau, Wehrden, Amelunxen, and Godelheim. But Höxter, lying as it did on the border of Westphalia and Saxony, and the fact that he would have been a boarder here, away from his parental home, expanded his horizons. This was post-World War 1 Germany, the early years of flux and promise of the Weimar Republic. Academically successful, and having a father devoted to community service, Hartwig chose to enter the medical field.

Having obtained a grant from the Brunswick Bnai Brith Lodge, Hartwig studied medicine at a series of universities and medical schools: Göttingen, Bonn, Vienna and Münster. In 1929, he worked as an intern at the *Israelitische Kranken-Verpflegungs-Anstalt und Beerdigungsgesellschaft* hospital in Breslau, and in 1930 at the City Hospital in Altona. It was in 1930 that his dissertation, "Three cases of congenital diaphragmatic hernia spuria" was approved at the University of Münster, and he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine.⁶

The Tide Turns

Pictures in a family album show Hartwig during these years as a serious and dedicated medical student, participating at the same time in the activities of student life. It is interesting to speculate for a moment on this aspect of German Jewish student life. Anti-Jewish prejudice, despite Weimar (or possibly because of), was a constant ingredient of

student life, and of society as a whole. On this, Paul Johnson writes, "The Jews tried everything to combat the poison. Some brought up their children to be artisans or farmers. They enlisted in the army. They attempted ultra-assimilation....or Zionism. Or they formed militant Jewish organizations, student leagues, (and) dueling clubs".⁷

Whether Hartwig's participation in such activities stemmed from a conscious decision as a Jew, or as a student, is unknown. It is probable, however, that he did so as an enthusiast, given his earlier commitment to forming a football club in his home town. It was during this period too, that his cheek was scarred in a duel, a badge of honour amongst German students. Stefan Zweig, however disparaging he was of this practice, wrote: "...being a real student meant giving proof of one's manhood, by participating in as many duels as possible, and bearing.... scars on one's face".⁸ By forming Jewish duelling and sports clubs, Jewish students were asserting their masculinity. Adolph Asch, himself a member of a duelling fraternity, recorded: "On Sunday afternoons in Breslau, where the first Jewish fraternity was founded, male students in full dress paraded down Schwernitzer Street and flirted with the ladies. Most fraternity men would have recognized the coloured sash of each group: it was an open declaration: 'We are Jewish. We are strong men. We are proud men'."⁹

There is little doubt about Hartwig's human qualities; he was brave, courageous and charismatic. He was to require these characteristics in the coming decade.

"On January 30, 1933, Hindenburg gave in to his advisors and appointed Hitler chancellor of a new cabinet in which Nazi ministers were a minority of two."¹⁰ The avalanche had begun. Three months later, the infamous April Laws were enacted, in terms of which Jews were excluded from organisations, professions, and other aspects of public life. In this same month, Jews were curtailed from full participation in the medical profession, and from reimbursement from state health insurance funds.¹¹

For Hartwig, the signals were quite clear: emigration was the only option. The discussion in his father's home in Dahlhauser Strasse, Beverungen, would have been fraught and wrenching. Presumably his parents, brother Gustav and sister Sidonie would have participated, while his grandmother Karolina Nussbaum, an aged woman close to eighty, sat quietly upstairs in her bedroom. Seligmann Buxbaum was well respected in his town and in the wider community. He was a dignified man (his *balebatisher*¹² top hat is today a treasured family heirloom), upright of bearing, with deft and creative hands.

From 1920 until 1935, he kept the minutes of the town's Ex Service League. The Protocol book's title page is in his bold writing, and the minutes are set out in his steady, effortless, precise, flowing script.¹³ But being the pragmatic man he was, he would have encouraged the brothers to leave. Gustav's job had also become precarious. Sidonie was close to her parents and grandmother. Towards the end of the 1930s, she married a Hungarian rabbi, Phillip Singer, from the town of Ipolysag.

Outside the house in Dahlhauser Strasse, the garden that the family tended so fastidiously lay quiet. The cherry tree that Seligmann had planted and recalled in his later years with so much pride and fondness bore its juicy, luscious fruit. To invoke the title of Amos Elon's book: "Oh! The pity of it all!"¹⁴

"WOHIN"? (Where to?)

South Africa was the land to which Hartwig would immigrate. To all intents and purposes, it seems like a strange choice. South Africa in the early 1930s was wracked by economic difficulties. The Great Depression had a concomitant result in exacerbating a "poor white problem".¹⁵ Antisemitism had found fertile soil in this riven society.¹⁶ Quotas aimed at limiting Jewish immigration to the Union were welcomed in the press.¹⁷ The Greyshirt movement, formed in 1933, mimicked by its uniform and paraphernalia what would become so familiar in the Germany of that decade. Antisemitism was fuelled by the idea of the exclusive belongingness to the Afrikaner *Volk* – encapsulating language, state, Union.¹⁸ The Jews were the foreign, the alien.

The funnel for Jewish emigration from Western and Eastern Europe had a large aperture, but the spout was steadily being squeezed tighter. America, that land of promise and the path to which the funnel almost directly led, had radically altered its immigration laws between the First World War and the advent of Nazism. The enactment of the cynical Johnson-Reid law of 1924 which placed restrictions on European immigration meant that in its hour of greatest need, Jewish immigration was severely curtailed. Looking at the records¹⁹ of the König-Wilhelm-Gymnasium in Höxter (the school that both Hartwig and Gustav attended), over the period 1867-1933, it is evident that 20 of the 25 Jewish ex-pupils who emigrated left for America. In the period after 1933, however, only 18 of 46 Jewish ex-pupils found their way there, while 11 found a home in South America, a new destination of safety. The strangulating effects of the Johnson-Reid law on Jewish immigration

were apparent.

In the Union of South Africa, the 1930 Quota Act had been passed with the aim of curtailing the flow of Jews from Eastern Europe.²⁰ Steered by extremists and by Afrikaner leaders and politicians, editors and church figures such as T E Dönges, H F Verwoerd, Eric Louw, and D.F. Malan, they would tout the prevalent idea of European Jews being unassimilable.²¹ In this view, Eastern European Jews (were) "perceived as inherently devious and immutably alien."²² There was, however, still a window of opportunity for German Jews to enter South Africa, until these doors too were closed by that iniquitous piece of legislation, the Aliens Act of 1937. It was in the years immediately prior to this that around 6000 German Jews were able to enter this country.²³ ²⁴ Milton Shain has argued that "Jew hatred was *not a marginal* factor in South African public life during those troubled years".²⁵ Private anti-Judaism had been transformed into public anti-Judaism.²⁶

So it was, in these fraught times, that the brothers Buxbaum would take their chances and decide to migrate to South Africa. Gustav relied on Hartwig's good judgment and steadfastness. He would wait in Amsterdam, while Hartwig upgraded his medical qualifications at the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. They would then sail to Africa, together.

Edinburgh

At its height in the 1920s and 1930s, the Jewish community of Edinburgh numbered several thousands, out of a population of between 420-440 000.²⁷ For recognition and registration as a medical doctor in the Union of South Africa, Hartwig had to augment his German certification with a qualification in medicine from a recognized university in the Commonwealth. Edinburgh provided the ideal venue. Hartwig read for the triple qualification of the L.C.P. & S Edin., L.R.F.P.S Glasg. He evidently did spend time in Glasgow, but the sparse family lore always located him in Edinburgh during this period.

Edinburgh would have offered the young, idealistic doctor a respite from the grave intensity, and dangerous and claustrophobic German Jewish society. In its place lay the broad Royal Mile, the regulated, ordered and mannered streets of Edinburgh. Here, he will have met a number of South African doctors, some of them Jewish, who had come to specialize at the university.²⁸ Was he alone or did he have companionship? The hint would always come from my late mother's oft repeated, throwaway line. In a muted tone, she would mention that "he was

married to a wealthy heiress, you know.”

Hartwig and Johanna Eva Polak: The mystery

In our family, Hartwig’s early marriage had always been an event shrouded in mystery. Always the hints, always the innuendos, always the cryptic suggestions of an unhappy liaison, told in the hushed voice of my mother. My father, close as he had been to his brother, chose never to let slip a word in all of his expressed memories. It was an impenetrable veil, laced in secrecy.

Slowly the mystery unravelled. A small, tucked away photograph in an aged family album of a wedding group on the steps of a synagogue was only recently discovered by my daughter, Galia.²⁹ The inscription on the reverse side of the photograph nonchalantly recalls the event as having taken place “*by dem synagoga*” (“at the Synagogue”).

The celebration was that of Hartwig’s wedding, solemnized in October 1933³⁰ at a synagogue in Glasgow. The bride was Johanna Eva Polak of Amsterdam, daughter of the late Robert Polak and Olga Beer. Born in Elberfeld, Germany, Johanna was 21 years old when she stood under the bridal canopy. The marriage certificate records her home address as Amsterdam, and that of Hartwig as 105 Hill Street, Glasgow.

Why Glasgow? Hartwig was in the city studying towards a further medical qualification. Johanna was, at some stage, a student at an arts college in Scotland.³¹ The steps of the partly visible pillars framing the picture of the wedding party were identified as being those of the grand portals of the Garnethill Synagogue in Hill Street.

The wedding picture shows the young bride in an almost dreamlike state, her glance elsewhere, perhaps? Hartwig, aged 27, stands tall, erect and elegant. Mysteriously, no members of the Buxbaum family appear in the portrait on the steps of the synagogue, neither Hartwig’s parents, nor his brother, Gustav, or sister, Sidonie. In the wedding party, the young men, all fashionably hatted,



“*By dem synagoga*” (*Garnethill Synagogue, Scotland*)

look proud, confident, resolute and gallant. The women are elegant, smart, fashionable and optimistic. Earlier that year, the Nuremberg Nazi party rally had been held.³² However, the shadow creeping over Central Europe seemed a distant news item on that sunny day in Glasgow.

The relationship soon crumbled. Shortly after the wedding, there was lasting disharmony between the couple. Enigmatically, a certificate of registration under The Aliens Order of 1920³³ dated 21 November 1933 and issued in Glasgow to Hartwig’s sister Sidonie, is suggestive. Why would she come two months *after* the wedding to visit, but not for the wedding itself? To mediate?

A later photograph of Johanna Eva is extant. The languid portrait adds to the mysterious aura of her persona. She has a tranquil hint of a smile; her thick, dark, wavy hair is parted neatly to the left, her eyes large, lustrous and luminous.



Johanna Eva Polak

Rebecca Lessem and the Lessems

How to flesh out the personality of the doctor? I am often reliant on the half-whispered reminiscences of my late mother, Rebecca (nee Lessem). There is little doubt that she and Hartwig, her brother-in-law, formed a close understanding and friendship.

Rebecca Lessem came from Memel, that

splendid Lithuanian city on the Baltic coast, where the lingua franca was German. The family was well established. Rebecca's father, Morris Lessem, together with his brothers, Mottel and Zallie, were partners in a jewellery business, *Gebrueder Lessem* ("The Brothers Lessem"). There were at least two businesses under this name: one in Memel³⁴ and a second in Kretinga, a town lying 26km to the north. Morris and Eva's two children, Rebecca and Solly, were educated at the local music conservatoire.

Once, in 1973, I met Henia Spitz in a Tel Aviv street. She had been a childhood friend of my mother's in Memel. Henia had been forced to flee the war-torn town in the 1940s, to Russia, and was a relatively new arrival in Israel. She recalled vividly the image of Rebecca and her mother, Eva, leaving by boat from Memel for Southampton, bound for South Africa. (By then Morris and Solly were already in Johannesburg.) Besides the wretchedness of the tearful farewell to the Lessem women on the quayside, the image writ large in Henia's memory of that day was seeing my mother's Ed. Seiler piano being loaded onto the ship. "Goodness," Henia said to me in a mixture of Hebrew and Yiddish, "how could your mother have insisted under those circumstances not to part with her piano?" It seemed absurd. It was a peculiar stubbornness, a petulant, defiant decision. So Henia's first question to me about my mother, whom she had not seen for more than thirty-five years, was: "Where is the piano?" "In our house," I replied. It still is: a stately and elegant reminder of a land far off.

The Lessem's almost aristocratic lifestyle in Memel was replaced, in those early years in Johannesburg, by meagreness. Valiantly, Morris and Solly tried to establish themselves in the city. They joined the Great Synagogue in Wolmarans Street as choristers, and Solly became a travelling salesman. Morris particularly, by now an aged man, struggled in an environment that sought robustness. He resorted to watch-making, in a small jewellery store in Harrison Street, a shop that he shared with a gentle Lebanese barber, Mike Kairos. Nervous and edgy, Morris was terrified of being offered illicit precious stones at his work bench, by passers-by of ill intent. He kept a whistle close at hand: he would use it to raise the alarm for the police to rush in, should they be needed in such circumstances.

Amsterdam - and the brothers journey forth

Meanwhile, across the North Sea from Scotland, Gustav had found a foothold in Amsterdam. There was a definite drift of

European Jews, many of them German, to the city at this time. Historically, Holland had showed a religious tolerance to its citizens. It would have been seen as a safer haven for Jews increasingly subjected to discriminatory legislation in Germany. This is reflected in census figures of the Jewish population in Amsterdam. The 1930 Census shows 111 917 Jews in the city. This had grown to 154 887 by 1941.³⁵ The 1947 census of Holland would show how the war had ravaged Dutch Jewry. Only 14 346 Jews remained in Amsterdam.³⁶

Gustav seems to have seamlessly slipped into the rhythm of the city. He worked at his trade in clothing, as a representative for a company specializing in women's fashions. Its offices were at number 751, on the Prinsengracht. How his station in life would change in the coming decade!

Great might have been the temptation for the brothers, Hartwig and Gustav, to remain in their adopted, temporary places of succour. Why journey on to South Africa? Could the myth of *die goldene medineh* have lodged somewhere in their consciousness? Was the geographic location of South Africa, so far away from that of a Europe on the brink of war, a factor? The time to go was surely now, for the gates of the Union were soon to be locked and bolted.

And so the brothers left for the southern tip of the African continent. Hartwig's arrival in South Africa was wracked with an equal measure of uncertainty and nervous anticipation. He was leaving behind the world he knew. He was an acculturated European, a cosmopolitan man, headed for a country which was struggling to move from a rural, agrarian economy to an industrialized society.

And he carried with him the heartache of a failed marriage. Johanna Eva had remained in Edinburgh, and Hartwig arrived in South Africa to all intents and purposes, a single man. The couple was childless. His parents were left behind in a Germany moving ever closer to the abyss.

- *The second part of this article will appear in the Pesach 2017 issue of Jewish Affairs.*

NOTES

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20 I acknowledge with appreciation the input provided by Cedric Ginsberg (previously lecturer in Judaica at both UNISA and Witwatersrand Universities) concerning the various legal enactments restricting Jewish immigration to various host countries, as well as his close reading of the text of this article.

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24 Hellig, Jocelyn, Osrin, Myra and Pimstein, Millie, *Seeking Refuge: German Jewish Immigration to Johannesburg in the 1930s*, South African Jewish Board of Deputies, 2005

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27 Fraser, ‘*Story of City’s Jewish Community told in new University exhibition*’, Edinburgh, 2013

28 “In fact, there were societies for South African Jewish Students, both in Glasgow and Edinburgh, right through the twenties and thirties.” Personal email from Kenneth Collins, author of inter alia (with E Borowski and L Granat), *Scotland’s Jews: A guide to the history and community of the Jews in Scotland*, Glasgow, 2008

29 I thank Galia for locating this picture and then trawling pictures of Scottish synagogues to link it to the Garnethill Synagogue. Hartwig’s story would have exhibited greater paucity without this discovery and which then led a trail

to many more links in this intrepid tale.

30 Thanks to Harvey Kaplan of the Scottish Jewish Archive Centre (located at the Garnethill Synagogue, Glasgow) for extracting the marriage certificate in the register of weddings, which provided the first identification of Hartwig’s bride.

31 Röder, Verner and Strauss, Herbert A (Ed.) *Politik, Wirtschaft, Öffentliches Leben. International Biographical Dictionary of Central European Emigrés, 1933 – 1945*, 1980. p529

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33 The Aliens Order of 1920 required all aliens to register with the police in the United Kingdom.

34 In Memel, the store was located in the main street of the shopping district, on Friedrich-Wilhelm Strasse. The sign to the store’s entrance was boldly displayed in Yiddish. The directory of that time records the telephone number of the store as being 3798.

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NON-FERROUS METAL WORKS

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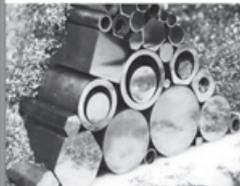
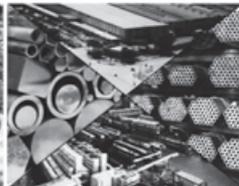
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SEARCHING FOR OOM SAL AND TANTE REGINA

*

Sybrandus Adema

“Regina Adema, ID I49344, dochter van Martinus Adema en Jikke Justina Blom, is geboren op 19 december 1902 te Bolsward, Nederland. Regina is overleden.” (Regina Adema ID I49344, daughter of Martinus Adema and Jikke Justina Blom, was born on 19 December 1902 in Bolsward, the Netherlands. Regina is deceased.)

So began my internet search regarding a great aunt of mine, a larger-than-life mensch, singer and lingerie-seller. And, more importantly, a woman who singlehandedly sheltered and kept alive five Jewish men during World War II in her cramped Amsterdam apartment. A woman who offered hope to these trapped men in a country that saw roughly three quarters of its Jewish residents murdered during the Nazi-occupation. It was a place and time where, consumed by fear and hunger and even hate, one could be betrayed by one's neighbours at the drop of a hat. But what would such a true legend be without romance? Because Regina and one of the Jewish survivors, Oom Sal, married directly after the war. They were inseparable until her death, where-after he died of a broken heart.

Growing up with Jewish neighbours and later friends in Cape Town (my father immigrated to South Africa and met my mother here), I sometimes mentioned the story, yet never investigated it - even when I met Oom Sal as a child and later lived in Amsterdam for a year. But suddenly I realised that the full story might be lost forever, especially with the older family members dying off. Accordingly, I embarked on a mini-search to get to the bottom of the history.

I began by sending emails to and talking with aunts and uncles - difficult, as they all live in Europe or Australia. I assumed that everyone would come up with a stack of information, photos and anecdotes, but strangely, most of them barely knew anything

Sybrandus Adema is a journalist by trade, but since moving to the platteland, he spends most of his time tackling renovation and other DIY projects. He still writes, translates and edits, while also building websites and promoting the village of Rosendal via social and other media. This is a translated and edited version of an article that first appeared at www.litnet.co.za/op-die-spoor-van-regina-adema/.

and their children were not even aware of the story. During the war, people kept quiet to avoid accidental betrayal. And after the war, many things were simply swept under the carpet.

On top of that my one aunt, who was more like a grandmother to me, selected the option of euthanasia a few years ago due to a long, painful battle with cancer. And she was the one who really knew it all! Too late to cry over spilt milk. However, I spoke to her daughter, my oldest niece (my father was the youngest of thirteen Catholic children), and cobbled together a few pieces of information from other family members. For the rest, the internet, especially www.joodsmonument.nl and www.geneawiki.nl, proved invaluable.

Shortly after World War I, a young Regina Adema moves to Amsterdam from the rural town of Bolsward in the province of Friesland. The city is old and large, yet boasting modern architecture in new residential areas such as the Transvaal Quarter (with its overwhelmingly Jewish population). Cinemas are opening and the amount of inhabitants not attending any church doubles. The ‘Grachtengordel’ (Canal Belt) embraces all, the Olympic Games are held here, the Roaring Twenties are swinging ahead and a post-war idealism is on everyone's lips. Well, maybe not all - at the same time the Dutch Reformed Church splits over a controversy whether the Biblical snake really spoke in Paradise. But what does Regina care? She's a very good singer and wants to perform with Louis Davids (real name Simon David 1883-1939), one of various Jewish Dutch cabaret artists at the time. Great-grandfather and great-grandmother are certainly not in favour of it, but she will have nothing come between her and the fun life she envisions.

Her musical career is not enough to survive on, thus she opens a ‘bh-zaak’ (a lingerie shop) in De Jordaan - then a distinctive working-class residential area in Amsterdam, today mainly inhabited by the rich. There is nothing lacking regarding her sense of humour: “Laat ze niet hangen voor een tientje,” proclaims the advertising in the window shop, appealing to women to not have them sagging to save a few guilders.

It's May 1940 and someone with no sense of humour, Adolf Hitler, invades the

Netherlands. The country capitulates within a week after Rotterdam is bombed to pieces and the Germans threaten that The Hague, Utrecht and Amsterdam will undergo the same fate. Little of the planned intentional flood damage to the Netherlands as part of its delay-defence was executed, so the occupation forces are quickly in full control. Rapidly, new laws restrict Jews' movements, finally leading up to their mass deportations to labour and concentration camps from 1942 onwards. Since Tante Regina is friends with many Jewish artists, she is asked to provide some of them with shelter. Soon, there are four or five men in her small apartment, including a Salomon Schrijver. She must certainly have been in two minds about aiding them; if she is betrayed or caught out, chances are slim that any of them will live to tell the tale. As described in the diary of Anne Frank - whose house on Prinsengracht is not far from Tante Regina's near Carré and the Amstel - everyone has to keep quiet all the time, the curtains remain closed and they are basically prisoners. Neighbours, friends or family can betray them, perhaps intentionally, perhaps accidentally. Not to speak of elements within the Amsterdam police, the German army, the SS brigades and collaborators who actively hunt Jews.

Whether Oom Sal still has any contact with his family during the first few months, one doesn't know. What he would be aware of is the continuing war and Jewish deportations raging furiously outside the crowded apartment. In cyberspace a ghostly past comes to life, coldly diarising how many of Oom Sal's siblings died during the war. In part due to the registration of Jewish inhabitants by the Jewish Council and the Dutch's meticulous bureaucratic machine, it was relatively easy for the Nazis to apprehend Jews. That was the downside, but the upside is that, decades later, one can learn relatively easy that Oom Sal was born on 10 October 1903 (identity number I48766), that he was one of 14 children, and that two of his siblings died at a very young age. I also learn that five sisters and three brothers died during the war years: one in Amsterdam, and most of the remainder in the Sobibór concentration camp in Poland between January and July 1943 - two of them on the same day in a gas chamber. Which makes one wonder: were they at least together in those last moments?

According to Wikipedia the condemned prisoners, formed into groups, are led along the 100-metre long *Himmelstrasse* (Road to Heaven) to the gas chambers, where they are murdered using carbon monoxide released from the exhaust pipes of an engine. Local Jews, who better understood what was happening, are delivered in absolute terror,

screaming and pounding the sides of the train carriages. Foreign Jews, on the other hand are treated with hypocritical politeness. Passengers from transit camp Westerbork in the Netherlands (originally built by the Dutch to house the 'undesirable' Jewish refugees after the country closed its borders to them in 1938) have a comfortable journey. There are Jewish doctors and nurses attending them and no shortage of food or medical supplies on the train. To them, Sobibór does not seem like a genuine threat.

About a quarter of a million Jews perish in the Sobibór camp, but inmates riot in October 1943 with hundreds fleeing before the authorities regain control. In your heart you cry out "yes, freedom!" only to read on that most escapees are eventually tracked down and murdered. No matter how well you know it, the information about the camp's operation, the industrial scale and orderly way in which masses of people are driven to their deaths, leaves one shaking with rage. What went through everyone's minds - those who were slain, and those that were slaughtering?



Sara Speijer-Schrijver, sister of Oom Sal.

I even find a grainy black and white photo of another of Oom Sal's sisters, Sara Speijer-Schrijver, who survives an unnamed concentration camp as her name is not on the list of the few Jews that survived Sobibór. Tragically, she dies on her way back to the Netherlands on a train near the German town of Lüneburg in April 1945. Less than 300km

from the Dutch border, from home, her body is left on a station as an air raid prevents any funeral, much less one in accordance with Jewish custom. Her husband, Meijer Speijer, had died a month earlier in the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen, but their two children somehow survived in the Netherlands. Once again a relative mentions a link; she thinks one of the two, a woman, is still alive. But no, she does not have any contact with her. Also, one of Oom Sal's sisters did survive and return to the Netherlands. This can only be Eva Schrijver as I cannot find a date of death for her. And yet nobody knows more about her...

For most of Oom Sal's other relatives, there are no dates of death. Resident at 14 Weesperzijde, Amsterdam, is his father, Hartog Shrijver, who passed away just before the outbreak of war in 1939 and mother, Roosje Speijer (who shares a maiden surname with one of her sons-in-law). Years earlier, he had placed a tribute to Roosje in the *Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad* (New Israeli Weekly) to commemorate her 70th birthday. She died during the war in 1942, the websites maintain, but according to a relative she died before that. Since she was about 80 years old, one can assume it was due to old age and that she was not taken to the transit camp Westerbork. Both parents are also buried in the Jewish cemetery, Diemen, close to the city centre.



In occupied Netherlands, acquiring enough food was an enormous challenge due to rationing. People could only get a limited amount of government-issued food stamps, and in the last year of the war the 'Hunger Winter' sees severe shortages. Tante Regina faces innumerable military checkpoints to cycle hundreds of kilometres to Friesland

where she can collect and smuggle food for herself and the Jewish men under her care. She sources it mostly directly from farmers, but also from her brother, Sybrandus Adema, who is a cattle trader in Leeuwarden. Apparently, the fact that she is not only flamboyant but also quite attractive helps her to get through the German blockades without any major incident.



The monument 'Vrouw op voedseltocht' (Woman on a food run) in Leeuwarden pays homage to the women that sourced and transported food during the Hunger Winter of 1944-1945. The memorial also pays tribute to the mother of the sisters Haanstra, who took care of two people in hiding during the occupation.

Unfortunately, this is all the information I manage to gather. But, in Friesland, I now hear for the first time that my grandfather had been picked up by the Germans in 1941 and taken to the Zaailand detention centre because a tenant of his had been found with a (banned) radio. Fortunately, my incensed grandmother, Geesbertha, marched to the prison within a day or two, read the soldiers the riot act, and helped to have him released. But another time she was in tears, according to an aunt, as she saw Jewish inhabitants in 'Smitsbuurt' behind her house being taken by the Nazis. "They will never return," she observed prophetically; many people still thought that the Jewish population was simply being interned.

In the meanwhile, many of my older uncles were hiding in the countryside to avoid the increasing razzias - military sweeps by the occupiers to apprehend young men and send them to labour camps in Germany. At my grandfather's house there was generally more food, also for distribution to others, which made a huge difference. So it was no surprise that five starving and scurvy-ridden children from Haarlem came to them for help after they had completed an arduous journey of hundreds of kilometres by road. The family found shelter for three of them, but the others were simply incorporated into

the large family and cared for until the end of the war. According to an aunt they were not the best-mannered house guests - much to the amusement of her and the remaining siblings, but to the dismay of my grandmother.

Back in Amsterdam, Regina and Sal had fallen in love with each other, but due to the war marriage was out of the question. The Netherlands had barely been liberated when they got hitched, on 27 June 1945. The few Dutch Jews who had survived formed a close-knit community in Amsterdam, and despite all the sadness and pain they retained their sense of humour. The one aunt who regularly visited the couple would apparently return to Friesland with a sore jaw - "caused by all the laughter!" When people came to visit them, it was always "party, party, party!" someone told me.

The war and suffering was not discussed much - for Oom Sal it was too painful. Life went on, and the couple once again ran a lingerie shop: she, the cheerful, upbeat woman; he a more reserved gentleman. They were unable to have any children - she had several miscarriages - but they financially supported various children in need. In June 1960, Oom Sal was at last paid compensation, totalling 1865 Dutch Guilders, for his Nieuwe Kerkstraat house contents that, like those of most other Amsterdam Jews, had been stolen (also called *gepulst*) under the auspices of the local government during the war (this according to a dossier held by the JMW, the national welfare organization for the Jewish community in the Netherlands). Decades later, the pair ended up in a Jewish old age home near Utrecht.

And I at last have their photographs, taken at a celebration on 19 December 1982. Tante Regina is turning 80 and they are singing and dancing together in 't Spant theater complex in Bussum - just a few months after I, as a nine year-old, first met them. In October 1983, Oom Sal turns 80; it is



Regina and Salomon at Regina's 80th birthday, 1982

celebrated with a big party at the Oranje Hotel in Leeuwarden. His wife dies shortly thereafter, and something dies within him. He refuses to go to the funeral, and only attends under duress. Within months, he twice tries to kill himself before passing away of the proverbial broken heart.

Age and lost love took a troubled soul to a peaceful place, but at least Oom Sal had a life. Not so in the case of seven other Dutch Salomon Schrijvers - with the exact first and last names - who were murdered in concentration camps, including Auschwitz, simply because they were Jewish.

But this is not the end. I unexpectedly receive an e-mail from New Zealand from a Jeanette Rooiman, who had seen my year-old request for information on a Jewish Holocaust website. She is tracing her Jewish family tree and knows a Schrijver (a distant relative of hers) who might be of assistance. I immediately contact Philip Schrijver with the information I have. "I read your story with great interest and many facts are known to me," he replies. "As you know, only a few immediate family members of ours survived the war, including my father and his brother. My grandfather Philip (a brother of Oom Sal) was murdered in Sobibór in 1943." Regarding my other questions, such as how his father and uncle survived the war, I am still awaiting answers. At least there is a generation of Schrijvers, a handful, who somehow escaped or survived the Holocaust. But who were the other Jewish men in Tante Regina's house, and what became of them? The same can be asked about the other 17 000 Jewish people in the Netherlands who managed to remain hidden during this hellish time and survive. How many of their stories have been recorded?

Yet the final words, as quoted to me by an aunt, concern Oom Sal, the eternal optimist always hoping to meet a surviving relative: "*Hij liet jaren na de oorlog de deur openstaan, want stel je voor dat er een familielid zou terugkeren!*" (Years after the war, he still left the house's door open, because what if a family member returned!)

NAOMI DEBORAH JACOBSON – HER LIFE AND CREATIONS

*

Karen Marshall

On 25 May 2016, one week before her 91st birthday, the well-known Namibian and South African sculptress Naomi Jacobson passed away in Johannesburg.

She was the eldest of four children born to Adv. Israel and Janet Goldblatt. Her father came to the then South West Africa in 1920 and, together with two other advocates and the German-speaking Judge Gutsche, opened the High Court in Windhoek, when the South African legal system was extended to the previous German colony after the First World War. Israel Goldblatt Q.C. practised there for 50 years, becoming the most senior advocate in South Africa by the time he immigrated to Israel in 1970.

Naomi had three siblings, two sisters, Michal and Karen and a brother, Lucian. Michal married Dr Hymie Goldblatt; they have lived in Israel since 1968. Lucian, who died in 2014, practised as an attorney in Namibia and Johannesburg, while Karen practised at the Bar in Namibia and Johannesburg.

Naomi's maternal grandparents were Reverend Mordechai Leib Cohen and his wife Sarah, who came to South West Africa in 1924. Reverend Cohen was present at the official opening of the shul in Windhoek on 31 August 1924, presided over by Rabbi J L Landau. Naomi's parents were married there on 21 August 1924.

Naomi's paternal grandfather was the well-known Yiddishist David Goldblatt, who started a newspaper, *Der Yiddish Advokaat*, in Cape Town and which ran from 1904-1914. He took the initiative and, together with Morris Alexander, led a delegation to Parliament, fighting for and succeeded in having Yiddish recognised as a "European language" in 1903. This enabled hundreds of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe to settle in South Africa. He subsequently left South Africa for America in 1915, where he lived until his death in 1945.

Naomi and her siblings all went to school in Windhoek and matriculated there. Afterwards, she studied at the Michaelis School of Art in Cape Town, where she met Larry Jacobson, a medical student. They were married in

1947. Larry started his medical practice in Luderitz, SWA, where they stayed for five years. Naomi found life in that small coastal town very stifling. As she wrote, "There were no trees, just Skeleton Coast desert, no fresh water, no fresh milk or vegetables. Sanitation was a bucket system up amongst the rocks. When my mother came to visit me she cried –'imagine a nice Jewish girl in a place like this!'" After another two years in Gobabis, and a short term in Umtata, they moved to Windhoek, where they lived until 1973.

On returning to Windhoek, Naomi established a studio and started sculpting in earnest, although she had previously taught pewter, and dabbled in painting. Her interest for many years was the indigenous peoples of Namibia, particularly the Bushmen, and she developed a passion for portrait sculpture. She would visit the hospitals and gaols, where she found interesting faces.

Naomi initially worked in clay but was introduced to cement fondu, a metal cement from France, by the famed British sculptor Frank McWilliam. He had been commissioned to sculpt the head of the Herero Chief Hosea Kutako, which was the very first bust to be exhibited at the UN. McWilliam taught her a great deal, and she went on to sculpt



Naomi Jacobson, with husband Larry, working on a larger-than-life statue of Steve Biko

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the heads of all the indigenous tribes, as well as of Chief Hosea Kutako, and of his successor Clemens Kapuu (who was later assassinated). She was further commissioned to sculpt three springbuck, which were placed in Kaiser Street, the main street in Windhoek.

Naomi began receiving commissions to do other sculptures, not only heads, but of animals, birds, dolphins, insects and abstract works. These were not always in cement fondu, but also in bronze (which had to be cast at a foundry in Pretoria) and in metal. Those that were not directly commissioned found a ready market in South Africa, the UK, the US and Europe. Throughout, she was supported and assisted by her husband.

After she and Larry moved to Johannesburg in 1973, Naomi became well established, although she seldom exhibited in or worked through a gallery. She wrote, "Portraiture is the orphan of the art world, but make no mistake, it is so exciting and exhilarating. I did my work because I loved the interaction with the subjects, not because of the money. I was honoured to do the people I felt were of historical importance, and money couldn't buy that."

And so started the introduction into the private lives of her subjects, whom Naomi got to know so well during the sittings. Where she was commissioned to do the heads of deceased persons, she would make an intimate study of their lives, assisted by many photographs. Of the countless commissions she received, among the most well known are King Shaka Zulu, which stands at Ulundi, Steve Biko, which stands in front of the Town Hall in East London and was unveiled by Nelson Mandela, King Sobhuza of Swaziland, Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana, Philip Tobias, Raymond Dart, Lady Baden-Powell, Alan Paton, Leonard Schach and all the Randlords. She further portrayed certain famous Afrikaans personalities, including Chief Justice Henry Fagan and C.J. Langenhoven, which are housed in the State Theatre in Pretoria. Naomi's paternal aunt, Sarah Goldblatt, had been Langenhoven's secretary and, after his death, acted as his literary executrix.

Of course, her most famous head is that of Nelson Mandela. This sculpture is the only one for which Mandela actually sat, over a period of weeks, and he was comfortable enough with Naomi to sometimes go to sleep during the sittings. At the same time, Naomi was commissioned to sculpt the heads of Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu. The latter and his wife, Albertina, became very good friends.

In 1998, Naomi was commissioned to sculpt two figures for the Michelangelo Hotel in Sandton. The larger of the two, named the

'Contessa', is four times larger than life-size. Naomi commented that it expressed her aspirations of what she would like a woman to be: "larger than life, ambitious, strong yet elegant, and reaching for the stars".

The second figure, 'Gabriella', is a conventional piece depicting the beauty of the female form. It was named after the mother of the two craftsmen/artists at the Vignali foundry, who died while the work was being completed. Naomi described these two sculptures as being "the culmination of my life's work".

But she was far from stopping. She carried on for close on eighteen years, sculpting heads on commission and abstract pieces. She was working on a "blue boy" - also larger than life-size - when her strength started failing her towards the end of 2015.

One of the commissions which Naomi most enjoyed was of Moses holding up a scroll containing the Ten Commandments. The bust was commissioned by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies in 2003 to mark its centenary. It stands today in the Beyachad Jewish community centre in Johannesburg.

Naomi is survived by her daughter Janine and son David, a well-known sculptor in London, grandsons Stephen (a prominent Johannesburg artist) and Jason and two great-grandchildren. Her husband, Larry, died in 2014.



Naomi Jacobson next to her 'Moses' bust, 2014

SCIENTIFIC PROOF FOR A CREATOR

*

Honey Gluckman

On 16 April 1966, *Time Magazine's* famous cover page appeared asking, with red letters on a black background, "IS GOD DEAD?" At that time this was the view of many scientists who stressed that reliable knowledge can only be gained through using the Scientific Method. This method involves observation, measurement, experimentation and forming and testing hypotheses until an acceptable theory is put forth, leading to an acceptable physical law. What would not be acceptable for scientists was knowledge that came from the authority of, and faith in, holy books and religious leaders.

However, a variety of factors have since enabled scientists to acquire knowledge of primordial times, going back hundreds of millions of years. These were the discoveries of ancient fossils of animals, plants and primitive life forms embedded in rocks and earth that were then dated using carbon 14. Other factors were the rise of new scientific theories by Einstein and others and the invention of more powerful telescopes which could unlock the mysteries of the Universe.

As a result of all these factors, many scientists have queried their unexamined belief that the Universe has always existed and have started to wonder whether it was indeed created. If this was so, there had to have been a Creator. This article will be looking at some of these scientist's arguments for accepting God. (See Bibliography for their names and credentials, as at the time of writing).

I will be discussing six of their reasons, but in putting forward these arguments, I will not be explaining how various physical laws were discovered, nor elaborating on the details of these laws. (All such explanations can be found in the books listed in the Bibliography). Rather, I will concentrate only on the significance of the arguments for those scientists who now accept that there was a Creator.

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(1) The Big Bang

There were two discoveries that led scientists to believe that the universe had not always existed, but had been created in what became known as the Big Bang. In the early decades of the 20th Century, Edwin Hubble and his assistant measured distances to galaxies and, noting that the light from these stars were red shifted, an indication of increasing distance, hypothesized that the galaxies were constantly moving further and further apart from each other. If this was the case, then at one stage in the much more distant past, they must have been incredibly closer together. As Gerald Schroeder put it (*Genesis and the Big Bang*, p65), "The present Universe ... is the result of the Big Bang, a massive expansion from a single point ... The universe was then the size of a speck of dust ... and at that early time, all matter was concentrated into one minuscule core location ... A Big Bang followed by an unending expansion of the Universe, tells us that there was a beginning in the form of energy which over eons of time was converted into tangible matter and that, at the minimum, there is a place for a Beginner."

The belief in a Big Bang was later proved in 1964 when the American radio astronomers Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson discovered a microwave radiation background that was constant and equal in all directions of the Universe. This fading radiation is what remains of the original heat from the explosive birth of the universe. Their discovery confirmed the prediction of the Big Bang theory. (You can hear this radiation background as static when you misplace a station on your radio or TV).

Schroeder then quotes the account of the Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, aka Nachmanides), in his commentary on Genesis (written in the 13th Century!). Of the first seconds of the universe, the Ramban wrote, "At the briefest instant following creation, all the matter of the universe was concentrated in a very small space, no larger than a grain of mustard. The matter at this time was so thin, so intangible, that it did not have real substance. It did, however, have

a potential to gain substance and form and to become tangible matter. From the initial concentration of this intangible substance in its minute location, the substance expanded, expanding the universe as it did so ... from this initial act of creation ... everything that has existed, or will ever exist, was, is, and will be formed” (ibid, p65).

How, Schroeder asked, was it possible for someone writing before the invention of powerful optical and radio telescopes and other sophisticated scientific instruments, to know all this? He concluded, “Nachmanides ... was not in the business of discovering ... All could be derived from the revelation associated with the Bible” (ibid, p68).

The first page of the Bible is an example of such a Revelation.

(2) Six Days of Creation

Both Schroeder and Andrew Parker discuss the eerie similarity between the Genesis account and the findings of science as regards the creation and development of the Universe, Earth and Life. This involved two issues, viz., how valid is six days of Creation and how accurate is the order of events as set out in Genesis?

Regarding the first question, scientists and others have always scoffed at the idea that the Universe was created in six days and put forward various alternative theories. Then Einstein happened. His Laws of Relativity showed that the closer some event approaches the speed of light, and the more it is affected by gravitational forces, the slower time moves for that event. Schroeder writes, “Not just the sensation of time, but the actuality of time’s passage changes in accord with the relative motion of the observers” (ibid, p47) and “...For when a single event is viewed from two frames of reference, a thousand or even a billion years in one can indeed pass for days in the other” (ibid, p34). In other words, when God created the Universe, for local time this took billions of years, but in God’s time, it took six days.

(3) The order of events as set out in Genesis

In order to prove how accurate this order was Andrew Parker, in his book *The Genesis Enigma*, analyzes the first page of the Bible. (Quotations in italics from all relevant parts of the Genesis account’ are found on page three of the book). In Chapter Two, he took Day One of the account and showed its scientific proof by listing the various stages from the Big Bang: the creation of energy, leading to the creation of fundamental particles, then atoms, then matter, then primordial gas, when darkness ruled upon the Earth,

then groups of stars, then the formation of the Sun (around 5000 million years ago). “*In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth and the Earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep... and God said, ‘Let there be light.’*”

In Chapter Three, Parker then explains in detail how the oceans were formed as the Earth cooled sufficiently for water vapor in the atmosphere to liquefy into rain eventually forming seas, and how land areas eventually appeared (around 4200 million years ago). “*And God said, ‘let the waters under the heaven be gathered together under one place, and let the dry land appear.’*”

Chapter Four describes how life began. The Genesis account states, “*Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind.*” Parker compares this to the scientific account of the beginnings of plant life, describing how single celled, photosynthetic organisms with the aid of the Sun, formed around 3900 million years ago. He comments, “It is also interesting that water was absolutely necessary for life to have appeared at all, and water was singled out in Genesis account’s previous stage” (ibid, p101).

The next stage in the Genesis account is strange since ‘light’ is once more mentioned. “*Let there be lights...to divide the day from the night.*” At the beginning of Chapter Five, Parker writes, “The author of Genesis recorded that God made two great lights; ‘*the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night*’. ... But God had already covered the appearance of the sun ... This fourth phase in the creation account cannot be referring to that, although it appears to invoke the sun again” (ibid, p102).

This is Parker’s own explanation for the repetition of this phenomenon: “The first image –forming eye evolved and the visual information used. The lights were turned on for animal behaviour and evolution (around 521 million years ago) ...” (ibid, p3). This was a monumental step that changed life forever and led to the Cambrian explosion, a period in geological time which lasted from 543 million to 490 million years ago, and which Parker, when this diversity of life increased immeasurably, called ‘evolution’s Big Bang: “*Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life ... And God created the great whales , and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind and every winged fowl after his kind.*” As scientific discovery has showed, at that time life existed in the oceans.

The sixth stage in the Creation account envisages great creatures making their way

out of the sea: “*the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing ... and beast of the earth.*” This too accords with the scientific account of the evolution of life. And then, finally, the creation of Man, the so called final species: “*so God created man in his own image...*”

Parker has shown that the evolution of our world and all life indeed reflects the order of events as set out in Genesis, viz.: the creation of the Sun; of the oceans; of the first plant life; the creation once more of light; the beginnings of life in the sea; living creatures coming out of the ocean; birds and finally, the creation of Man. He asks, “Could it be that the Creation Account on page one of Genesis was written as it is *because* that is how the sequence of events really happened? ... But the astonishing point is that the Genesis account has *no right* to be correct. ... Consider the identity of its writer – when and where he lived ... no one (then) had access to the information or the techniques needed to deduce the scientific account” (p. xiii).

Parker ends his book with these words (pp288-9):

The Aaronid priest who wrote the Bible’s first page, or Moses who may have given the ancient Israelites their creation account, originally lacked any interest in natural history The scientific method necessary to decipher the true account of how the universe formed and life evolved ... was yet to manifest itself ... The writer of the Bible’s first page ... was without so much as a magnifying glass But the Genesis Enigma has told us that those enigmatic phrases ... are scientifically accurate ... The conclusion is that *this page of the Bible could, perhaps more than any other, represent God’s hand in the Bible* (Parker’s italics). The true account of how we came to exist may have been handed to humans by God”.¹⁰

(4) Fitness for Life

The phenomenon of the eerie fit between our world and its habitability for life is what has astonished and puzzled many scientists. As Fred Hoyle, a British cosmologist, stated (quoted in Davies), “Our bio-friendly universe looks like a fix or ‘put-up job’ as if a super intellect had been ‘monkeying’ with the laws of physics” (Davies, *The Goldilocks Enigma*, p3).

I will be discussing how this “super intellect” incredibly shortened the time needed to produce life; how the Earth was ‘fine-tuned’ to allow life to appear, both in the macro and micro fields; and how all life

is regulated by the miracle of our genes.

a) Time Needed For Life to Evolve

Schroeder (p11) analyzes the fossil record, which shows that life appeared on Earth about 4.5 billion years ago and argues that this was not possible. He refers to Morowitz, a physicist, “who presented calculations of the time required for random chemical reactions to form just a single-celled bacterium (which) ... exceeds not only the 4.5 billion year age of the Earth, but also the entire 15 billion age of the universe ... The likelihood ... of random processes producing life from a primordial bath of chemicals in the time available, is therefore improbable and cannot be explained by conventional physical laws (p101).

b) Fine Tuning

As Flew states (*There is a God*, p115), “Virtually no major scientist today claims that fine tuning was purely a result of chance factors at work”. Here follow just a few examples, given by the writers in my Bibliography, of the fine tuning of basic physical laws.

The Big Bang produced slightly more matter than antimatter. When these both come together, they quickly annihilate. As Collins (*The Language of God*, p72) explains, “If there had been complete symmetry between matter and antimatter, the universe would have devolved into pure radiation and people, planets, stars and galaxies would never have come into existence.” He adds that without sufficient dark matter, which provides most of the gravitational pull needed to grow galaxies, our stars and planets could not have been formed. Moreover, if gravity was stronger or weaker, the orbits of these planets, stars and galaxies as they fly through space, would become unstable and Earth would spiral away from, or towards the Sun. End of life here.

Moreover, the Big Bang was just the right size. As Davies comments, “Our Universe has picked a happy compromise; it expands slowly enough to permit galaxies, stars and planets to form, but not so slowly as to risk rapid collapse” (pp61-2).

In addition, the Sun is just the right distance from the Earth to give us light, warmth and with it, food. Without our star, life would not be possible. But together with its life-giving properties, the Sun can also harm us with its destructive UV rays. So the ‘Super Intellect’ provided the Earth with an atmosphere which originated at the nuclear level and which eventually provided volcanoes with fuel rich in carbon

dioxide. This gas generated plant life and through photosynthesis, oxygen was produced which together with other gases, formed the atmosphere under which we live and breathe. The miracle is that upon striking oxygen, the ultra-violet radiation from the Sun forms ozone, and it is ozone that absorbs this toxic radiation. Walker (*An Ocean of Air*, p153) elaborates that “Five billion tons of ozone float above our heads trapping the highest-energy ultraviolet rays before they make it down to the surface. The lowest energy ultra violet rays, the ones that our ozone frontier guards let through, are quite good for humans... But if the ones trapped were allowed to fall freely to the ground, they would be highly dangerous” in that they can... cause skin cancer and cataracts. Moreover, when the molten iron deep inside the core of the Earth moves about, it produces a magnetic field that diverts away from the Poles much more of the lethal UV rays, (which we see as the Northern Lights, Aurora Borealis) that would otherwise reach the Earth. Furthermore, Walker points out that without air in our atmosphere, there would be no way for sound to travel and we would be ‘living’ (if such was possible) on a silent planet.

Finally, water in its liquid state is essential and on Earth it is between 0 degrees and 100 degrees C. Compared with the incredibly huge range of temperatures in our solar system, anything far below or above would have prevented human life.

The most famous scientist of today, Stephen Hawking, stated, “The laws of science contain many fundamental numbers ... The remarkable fact, is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted, to make possible the development of life”... He concludes, “The initial state of the Universe must have been very carefully chosen indeed ... It would be very difficult to explain why the universe should have begun in just this way except as an act of a God who intended to create beings like us” (*A Brief History of Time*, p125, 127).

c) Mathematical Order in the Universe

As Davies stated, “Modern scientists are mostly not religious, yet they still accept that an intelligent script underlies the workings of nature,” otherwise there would be no point in doing research. He added, “You would never guess by looking at the physical world that beneath the surface hubbub of natural phenomena lies an abstract order ... Diverse physical systems making up the cosmos are linked deep down by a network of coded mathematical relationships. And science has uncovered the existence of

this concealed mathematical domain” (*The Goldilocks Enigma*, p5). In other words, all the discovered laws of nature and of the different phenomena on our Earth and in the Universe can be summarized in a rationally precise manner through the language of Mathematics.

Flew, a one-time ardent atheist, wrote, “The important point is not merely that there are regularities in nature, but that these regularities are mathematically precise, universal and tied together ... The question we should ask is how nature came packaged in this fashion. This is certainly the question that scientists from Newton to Einstein to Heisenberg have asked and answered. Their answer was the Mind of God” (*There Is a God*, p96). This, too, was the answer which Varghese (quoted in Flew) gave, “There can be rationality in the universe only if it is grounded in the ultimate rationality – an infinite mind” (*ibid*, p166). Collins asked, “Are these mathematical descriptions of reality signposts to some greater intelligence? Is mathematics, along with DNA, another language of God?” (*The Language of God*, p62).

d) The Improbability of DNA

Not only are the natural laws of the world and the universe based on mathematics, so too are the laws affecting our genetic makeup mathematically based. Schroeder (*Genesis and the Big Bang*, p113) explains DNA as follows: “The long helix-like molecules ... DNA and RNA ... are the basis of the genetic material of all living cells yet analyzed ... All forms of life have the same type of genetic code...a blade of grass, a bacterium or a human, all base their existence on the same 20 amino acids ... This equivalence among all life forms is strong evidence for a single source of all life. It is not plausible that the similarity arose by chance...”

Collins asks, “How could a self-replicating information carrying molecule assemble spontaneously ... DNA ... seems an utterly improbable molecule to have ‘just happened’” (*The Language of God*, p91). For him, the answer was God, who spoke life into being through DNA language.

I conclude with a quote from Collins: “... the fact that the Universe had a beginning, that it obeys orderly laws expressed precisely with mathematics, and the existence of a remarkable series of ‘co-incidences’ that allows the laws of nature to support life ... do point to an intelligent mind that could lie behind such precise and elegant principles” (*ibid*, 219). Hawking (*A Brief History of Time*, p175) refers to this mind as “The mind of God”.

It is such proven facts which led the astrophysicist Robert Jastrow, quoted in Smoot (*Wrinkles in Time: The Imprint of Creation*, p291) to speak of the scientist's nightmare: "He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries".

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**SHORT
STORY**
HOLOCAUST SHADOWS

*

Zita Nurok

The keys to the bottom drawer of the dressing table in my parents' bedroom lay under the heavy green eiderdown on my mother's bed. When we were young children my father, brother, or I never opened that drawer, and no one ever talked about it. It was just another drawer so we mostly forgot about it, but I knew in my heart that there was something there that evoked sadness in my mother.

As I grew older and became a teenager, my curiosity overcame me and I decided that someday I would look in that place to discover the secrets it held.

That day came. On many afternoons my mother walked into town to help my father with sales in the family's bicycle shop. It was a duty to him that she didn't enjoy. She sat in the darkness at the back of the shop patiently knitting colorful sweaters for my brother or myself while waiting for customers to come in and browse. When she grew tired of doing that she would visit the kindly Indian tailor and his wife in the shop next door to ours, or she'd walk across the road to catch up with the town's news from the gruff butcher and his wife. They sold kosher meat on one side of the butchery and meat for the general public on the other. She kept an eye on our shop and if she saw customers arriving she returned to help with the sales of bicycles, tires, bike pumps, wheels, spokes, or bicycle bells. Records of African music blared from the gramophone into the speakers attached to the shop windows, enticing African customers to come in and make their purchases.

One such afternoon, while my brother was out playing tennis, I was alone at home, a good time to unlock the drawer I thought. The smallest key on the bunch under the eiderdown opened it. I sorted through the papers, photographs, and a photo album showing photos of family left behind in Lithuania after my parents had left to travel to South Africa. I wondered what had become of those family members. I found passports with stamped visas telling about the individual journeys to South Africa that my mother and father had taken, he in 1925, and she in 1929. There were postcards in an envelope, of Riteve, the town where my mother grew up. These showed streets, buildings, nearby towns, and more special places to her. She enjoyed telling me stories about her little town, especially about the river where she and her friends loved to splash and play, or about the forests where they would dance, skip, and run to pick berries. She told me of the way her family celebrated holidays, and how she helped her mother cook and bake the food associated with each one. There were pictures of my father when he was a yeshiva student in Kurshan, where he came from. He dreamed of becoming a teacher one day, and was proud that he was the 'educated' one of his brothers and sisters. We were proud of the fact that our dad could lead the services in our small shul whenever needed.

And then in this treasure trove of past lives I found it: A yellowing envelope with a cutting from a South African Jewish newspaper telling what had happened to my mother's youngest sister Gitele and their mother, in August 1941, the year that I was born.

Many questions tumbled through my shaken mind. How did she react to the news of the manner in which her own mother and beloved sister died? Where had they spent the last days of their lives? How were they transported to that place? Were they taken from their modest small house in Riteve? How did she handle this unspeakable information?

My discovery gave us a better understanding of the impact on our family of my mother's secrets and untold stories, and of her ways as she grew older. Like a puzzle we could fill in some of the pieces of the past, but we'd never have answers to the questions that remained to complete the puzzle.

Was the legacy of the Holocaust a dark shadow that descended over the generations that came after the war? Does that shadow, although dimmer now, continue to spread over those who are the remaining link to those years? Perhaps.


**Girl's Message to South African
Relatives Found on Lithuanian
Prison Wall**

(Independent Jewish Press Service)

NEW YORK, Monday.—A plea for Kaddish, written in Yiddish on the cell wall in a Nazi prison of Shavie, Lithuania, informs Rabbi Isaac K. Sachs, of the Bronx, and other members of the family in South Africa, of the death of Gitele Sachs at the hands of the Nazis. A transcript of the message from Gitele Sachs is contained among documents sent from the Soviet Union to the American Committee of Jewish Writers, Artists and Scientists here which is compiling a "Jewish Black Book" of Nazi crimes. It reads:

"Jewish girls were sitting in this cell. We were told we were to be shot. If a Jew will pass here and will survive, I beg him, since I have brothers and sisters in America and South Africa, to notify them that my mother was shot August 14, 1941, in Gerul and that they should observe the anniversary of her death. I am Gitele Sachs, of Riteve, and I also beg that Kaddish be said for me. The address of my brother is Rabbi Sachs, 3554 Rochambeau Ave, Bronx."

Zita Nurok is an elementary school teacher who grew up in South Africa. She is a member of the National League of American Pen Women, and has served as Vice-President and President of the Indianapolis branch.



MARRIED TO MEDICINE: DR MARY GORDON, PIONEER WOMAN PHYSICIAN AND HUMANIST

*

Rebecca Hodes

Recent years have seen an upsurge of writing about the diverse histories of Jewish South Africans. Paul Weinberg's *Dear Edward* (Jacana, 2012), Sally Swartz's *Homeless wanderers: movement and mental illness in the Cape Colony* (UCT Press, 2015) and Steven Robins' *Letters of Stone* (Penguin Random House, 2016) provide new insights into the expanse of Jewish life over the last century. All rely on letters as principal sources and, in the case of Weinberg's book, as their mode of storytelling. In their memoir of Dr Mary Gordon, a physician whose life and career spanned pivotal events and processes of the last century, Jack and Gordon Metz have added to this flourishing literature.

Through piecing together correspondence, photographs, newspaper accounts, interviews and observations, the authors have recuperated the history of a doyen of 20th Century medicine, whose disappearance into the shadows of the past is in part due to her humility and lifelong eschewal of publicity. In writing her biography, they have recounted how the tale of one relates to the histories of many, framing Gordon's life history in relation to Jewish experience in the 20th Century, including the Russian Revolution, emigration from the Pale of Settlement, the tumult of the First and Second World Wars, the rise of apartheid South Africa and the establishment of the State of Israel. They focus in particular on two central developments in politics and profession: contemporary South Africa, and modern medicine.

Gordon's life is told through the tender frame of memory, providing intimate glimpses of an austere yet charismatic relative. Her professional successes made an indelible impression on her relatives, as did her

anomalousness as an unmarried, professional woman.

Gordon's story is in part one of defiance against various forms of exclusion – of gender, religion, class and nation. The account is peppered with familial anecdotes, the truth of which is sometimes disputed. The veracity of her procurement of a 'yellow ticket', a prostitute's identity stamp to allow her to escape the Pale of Settlement and seek higher education in Russia, is questioned (pp. 27-8).

But assertions of Gordon's ingenuity, tenacity and resilience, fundamental to Jewish notions of selfhood, are central to the narrative, as are accounts of friendship, loyalty and affection. See, for instance, the correspondence between Gordon, Rabbi Moses Hirsch Segal (pp. 33 – 35) and Morison Rutherford (pp. 81-84). The loyalty and admiration that she inspired among her patients is documented in the description of an engraving written for her by the detainees of a displaced persons camp in Cyprus, in acknowledgment of her work as a doctor in the Jewish Wing of the British Medical Hospital (p125).

Co-authorship must be complicated, and the book's narrative cohesion testifies to the success of the authors' dual endeavour. But there were moments in which I questioned how descriptions of Gordon's own character aligned with the views and practices of her ancestors. For instance, the 'orthodoxy' of Mary's father – Mottel/Moses Mordechai is recognised as a celebrated value (p182), while her own practice of Judaism was decidedly unorthodox – cf. the account on p92 of Mary's attendance of a 1958 production of the musical *My Fair Lady*, in London, on Yom Kippur.

Gordon's own ascription of value to different forms of identity seems at times ambiguous. Despite her commitment to medical practice, and to the training of women practitioners, she wrote: "Women are

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not suited to the medical profession. They are not prepared to devote a lifetime to the study of medicine” (p88). Here I read shades of Elizabeth Thompson Butler, the best-known woman painter of the Victorian era. Thompson Butler created among the most brilliant portraits of war ever committed to oils, but she was never elected to Britain’s Royal Academy – a benchmark for artistic recognition in the 19th Century. Thompson wrote in her autobiography that, although she had missed election to the Academy by only two votes, she thought that, “the door had been closed, and wisely”.

Why did Gordon’s experience of medical practice lead her to believe that women were ill-suited for the profession? This question remains unanswered in the text. But all biographies provide only partial views of any life and, despite Gordon’s ultimate ‘unknowability’ in some senses, this book captures other aspects of her audacious life.

Married to Medicine: Dr Mary Gordon, Pioneer Woman Physician and Humanist, by Jack and Gordon Metz (Adler Museum of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersand, Johannesburg, 2016)

ANTI-JUDAISM: THE WESTERN TRADITION

*

Kenneth Hughes

There is no getting away from it: David Nirenberg’s *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* is the kind of book of which one says simply, it marks an epoch; it is a *great work*.

It is a book which revives and revises all the old debates about the origins of Antisemitism.

It gives a novel twist to all these old discussions, by locating Antisemitism as derivative from a discourse ANTI-JUDAISM, which it sees as directed primarily against Judaism both as a culture and as a religion; and which it most challengingly, takes to be, not just some eccentric and peripheral deviation, but a central part of the traditional Western Christian (and also of the Islamic) cultural heritage.

Anti-Judaism gives a radical revisionist interpretation - and, in the future, nobody will be able to write on these issues without first taking Nirenberg’s terrific synthesis into account.

It is also a remarkable and unusual work, in that it seeks to revise and modify in important ways a powerful argument, which the author himself was the first to put forward and defend in an earlier and likewise seminal book. This was Nirenberg’s ground-breaking first work: *Communities of Violence: persecution of minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton University Press, 1996).

In this work which was based on his doctoral thesis, Nirenberg drew on the very

rich archives of the Kingdom of Catalonia in Barcelona, to revisit a number of well-known incidents involving inter-communal violence-which earlier historians had drawn on when writing the history of Antisemitism or (in some cases) of medieval intolerance. It was an avowedly revisionist work, because Nirenberg wanted to take issue with the work of earlier historians like Norman Cohn, who in his classic book *The Pursuit of the Millennium* had argued that medieval social and religious struggles involving a vision of the Last Days, had anticipated or prefigured in important ways, the delirious persecutory mania of 20th Century totalitarianism - both the Nazis and the Soviets. Nirenberg will have none of this: there is no straight road leading from Barcelona to Auschwitz, he says - and sets up arguments to prove his point by locating the medieval violence in the context of an ongoing series of inter-communal hostilities which are very clearly specific to the various communities present in medieval Catalonia, and gives us what the anthropologist Clifford Geertz liked to call “thick description” - showing how the cultural meanings of the violence of that time have no modern parallels. (There was, for example, a strange custom whereby tonsured children were permitted to throw stones into the ghetto - or at Jewish funeral processions - during Holy Week. And there was carnival mockery when fourteen year old children - but only they - were permitted to dress up as Jews or Muslims for purposes of satire). The idiosyncrasy - and the cultural specificity of these performances, leads Nirenberg to contend that there can be no such thing as an “eternal Antisemitism”.

Yet, in his more recent work, this is exactly

Dr Kenneth Hughes is an independent scholar, who recently retired from teaching Mathematics and the History of Ideas at the University of Cape Town.

what he does contend. How does he square the contradiction? Basically, so far as I can see, by arguing that there is a continuing line of discourse, ANTI-JUDAISM which is central to the pursuit of the Christian (and also of the Islamic) faith, a discourse which gets passed on from generation to generation, and which serves as a kind of cultural template - a resource on which individuals and communities can draw, according to their needs. It is independent of contact or experience with actual Jews and so can sometimes function in communities from which Jews are totally excluded or absent. (A classic case is that of Shakespeare imagining Shylock in Elizabethan England).

It is also a very disturbing book, and for two reasons. One initially is disturbed because the subject matter is intrinsically repellent, if not indeed horrifying and depressing; and then subsequently, one also worries because of wondering whether - despite the author deploying great care and considerable subtlety - he has got it exactly right.

As to the first worry, let me illustrate by taking a striking example. Much of Nirenberg's exposition is a breezy survey of the high-roads of European culture. One of Shakespeare's most famous passages (much quoted by patriotic Englishmen on national occasions) is a long celebratory eulogy of England as "this scepter'd isle", "this precious stone set in a silver sea" which is a speech put into the mouth of John of Gaunt, in the history play *Richard II*. The piece is so well-known that it has become hackneyed.

So it comes as something of a shock when Nirenberg runs on beyond the oft-quoted paragraphs and shows that the speech culminates in an anti-Jewish diatribe, where England is described as leased out ("bound in with shame, with inky blots and rotten parchment bonds") to a group of rulers metaphorically equated with "stubborn Jewry". Thus, Shakespeare manages to combine neatly both the stereotype of the Jew as extortionate money-lender with religious

discourse about the Jews holding out against Christianization. This is what Nirenberg means when he talks about "thinking with Judaism".

Some parts of the book tread well-worn paths - other authors have taken us on a guided tour of the anti-Jewish strain in Christian theology, for example - while other parts explore long-forgotten byways. But what gives Nirenberg's book its unique power is his capacity to find examples of Anti-Judaism in iconic texts by major European writers and thinkers where one least expects it.

As regards my second concern, what is at stake here is whether the author has found the best way of dealing with his subject matter. To be sure, his account is powerful and in each episode he discusses his analysis is incisive and convincing. But what is not altogether clear to me is the thread which binds these episodes together - the notion of 'discourse' is a vague one and one is not always sure that it is the same discourse which is at issue. One would have liked to see him pay more attention to questions of how the discourse gets transmitted - and how it gets edited or combined with other discourses. In particular Norman Cohn's work remains a powerful account of another discourse - that of Christian Apocalyptic, which may not have lead straight to Auschwitz, but which was certainly intertwined with Anti-Judaism, and whose importance for the history of the Crusades, and for the history of the Western Revolutionary tradition has recently been re-underlined by the work of several historians (such as Jay Rubinstein's *Armies of Heaven* and Martin Malia's *History's Locomotives*).

To sum up, this is a major work, by one of today's most erudite and original historians, which nonetheless is not a work for the specialist only. The questions it raises about culture and intolerance invite reflection by all thinking people.

Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition by David Nirenberg, W. W. Norton, New York, 2013, 624pp

WHAT A BOYKIE: THE JOHN BERKS STORY

*

Ralph Zulman

Mr Justice Ralph Zulman, a long-serving member of the editorial board of Jewish Affairs and a frequent contributor to its Reviews pages, is a former Judge of the Appeal Court of South Africa.

Many youngsters today will not have heard of John Berks (born Berkowitz), but there are few of the over forties who do not remember *Berksie* with warmth and affection. The author Robin Binckes mentions that

he had to peel away layers to expose the true John. He describes him as “one of the most impossible human beings with whom to work. He hates talking about himself and is constantly afraid of speaking about anyone else, fearing that he will hurt their feelings or that they will sue him. He has a deep commitment to decency and family values. He can be forgetful, unreliable scatter-brained and stubborn”.

In interviews with people who worked with John, or knew him socially, the author came across “a common thread: that of affection for his character”. None of the persons interviewed had anything detrimental to say about him, and everyone who had worked with him acknowledged him as a ‘radio genius’.

The book contains a prologue, forty-five distinct and appropriately titled chapters, an epilogue and an appendix and a number of photographs.

Fifteen months after John’s birth in Krugersdorp on 24 August 1941, the family moved to Klerksdorp, where his father, Louis, set up a foundry business with his brother, Jack. A handful of less well-off Jewish families, including the Berkowitz family, lived in downtown Klerksdorp, whilst the more affluent Jewish families lived in a suburb named Irene Park.

John hated school. It was only English that held his attention. His first real interest was the radio. Unlike other boys his age, he hero-worshipped such radio commentators as Rex Alston, John Arlot, Charles Fortune and others. From early on he learned to mimic them.

Chapter Eight relates John’s first rejection by Springbok Radio to become a radio announcer. This was followed by his working in a soap factory. John’s new career started in 1963, when he moved back to Klerksdorp to take up a job with the *Klerksdorp Recorder*. However, he continually telephoned radio announcers John Silver, Mervyn John, Frank Douglas, Stanley Raphael and Colin Du Plessis in the hope of joining Springbok Radio. Eventually he was invited to by Du Plessis to come to the SABC offices. Du Plessis tested his pronunciation of the word ‘just’. John pronounced the word with a strong Klerksdorp accent - ‘jist’. Du Plessis spent the next six months giving him elocution lessons, but he showed little progress. In 1963, John attended a conference of small newspapers. There he met David Bray, who said he was looking for a cub reporter for the *Germiston Advocate*. John jumped at the chance and moved to Germiston. Whenever he got the chance he telephoned Springbok Radio or the independent radio station in Mocambique - Lourenco Marques

Radio (LM Radio). He was interviewed by his nemesis, the Programme Development Manager Rob Vickers, who declined to give him an announcer’s job. His big break came two months later when Gary Wilmot, a legendary Canadian radio announcer, replaced Vickers. John was eventually employed as an announcer at LM Radio. After some time, from an insecure young announcer, he blossomed and began to make his mark. He shared his microphone with the radio greats like Clarke McKay, Gary Edwards, David Gresham and Robin Alexander.

In 1967, John was promoted to Programme Development Manager in Johannesburg. In April 1969 he married Celeste - described as a typical South African *kugel* - at the Berea Synagogue. John resigned from LM Radio and joined Springbok Radio as a continuity announcer, but battled financially. He made a very unsuccessful trip to the USA in an attempt to get a job there, before returning to Springbok Radio. However, his name was becoming known on a national basis.

In October 1972, following an approach from Issie Kirsh, John left Springbok Radio and joined Swazi Music Radio. The station did not last long, and he returned to Springbok Radio as a part time continuity announcer. In October 1975 LM Radio closed and was re-launched as Radio 5, which John eventually joined.

On air John began to call himself ‘Long John Berks’. By 1979 he had become a celebrity and a doyen of the media. His next career move was to join Capital Radio, which broadcast out of Port St Johns. He spent time there bonding with his two children (he and Celeste having by then divorced).

On 29 June 1980 Channel 702, founded by Issie Kirsh, went live. On the advice of Bob Hanabery, a top radio consultant in the USA, Kirsh approached John to join the station. According to Hanabery, a talent like John came along once or twice in a hundred years; he rated him alongside the all-time greats in the USA.

As soon as he joined 702, John became a different person. Freed from the conservative restraints of Radio 5, he was able to do much as he pleased. He had a direct line to Issie Kirsh, and was handled with kid gloves. Bookings for public appearances and charity events poured in. He became the most talked about DJ in the country. Any celebrity that came to South Africa sought an interview with him. At the beginning of 1987, the Sunday Times rated John at number 32, with Pik Botha as number 1 and Gary Player as number 2, in a poll of the most admired South Africans.

In April 1986, John said that he was ‘burn out’ and needed to take a break. He left on

a two year sabbatical, on full pay, and went to Portugal. 702 suffered as a result of his absence, with listenership figures tumbling dramatically. (An article entitled *Come Back Berksie* appeared in the *Sunday Times*). After just one year of his sabbatical, John returned to 702. He chose the 0900 to 12h00 slot with his friend Gary Edwards (“His prank calls set the whole country chuckling. One such hilarious call was to Dr Harry Seftel about gas in the colon. The response to Talk Radio on John’s shows was overwhelming. However, there were elements who disliked this new form of liberalism”).

On 2 February 1990, President de Klerk announced the unbanning of the ANC and imminent release of Nelson Mandela. After years of restrictions, the public craved truthful news reports. 702 provided them. While many South Africans embraced the changes that were taking place, many did not. John was one of them; the rate of change was too fast for him. As the decade progressed, his concerns about the future of South Africa increased. Like many others, he felt that he might be better off in another country.

702’s listenership figures fell and it lost direction. In 1997 the deck chairs there were

rearranged. John resigned from the station, but later accepted an offer of an annual salary of R1 million and perks and returned. He found, however, that 702 had changed. On air, he sounded jaded and tired. In 2006 he accepted an offer from Kirsh to operate a radio station in Israel. He spent a year in Israel before resigning and returning to South Africa, where he was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame and honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award. In February 2008, John hung up his headphones for the last time. Since then, there have been various attempts to lure him back into the world of radio. None have been successful.

The statement in the title of the book *What a Boykie* is convincingly answered in the pages of the book. They show a man possessed of dogged and persistent determination to succeed and how he rose from obscurity to become a national figure. The book makes interesting and easy reading. It is highly recommended to all, especially to the ‘golden oldies’.

What a Boykie: The John Berks Story by Robin Binckes, 30 Degrees South publishers, Johannesburg, 2015, 256pp.

THE REB AND THE REBEL - JEWISH NARRATIVES IN SOUTH AFRICA 1892-1913

*

Kathy Munro

At first glance, this would appear to be a book of limited appeal. It is likely to be read with enthusiasm by the members of the Schrire family, because it is a collection of family manuscripts. Perhaps it is also likely to appeal to the Jewish community, where there is an interest in roots and Jewish genealogy. But this is entirely the wrong conclusion. *The Reb and the Rebel – Jewish Narratives in South Africa, 1892-1913*, adds to the history of Jewish settlement in South Africa while also throwing light on Cape Town social history in the two decades before World War

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I. As I turned the pages, I found it to be a surprisingly good read, and concluded that it is a book of far wider appeal than the title signals. These are personal stories of immigration, new lives, struggle, trial and travails that speak for so many who came to South Africa in search of better lives.

The Reb and the Rebel is a story of a particular family, the Schrires, told through the diary and a long epic poem of a Lithuanian-born father, Reb Yehuda Leib (1851-1912) and a memoir of his youngest son, Harry (1895-1980), who was born in Cape Town and was hence a first generation South African. There is a universality in this immigrant story, one telling of travel, hardship, poverty, family roots, adventure, entrepreneurship, illness, first business success, early financial set-backs followed by efforts to try yet another venture, longer term prosperity and eventually the founding of families which became prominent and successful.

I particularly liked the formal family photograph from 1911, showing the patriarch, Reb Yehuda, with his wife, four children, daughter in law and three grandchildren. The family poses in comfortable affluence and confidence. A studio portrait signals a certain status of immigrant outward achievement and success.

There is a strong interest in Jewish genealogy in South Africa, as much as there is in the USA and Britain. People everywhere search for their ancestors and look for geographical roots. The Southern African Jewish Interest Group website, founded by Dr Saul Issroff, provides a huge amount of information about Jewish history and settlement. Between 1880 and 1914, there was a ten-fold increase in Jewish immigration to South Africa, with the Jewish community growing from 4000 to over 40 000. 90% of the immigrants came from Eastern Europe, mainly Lithuania. Issroff, in an online article on researching Jewish genealogies in South Africa, explains that these 'Litvaks' came from the provinces of Kovno, Vilna and Grodno, from Northern Suwalki (East Prussia and later Poland) and also from the Byelorussian provinces of Vitebsk, Mogilev and Minsk. In the first South African Union census of 1911, 47 000 Jews were enumerated. Unlike other Jewish communities that formed in North America and Australia, the South African Jewish community was largely homogenous in their origins in the years before 1920.

Why did these Lithuanian Jews come to South Africa, thereby spreading the Jewish diaspora to the southern tip of Africa? Were there any common patterns? Demographic history reveals a combination of push and pull factors in migratory surges, combined with the progress in transport and travel that made movement possible and affordable. Lithuania has a proud independent history but for several centuries it was part of the Russian Empire and for a brief time occupied by Nazi Germany. In the late 19th Century, Jewish communities in hamlets and towns found themselves subject to pogroms and antisemitic waves; despite the strong religious, and hence literate traditions, poverty was widespread and epidemics, drought, harvest failures, army service, fires among narrow wooden village buildings and political events may have pushed emigration. But what this family's history reveals is that migration could be reversed and families or individuals could take a decision to return to their homeland or try out alternative spells of residence in England or Germany before coming 'home' to Africa. Movement could be both north and south and, provided one had the funds for steamship travel, there was some fluidity in travel by the early

20th Century, with regular sailings between South Africa and Europe.

This volume, comprising three distinct autobiographical manuscripts by two men, has been given cohesion and context through the work of the two editors and family members, Carmel Schrire and Gwynne Schrire, both competent scholars and researchers. In an introductory chapter they explain the South African context of the Schrire manuscripts, the origin of the manuscripts and how they were found, transcribed and translated. Here are the biographical thumbnail sketches of father and son, so that one is given a road map before one even tries to read the main text. Their footnotes are a model of scholarship. The diary of Reb Yehuda, his epic poem and then the memoirs of his son, Harry, make up much the greater part of the book. A final chapter by Carmel Schrire is a discourse on the authors of the manuscripts and extends the coverage on family background, marriages and of lives well lived.

In my opinion, the two context chapters should have been placed together and edited to eliminate repetition. In addition to this, what is missing and which should have been researched was the broader international context of the Jewish diaspora and migration. An appendix, compiled by Paul Cheifitz, lists the genealogy of the Schrire family. It is set out in a long list of names, indented further into a page for the next generation. Additional appendices document writings and art works by Yehuda Schrire. An essential glossary of Yiddish and Hebrew words enables readers to understand colloquial and written language.

The diary of Reb Yehuda Schrire, written in cursive Hebrew, is a rare document, recounting a period of 19 months in his life between 1892 and 1893. It reveals a momentous time of emigration from Europe, his own arrival and sojourn in Johannesburg, his decision to return to Lithuania and then his change of mind and prospects when he settled instead in Cape Town. The account of why he left Neustadt and of his journey to Johannesburg via Germany, Holland and England is fascinating. He travelled on the *Dunbar Castle* and stopped at Las Palmas before reaching Cape Town. It was a three-month epic journey and the voice of the curious, observant traveler comes through. Where the diary makes a new and interesting contribution is in his observations on life in early Johannesburg from the perspective of a proud, conservative religious man whose employment was that of a religious leader and cantor to the Park Synagogue. Schrire quickly found that there wasn't a match between the acculturated Anglo-German

Jewish congregation and the traditional Eastern European Rabbi. He did not think they were sufficiently Jewish in their religious observance, dress and language, and in their readiness to shave their beards and abandon kosher food. Schrire was open in his criticism of his fellow Jews and their new town. He commented, "...it is unbelievable that within seven years a city could be built in the wild South Africa within rocky mountains and hills of sand. A big city and a fortified metropolis. It is one point that gives light to almost the whole land of Africa, with its golden sands and houses of bank notes." His layman's description of gold mining draws the distinction between prospectors, engineers and the 'kaffirs' who do the digging once a promising seam has been located. Finding himself in penurious circumstances and not able to fit into Johannesburg, Schrire decides to return to Russia and his home, hence his return to Cape Town, where he takes up employment as a ritual slaughterer. It is South Africa's gain, as Schrire puts down roots and his wife and family eventually join him.

The second historic document is Reb Yehuda's epic poem, the Tolada. Of some 150 stanzas, and also written in Hebrew, this sets out the story of his life. The first third of the poem covers the same ground as his travel diary, but thereafter details his Cape Town experiences and life, travels and troubles of family life, illness and survival. Throughout his life his religious faith gave him a steadfast guide to understanding life and his role as son, husband, father and religious leader. He was a talented man

who could turn his hand to practical crafts as well as literary compositions, but in his final years (he died in 1912) he regarded himself and his life as a failure.

Harry Nathan Schrire, whose memoirs conclude the volume, was far more secular than his father, although his upbringing in Cape Town was Orthodox. These reminiscences cover his family and ancestry, childhood, school days and Jewish life in Cape Town in the first decade of the 20th Century. Harry left South Africa following Reb Yehuda's death to study medicine in Edinburgh. His father's life had been lived within religious confines and within fairly narrow constraints of tradesman, shopkeeper and butcher occupations, but Harry has the opportunity to make the transition to professional status within a generation. However, his world was even less certain and firm than that of his father and his plans were disrupted by the First World War. He returned to South Africa in 1920 and made his career in retailing.

This book combines a family story and sets one thinking about immigration and its implications for individuals, family and community. This family story would make a wonderful film. However, the title *The Reb and the Rebel* will not be easily understood by a wider readership and fails to capture the characters of the two protagonists.

The Reb and the Rebel Jewish Narratives in South Africa 1892-1913, edited by Carmel Schrire and Gwynne Schrire, UCT Press and Kaplan Centre of Jewish Studies and Research, University of Cape Town, 2016, illustrated, 258pp.

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Elegiac Prayers for Rosalind¹

Poem 1

Education did not come easily.
It was dearly bought and secretly spread
by ghetto ancestors,
the ancient Hebrew alphabet sewn into
trouser turn-ups by the local tailor.
Miraculously, the patriarchs who escaped to foreign
lands,
understood that learning was a fundamental tool
for survival and progress and individual growth
for each and every man, woman and child.
So Rosalind was given an education with the best.
Tragically and ironically, the candle of civilization
and culture which she lit
was snuffed out by the very darkness of barbarism
and ignorance she sought to light.

Poem 2

Music was her passion.
She played the piano and sang
with perfect pitch, quite unselfconsciously.
It was something they were required to do from
childhood
on the farm and in the village
to entertain guests, family and friends.
As a dutiful daughter, she accompanied her father
on the piano which he sang, in raucous baritone,
the 'pop' songs of the age –
"Only a rose I give you...."
Blushing as roses do....."
"Oh! Rosemarie I love you!
I'm always dreaming of you..."
After her death, we found the old sheet music
stacked
in cupboards and piano stools.

Poem 8

Somebody once said "She has fire in her eyes!"
She was a handsome woman.
The youthful photos show a young matron,
fashionably dressed, dark brown lustrous hair
plaited and wound round her head.
Slim and petite walking down Adderley Street
in the post-war severe dark dress with white Peter
Pan collar,
padded shoulders, platform shoes.
Her pantyhose weren't even torn when they found
her.

Poem 11

On her 80th birthday, we got
all dressed up and celebrated at a
restaurant on the banks of the Liesbeeck River,
an historical spot, amid old oak and poplar trees.
It was almost doubly disastrous!
Our sister found an intruder in the bathroom
that day, fell as she escaped attack
and bravely concealed her bruises
under a long-sleeved dress.
Maman, rushing down the broadly-spaced wooden
steps of the restaurant to greet the guests,
tripped and fell heavily.
But they both recovered and we
partied in the smug belief that many
birthdays were to follow.

Poem 26

But the trickster was at work!
They found a loaf of bread on the front doorstep
the day she was attacked.
Perhaps it was that last good deed which ended
her life.
They pushed their way in.
She resisted the attack,
so they savaged her,
fiercely, brutally, violently and aggressively.
They pulverized her face, beat her head with
their fists,
strangled her, tied her hands with the cord from
the lamp
and took her right there on the Persian carpet.

Poem 27

The nightmare and the pain had only just begun.
Maman was transformed into a ghoul,
quite unrecognizable even by her own flesh and
blood.
Her face was swollen to five times the size,
the matted grey hair untidy on the pillow,
the mouth battered and beaten like an old crone,
the left ear black with bruising,
breathing laboured,
her throat puffed out and misshapen as though
from a goitre.
Her eyes were tightly closed
and she drifted in and out of consciousness.
There was a stench of things rotten and putrid
And the leering skull of Death
over the hospital bed.

Poem 28

For 12 days she lived in a twilight zone.
It was like the screen-saver of a computer.
We waited expectantly for the click of the mouse,
bringing the programme of light and consciousness
back to the screen.
On the 13th day when the swelling had come down,
They did a scan and discovered she'd had a series of
strokes at the time of the attack.
By that night she was dead,
without justice or retribution,
just stone-cold dead by cold-blooded murder.
It was a cruel caricature of the husband's tender
care.
Now she was the withered bride of a savage Death

Poem 29

It is the obligation of the living to
recite the prayer for the dead
on the anniversary of our parent's death, for one
generation,
until the day we die,
and then the obligation ends.
"O-seh sha-lom bim'-'ro-mav, hu ya-a-she sha-lom,
a le-nuh v'al kol yis-ra-el v'im-ru Amen."
"May the One who causes peace to reign in the
high heavens,
let peace descend on us, on all Israel, and all
the world,
and let us say: Amen."

Pamela Heller-Stern

Love, Hate and Hope²

When dictators enslave their own and force their ideas upon other people, (1)
 Those oppressed must rise up and fight for their freedom against the dictators. (2)
 They say that war is a holy cause? I say war causes people to be holy (3)
 He who says what is not, goes to hell; (4)
 He, also, who having done a thing, says I have not done it. (5)
 Hell is a place, a time, a consciousness, in which there is no love. (6)
 There are a few things certain since Social Progress began: (7)
 The Dog returns to his vomit, and the Sow returns to her Mire, (8)
 And the burnt fool's bandaged finger goes wabbling back to the Fire. (9)
 Despair is not weak; it is strong. It fights against our hope, (10)
 Our determination and our hearts conviction-like. (11)
 Hope is the thing with feathers that perches on the soul, (12)
 And sings the tune without the words and never stops at all. (13)
 Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me shed, (14)
 And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head. (15)
 No remedy for black hate? Who says? Just love and love more, that's all. (16)
 Let such pure hate still underprop our love... (17)
 I have no time to hate, because the grave would hinder me, (18)
 And life is not so ample I could finish enmity. (19)
 Good we must love, and must hate ill, for ill is ill, and good, good still (20)
 And the night shall be filled with music, and the cares that infest the day (21)
 Shall fold their tents like the Arabs, and silently steal away. (22)
 To see the world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower, (23)
 Hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour. (24)
 Canst though, O cruel! Say I love thee not (25)
 When I against myself with thee partake? (26)

Rodney Mazinter

(Poets: 1 - Friedrich Kellner; 2 - Friedrich Nietzsche; 3 - Lord Buddha; 4 - Richard Bach; 5 - Rudyard Kipling; 6 - Sri Chinmoy; 7 - Emily Dickinson; 8 - John Keats; 9 - Sri Chinmoy; 10 - Henry David Thoreau; 11 - Emily Dickinson; 12 - John Donne; 13 - Henry Longfellow; 14 - William Blake; 15 - William Shakespeare)

David and Goliath

The world stood by
 Blind again ...
 And unkind

The only tiny democracy in the Middle East
 Fought and still fights on behalf of humanity
 Against superstition, ignorance and stupidity
 An example to the world
 Holding their hand out for peace and stability
 They continue to protect themselves
 And the uncivil civilized world

Remember how often
 Israel has stood completely alone
 To fight this infliction?

Now civilization stands alone
 With their chances gone
 Not knowing how
 And where and when
 To protect themselves
 From the scourge of Islamic terror

And Israel still fights
 For itself
 And them

Charlotte Cohen

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NOTES

- 1 The "29 Elegiac Prayers for Rosalind", a selection of which are published hereunder, were written in memory of my mother, Rosalind, who was attacked and left for dead in her own elegant apartment in Claremont, Cape Town at the age of 83. She died of her injuries 13 days later.
- 2 This poem is in the form of a *CENTO* – a literary work made up of quotations from other works. It is composed of verses or passages taken from other authors, disposed in a new form or order. The *cento* originated in the 3rd or 4th century.

READER'S LETTER

*

I refer to the article by Judge Dennis Davis in the Rosh Hashanah 2016 issue of *Jewish Affairs*, entitled 'Jewish Contributions to the Law in South Africa' (the Contents list provides a different title, viz. 'Jews in the Legal Profession in South Africa').

As Judge Davis acknowledges, his article is heavily weighted in favour of Jews in the legal profession in South Africa who hail from the Western Cape, where he grew up and sits as a judge. It makes limited reference to some in the rest of the country, but most Jewish lawyers outside the Western Cape are not even mentioned, save briefly in a footnote. The article is thus unbalanced and not a true reflection of the Jews in the legal profession in the country as a whole.

So, for example, no less than 25 of the following prominent Jewish judges are not referred to:

Oscar Galgut, Solly Miller and Harry Nestadt (one of the few judges to sit permanently in the Appellate Division); Philip Millin (originally passed over in favour of much younger men for appointment as a judge. His wife, the novelist Sarah Gertrude Millin, raised the matter with General Smuts, and he was eventually appointed); Simon (Simie) Kuper, a prominent Zionist leader who was tragically murdered; Cecil Margo, who served with distinction in the Israeli Air Force; David Melamet, who headed an Income Tax Court; Henry Preiss, who acted as a judge in the Appellate Division; Goodie Gordon; Jeff Leveson; Eric Morris (son of the of the illustrious Harry Morris); Brian Spilg; Charisse Weiner; Neil Tuchten; in Gauteng, Norman Addelson and Lionel Melunsky; Steve Rein in the Eastern Cape; Judges Henochsberg, Friedman Senior; Brian Galgut; Philip Meskin and Gerald Alexander in Natal; Judge Horwitz, probably the only Jewish judge to sit in the Orange Free State; Judge Hendler in the Northern Cape; Judge Golden in the Transkei; Judge Friedman in Bophuthatswana and Acting Judges Namie Philips and Dennis Levy (who acted as judges for many years in the Transvaal) and Karen Blum (Marshall).

The following leading Jewish senior counsel are also not mentioned: Aaron Mendelow QC; Willie Oshry SC; Philip Wulfsohn SC; Sony Ettlinger QC; Sir Joel Jofee; Percy Yutar SC; Dan Reichman SC; Jules Browde SC; Charles Nathan SC; Leslie Lawrence SC; Norman Rosenberg QC; Michael Kuper, the son of Judge Simon Kuper; Gerald Farber SC; Hilton Epstein SC; Dennis Fine SC; Philip Guinberg SC; Guy Hoffman SC; Gilbert Marcus SC; Ross Rosenberg ASC; David Unterhalter and the academic Professor David Zefferett, SC; Josie Medalie SC; Arnold Subel SC; Dennis Kuny SC; Dan Bregman; SC; Josie Brett SC and David Gordon SC in Natal, to name just a few.

Mention is also not made of many prominent attorneys, such as Isaac Mendelow; Natchie Mendelow; Julius Rosettenstein; Leonard Browde; Maurice Porter; Charles Friedman; Max Levenberg; Cecil Meltz; Victor Mansell and Philip Friedland.

Jewish politicians who were lawyers are not mentioned. For example Harry Schwarz, one time South African Ambassador to the USA; Alf Widman; Hymie Miller and Bertha Solomon, again just to name a few.

Even in the Western Cape Irwin Spiro, author of the *South African Law of Parent and Child*, and Aubrey Silke, author of a leading textbook on Income Tax, are not mentioned.

Ralph Zulman

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