

**THE PRICE THEY PAID:
A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF THE MEMOIRS OF THE JEWS
IN THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY
AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Veronica Belling

Description: Under the Apartheid government freedom of expression in South Africa was severely restricted. Those under banning orders could not be quoted or published, nor could their overseas publications be distributed in South Africa. If a copy was donated to the University library, it had to be kept in the banned book cupboard to be consulted at the discretion of the librarian. Since the unbanning of the African National Congress, the Pan African Congress and the South African Communist Party in February 1990, followed by the election of a democratic government in April 1994, there has been an outpouring of memoirs. Amongst these are a large number by Jews who have always been disproportionately represented amongst the white opponents of the Apartheid regime. This paper aims to introduce and to contextualise this literature as a resource for the study of Jewish history and identity. The memoirs have been grouped chronologically into seven categories according to historical subject and *genre* consisting of: Communists Unionists feminists, Sharpsville, the Rivonia Trial, Detention memoirs, In exile, At home, and Collections.

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disproportionately represented amongst the white opponents of the Apartheid regime. This paper aims to introduce and to contextualise this literature as a resource for the study of Jewish history and identity.

The struggle for Black liberation was born out of the marriage between Black nationalism and Communism, an ideology brought to South Africa in the early twentieth century by British anarchists and East European Jews. The African National Congress, established in 1912, did not initially admit Whites, Coloureds or Indians, and the first multiracial party in South Africa was the Communist Party of South Africa founded in 1921. The majority of the authors that I am about to discuss belonged to the CPSA before its banning by the Nationalist government in 1950. It is indeed ironical that whilst the South African Jewish Board of Deputies refused to adopt an official stand against Apartheid, a small group of disaffected Jews, who had rejected Judaism and in many cases Zionism as well, took it upon themselves to act upon the ethical tenets of Judaism in a way that their identifying brethren, wary of the Nationalist

Government's pro-Nazi past, would not. Now that these formerly stigmatised and marginalised Jews are back, several occupying important governmental positions, the question arises as to whether the Jewish community, given its tradition of apathy and accommodation, can truly claim credit for their actions. On the other hand, do the former exiles themselves want to identify or in any way be associated with the community that rejected them? It is with these questions in mind that the South African Jewish public has greeted this latest spate of autobiographies, eagerly examining them to discover hidden motivations and *'klaybing nakhes'* when any hint of Jewish identity is revealed.

Communists, Unionists, feminists: Ray Alexander Simons and Pauline Podbrey.

Ray Alexander and Pauline Podbrey both represent the direct transference of Eastern European political ideologies into a South African context. Both came to South Africa directly from Eastern Europe as young girls. When Ray, born into an orthodox Jewish family in Latvia, came to South Africa in 1929 at the age of 16, she had already become a Communist. Ray and her late husband, Professor Jack Simons (whose father was Jewish), are giant figures in the Black liberation struggle. Ray was a prominent trade union leader, a parliamentary representative for the Africans in the Western Cape, and one of the founders of the Federation of South African Women. Jack was the Professor of African Government and Law at the University of Cape Town and leading Communist. In 1965 successive bannings forced the couple to leave South Africa to spend 25 years in exile in England and Zambia. Together they wrote one of the earliest histories of the Black struggle in South Africa, *Class and colour in South Africa, 1850-1950* (Penguin, 1969). Although Ray's autobiography has not yet been published, an interview with her is included in the collection, *Cutting through the mountain* (Viking, 1997). Ray's roots in the Eastern European *Bundist* tradition are clearly revealed in an exercise book containing Yiddish poems by the sweatshop poets, which she copied out as a young girl in Latvia. Found amongst her personal papers, in the Simons' archival collection in the Manuscripts Department at the University of Cape Town, it includes Dovid Edelstadt's poem, *Mayn tsevo'e* (My testament) which captures Ray's lifelong commitment to the workers' struggle.

*A guter fraynt ven ikh vel shtorbn
Trogt tsu mayn keyver unzer fon-
Di fraye fon mit royte farbn
Beshprits mit blut fun arbetsman!
Un dort unter dem fon dem royt
Zingt mir mayn lid mayn fraye lid!
Mayn lid in kamf vos klingt vi keytn
Fun dem farshklastn Krist un Yid.*

Oh good friend if I should die
Bring our flag to my graveside
Freedom's flag all coloured red
Soaked in the blood the workers shed
And under the red flag over there
My song of freedom I wish to hear
My song of struggle ringing out like chains
Of enslaved Jews and Christians.

Before the publication of her autobiography, *White girl in search of the party* in 1990, the story of Pauline Podbrey was virtually unknown. Pauline immigrated from Lithuania to South Africa together with her family in 1933 when she was eleven years old. Influenced by her Bundist father, she already knew that she wanted to become a Communist. She became a trade union leader in Durban and in 1950 she committed the unpardonable sin for a nice white South African Jewish girl, when she married the Indian trade unionist and Communist Party leader, H.A. Naidoo. Her mother was ostracised by the Jewish community, would not speak to Pauline, and the couple moved to the more liberal Cape. Yet Pauline was always quite comfortable with her Jewishness, and when her little daughters asked her with whom they should identify, Indians or Jews, she told them that they should always identify with the oppressed, in this case Indians first, Jews second. (Podbrey 1993:66). Pauline's children were

refused entry into the Jewish nursery school in Cape Town on the grounds of their being Indian. Forced to leave South Africa, in the early 1950's on account of the Mixed Marriages Act, Pauline and her family, spent time in Budapest working for Budapest radio. Their experiences there led to their thorough disillusionment with Stalinism and the Soviet Union. In 1954 they both left the Party and returned to London.

Sharpville, 1960: Ronald Segal

The turning point in the history of the liberation struggle came on 21 March 1960 at Sharpville, when police fired on a group of Africans, members of the Pan Africanist Congress during a peaceful protest against the pass laws, killing 69 and injuring 180. In the aftermath the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress were banned and Oliver Tambo, the Deputy President of the ANC, escaped across the border into Bechuanaland, the present day Botswana, assisted by Ronald Segal. Segal, a wealthy Cape Town Jew. and one of the few non-Communists in the Struggle, has described his experiences in his book *Into exile*, published in 1963, one of the earliest of the Struggle memoirs. An intellectual, Segal founded the important anti-Apartheid journal *Africa South*, which provided a forum for the opponents of Apartheid of all political hues. Unlike most of the activists, Segal, whose father was a Zionist and a member of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, was not alienated from the Jewish community. He caused a stir in the community when he published the criticism of South African Jewry by Rabbi Andre Unger of the Port Elizabeth Progressive Jewish Congregation, who was forced to leave South Africa on account of his anti-Apartheid views.

Rivonia Trial, 1963

After Sharpville the Communist Party and the African National Congress went underground and established their headquarters at Lilliesleaf farm in the Johannesburg suburb of Rivonia. Arthur Goldreich, a lesser known Communist Party member, and his family were installed as the occupants of Lilliesleaf, whilst Nelson Mandela in the guise of a farm worker, occupied an outhouse. It was at Lilliesleaf that Umkhonto we Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation), an independent military organisation made up of members of the ANC and of the Communist Party, was conceived. Its High Command of Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu, and Raymond Mhlaba, also included Jo Slovo and Arthur Goldreich, who was seconded to Umkhonto on account of his having served in the Palmach in Israel. All five whites arrested in 1963 at Lilliesleaf farm, were Jewish: Arthur Goldreich, Rusty Bernstein, Dennis Goldberg, Bob Hepple, and Dr Hilliard Festenstein. Their trial in October 1963, known as the Rivonia trial, marked both the climax and the nadir of the struggle, resulting in the temporary collapse of its organisations and the imprisonment of its leaders, including Nelson Mandela, for life.

The stories of the events around the Rivonia trial read like suspense thrillers. Harold Wolpe, an attorney and member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, who was not at Lilliesleaf at the time, was arrested a few days later as he attempted to escape cross the border. Both Wolpe and Goldreich never stood trial as they managed to escape from Marshall Square police station and cross the border to Botswana. Their hair-raising adventures are described in AnnMarie Wolpe's gripping memoir *The Long Way home* published in 1994. After news of their escape hit the headlines Harold Wolpe's brother-in-law, James Kantor, was arrested out of spite. Kantor, who was completely apolitical, was held under Ninety Day-Detention, tried and eventually acquitted. However he had a nervous breakdown, his very successful law practice was destroyed, his wife divorced him and he died tragically of a heart

attack in London in his late 40's. Yet he describes his experiences in a remarkably uncomplaining memoir, *A healthy grave*, published in 1969. Sadly Denis Goldberg, the only one of the white accused who was sent to prison for life, has never written of his experience although he is interviewed in the collection, *Cutting through the mountain*.

A number of books have been written about the Rivonia trial. The first was by Hilda Bernstein, a journalist and the wife of Rusty Bernstein, one of the accused. Born Hilda Watts, the daughter of a Jew from Odessa who had been the first Soviet Consul to Great Britain, Hilda was as committed to the struggle as her husband. In her powerful and passionate memoir, *The world that was ours* published in 1969, she describes the trial and the effect that it had on her family. Her account was followed by that of one of the defence attorneys, Joel Joffe's book, *The Rivonia story*. It was not until 1999 that Rusty Bernstein finally published his own story, entitled *Memory against forgetting: a life in South African politics, 1938-1964*. His is the only first hand account of the Rivonia trial by one of the white accused and is also by far the most comprehensive record of the struggle years. Bernstein was the only one of the Jewish accused in the Rivonia Trial who was also involved in the Treason Trial of 1956-1961. He was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and of the Congress of Democrats but was never a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe, and on that account was acquitted at the Rivonia Trial. However, Bernstein, an intensely private individual, reveals little of his inner motivation and never once alludes to the fact that he is Jewish. He attributes his hatred of Fascism to his Oxford and Cambridge trained masters at the upper class boarding school he attended in Pietermaritzburg in the 1930's at the time of the Spanish Civil War (Bernstein 1969:207). In the 1990's Pulitzer Prize winner, staff writer and editor on the Washington Post, Glen Frankel, discovered these memoirs and inspired by them, synthesized their experiences together with his own commentary, to create a unique historical chronicle in his book, *Rivonia's children* published in 1999.

Detention memoirs: Ruth First, Albie Sachs, Raymond Suttner and Baruch Hirson

The Ninety-Day Detention law, introduced on 24 April 1963, under which a person could be held without warrant, charge or trial, generated a new genre of Jewish South African literature, that of memoirs written from prison. The authors of these memoirs, Ruth First, Albie Sachs, Raymond Suttner and Baruch Hirson, are Marxist intellectuals, academics, journalists, hardly the hardened types one would expect to find in prison. It is this that makes their memoirs all the more compelling. Ruth First and Albie Sachs were also the targets of assassination attempts by the South African Security Branch. In 1982 Ruth First was tragically killed by a parcel bomb addressed to her at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, where she was working as Director of Research at the Centre for African Studies. In 1988 Albie Sachs, who was working as a Professor of Law at the same university, lost his right arm and his left eye as a result of a bomb placed in his car on the Maputo beach front.

Born in Johannesburg in 1925 Ruth First imbibed her leftist views from her parents, Tilly and Julius First, Jewish immigrants from Latvia, who were active members of the Communist Party of South Africa. At university Ruth had an affair with an Indian law student and member of the Communist Party, Ismail Meer. However unlike Pauline Podbrey, their relationship did not survive the separations of Apartheid and in 1949 Ruth married Joe Slovo, a Jewish immigrant from Obel in Lithuania. Like Ruth Joe embraced Communism at an early age, but not from his traditionally orthodox parents. Disillusioned with *Hashomer Hatzair*, because it was only concerned with the Jewish proletariat in Palestine and ignored the plight of the Black proletariat, at the age of 16 Joe became the youngest member of the Communist

Party of South Africa. He went on to become its General Secretary and a member of the Central Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Whilst Jo was out of the country at the time of the raid on Rivonia in 1963, Ruth, a radical journalist and the mother of their three small daughters, was arrested only two months after he left. She was the first White woman to be held under the Ninety-Day Detention Law. She was released after the first Ninety Days and immediately rearrested. The trauma of this experience brought her to a state of nervous collapse and attempted suicide. She wrote of her experiences in her diary, *117 days*, published in 1965. In 1988 her diary served as the inspiration for a film, *A World apart*, made by her daughter, Shawn Slovo, just a small girl at the time of her mother's imprisonment. In 1997 Joe and Ruth's daughter Gillian, brought a post-Apartheid perspective on growing up in a family of political activists and on Ruth's assassination, in her memoir of her family *Every secret thing*.

On 1 October 1963, in the same month as the Rivonia Trial, present day Constitutional Court Judge, Albie Sachs, then a twenty eight year old Cape Town advocate, was arrested and held in isolation for 165 days under the Ninety Day Detention Law. In contrast to Ruth First who regarded her detention as a failure, Sachs regarded his detention as a victory. This is not that surprising, as his father, the trade union leader, Solly Sachs, had expressed the wish that his son should grow up to be a freedom fighter. Torture was not yet the norm for white political prisoners and Sachs' beautiful and sensitive *Jail diary* is a celebration of the triumph of the human spirit. For Sachs, a Communist and an internationalist, the experiences of the non-White community in South Africa are the sole yardstick for measuring his own suffering. Notwithstanding he cannot escape his Jewish identity which is imposed upon him by his captors, who equate Jews with Communism. Sachs' second very personal memoir, *The Soft vengeance of a freedom fighter*, deals with his recovery from the bomb which cost him his right arm and left eye. Although written twenty five years later, this memoir continues the theme of resistance of his *Jail diary*. However in this later memoir Sachs seems to have come to terms with his Jewish identity and constructs the central experience of waking up in hospital without his right arm, around the well known Jewish joke about Hymie who falls off a bus, picks himself up and crosses himself. Questioned as to what he is doing he answers that he is just checking for 'his spectacles, his testicles, his watch and his wallet.'

Raymond Suttner, the author of the third detention memoir, *Inside Apartheid's prison: notes and letters of struggle*, published in 2001, had to read Ruth First's *117 days* and Albie Sach's *Jail diary* as part of his training to be an undercover ANC operative. Born in Cape Town in 1945 into a liberal Jewish family, Suttner was trained in London by Joe Slovo and Ronnie Kasrils. Between 1971 and 1975 Suttner lectured in the Law Faculty at the University of Durban, whilst secretly distributing pamphlets on behalf of the ANC. In 1975 he was sentenced to eight years in prison, and in 1986 he was again detained for 27 months, 18 of which he spent in isolation. Like Sachs, Suttner deliberately refused to exploit any of the advantages of being white, believing that he must suffer in the same way as the Black prisoners. However he too cannot escape his Jewishness which is regarded by his captors as as much of a crime as his acts of sabotage.

Baruch Hirson, a theoretical Physicist who spent nine years in a Pretoria jail on account of his participation in the African Resistance Movement, is the most Jewish of the four authors. Born in Johannesburg in 1921 to poor Jewish immigrants from Lithuania who were not overtly Leftist, Hirson was a member of *Hashomer Hatzair*, contemplated going on *aliyah* and adopted his Hebrew name, Baruch, in place of his English name of Bertram. In his book *Revolutions in my life*, published in 1996, he prefaces each stage of his intellectual

development, the ‘revolutions in his life’ with an aspect of his prison experience. Unlike the majority of Jewish Marxists in South Africa, Hirson did not join the Communist Party, but a succession of small Trotskyite groups, the Congress of Democrats, and the ARM. On his release from prison he and his family left for the United Kingdom where he forged a new career as a Professor of History, a subject that he had started studying whilst in jail. Hirson is the author of several books on the history of Labour and of the Black Struggle in South Africa.

In exile: Ray and Jack Simons, Joe Slovo, Norma Kitson and Ronnie Kasrils

Few of the memoirs of the Jewish activists deal with the activities of the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe in exile in London, and in the border states of Zambia, Angola, Mozambique and Tanzania. Source material for the period can be found in the archive of Ray Alexander and Jack Simons, who lectured at the University of Zambia and in the Umkhonto military camps in Angola.

Unfortunately Joe Slovo’s posthumously published autobiography, *Joe Slovo: the unfinished autobiography* published in 1995, deals only with his experiences in South Africa before he went into exile. However one gets an inkling of the pivotal role that he played through the tributes which make up the second section of the book. As demonised as Slovo was both by the South African government and by the Jewish community, he was universally loved by the Black community. As Military Strategist of Umkhonto, he was only second to Oliver Tambo, the President of the ANC, in the Struggle leadership in Zambia. He played a leading role in the negotiations for the new democratic government of South Africa, becoming its first Minister of Housing. Despite his rejection of Judaism, Joe had a strong ethnic identity embodied in his prolific store of Jewish-Yiddish jokes. Significantly he begins his autobiography with his return visit to Obel, the town of his birth in Lithuania, whose Jewish community was entirely wiped out in the Holocaust only five years after he and his family left for South Africa in 1936.

Life amongst the ANC and SACP exiles in London is described in Norma Kitson’s frank memoir, *Where sixpence lives*, published in 1986. It is not clear exactly why the story of Norma Cranko, born into a Jewish family in Durban, who named her only daughter Amandla, the Xhosa word for ‘power’, has been written out of the Jewish involvement in the Struggle. Norma and her non-Jewish husband, David Kitson, a member of the Umkhonto High Command who served twenty years for sabotage, were ostracised by the exiles in London. This is possibly because of Kitson’s implication at his trial that the exiles had run away, or possibly because of the independent initiative displayed by Norma in relentlessly agitating for his release in the framework of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. However her selfless dedication and the unbelievable persecution suffered by her whole family cannot be ignored.

The only memoir that includes activities in the border states, is *‘Armed and dangerous’: my undercover struggle against Apartheid*, by the present day Minister of Water Affairs and Afforestation, Ronnie Kasrils. Born in 1938 to a poor immigrant father from Lithuania and a locally born mother, Kasrils, one of the few non academics amongst the Jewish activists, found his niche in Umkhonto we Sizwe. Managing to evade arrest in the 1963 round-up, he escaped across the border to later become Chief of Military Intelligence of Umkhonto and Deputy Minister of Defence in the new democratic government. Despite his assertions that his Judaism means little to him, in 1963 when his father died when Kasrils was on the run in Dar-es-Salaam, he especially went to the Israeli Embassy in order to say *kadish*. Today Kasrils

Jewish identity has been further compromised with his initiation of a Declaration of Conscience, calling on Jews to protest against and disassociate themselves from Israel's policy towards the Palestinians. Needless to say this does not endear him to the overwhelmingly Zionist South African Jewish establishment.

At home: Helen Suzman, Issie Maisels and Benjamin Pogrund

At home in South Africa Jews were prominent in the fight against Apartheid, in Parliament, in the courts and in the press. For thirteen years Helen Suzman was the sole representative in Parliament of the Progressive Party, the only party that consistently opposed Apartheid. Born Helen Gavronsky in Germiston in 1917 to Jewish immigrants from Lithuania, Helen discounts the influence of her Judaism but acknowledges that the Jewish experience of antisemitism deeply influenced her attitude to racial discrimination. A lecturer in Economic History at the University of the Witwatersrand, Helen was originally elected as the member of the United Party for Houghton in 1953. In 1959 she broke away together with 10 other members to form the Progressive Party. Helen's memoirs, entitled *In no uncertain terms*, published in 1993, contain a lively history of South African politics in the Apartheid era, when she was forced to beard the lions of Verwoerd, Vorster, Strydom and Botha, in their dens. Her story often fills in the gaps in the stories of the detainees for whom she petitioned and regularly visited. It was thanks to her intervention with Prime Minister Vorster, for example, that Ruth First was finally released from detention. She also relates some marvellous anecdotes such as the one about a female constituent who informs her that she would not be voting for her because she opposed the Mixed Marriages Act. "It's all very well for you" said she, "but my daughter wants to marry a Jew!"

Many Jews participated in the defence teams at the trials of the political activists. One of South Africa's most distinguished Senior Council, Issie Maisels was one of the earliest to rise to prominence as the leader of the Defence team at the Treason Trial (1956-1961). At this trial a group of 156 activists, including 23 Whites of whom 15 were Jewish, 21 Indians, 7 Coloureds and the rest Blacks, including Nelson Mandela, were accused of plotting to overthrow the South African government, only to be acquitted five years later. The chapter on the Treason Trial occupies almost a third of his book, *A Life at law*, published in 1999. Maisels also defended David Pratt who attempted to assassinate Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, many Group Areas cases and the Farm Prison Scheme case. As President of the Federation of Synagogues, member of the Executive of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, the South African Zionist Federation and of the Board of the Jewish Agency in Israel, he was undeniably the most committed Jew amongst Apartheid's Jewish opponents.

Another identifying Jew is Benjamin Pogrund, the son of strictly orthodox Lithuanian Jewish immigrants, who is described in his police file as 'one of the strongest and most effective critics of the South African government'. In his chronicle, *War of words*, published in 2000, Pogrund describes his twenty seven years (1958-1985) on the newspaper, the *Rand Daily Mail*, the only English language newspaper in South Africa to take a consistent and aggressive stand against Apartheid. As African Affairs Editor and later Deputy Editor, he fearlessly and often at his own risk, exposed prison conditions, Black education, and the plight of political detainees. He was a close personal friend and the author of the biography of Robert Sobukwe, the leader of the Pan Africanist Congress. Pogrund left South Africa for London when the *Rand Daily Mail* was closed down in 1985. Today he lives in Jerusalem where he heads the Yakar Center for Social Concern which strives to promote Israeli-Arab relations.

Collections

Besides individual memoirs, collections of oral interviews, photographs, and short stories have also been published. The earliest was Hilda Bernstein's *The rift: the exile experience of South Africans*, published in 1994. This collection which documents the experiences of 105 South Africans of all races and religions, includes those of ten Jews: Ronald Segal, Ruth Weiss, Ronnie Kasrils, Esther Levitan, Anthony Sher, Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, Robyn and Shawn Slovo, and Peta and Tessa Wolpe.

Similar in conception to *The Rift* but devoted exclusively to Jewish activists is a unique collection of in depth interviews, entitled *Cutting through the mountain*, published in 1997. Edited by Immanuel Suttner these interviews explore the Jewish identity of 27 Jewish participants in the Struggle. The interviews which are divided thematically and chronologically go beyond the political to include cultural personalities such as the Nobel prize winner for literature, Nadine Gordimer, the playwright, Barney Simon and Johnny Clegg, South Africa's white Zulu, famous for his music. Unfortunately this superb collection has been plagued by problems from the outset. One interview in particular was considered to contain slanderous references resulting in a court case. Sadly besides awarding damages the court ordered that the remainder of unsold copies, 1800 out of a total of 3 500, be pulped. As the situation stands today, the book could be published in a second edition without the offending interview if a sponsor could be found. Alternatively the possibility of posting the interviews on a web site is being considered.

In 1998 the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town, mounted the exhibition, *Looking back: Jews in the struggle for human rights and democracy in South Africa*, a copy of which was recently acquired by the American Jewish Committee. The idea behind the exhibition originated in a suggestion made by Albie Sachs when he visited the Kaplan Centre on his return from exile. The attractive catalogue of the exhibition contains a brief narrative which together with the photographs give a composite picture of the history, the range and the scope of the struggle.

A welcome addition to the above collections is the very recently published anthology, *Contemporary Jewish writing in South Africa*, compiled and edited by Claudia Bathsheva Braude. This collection brings together stories by veteran authors, such as Sarah Gertrude Millin, Nadine Gordimer, Dan Jacobson, Lionel Abrahams, and Rose Zwi, with previously banned authors, such as Albie Sachs, and others ranging from the playwright, Barney Simons, the Yiddish writer, Nehemiah Levinsky, to South Africa's famous comedian, Pieter Dirk Uys, whose mother was Jewish. In an innovative sixty page introduction, the focus of the collection, Braude analyses the transformations that have taken place in memory and the constructions of racial identity in Jewish writing from before the emergence of the Nationalist Government, into the Apartheid era and beyond into post Apartheid South Africa.

Clearly this large outpouring of memoirs signifies a desire for vindication, for acknowledgement and recognition on the part of its authors. With the exception of Rusty Bernstein, who omits mentioning it entirely, the Jewishness of the authors is inescapable. If not by observance, they are Jewish by their common origins in Eastern Europe and by their collective memory of persecution, particularly of the Holocaust. A large percentage were born into families that already were radicalised. In South Africa's staunchly Zionist community, which originated in Lithuania and Latvia, there was little room for debate, and to be ante-

religious and anti-Zionist placed one beyond the pale. The type of secular *Bundist* identity that flourished in Eastern Europe and in North and South America, was largely marginalised in South Africa. Whether it was this that drove this handful of idealists into the arms of the Black Liberation struggle is not clear. No doubt the answer is far more complex as Jews have stood at the forefront of many revolutionary struggles. Today, however, the story has taken on a new twist, as in sympathy with the South African government's pro-Palestinian stance, this same minority of Jews, have publicly aligned themselves against Israel's policy towards the Palestinians, by signing a Declaration of Conscience, entitled 'Not in my name'. In this way they have jeopardised their acceptance in the Jewish community and risk being marginalised yet again. This continuing debate only emphasises the fact that this new body of literature which is emanating from South Africa should provide a fertile field of research for researchers and scholars who are interested in Jewish identity, in a wide range of academic disciplines.

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