

INTERACTION BETWEEN THE AFRIKANER AND JEWISH COMMUNITIES¹⁾S.J. Terreblanche

I wish to extend a hearty word of thanks to the Board for inviting me to take part in this panel discussion on the important topic of "South African Jewry in an era of change".

As an Afrikaner political economist my main interaction with Jews is with four prominent economists, namely Dawid Ricardo, Karl Marx, Paul Samuelson and Milton Freedman. Out of the four, I can associate myself the closest with Paul Samuelson - although not completely. I very much regret the wide-spread influence Milton Freedman has attained in South Africa. As far as I am concerned, this is definitely not justifiable. Ricardo - an English Jew of Spanish-Dutch descent - is perhaps the greatest theoretical economist of all times, but because of his ideas, economics was branded as the dismal science. The one with whom I am definitely not in agreement, but who is, as social scientist and historian, the most fascinating of them all, is of course Karl Marx. It is a pity that the so-called Marxian ideology that is propagated (mostly in an unfounded way) in his name, makes it nearly impossible to study his works in a scientific and unprejudiced way.

In my study of the Economic History of the Western World it has always intrigued me to discover the role the Jewish people have played in the development of Capitalism and especially in the development of financial and stock-exchange institutions. It was the good fortune of Antwerpen to become host to many of the Jewish people expelled by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1492. Because of the Eighty Year War (1568-1648) the greater part of the Jews of Antwerpen moved to Amsterdam and supplied a great deal of the financial and organizational basis for the Golden Century of Holland. At the end of the 17th century they started to move to London and played a key role in Britain's worldwide economic and financial success in the 18th and especially in the 19th century.

1) Contribution to a panel discussion on "South African Jewry in an era of Change" at the 32nd National Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, in Johannesburg, 29th May 1983.

After many of the financial wizards decided to move from London to New York at the end of the 19th century, Wall Street became the financial centre of the world and the hub of international Capitalism.

This short history is of relevance to us. The interaction between Jew and Afrikaner^{has} stretched back for at least four centuries, when the long and mutually beneficial contact started between the Jews and the Old Afrikaners or the Dutch people of Antwerpen and Amsterdam. Apart from intermarriages between Jew and Dutch, I suspect that the Dutch and the Afrikaner derived their business and organizational capacities to a large extent from the Jews.

I grew up and matriculated in a small town in the Northern Free State. The mother of Elana Kloss and I attended the same class. I now realize that many of the platteland Afrikaners, like myself, had a closer contact with the so-called Boere Jode than with the English. There was a time when they owned nearly all the businesses in the platteland towns. In those years a positive and constructive relationship was built up between them and their many Afrikaner clients.

I am unfortunately not in a position to give a detailed or documented version of the interaction between Afrikaner and Jew on all the different levels of the South African scene. Apart from the business world, I would like to mention three fields in which close interaction took place: the professional, the academic and the sports fields. I think that we cannot easily over-emphasize the great and valuable contribution the Jews have made, and are still making, to our professional and academic worlds. In both of these, but especially in all the different professions (medical, law, accountancy, engineering, etc.) they were truly the senior partner with the Afrikaners very much the junior partner. The knowledge and experience of the senior partner have over the years been to the immeasurable advantage of the junior partner. On the sports fields - and especially rugby - the Afrikaner has normally been the senior partner but the contribution of the usually solitary Jewish player was normally indispensable - if only to be responsible for the very important ingredient of luck!

My main interest is in the interaction that has taken place, and may still take place in the immediate future, on the level of ideas, attitudes and perceptions. To evaluate this interaction, I regard

it necessary to concentrate on the similarities and differences between the Jewish communities in South Africa and in Israel on the one hand, and the Afrikaner community on the other hand.

First the similarities:

- (a) Both are strongly orientated towards the Old Testament.
- (b) Both emphasize nationalism and tried - without success - to build an ethnically pure homeland.
- (c) Both are still trying to build and to maintain New Europes on foreign, rather hostile and undeveloped Continents.
- (d) Both are encircled by a majority of developing Third World people in their own countries and in the countries around them.
- (e) The policies that both communities (here and in Israel) are trying to carry through, on behalf of what they regard as their national interests, go very much against the grain of the current opinion in the Western World. Because of this, both are experiencing a lot of international hostility and denunciations, especially at the United Nations and at the Third World conferences.
- (f) Both are confronted with internal and external problems which are seemingly unsolvable and both will need Solomon's wisdom - our common prophet - to maintain stability and to ensure long-term survival.
- (g) Both are in possession of knowledge and experience that can be of extreme and even vital importance for the developing people in and around our countries - if only the internal and external relations can be normalized.
- (h) Lastly, there are signs that both the Afrikaners and the Jewish communities - especially in South Africa - have become extremely materialistic and that both pamper a richman's cult. Closely connected with this, the Afrikaners and the Jews (mainly in South Africa) are inclined to take only short-term considerations into account in their decision-making processes. Given the

problems with which we are confronted, this is a very alarming inclination.

But there are also important differences between the Jewish people in South Africa and Israel on the one hand, and the Afrikaners on the other hand:

- (a) Apart from the important religious and language differences, the Jewish people (especially in South Africa) are mainly urbanized while a large percentage (and many of the attitudes) of the Afrikaners are still rural.
- (b) In terms of the White South African ideological spectrum, the Jewish people are mostly left of centre, while a large percentage of the Afrikaners (especially in the rural areas) are very much right of centre.
- (c) A very important difference exists in the history of the two groups. The history of the Jewish people stretches over four or five millennia while that of the Afrikaners stretch over two to three centuries. And while the Jewish people are dispersed all over the world because of the diaspora, and are present in nearly every country in the world, the Afrikaner nation is a recent result of a merger between the blood streams and cultures from mainly Western European countries and a small input of non-European blood and culture.
- (d) Mainly because of the differences in historical background, the Jewish people have many international contacts, they are very internationally orientated and although international pressures usually do not put them off the course they have chosen, they are nonetheless sensitive towards the international opinion and present their case in a way that generates considerable international support. The Afrikaners have, on the contrary, few international contacts and are often rather indifferent towards the hostile attitudes of the outside world. They are often inclined to reject foreign criticism too easily as unreasonable, unjustified and as being based on a lack of knowledge. While the Jewish people are an outward-looking people in spite of their determination to

follow their own course, the Afrikaners are mainly an inward-looking community. This attitude of the Afrikaners is often - and not without justification - regarded as a sign of cultural and national immaturity.

If we compare the similarities and the differences between the Jewish and the Afrikaner communities, the differences outweigh the similarities to such an extent that an understanding or a rapprochement seems rather unlikely. But up till now I have deliberately spoken about the Afrikaners as if they are ideologically and politically still an undivided and culturally closely-knit community. Fortunately this is no longer the case. The split in the National Party brought a final end to this unity. The ideological tensions within the Afrikaner community were built up over a long period of time and both the impression of cultural unity and of the close link between the National Party and the Afrikaner clan was highly artificial for at least 10 years. When the split at last took place last year, it was long overdue. It brought about an ideological and organizational normalization within the ranks of both the National Party and the Afrikanerdom. We can no longer talk about the Afrikaners or about an undivided Afrikaner Establishment. On the cultural and church levels the facade of unity is still maintained but deep down mounting tensions are present and are building up. Afrikaner unity is definitely something of the past.

If we compare the ideas, attitudes and perceptions of the Verligte and reform-orientated part of the Afrikaners - it comprises, I hope, round about 60 per cent of the Afrikaners - with the ideas, attitudes and perceptions of the Jewish community, the differences become less and the similarities more obvious:

- (a) The religious differences remain. They may even become bigger because the New Testament is more important to the Verligte Afrikaners who are striving towards reconciliation between the peoples of South Africa.
- (b) The language differences are less important in the case of the Verligte Afrikaners and they are also more urbanized and more modern in their attitudes.

- (c) In terms of the whole South African ideological spectrum the Verligte Afrikaners take a position at centre and left of centre and are hopefully as reform-orientated as the Jews.
- (d) The Verligte Afrikaners are also more internationally-orientated and more sensitive towards the international opinion than their Verkrampste counterparts. Given that the chains of the cultural clan have been broken and that the close association between the clan and the National Party has ended, the Verligte Afrikaners are free to become more outward-looking and to develop a greater sensitivity for the interests of the other population groups in South Africa. We have reason to believe that the Verligte Afrikaners have outlived the typical and cultural immaturity of the Afrikaners. They, hopefully, realize that the Afrikaners are no longer underdogs and can no longer think and act like underdogs. Hopefully the Verligte Afrikaners will become more aware of the responsibility resting on their shoulders because of their position as political "upperdogs".

There can be no doubt that the chances and the need for a greater understanding and even a rapprochement between Verligte and reform orientated Afrikaners and the Jewish community are much better than ever before. The nature of our seemingly unsolvable internal and external problems and the grave necessity for constitutional reform, makes some form of understanding between the two groups an imperative. Luckily it has become a real possibility. It will become an even greater possibility if the Jewish community were to realize that the Verligte Afrikaners, more than both the English and the Jewish communities, have their roots in this African- and Third World soil and for this reason perhaps have a better appreciation of the structural nature and dimensions of many of our problems.

Allow me to say a few words about the English community in South Africa. Although they are dispersed over the whole ideological and political spectrum and although the English Establishment has never been such a well-integrated and closely-knit establishment as either the Jewish or Afrikaner Establishments, it nonetheless has a central point of gravitation. This central point of gravitation in the English community is still the main unifying and also the determining force of the direction taken by the Progressive Federal Party.

The English Establishment is kept together by its wealth, its economic power, its mass media influence and its Victorian liberalism - something which is completely out of date. As long as the English Establishment remains what it is and remains the unifying force behind the PFP, a broadly based rapprochement between Verligte Afrikaners, the Jewish community and the English community on behalf of meaningful, realistic and viable reform will not be possible. Until such time when both the PFP and the English Establishment become more realistic in their attitude towards reform and get rid of their anachronistic Victorian and liberal ideologies, the Verligte Afrikaners, the Jewish community and the realistic section of the English community will have to explore every possibility for samewerking - not necessarily within the framework of the same political party - on behalf of meaningful and ongoing reform. The ethnic and language groups in the White community are confronted with common problems, we have a common destiny and common responsibilities. We will have to reach some understanding in our search for common solutions for all the people of South Africa. We have definitely reached a point where the sectional interests of the different ethnic or language groups have to be suppressed on behalf of the general interest and the common destiny of all the groups.

About one thing I want to be categoric. All the different groups in the White community will have to get rid of their materialism and their richman's cult. The demands of meaningful reform are of such a nature that it has become imperative for all White South Africans to understand their long-term enlightened self-interest in a proper way and to act accordingly. This implies that we will have to be prepared to make rather big material, financial and also intangible sacrifices in the short- and medium term in the prospect of a more stable and prosperous future in the long-term.

If we concentrate on the similarities between the Verligte Afrikaners and the Jewish people (here and in Israel) the important common denominator is, to my mind, loneliness - ethnic and international loneliness. When two lonely persons get to the point where they can understand and appreciate the other one's loneliness, two can become company. This can also happen with the Jews and the Verligte Afrikaners.

Through the ages the Jews have survived many onslaughts and unfavourable conditons. This, to my mind, was only possible because of a special instinct which can be characterized as a gut feeling. Given the internal and external dangers that confront South Africa, it may not be possible to survive without this kind of gut feeling. Because of this, more than any other reason, the Verligte Afrikaners need the company of their Jewish compatriots.



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SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES
SUID-AFRIKAANSE JOODSE RAAD VAN AFGEVAARDIGDES

15th April, 1983

Handwritten: 20/1/83

Professor S J Terreblanche
Department of Economics
Stellenbosch University
STELLENBOSCH
7600

Dear Professor Terreblanche,

32ND NATIONAL CONGRESS - MAY, 1983

This is to confirm that you have kindly agreed to participate in the proceedings of the 32nd National Congress of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, which will take place at the Carlton Hotel, Johannesburg, from Saturday night, 28th May, until Tuesday, 31st May, 1983.

The session in which you will be involved, is entitled "South African Jewry in an Era of Change". Mr Michael Katz, our Congress Chairman, will present an overall view, which should be about twenty minutes long. Three topics will then be dealt with, and they are:

Jews and the Non-White Community - we are awaiting confirmation regarding the speaker, but the participant will be a Black person.

The Role of the Board of Deputies and the Community in Political Life - Adv. A Suzman Q C will deal with this subject, and your topic will be "The Interaction between Jew and Afrikaner". The time allotted for you, is between 15 and 20 minutes.

The session is scheduled for Sunday, 29th May, at 20h15 until 22h00. At the end of the session, there will be a discussion, with questions from the delegates.

May I suggest that you allow us to book you on flight SA 314 departing from Cape Town at 14h30, arriving at Jan Smuts at 16h25 on Sunday 29th May, and a return flight on Monday 30th, on SA 303 departing at 09.30, to arrive in Cape Town at 11h35. Accommodation will be booked for you at the Carlton Hotel. If these times do not suit you, please let me know, so that the necessary bookings can be done without delay.

We look forward to your participation in the Congress, and to welcoming you as our guest.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Shirley Stein

(MISS) SHIRLEY STEIN

CONGRESS SECRETARY

32nd NATIONAL CONGRESS — 28-31 MAY 1983
ANNIVERSARY - 80 - JAARFEES



SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES
SUID-AFRIKAANSE JOODSE RAAD VAN AFGEVAARDIGDES

16th May, 1983

Professor S Terreblanche
Department of Economics
University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH
7600

Dear Professor Terreblanche,

32ND NATIONAL CONGRESS - 28 - 31 MAY, 1983

I have pleasure in enclosing your airticket for your flight to Johannesburg, with the flight times as requested.

As I will be at the Congress itself, I hope you will forgive my not meeting you personally. Our driver will be at the airport with a sign, bearing your name. He will take you directly to the Carlton Hotel, where accommodation has been reserved for you.

On Monday morning, 30th May, our driver will call for you at the hotel at 10.15 a.m. to take you to Jan Smuts Airport.

For your information, I am enclosing a copy of our Congress Agenda, which you may find interesting.

We look forward to welcoming you at the Congress. If you are going to be in the hotel at lunchtime, and would like to attend the luncheon, please let me know so that I can reserve a place for you.

Yours sincerely,

(MISS) SHIRLEY STEIN
CONGRESS SECRETARY



31st NATIONAL CONGRESS 31 MAY - 2 JUNE 1980

NOTE: New Telephone No. 21-0331

SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES

AGENDA - CONGRESS 1983

OPENING SESSION

SATURDAY, 28TH MAY, 1983

20h30

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Welcome | - | Dr I Abramowitz, Chairman
S A Jewish Board of Deputies |
| Opening Prayer | - | Chief Rabbi B M Casper |
| Messages | - | a) Mayor of Johannesburg
Councillor Alan Gadd |
| | | b) His Excellency, The Ambassador
for Israel, Mr E Lankin |
| | | c) Chairman of the South African
Zionist Federation, Mr I Kalmanowitz |
| Tribute to Dr T Schneider | - | Mr A Mendelow Q C |
| Formal Resolutions | - | Mr A Goldberg |

A D D R E S S

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| Introduction | - | Mr M Kaplan |
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MR EDGAR BRONFMAN

President, World Jewish Congress

"WORLD JEWRY TODAY"

- | | | |
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| Response and Vote of Thanks | - | Mr A <u>Suzman</u> Q C, President,
S A Jewish Board of Deputies |
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Tea & Coffee

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SUNDAY, 29TH MAY, 1983

08h30 - 09h30 ----- Registration -----

09h30 - 11h00 CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Chairman | - | Dr I Abramowitz |
| Introductory Remarks and
Proposals | - | Mr M Katz |
| Discussion | | |

RESOLUTIONS

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11h00 - 12h45 THE EXTENT OF THE ANTI-SEMITIC THREAT TODAY

Chairman - Mr S Kessler
ADDRESS "The World Situation" - Dr G Riegner
Panelists
South Africa - Mr M Smith
The Religious Roots of Anti-
Semitism - Dr Jocelyn Hellig
Discussion

RESOLUTIONS

12h45 - 14h15 LUNCHEON

"IS SOUTH AFRICA CHANGING?"

DR F J DU PLESSIS

Chairman - Sanlam

Chairman - Mr A Shandling
Thanks - Mr N Horwitz

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14h30 - 17h00 - Elections (Depending on whether
Constitution accepted or not)

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14h30 - 17h00 JEWISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN A CHANGING SOUTH AFRICA

Chairman - Mr J Moshal
ADDRESS - Professor Philip Tobias
Panelists
The Role of S A U J S - Mr Neville Eisenberg, Chairman S A U J S
The Role of Academic Staff - Mrs Sally Frankenthal - Kaplan Centre
The Role of the Jewish Youth
Movement - Mr J Broomberg
Discussion

RESOLUTIONS

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20h15 - 22h30 SOUTH AFRICAN JEWRY IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

Chairman - Mr M Kaplan

ADDRESS : An Overall View - Mr M Katz

Panelists

Interaction between the Black
and Jewish Communities - Mrs D Mabiletsa

The Role of the Board and the
Jewish Community in Political
Life - Mr A Suzman Q C

Interaction between the Afrikaner - Professor S Terreblanche
and Jewish Communities

Jewish Influences on South - Mr W A M Clewlow
African Society

Discussion

RESOLUTIONS

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MONDAY, 30TH MAY, 1983

20h00 - 22h00 PUBLIC MEETING ON SOVIET JEWRY

Chairman - Mr D K Mann

ADDRESS - Mr I Singer

Vote of Thanks - Mr T Blumberg

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TUESDAY, 31ST MAY, 1983

10h00 - 12h00 FOCUS ON ISRAEL - CLOSED SESSION

Chairman - Mr J Weinstein

Panelists

Israel and America - Mr I Singer

Israel & Africa - Dr E Lottem

Israel and the Arab States - Professor M Arkin

Discussion

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VALEDICTORY

RABBI NORMAN MENDEL

12h15 - 14h15 LUNCHEON

"LOOKING BACK - AND AHEAD"

MRS HELEN SUZMAN

Chairman	-	Mr N Mendelow
Vote of Thanks	-	Mr C Jankelowitz
Tribute to Mr I Teeger		

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14h30 - 15h30 Meeting of National Executive Council

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HAND OF FRIENDSHIP EXTENDED AT BOARD CONGRESS:JEWS SHOULD RESPOND TO CALL FOR ALLIANCE WITH
VERLIGTE AFRIKANERS

A PERSONAL REACTION BY

DAVID ABELFORMER ASSISTANT EDITOR OF THE JEWISH HERALD (1958-1961)

[This year South African Jews found themselves - together with all other sections of the population - caught up in the maelstrom of political change now sweeping over the country. And within the context of a power struggle raging between various clashing interests, they were confronted with a challenge they could hardly ignore: a call from verligte Afrikaners for an alliance with S.A. Jewry in a battle which the Prime Minister, Mr P W Botha, has described as being "not between black and white, but rather between those forces that would maintain civilized standards in Southern African and those who seek to destroy what has already been established."

[In June, at the S.A. Jewish Board of Deputies Congress, Dr F J Da Plessis, Chairman of Sanlam, and Professor Sampie Terreblanche (a key adviser to the Minister of Constitutional Development, Mr Chris Heunis, an economist at Stellenbosch University and vice-chairman of the SABC) issued their call for Jews to support the S A Government's present constitutional reforms.

[Dr Du Plessis maintained that the new dispensation was the most important change in a country which had altered dramatically over the last 40 years. He believed the new plan would benefit all South Africans "who should work and stand together for the good of South Africa." In that spirit, prominent leaders of the Jewish community who had always played a vital role in creating stability in South Africa should form part of an English and Afrikaans alliance."

[Professor Terreblanche urged Jews and Afrikaners and "the realistic section of the English community" to explore every possibility for samewerking (co-operation) on behalf of meaningful and on-going reform."

[He believed some form of Afrikaner-Jewish understanding was imperative in view of South Africa's grave internal and external situation and the need for constitutional reform.

[The Nationalist split] had made it possible for "a rapprochement" between Jews and Verligte Afrikaners, who comprised about 60% of Afrikanerdom.

[Although the Board of Deputies had always maintained that it did not represent S.A. Jewry politically - that Jews as individuals belonged to all parties in the country and did not speak with one voice on South African politics] nevertheless several delegates spoke during the subsequent debate. Their personal points of view, however, in no way represent, or even reflect, a cross-section or a collective political attitude and should be seen in that light. [Deputies to the Board are not elected as a result of comprehensive ideological elections within the Jewish Community; they are merely individuals ^{with} special skills ^{or positions} who are nominated at the Board's congresses, with the express purpose of ^{forming} a type of "watch-dog" body to guard the community's general interests and to help maintain ^{its} various religious cultural, and educational institutions.

[So the question which ^{arises, is} ~~arises~~: how should any thinking, sensitive South African Jew react to such a call for an alliance with Verligte Afrikaners and ^a request to "work and stand together for the good of the country", in the words of Dr Du Plessis?

[Subjectively speaking, as a proud Jew and Zionist who has always been deeply committed to the welfare of my co-religionists, and as one who has always worn my interest in Israel as a badge of honour, it is ~~certainly~~ pleasing to be able to record, in these days of heartening change and national reconciliation between our various population groups, that one can ~~be~~ be a proud South African by supporting the current on-going process of stage by stage reform towards a more just society ~~in~~ ~~South Africa~~.

[Indeed loyalty towards both one's spiritual heritage and to the country of one's birth is perfectly reconcilable and mutually enriching.

[A crucial factor, in any objective analysis, is the fact that South Africa is a most difficult country to administer. ^{Indeed,} It was the Minister of Constitutional Development, Mr Chris Heunis, who ^{once} remarked that "it is not possible to find perfect solutions for an imperfect South Africa."

[Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties, the Minister of Co-operation and Development, Dr Piet Koornhof, in an excellent TV interview with Dr Wimpie De Klerk, ^{declared} remarked: "If we continue to go forward along our present path and succeed in avoiding the long-predicted bloody revolution in South Africa, we will have achieved in this country, the miracle of the century."

[A telling point ^{to consider} for those who wish to view the situation ^{analytically} ~~subjectively~~, is the viewpoint expressed by ^{a bitter arch enemy of the S.A. Government} Mr Malcolm Muggeridge, former editor of the satirical "Punch" magazine, ^{during the} ~~for another outstanding~~ SATV feature titled "And Then Came the English".

^{Mr. Muggeridge} when he said: "It seems to be more comfortable for English - speakers to be able to point a finger at those in authority; ^{but} they would probably be horrified if they were to be in power and then had to make the decisions."

[Political ^{events} ~~developments~~ during the past year have certainly been far-reaching - affecting the futures of us all. ^{And} South Africans are presently witnessing the following positive developments:

[(1) The rebirth of the peoples of Bophutatswana, Transkei, Ciskei, Venda and many other semi- independant black states, all with their own sense of dignity, ^{during} the best they can for their own peoples, with their different languages, cultures, and aspirations;

[(2) The upliftment of the Coloureds and Indians, by the promotion of their rights at national level, sharing in decisions of mutual concern with Whites, and being the sole authority over their own affairs; and

[(3) The thorough examination, currently being undertaken at Cabinet level, to resolve the problems and formulate a solution for the urban Blacks.

[Indeed a true liberal, Jewish or otherwise - ~~subjective~~ ^a pursuer of social justice - cannot but view the entire unfolding and developing social pattern without a sense of pride.

[Such still-unresolved and complicated problems as the Group Areas Act, the Immorality Act, the movement of people from one area to another, and various other irritants in an imperfect South Africa - hopefully will increasingly be tackled by the constructive, positive leaders of our country, through the various institutions and channels presently being envisaged under the new constitutional dispensation.

[Three prominent South African Jews, in particular, are ^{presently} ~~also~~ playing important and highly significant roles in these constantly changing times:

Mr Abe Hoppenstein, ^{of Springs} the South African Consul in New York, Dr Shlomo Peer ^{of Johannesburg}

^{as a vice-chairman} of the South African Foundation, and Mr Theo Aronson of Port Elizabeth in his capacity as a ~~Member~~ ^{Member} of Parliament within the ruling party.

[On the other hand, there are those who ^{with words of Malcolm Muggeridge} would point fingers, and who seem to be unable to accept anything that emanates from the authorities.

[Which gives rise to the following ^{question} question:

[When will fellow Jews finally rid themselves of their "holier-than-thou" approach to issues of morality?

[Certainly, as the people of the Book, we can take justifiable pride in the Jewish contribution to morality in this world, but to imagine that we have a monopoly on wisdom and morality is surely nothing less than sheer arrogance - an arrogance which, I fear, is often strongly in evidence also among some of our ^{let} community leaders.

[Such sapientimonious hypocrisy is particularly distressing to those who wish to build bridges between ^{the} various communities in this sub-continent.

[Again, subjectively speaking, although born an English-speaking Jew in the Eastern Cape some 49 years ago, I consider myself to be one of those who, fortunately, has been able to bridge the gap that exists artificially between the two language groups in this country.

[My ^{personal} progression from daily fist fights with young anti-semites during the second world war years; through my years of ultra - liberal anti-establishment student demonstration marches at Wits (early ^{1950s} 1950s) to my present-day active membership of the National Party, is a drama-filled story in its own right.

[As a general guide to ^{English-speaking} attitudes within the current South African political spectrum, perhaps the situation was best summed up by Mr Ken Owen, Editor of the Sunday Express, who ^{in Johannesburg} ~~recently~~ wrote about the role of the English-speaking South African after the coloured Labour Party's ^{decision this year} ~~decision~~ to join in the new dispensation. ~~And for "English-speaking South~~

(And for "English-speaking South African" one could well substitute "English-speaking Jew").

[Mr Owen wrote:

["English South Africa has been relieved at last of the dreadful burden of trying to speak for the black communities. That thankless duty now passes to the coloured people, who are better qualified and better positioned, to do the job.

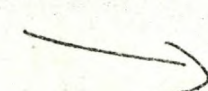
["English South Africans, typically, have dozed their way through this revolution in the conduct of national affairs. Perhaps their recent political torpor stems from inertia, more likely from exhaustion. The guilty need to represent black people's interests has clung to their backs like a monkey ever since Olive Schreiner protested against white supremacy.

["Now it is over. The decision by the Labour Party in Eshowe to accept the Government's constitutional proposals has shifted the very axis of South African politics. No longer will our politics revolve around the clash of Government and Opposition, English and Afrikaans, public service and private enterprise; now it revolves around the confrontation of white Afrikaner and coloured Afrikaner, face to face at last.

["For English South Africans this should come as an immense relief. The idea that they could speak for black people from their position of pampered impotence was always a vanity; it invited contempt from the Afrikaner and rejection by the blacks.

["Now, as a community, English South Africans can begin to discover who they are, and what they really value - golf on Sundays? Their language as an incomparable vehicle ^{for} of the ideas of liberty? A thousand years of painfully accumulated democratic heritage? Money? Or simply the whiteness of their skins?

["It is a voyage of self-discovery that must be undertaken, and it is long overdue. English South Africans - and especially those of their leaders who have made a profession of representing unfranchised blacks more than their own voters —



→ may need some time to get used to the idea that they will be patronised rather than patronising; but that's the truth of it.⁹⁹

[Mr Owen concluded: ^{ee} In time, when they have discovered their own identity, and thrashed out their own values, and learned to protect their own legitimate interests, they may also discover a new and appropriate role for themselves."

[Taking a leaf out of Mr Owen's book, ^{xxxxxx} and after careful analysis over the years, one comes to the inescapable ~~political~~ conclusion that the aim of the powers now in control of the country's affairs is to secure an ethnically-protected, multi-racial society in a confederation of states, with a broadly-based, common South Africanism.

[In the unique racial mix that is South Africa, comprising what even Time Magazine once called "the white tribe", coloureds, Asians, and over 12 different black nations, ~~with different languages and cultures~~, Jews are white, English or Afrikaans speaking, South Africans. For us to ignore or deny that physical reality within the context of the country's political power struggle, would be both foolhardy and naive.

[This has nothing to do with racialism or discrimination, but everything to do with group identity and self-preservation.

~~Common~~ Commonsense dictates that we plan our future and protect our own interests accordingly, seeking out our natural allies.

[• And so, the cardinal tenet ^{guiding my own personal} ~~guiding my personal~~ approach ^{within} ~~the~~ the S.A. milieu, is the principle of social justice, based on the ~~Judeo-Christian~~ concept of morality, ^{as contained in the Bible} ~~linked~~ ^{reality} linked to the very real issue of self-preservation.

[I perceive my enemy as godless communism and radicalism, not any other group in our beautiful country, with its remarkable human and natural ^{resources} ~~resources~~. My allies would be the constructive leaders of both Afrikaner ^{and} Black nationalism.

[And, ^{deeply} ~~once again~~ as a Jew ^{deeply} conscious of my people's tragic historic ^{perspective} ~~perspective~~, I naturally do not countenance discrimination of any kind, summing up my

general approach in the memorable words of Foreign Minister *Pik Botha*, who said he was "prepared to die for my country, but not for a sign on a toilet."

Against that background, ~~xxxxxxx~~ personal experience has taught me that the educated enlightened Afrikaner is the veritable salt of the earth within South African society.

And *in an article of this nature,* it is appropriate that tribute be paid to the intellectual leadership provided by such men as Dr Wimpie *de Klerk*, Professor *Sampie Terreblanche*, and Dr Willie Esterhyse - men who personify everything that is best in Afrikanerdom.

In the unique political minefield of South African politics their courageous and articulate path-finding (which basically recognises the dignity of the human spirit as applied to the needs of all our peoples, while at the same time propagating the art of the possible within the realities of South Africa) is an inestimable contribution to the welfare of our country. Their efforts, indeed, provided the intellectual and moral basis upon which the Government's present plans have been conceived. And no serious student of *the* current political scene could regard his information as being complete if he has not digested the ideas of these three outstanding academics. He certainly would not be able to reach an entirely objective assessment of the complicated political trends motivating present constitutional developments.

And for that *these* ~~South African~~ intellectual powerhouses deserve nothing but ~~an~~ unstinting praise.

It is in that spirit of verligtheid (enlightenment) that all South African Jews (and others of whatever colour or *creed*) who wish to support the sensible and moderate formula of stage by stage reform, should wholeheartedly welcome the hand of friendship now being extended by verligte Afrikaners like Professor *SAMPIE* ~~Terreblanche~~. *Indeed, they should* ~~and~~ actively participate, together with all the other positive elements, in an on-going process of peaceful change towards a more just society in South Africa.

And so, in the year 1983, it is the constructive Afrikaner and *Black* leaders -

- the Bothas, the Hendrikses, the Rajbansis, the Mangopes, and the Thebehalis among many others - who hold the key to the future.

[Already the leaders of the Labour Party and the National Party ^(by their actions) have amply shown that they are able to accept the challenge of our times, courageously, ~~and~~ with heart-warming stat^semanship, and not without great personal risk.

[Thus, with the coming referendum, the burning, unavoidable question now before South African Jews, is: in the complex reality of current S A politics, can these Jews who over the years may have opposed the ruling party for reasons which could well have been valid then - can they also show the same courage and adapt to the present challenge of the times?

[Hopefully, more and more are doing just that.

Ends

END

DAVID ABEL is prominently involved in both Jewish and general public affairs. At present he is Chairman of the Transvaal Mall Trader Association of Port Elizabeth; Member of the Commercial Affairs Committee of the P.E. Chamber of Commerce; Executive Member of the P.E. Central Business District Association; Ex-officio Chairman of the P.E. Jewish Revisionist Organisation; Vice-Chairman of the Eastern Cape Zionist Council; Chairman of the Public Affairs Committee of the E. C. Zionist Council; and Editor of "Viewpoint" news magazine.