

# WE ARE HERE

אנחנו פה

*MESSAGES AND REFLECTIONS  
FROM FORMER MAZKIRIM*

Compiled by Brad Gottschalk & Wayne Sussman



# Introduction

Sometimes language can be limiting. It's not often that I am unable to express myself in English - but there is one word in the English language that is missing. There is no single word to describe "Habonim Magic" - that euphoric feeling that comes with being in the movement. In fact, the concept itself is so hard to express, I must sound banal when explaining what Habo is to people who have never experienced this particular magic. How life-changing can a 'camp counsellor job' even be? But this conversation is different when had with any current or former members of Habo - that spark of magic is understood. Spanning 92 years, one would think that the culture surrounding Habo would have changed drastically from generation to generation. The first reflection is from Avi Hechter. Avi led the movement in 1953. The last reflection is from Mira Rudnick. Mira will lead the movement in 2023. There is a chain of 70 years between the oldest living Mazkir Klali, and the person just elected for the tafkid.

Speaking to past chaverim, however, one quickly comes to the realisation that, surprisingly, Habo has always been (in many ways) a consistent environment. The world occupied by the movement might be ever changing, be it from the scouting roots, to hachsharah farms, the era of kibbutz building, transition to democracy, the peace process, inequality or modern identity politics. The experiences might have also been different for those who camped at Leaches Bay, Nahoon or Onrus. Yet Habonim chaverim always seem to exist in a space which is filled with intellectual stimulation, silliness, critical thought, tarbut and ideology. We also know that our movement was strengthened by our merger with Dror, and our joining together with Bnei Zion. Our movement was made stronger when members of Hashomer Hatzair could find a new home after their forced closure for their brave activism.

The English language may not have a word for that feeling, but this project certainly articulates what cannot be said. It is so beautiful to read these reflections as a tapestry. Viewed individually, these reflections speak to the challenges and feelings of the time. But together, they reveal so much about the core of Habonim. Because Habonim is exactly that - a tapestry. The makeup of Habo spans different political movements and historical events, personalities and machaneh traditions, train rides from Bulawayo and flights from Johannesburg, all of which have contributed to the feeling and make-up of the movement.

Biologist Richard Dawkins explains evolution with the allegory of a family photo album. He says that if you were to take a photo of every ancestor belonging to one person and order it in a (giant) album, you wouldn't see much difference from one consecutive photo to the next. But looking at the photo album with millions of photos would let you see the difference and change in a species. Much like Dawkins' allegory, this project looks at the movement through the same lens. There is not much difference in the movement between the years 1959 and 1960, but there most definitely is between the years 1960 and 2022! All these reflections put together in an 'album' perfectly encapsulate the change and similarities in movement from different eras - a tapestry spanning time. We also know that our movement was strengthened by our merger with Dror, and our joining together with Bnei Zion. Our movement was made stronger when members of Hashomer Hatzair could find a new home after their forced closure for their brave activism.

When you're in the movement, it feels like the biggest and most important thing in the world, yet HDSA is such a niche in a world of 8 billion and histories of larger scales. I always laugh with my friends over the uselessness in the 'outside world' of knowing such obscurities like the 'Sayarim Streak' of 1996. Yet, Habonim is the most important thing in the world. Getting lost in its niche politics, culture, and history, is part of the Habo experience. One can draw so much out of this project when reading between-the-lines (the lack of women in leadership, for example). This project exists for different reasons: the sake of nostalgia, movement literature, historical archiving, and memorialisation. However, the most important reason should be for reading by the current movement, whenever that may be. I hope if you are reading this book as a current member, that you read it through the lens of Habonim's future. Look to the past for advice and anecdotes of Habo history - and think critically about what your movement needs at the moment. This book exists in a physical and unchanging form, but the movement lives as a fluid and diverse being. Understand how crucial the movement's existence is in the community and in the world. Look at the different and uniquely unprecedented challenges of each era, and let it inspire you to fight tooth and claw for Habonim's survival. Sometimes movement feels impossible, but look to these words as a comfort and inspiration. The title, 'We Are Here', is taken from the last line of the Partisan Song - **And we marched more fiercely: we are here!** When there is a push against us, we will march more fiercely. Habonim has always gone against the grain, and this has rarely been taken well to. Sometimes it feels like the forces against us are impossible to overcome, but we still call out: 'We Are Here!', because we know how crucial the movement is to so many who pass through the Onrus gates. This is what I hope is taken away from this book: Habonim's eulogy is not an option.

*Aleh U'Vneh*  
*Chazak Ve'Ematz*  
*Aleh Ve'Hagshem*

**Brad Gottschalk**



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# Avi Hechter

## 1953-1954



*Avi Hechter*

I was a *Madrach* in Habonim from 1946 to 1955. The Habonim I was in had to deal with the trauma and aftermath of World War II and the genocide of the Jewish people. There was also much excitement surrounding the establishment of the State of Israel, and a new possibility of *Aliya* was prompted. Before the establishment, we were still making *Aliya*. I had friends who went to fight with the Machal - a group of international Jews who joined the fighting forces in Israel. I had family in Israel and was worried during the war. I came from a typical South African Jewish family. My parents were part of the Socialist Zionist movement. My dad came to Israel during *Aliya Shlishit* in 1926, and went back to Lithuania, and then came to South Africa. My whole family eventually came to Israel. I had been on a program called Beit Berel (alternative to *Machon*), a three month program on Kibbutz Mayan Baruch with different seminars about Zionist thinkers. Before *Aliya*, we attended hachsharah farms in Northcliff (now a suburb in Johannesburg), a town called Brits in today's North West and Ogies in today's Mpumalanga. There were ideological differences in Habonim, during which many of us who pushed for Socialism and Zionism to be included in the movement were banned from *hadrachah* and tafkid positions. The eventual result was Habonim becoming a Zionist Socialist youth movement, where *Aliya* to Israel and life on kibbutz was a final fulfilment. I still consider myself a socialist. In South Africa, we had to help fight against *apartheid*. We had to do this not under Habonim, but as individuals, being careful not to involve Habonim (which could have been banned). We put together illegal night schools to teach people who were not white. We got together and protested against *apartheid*. I had friends in the Hashomer Hatzair movement who did the same (although they were more radical than us). The Jewish community had a 'stand-aside' policy when it came to apartheid, but we decided to take action. My friends all worked trade jobs rather than studying (for ideologically socialist reasons).

Our lives were Habonim, sport, and studies - but Habonim was our commitment, our home, chevra, and the beginning of lifelong friendships, many of them I still keep to this day. My wife and I met in Habo and have been together for 70 years.



## ***Message***

Habonim should be a Jewish, Zionist, scout movement, which is involved in social injustices causes in South Africa - but at the same time stretching the influence of Israel on the Jewish community and making *Aliya* a personal alternative.



# Meyer Jaffe

# 1955-1957

I joined *Gedud Tel Yosef* in Habonim Cape Town in 1947. My involvement in the Youth Movement was immediate and deep for 10 years until my *Aliya* in Hanukkah in 1957. My activities included being a *madrach* for both *Bonim* and *Shomrim*. I was also *Bakoach* of Habonim in Western Province, Chairperson of the Cape Town Youth Movement Council. I was very involved on the *Hachshara* Farm in Oogies and was also the *Mazkir Klali*. We were 4,500 *chanicim* spread over Southern Africa. The year 1956 saw Habonim without a single Shaliach. Despite this, we saw graduates of the *Machon* playing a vital role in expanding the movement. Changing from a scouting organisation to a Chalutzic Zionist Youth Movement saw bogrim settling on *Kibbuzim*, *Moshavim* and cities in the new State of Israel. Prior to the 1956 Sinai Campaign we sent 200 volunteers to help build *Kibbutzim* and *Moshavim*.

Habonim challenged its members to the realization of their beliefs. Are there 'think debates' today? Are members of the Movement involved in improving the quality of life, be it in South Africa or Israel? There is so much to do both as youth and as graduates!

# Eli Sluszny

# 1958

*Apartheid* was the order of the day in South Africa then. On more than one occasion, I had to go outside during a meeting , to check we were not being listened to. Those were difficult times, but we prevailed . Our ideals kept us on track. Only two Jewish lawyers were prepared to take Nelson Mandela to do their internship.

Avi Sheftz and I combined Habonim and HaShomer Hatzair together under the umbrella of Ichud Habonim.. We and all the Shlichim lived in the Bayit together at that time!

My message to the current movement is to have faith that your ideals and your values will sustain you and give you the courage and power you need to carry out your ideals!

On a practical level ,my advice is for each family sending a child to camp to sign a form giving *In Loco Parentis*. Of course, the camp must have the best qualified doctors!

The most important thing is for security to be tight and the camp to be well-guarded and to also have at least two life-guards.

I wish Habonim to be plentiful and to grow from strength to strength! Keep on instilling values in the youth and love of Zion!

***Chazak Ve'Ematz!***

***The 6th Mazkir of Habonim Dror SA!***

# Giddy Shimoni 1959-1960



*Giddy Shimoni, Colin Kessel, Lazer Choritz,  
Wolf Zeev Mankowitz, among others.*

My period as *Mazkir Klali* was 1959 and 1960. Its most significant and memorable aspects were the first reformulation of the movement's platform of aims and purposes by the 1959 Moatza (council); the composition in a series of booklets of the first-ever educational program for the *Shomrim schichvah*; the fusion of the Dror youth movement with Habonim and the beginning of discussions for amalgamation also with Bnei Zion.

I understand that choosing personal *Aliya* is not as compelling as it was in my time. I wish more Habonim Dror *chaverim* in South Africa would make this choice. All *olim* are welcome, but for reasons that are obvious after all I have said here, I wish there were more from Habonim Dror than from, say, other youth movements which encourage settlement in the occupied territories. However, I do believe that present Habonim Dror is espousing a Zionist understanding, against all odds, given that it is situated within a community in which knee-jerk support for hyper-nationalist expressions in Israel holds sway. I do believe that notwithstanding all changes in its size, situation and functioning, it is upholding the fundamentals of Habonim Dror's heritage. For this, I applaud today's Habonim Dror.

# 50s



# 60s



# Colin Kessel

## 1961

On returning home from an amazing year on the Machon in 1960, I was summoned by Giddy Shimoni, the Mazkir Klali of Habonim at that time, who asked me to take on the job of Mazkir, thereby freeing him to go to Israel to the Hebrew University where he had an academic appointment waiting for him. This aroused some conflict for me, since I was due to begin a B.A. Degree at the University of Witwatersrand, however I felt obliged to take on the task. It soon became clear that this was a huge, but extremely rewarding, commitment, and somehow I managed them both.

*Tasks as Mazkir Klali:*

**1.** ■ Shlichim: One of the main tasks on hand was to integrate and absorb several new *shlichim*, coming from different *kibbutzim* (Tzora, Beit HaEmek, Kfar Hanassi, Yizreel). This was for the most part a very rewarding task, creating a special relationship with these great *shlichim*. However sometimes it was not easy and aroused difficult decisions, especially regarding the non-English speaking shlichim.

**2.** ■ Policy with the South African government: Another important task was dealing with Habonim's policy in relation to the South African Government, and I spent many hours with Jules Browde, the *manhig*, in this complex political task. Clearly our main role in the movement at that time was to push *Aliya* to Israel and the formation of a *garin*, whose goal was *Aliya* to the *kibbutz*. This aroused much conflict with the Jewish Board of Deputies, whose role was to mediate the issue of the Jewish community's relationship with the *apartheid* administration. A classic example of this issue was our (ambivalent!) agreement to participate in the South African youth movements' (Jewish and non-Jewish) celebration of the founding of South Africa in Bloemfontein. In the end, our sight and sound presentation in Bloemfontein, acted out in operatic form, the building of a new settlement - *Homa ve Migdal* - Tower and Stockade. This production was well received by both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities, despite the freezing conditions.

**3.** ■ Daily running of the movement: In addition, the obvious task of the *Mazkir Klali* dealt with the mundane issues of the daily running of the movement, the publication of handbooks, magazines for each *shichvah*, study materials and the logistics and organisation of annual seminars, as well as camps, transferring 1,000 *chanichim* from the centre of the country to the camp sites in the Cape.

**4.** ■ Formulation of Aliya policy - being *Mazkir Klali* of Habonim required extra efforts in the field of *Aliya*, negotiating between the two antagonistic groups, those in favour of Garin Etgar who saw the *kibbutz* as the only acceptable form of *Aliya*, and those who were pushing for the development of other socialist/academic frameworks.

**5.** ■ The office - The job of *Mazkir Klali* was aided by the Habonim office situated in Johannesburg, run by the amazing Mrs. (Rita) Hellman who took care of all the administrative functions, and acted as mother to us all. Without her none of this would have happened!



*Leaches Bay*

# Geoffrey Bethlehem

## 1963

For quite a few years representatives from both Bnei Zion and Habonim had been in contact with the aim of bringing the two movements together. During those years there was a lot of local political stress and budgetary pressure on all the Zionist youth movements in South Africa. I recall one *kinnus* at which Foggy Peleg (Fogelewitz) and Giddy Shimoni both attended to discuss the topic. In 1961 I was appointed head of Bnei Zion and after protracted negotiations the merger of the two movements to be called Ichud Habonim-Bnei Zion was inaugurated. Towards this end, in 1962 I took up the position of *Mazkir Klali*, and Woolfie Mankowitz became *Mazkir Chinuch*. Many former members of Bnei Zion including many outstanding *madrichim* followed through into the merger.

1962 was an eventful year and for me one of great satisfaction and enjoyment and the success of the merger added to my sense of achievement. At the movement offices I met the love of my life Pamela Hellmann who had returned from the *Machon* and was the editor of the *Shtilim* and *Bonim* magazine. We made Aliya in 1965 and live in Haifa.

To the *madrichim* and *chanichim* in South Africa we wish you every success in your endeavors. Times are different now and the challenges you face are immense.

Chazak Ve'Ematz



*Leon Fine and Alan Hoffman among others in Onrus*



*Arnie Friedman, Basil Kawalsky, Alan Fisher, Itamar Avin. Diana Green Schneeweiss, Pam Bethlehem, Claire Moss. Jacky Sobel, Sheppy Factor Diana Green Schneeweiss, Pam Bethlehem, Claire Moss. Jacky Sobel, Sheppy Factor*

# Ronald Miller

# 1964

I have very fond memories working in 1964 as *Mazkir Klali*. Undoubtedly, the highlight of this year for me was the formation of Garin Etgar that settled on Kibbutz Tzora and made a major contribution to Habonim in South Africa by sending numerous *shlichim* over the years and serving as a nucleus for the movement to this day. At the tender age of eight I was schlepped by my older brother to *Shtilim* meetings probably as a consequence of my parents' desire to enjoy a child-free Sunday morning. (Long before any school geography lessons, I was drawing maps of Eretz Yisrael, blissfully ignorant of how contentious those green lines would become.) From that time Habonim began to play a formative role in my life functioning as a surrogate family and school in a number of different senses. Of course there were the weekly meetings, *machanot*, and seminars. From age ten I attended every *machaneh* except the year it was cancelled due to a polio epidemic – and had the dubious distinction of nearly being sent home from Leaches Bay for bunking out to watch a movie. Embedded in these activities were the seeds that constitute the making of an identity – a dense network of values both Jewish and universal. Growing up in a secular Jewish household and attending a public school where antisemitism was present although not virulent, I had my own “Jewish problem” being acutely aware that I was somehow different from the “others” exacerbated by an early awareness of the Holocaust. Labour Zionism espoused by Habonim provided me with answers to my adolescent questioning and relentless seeking for answers. And these answers together with the firm and abiding friendships cultivated in the movement have remained with me over the course of sixty years. (When my phone rings or my email pings it's invariably a chaver keeping alive our memories and fellowship of the brick.) Of course, as the world has changed, this and that conviction and opinion has also been modified, but at root the values that still inform Habonim Dror in 2022 – “of tolerance, peace, equality, freedom, respect and human rights” – remain as a firm fixture of my outlook and identity.

I have no wise words to impart to the current leadership and members of Habonim Dror. The world, including Israel and South Africa, in 2022 is now a very different place than that of the sixties when I was active in the movement. In Israel the “left” seems not only to have become politically irrelevant but, as also in other places, a term of opprobrium. Unlike in the sixties when we swam with the tide, today sadly the swimming is against it. This means that Habonim Dror faces challenges we did not have to meet. The best I can do is to invoke the old motto, Chazak V'Ematz and to include its continuation – be not afraid and neither be dismayed.



*Kibbutz Tzora, early days*

# Riwa (Durbach) Lapid

# 1965

I grew up in Umtata (Mthatha) in the Transkei and joined the movement together with the few other Jews in the town. Camps, seminars and visits by *Shlichim* and soon I was becoming aware both of Jewish moral values and the need for a strong and stable Israel for the future of the Jewish people.

After matriculating, a year in Israel on the *Machon* cemented my views, and while still on *Machon* I took the decision to come on *Aliya* after serving the movement as I had obligated myself. During three years I worked in the Habonim office in Johannesburg, serving as *Mazkira Klalit* in 1965.

During that year I married Ron-also an active member of the movement.

As members of Garin Etgar we made *Aliya* to Kibbutz Tzora at the beginning of 1966. After six years on Kibbutz we moved to Ra'anana where we have lived ever since. Although Israel had and has huge challenges before it, I feel that this is home from all points of view and I have never doubted that I made the correct decision for myself and my family.

There is no doubt that my years in the movement were the most formative, influential, satisfying and exciting years in my life. The environment in the movement was stimulating and enabled me to develop myself to the full. Thank you to the founders of the movements that developed into Habonim (I started off in Bnei Zion which later amalgamated with Habonim).

The world has greatly changed since I was a teenager and then Mazkira of the movement, but I continue to believe in the centrality of a stable and democratic Israel for the future of the Jewish people and invite you all to participate in this ongoing story-everyone in their own way.

*Chazack Ve'Ematz!*

# Benzi Segal

# 1966-1967

In over 90 years since the founding Habonim Dror in South Africa every generation has had to redefine and reinterpret the movement within the context of the reality in which they find themselves - in South Africa, in the Jewish world and in relation to the State of Israel.

The movement of the Sixties in South Africa faced unique challenges during a most turbulent time and there is no doubt that this period of our lives was a significant one and for most of us, it determined our world outlook and our future path in life. More *chaverim* of the movement made *Aliya* during this decade than in any other. In 1963 *Garin Etgar* was declared and in the 4 year period between 1965 and 1968 close to 200 *chaverim* made *Aliya* through the *ulpan* on Tzora and via other channels.

Living in South Africa as part of the privileged white society we educated our members towards an awareness of the inherent inequality and discrimination surrounding them while advocating non involvement in the resistance to the Apartheid regime as a movement. The dilemma facing us was self preservation and non involvement versus embarking on a course of action which would have endangered the very existence of Habonim and perhaps also implicated the entire Jewish community. Our inability to facilitate change in S.A. and the realization that this could not really become our struggle. *Aliya* to Israel was seen as the only realistic way to implement both our Jewish and our universal values.

The movement provides a special atmosphere and comradeship which does not exist in any other framework and together with idealism, ideology, fun and wonderful experiences have created a special and unique bond which binds us all together over the generations. I hope that Habonim Dror will continue to provide the present leadership with the power to initiate real and significant change, both in the movement and in their own personal lives and that this will lead to greater involvement, more personal commitment and to *Hagshama*.

*Aleh U'Vneh!*



*Cape Town Chaverim*

# Alan Hoffman

# 1966-1967 Sgan

Habonim S.A. of 1966 and 1967 was influenced by three very different vectors. In the very depths of the apartheid years and just after the Mandela trial, we were deeply concerned that the movement's very liberal educational stance would turn the authorities against us and lead to the closing down of Habonim (as had happened to Hashomer Hatzair). Onrus was relatively new and the weekly and annual activities of the movement still attracted over four thousand chanichim. In Israel, the majority of Garin Etgar was already on Tzora and in the army, and through shlichim like Leib Golan and Eddie Neminoff, Aliya to kibbutz remained a central value, while never attracting the mass of the movement. And then, in May 1967, came the call for volunteers to replace *kibbutznikim* who had been drafted after *Yom haAtzmaut*. The first plane-load of volunteers, including much of the senior leadership, left on the night of June 3, 1967 and arrived in Israel less than 24hrs before the Six Day War broke out. By the end of those Six Days, Israel was to become a very different country and society, with a new set of opportunities and challenges which have continued to shape the subsequent decades.

South African Jewry of today is much smaller, much more Orthodox and maybe much more divided than in our day. Yet from the perspective of almost 60 years later, an infinitely stronger but infinitely more complicated Israel continues to offer post-apartheid members of Habonim a unique opportunity to consider your role in bridging the gap between present-day Israel and the *Chevrat Mofet* – the exemplary society -that early Zionists and so many generations of the movement have venerated.

# Bruce Oppenheimer

## 1968-1969

Looking back, I think that the year and a quarter that I was *Mazkir Klali* was one of the most formative, meaningful and enjoyable years of my life. I loved everything about it: being part of the office team, visiting the different centres, living in the Bayit and getting to know Johannesburg (I came from Cape Town). I had gained so much from the movement - *Sollelim and Shomrim, Hadrachah, Machon, machanot*, seminars - and the years as *Mazkir Klali* topped it all. I learnt about teamwork, about group decision-making, about how to manage and lead, about how a large organisation operates (Habonim South Africa numbered 5000 at the time). It was a heady time, a year after the Six Day War, when most of the senior leadership of the movement had been together on Ma'ayan Baruch. There was hope for peace in the air, and a strong pull for *Aliya*. I am forever grateful to the movement for those wonderful years. What stands out are the relationships and friendships that were forged, the sense that I could make a difference, the wish to make things better, the delight in being Jewish, and the vision of a better future for Israel and in Israel. I wish the same for the current members of HDSA. I envy you and would repeat my Habonim years over again if I could.



*Machon 1969-1969*



*Bruce Oppenheimer with Shomrim  
Maddies 1968-1969*

# Paul Horwitz

## 1970

In 1970 I held the newly created position of *National Mazkir*, working part time in the Joburg office while completing my degree at Wits. I was a member of Garin Hod and lived in the first ever *Garin Bayit in Yeoville*, with 8 other members of the garin. The house was the vibrant centre of senior *madrichim* activity. We weren't the only garin however – Garin Sha'al an urban *garin* created by a group of senior *madrichim* who did not want to go to *kibbutz* but wanted to live some kind of communal framework, had been formed and the dynamic interaction and rivalry between the two garinim made for an unprecedented, exciting intellectual atmosphere. In 1971 the first group of Garin Hod made *Aliya* to Yizreel, and the Sha'al members went to Carmiel.

In the 1970's the movement was possibly as big as it had ever been – certainly bigger than all the other movements with *machanot* of 1000 plus *chanichim*. In Johannesburg for a period of time we even had 2 *Shomrim* meetings a week in an attempt to try and cover as much educational material as possible. As members of a left-wing orientated organization we were accepted and respected on Wits campus by the left-wing student factions – left-wing socialist Zionism and *kibbutz* were then seen as a legitimate and accepted way of implementing socialist ideology. There were no anti-Israel organizations that I can recall.

I was the central *shaliach* between 1978 and 1980, and saw the *garin* to Tuval formed and make *Aliya*. The movement then, was of course different to what I experienced as a *chanich* and *madrich* in the 1960's, but still a dynamic and special organization, and although I have lost contact over the years, I am certain that that is still the case today. Most of my friends today are people who were my contemporaries in the movement and I am sure the same is true for many others, both here and abroad. Habonim has had a profound influence on its members in every generation and despite logical sociological and other changes specific to each period of time, the basic principles of *chavershaft* and seeking social justice, equality and a better society remain.

I wish the current leadership every success in their attempt to continue to uphold the uniqueness and principles of Habonim, and have no doubt that when they look back in a few years at their accomplishments, they will never regret having been part of such a dynamic organization - 92 years old but still going strong.



# 60s



# 70s



# Norman 'Noam' Karstaedt 1971

I was privileged to be the *Mazkir Klali* of Habonim in 1971. Habonim in that year still pulsed with the post Six Day War energy and enthusiasm. I had volunteered to go to Israel during the war and had the good fortune of subsequently joining the Northern Machzor (course) of the *Machon* which was excellent preparation for this leadership challenge. Habonim had 4,500 members which was over 50% of all the youth movement membership and one in five of the SA Jewish youth. Seminars were well attended and Onrus had 1,000 campers. I was supported by a great office staff, the indomitable Mrs H (Rita Hellman z"l), Toni Shimoni, Sandy Florence and the enthusiastic Yuval Fine, who set a precedent by staying on for a *Shnat Sherut Leumi* before returning to Israel for army service. Our active and committed *Hanhagah*, regional leadership and *shlichim* were an essential, consistent and dynamic leadership team. Avi Hechter, our central shaliach and I went to an auction and I raised my hand for the winning bid for the purchase of the new movement *bayit* opposite Zoo Lake. Our meetings would no longer disturb our neighbours. The First group of our Garin Hod left for Kibbutz Yizreel and Garin Shahal left for Carmiel to join an urban *kibbutz*. In February, I travelled to Brussels as our representative to the First World Conference on Soviet Jewry "Let My People Go". We demanded freedom for Soviet Jewry to make Aliya, freedom to practice Judaism and freedom from discrimination. The positive results would as we know eventually ensue. After decades, the World Zionist Organization ordered worldwide democratic elections. John Eliasov came back from Israel for the campaign and Habonim received an outstanding 15% of the vote. In January 1972 Mike Lewin and I travelled to Jerusalem as delegates to the World Zionist Organization Conference. I had received the *Mazkirship* from the charismatic Ian Browde, then led through a challenging and eventful year and was confident in handing over a vibrant and healthy movement to the really talented Mike Lewin for 1972.

And now a message to the current movement, *Chanichim* and *Bogrim*. Recalling 1971, I have outlined key events and activities. All that is important, but much more essential is the clear and consistent Habonim moral education and the values we provide for all our members. Habonim must continue laying out with clarity those universal and Jewish values of truth, freedom and democracy together with *chaverut* and commitment to each other. Our Israeli, Jewish and global world is rapidly changing. This makes the need for a core of firm personal values all the more essential. From this solid foundation, we can strive to move our world in a positive direction. This is now your continuing challenge.

*Chazak Ve'Ematz.*



1969 Hanhagat Habonim - Zubby Lacob, Mike Lewin, Des Kahn, Noam (Norman) Karstaedt, Ian Browde, John Eliasov, Martin Kagan, Uri Bargai, Paul Horwitz

## Mike Lewin 1972

Thinking about 1972 immediately leads to contemplating how much the world has changed since then. South Africa today is so different from it was then and the changes that occurred were (almost) inconceivable in 1972. I should add that I have not been to South Africa in almost 40 years, but I know from what I have read and been told how changed it is, which leads me to question, how different is Habonim today from what it was 50 years ago? Back then, the organization of the weekly meetings for the various age groups was mostly local and was managed quite well. The national office (where I worked in 1972) was in the building of the Zionist Federation in the city centre of Johannesburg (I doubt that it is still there) and was responsible for organizing, well, national events such as *Machaneh* at Onrus in the summer and 'seminars' in the winter. *Machaneh*, of course, was mostly about fun but the 'seminars' were meant to be more educational. Are the seminars still held? Conditions today at Onrus are probably quite different from what they were then.

There were few permanent structures and the job of the so-called 'advance guard' was to pitch tents (everyone slept in tents) and build primitive toilets and showers. Is there hot water today at the campsite? Not then. Organizing transport to camp was also quite an ordeal. All the *chanichim* from Johannesburg went by a special Habonim train to Cape Town and from there were bussed to Onrus. (Is this still the case?) So, while a lot of energy went into contemplating how we were going to change Israel and the world, these organizational tasks had to be done and occupied much of our time. Of course, there were also conferences to attend and trips to Israel to arrange and weekly bulletins to publish and so on.

The world has changed; South Africa has changed, and Israel too has undergone fundamental transformations. How much of Habonim 1972 still exists in Habonim Dror of 2022? Not a question that can be answered standing on one leg but I suspect some core elements remain: Habonim is great place to meet and make lasting friendships with people from all over the country; it is a vehicle for deepening Jewish identity, understanding Judaism, and pursuing humanistic values and 'tikkun olam'; and, most importantly, since it is after all a Zionist Youth Movement, it is a framework for developing strong ties to Israel and promoting Aliyah and the centrality of Israel in Jewish life.



*Mike Lewin 1972*

# Jonni Swerdlow

## 1973-1974

I was *Mazkir* of the movement during the Yom Kippur war. It was probably the most important and impactful event of my tenure. In an era without TV or smartphones or social media, the only source of news was the local press, the SABC and whatever snippets of information the Zionist Fed and the *shlichim* could get from the Israel Embassy.

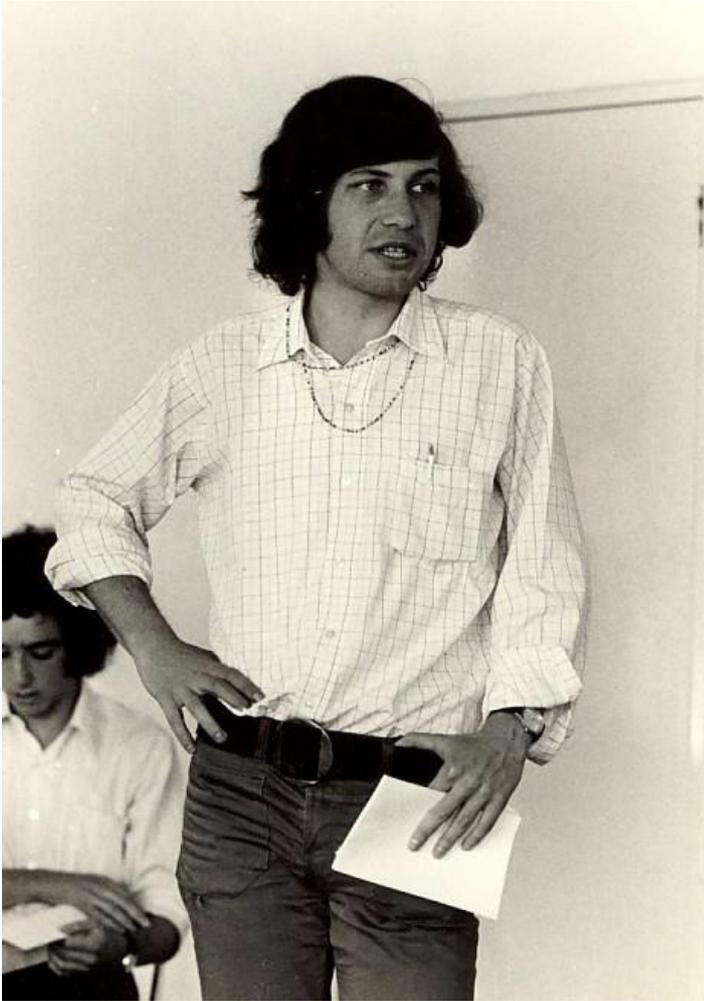
I don't think that during those initial days the leadership of the movement realized how perilously close Israel came to the worst of outcomes.

The awful news of Neil Freed and Dudi Silbowitz's deaths somehow reached us. They were both *madrichim* to most of the senior leadership and were beloved by all.

As past wars did, the Yom Kippur war galvanized the community in general and the movement in particular. We sent groups of volunteers to the *kibbutzim* and Garin Lahav advanced their arrival to Nir Eliyahu. Numbers for weekly meetings and *machaneh* broke records. The Jewish community had a need to identify with Israel in a tangible way and Habonim provided a strong framework to accomplish this.

Today we know much more than ever about that war. Our poets and writers and musicians have woven moving threads connecting the Yom Kippur liturgy and the reality of the war that bears the name of the holiest day in the calendar. Back in 1973 we were just naïve kids running the biggest and best Zionist socialist youth movement on the planet and trying hard to make sense of a war that took our *madrichim* from us and changed Israel forever.

PS I have no erudite words of advice for today's leadership. Back in the day we, as true revolutionary and independent youth, would never take advice from someone over 70 years of age. I presume you wouldn't either.



*Jonni Swerdlow 1973-1974*



**HABONIM CAMP 72/73**

*Machaneh 1972-1973*

# Rael Meyerowitz

## 1975

I was the *Mazkir Klali* of Habonim in 1975 and worked in the Johannesburg office with Les Abelson and Benzi Segal from Tzora who was our central shaliach. I say 'worked', but Benzi would come into my office, see a pristinely neat desk, and say, 'No one can have a desk that neat and claim to be doing any real work.' He was not entirely wrong; then again, he probably wasn't privy to my OCD tendencies! I have very fond memories of that year and all my years in the Movement, of course, but memory becomes elusive as one ages, and this is going back more than half a century now. One event that stands out was leading a large-scale protest march against the UN 'Zionism=Racism' resolution through downtown Johannesburg. As those of you who have remained more involved will know, I have not really kept in touch with Habonim affairs. While this may again have more to do with personal rather than ideological inclinations, it would be fair to say that I have been struggling with my own Zionism in recent decades, having always been more interested – even in those good old days – in the Socialist side of what Habonim stands, or stood, for. When I finally got to Israel with our garin, the year after the *mazkirut*, it was just in time to witness the Likud coming to power for the first time; things have never been the same since. The year spent on Nir Eliyahu, moreover, proved a difficult experience for me and I 'retreated' to Jerusalem and the life of academia. Later still, I resumed my Jewish wandering, became a psychoanalyst – and the rest is history. All that notwithstanding, I still treasure my years in Habonim. The movement was in many ways a lifesaver for me – again, personally, psychologically, as well as socially and intellectually. My message to the current members would be simple: Habonim South Africa is or should be as universal as it is parochial; it should retain or revive its social justice, egalitarian agenda, resisting racist and fascist-leaning ideologies wherever they arise, including in the State of Israel. Though I no longer reside in either of them, our two lands have seen enough of human suffering and the oppression of one group by another. Habonim has always stood up against such things.



*Rael Meyerowitz 1975*

# Simmy Zawels

## 1976-1977

I am now three times the age I was when I completed my term as *Mazkir Klali* and have had a lifetime of experiences, both professionally and personally since that last *mifkad eish* in January 1978, that have shaped who I became. And yet, if I try and imagine who I would have been throughout these latter two thirds of my life without those years in Habonim in general and as *Mazkir Klali* and *Rosh Machaneh* in particular, it is hard to imagine who that person would have been. At the time we focused on big ideas and macro-ideologies about society and the Jewish people, many of which did not stand the test of time. What did become indelibly etched into my persona is what psychologists call the non-cognitive factors like tenacity, openness, empathy, teamwork and leadership, fused with friendships that allow for conversations to be picked up mid-sentence years after they began.

So much has changed in the world over the past 45 years and so many so-called certainties with respect to democracy, Israel and the future of our planet seem shaky today. How all of these play-out over the next decades will be impacted by the kinds of people who ultimately gain the high ground in these existential struggles. Continuing to shape the young lives of *madrachim* and *chanichim* in *Habonim Dror* South Africa is the awesome responsibility of the movement leaders of today. The world and Jewish people need you to succeed more than ever.



*Simmy Zawels 1976-1977*

# Stephen Pincus

# 1979-1980

I feel very fortunate to have been part of Habonim. Inspired by cool, creative *madrachim*. Challenged by bold, brilliant *chanichim*. Guided by wise, warm shlichim. Sustained by deeply-rooted friendships with amazing chaverim across the world.

We, the Habonim generation of the late 1970s, inherited a movement weakened by the collapse of the *Machon*, disillusioned by the '73 war, challenged by the '76 Soweto uprising, and confused by the equation of Zionism with racism, the '77 *mahapach* (political shift in Israel), and the ascendance of Bnei Akiva and haredi outreach movements. The resulting pessimistic malaise was epitomized in 1978 by the smallest *machaneh* in many years.

Yet, like all Habonim generations before and after us, we responded in our own unique ways, informed by our times and temperaments. Our imagination was captured by a bold *chalutzic* project on a barren windswept cliff in the western Galil, where we helped to found a brand new kibbutz: Tuval. As thousands gathered across South Africa for a breathtaking series of events to celebrate Habonim's Golden Jubilee in 1980, culminating in *Machaneh Hayovel* (estimated to be the largest camp in the movement's history), the movement was infused with a renewed sense of meaning and promise.

We took a broad "big tent" approach, viewing Habonim as a "klali" Zionist youth movement. In the ongoing balancing-act between ideology and inclusion, we stressed tolerance over certainty. Values that, four decades later, underpin Kaleidoscope, HED and Habo 2020.

To Habonim's chaverim of the 2020s - as you rebuild a movement ravaged by a global pandemic within a Jewish community and a world crazed by certainties - I know you will be bold, passionate, curious and creative in forging your own pathways. Savour every moment of your Habonim lives. Above all, please treasure this precious movement as you carry it toward its centenary. And beyond.



*Stephen Pincus*



70s

80s

# Jonathan Broomberg

# 1981-1982

## *Reflections on my time in the movement.*

My memories of my time in Habonim in the late 1970s and early 1980s are very much bound up with the situation in South Africa at that time. This was a period when the anti-apartheid struggle would become much more intense, impacting perhaps for the first time, on the comfortable suburban lives of most of the Jewish community. For the most part, white South Africans, including the Jewish community, tried hard to ignore the harsh realities of *apartheid* on the majority of their fellow citizens. In this situation, Habonim played an incredibly powerful role for many of our generation in ' us to the realities of life in *apartheid* South Africa, and instilling in us a deep commitment to social justice, and inspiring lives of social commitment and activism in many issues which feel as relevant now as they did then. I recall many intense discussions about the movement's commitments to Zionism and to social justice, and about how these could be brought together. At the same time, Habonim was the heart of our social world, and I have many indelible memories of wonderful times at *machanot*, seminars and weekly meetings; some of my oldest and deepest friendships and relationships were born in Habonim. I particularly recall the great role models presented to me and to all of us by the wonderful families of Shlichim of that era, most importantly for me, Les and Fran Oshry and their wonderful kids. I am forever grateful for their openness and deep friendship towards a much younger, much less mature young man, and for all the lessons they provided me in loyalty and commitment, leadership, and the meaning of a loving family. Overall, Habonim in that period represents to me a unique combination of serious and passionate commitment to deeply felt causes, mutual learning and growth, the development of powerful friendships with wonderful people, and always incredibly good times.

I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to spend many formative years in Habonim South Africa. The movement had a powerful, enduring and very positive impact on my life. Reflecting back on this makes me realise that my active participation in Habonim South Africa was an incredible privilege and an opportunity for so much learning, growth and development, not to mention great friendships and great times. I hope that all of you current members of the movement are aware of this privilege and of the wonderful opportunities Habonim offers you; and also that you realise that you are part of a long, long line of committed members who have contributed to building the movement for the past 90 years. Of course, with all of those opportunities and privileges, come great responsibilities and I also hope that each of you feel the responsibility to contribute in your own way to sustaining and building the great tradition and culture of Habonim SA. As in my time in the 1970s and 80s, South Africa and Israel today present difficult challenges and contradictions to a movement strongly committed to both Zionism and to social justice. I think that now, as then, Habonim offers a unique and powerful environment for young Jewish South Africans to confront these challenges and contradictions and to find their own resolutions to them.



*Johnny Broomberg among others*

# David 'Sam' Seligman

## 1983-1984

I began my 2 year tenure as *Mazkir* almost 40 years prior to the publication of this booklet. Both SA and Israel were undergoing major changes: 1983 saw the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in South Africa, while as a progressive Zionist youth movement we were grappling with the implications of Sabra and Shatilla and 5 years of Likud in power.

Habonim Dror at that time benefitted from having 5 wonderful families of *shlichim* who opened their hearts, homes (and fridges!) to us. We also had an incredibly vibrant group of *bogrim* – it was not uncommon to have 120 people at a Friday night *bogrim* meeting in Joburg. We operated in a South African Jewish community that was a lot more tolerant of differing viewpoints than it is today, and we were accepted on school and university campuses and even in *shuls* for weekly meetings. I was privileged to be Rosh of 2 *machanot* where we had 1300 participants and would have had more, if we hadn't been full and had to turn applicants away. The friendships and deep relationships that I formed there, particularly on A Guard, have shaped both my family and *chevra* ever since. (I was a second generation Habonim graduate and our kids are both *Bogrim* of Habonim Dror.) HDSA remains a wonderful and dynamic movement for young South African Jews. It is as relevant, exciting and important as it was in my day.

# Janina Kahn-Horwitz

# 1985

The period I spent in Habonim Dror South Africa, allowed me to develop both personally and communally. I lived in the Habonim Bayit with members of my *garin* (Aviv) and other members of the movement. Long-term relationships developed that became lifelong friendships. It was an exciting time, and we were deeply engaged in educating ourselves and those around us. My peers and I took on responsibility and leadership roles (the what) while simultaneously grappling with our ideals and dreams (the why). Habonim offered endless avenues to realise dreams. Much of what I engage in today is a continuation of those days in the early 1980s. I grappled with where and how I planned to realise my aspirations - educating, creating, and working towards building a more tolerant and inclusive society. As an educator in higher education today, I understand the importance of young people developing themselves as individuals and simultaneously creating a community. I reflect on my personal history and understand that Habonim provided multiple opportunities to experience and reflect on the person I was. I consider the challenges young people worldwide are facing today. In this context, Habonim is as relevant as ever. I have had the pleasure of meeting impressive young leaders from Habo South Africa. They visited my home on Manof and my institution, Oranim College of Education, in northern Israel. During our conversations, I am inspired to hear how they continue the decades-long tradition of providing a healthy and dynamic platform for young Jewish South Africans to engage in identity formation, emphasising social responsibility, drawing from our cultural and historical background, and strongly embracing humanistic and democratic values. The community is fortunate to have this youth movement active and evolving, addressing life in South Africa today.



*Janina Kahn with Ian Lucas, Paul Broomberg, Jonathan Penkin, David "Sam" Seligman 1985*

# Michael Schur

# 1986

I was Mazkir during a very tumultuous time in South Africa's history, leading the movement in the period a few years before the first democratic election in 1994. I was proud then that anti-apartheid activists saw us as allies, despite our primary allegiance to Israel, and we supported the struggle in important ways (mainly through age-appropriate peulot on the effects of *apartheid* on black peoples' lives but also through more dangerous activities, such as providing a safe-haven to folk hiding from the country's security forces).

Of all the things I learned in the movement, the one that has endured (clearly it cannot be my Zionism - because in our strict definition of the word - i.e. one that makes *Aliya* - I was a failure), is the faculty for critical thinking. It has stood me in good stead, and I am most grateful to Habonim for this special gift.

As I have grown older, critical thinking has made me worry about the direction of focus of young, ideological people, and hence my message to the current movement, in Andrew Sullivan's words rather than mine, because he writes better than I do (but the sentiment is all mine). While the reference is to universities, his warnings apply equally to other institutions, including ones like Habonim. I hope you heed them well.

*"When elite universities shift their entire worldview away from liberal education as we have long known it toward the imperatives of an identity-based "social justice" movement, the broader culture is in danger of drifting away from liberal democracy as well. If elites believe that the core truth of our society is a system of interlocking and oppressive power structures based around immutable characteristics like race or gender or sexual orientation, then sooner rather than later, this will be reflected in our culture at large.*

*The goal of our culture now is not the emancipation of the individual from the group, but the permanent definition of the individual by the group. We used to call this bigotry. Now we call it being woke."*

***Aleh Ve'Hagshem***



*Larry Borowitz, Michael Foreman, Brett Caminsky, among others*

# Peta Schur

# 1987

The person I am today has, in so many ways, been deeply influenced by my wonderful experiences in Habonim. Habonim was such a significant part of my life, and the memories I have from the *machanot*, the seminars and the meetings have stayed with me as some of my most cherished times. I so fondly remember the beautiful friendships, the late-night political discussions and the thoughtfulness we put into creating *tochniot* for our *chanichim*. Habonim felt like home, a place to share my values and celebrate being Jewish in a way that made the most sense to me. My time in Habonim showed me who I wanted to be in the world and gave me a foundation for building my dreams. I still sing Habonim songs to my grown children and tell them funny stories from my Habonim days. It is hard to find the words to capture how wonderful it felt to be a part of the movement, to be together with remarkable close friends who shared values and a passion for making a better world.

These are critical times. Times in which youth have such an essential role in influencing and contributing to this world we live in. I hope you all cherish the beautiful friendships, the community and the passion that Habonim encourages. Habonim is the past for many of us; for you all, it is your present and a gift that will stay with you forever.

# Natan Zeligson

# 1988

What stood out in the last several years before my *Aliya* was the heightened political/civil state of emergency declared by the South African regime. One incident that I had to deal with as *Mazkir Klali* comes to mind. Particularly affected during this time were progressive organizations aimed at undermining the huge machine that was *apartheid*. One of these organisations was the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), whose goal was to educate young white men about the role of the SADF in upholding the regime. Representatives from the ECC were invited to speak to the *Shomrim shichvah* of the previous *machaneh*. Several weeks after the end of *machaneh*, I received a phone call from a furious parent whose daughter, as a *Shomrim chanicha*, had heard the guest speaker. I recall trying to calm down the father, who insisted we had brainwashed his kid. I initially thought he just needed to vent, but when he threatened to report us to the Security Branch (the secret service of the *apartheid* regime) I realized we had a serious problem. After a meeting that lasted several hours, I eventually managed to placate him. (I assume that since no one was taken in for questioning by the Security Branch, he never did report us.)

Another episode during my final year in the movement was connected to the first Palestinian intifada - which had begun several months before my tenure as *Mazkir Klali*. Around the time of Yom Haatzmaut, the Wits campus was the scene of pitched battles between pro and anti-Zionist students. I recall having a reasoned and atypically calm dialogue with a leader of a secular Muslim anti-apartheid organization. The only Zionists he encountered were right-wing Jews. Needless to say, his shock was palpable in discovering that there were Jews who were no less critical of *apartheid* than him, but who also believed in something called progressive Zionism

My message to the current *bogrim* is to be steadfast in one's understanding of and commitment to the legitimacy of Zionism, especially in today's hostile climate. Make no mistake - much of the anti-Zionism peddled as a valid critique of the state of Israel is nothing other than modern anti-Semitism. Amos Oz apparently once remarked that he'd be willing for the Jewish people to be the second nation to abdicate their right to a sovereign nation state, but not the first.

# Larry Borowitz

# 1989-1990

I was a *chaver* of the movement from Garinim in the mid-1970's through to 1990 when I completed my two-year term as Mazkir Klali.

Some of the experiences which come to mind are the weekly Sunday meetings, *Mini Machanot*, winter seminars, Israel programs and nine unforgettable summer *machanot*.

My time in the movement mirrored changes in the broader world — from the height of *apartheid* to the freeing of Nelson Mandela; the oppression of the Soviet Union to the collapse of the Berlin Wall; peace between Israel and Egypt, the first Intifada and then the start of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

Habonim gave its members the insight and understanding to comprehend a changing world, allowing us to challenge convention and consider how to make the world a better place in our own right as individuals and society at large.

Habonim created an environment where lifelong friendships were fostered and many unforgettable, happy memories were etched into our minds. It was a privilege to be part of this unique youth movement which helped shape me and thousands of other *chaverim* into the people we are today.

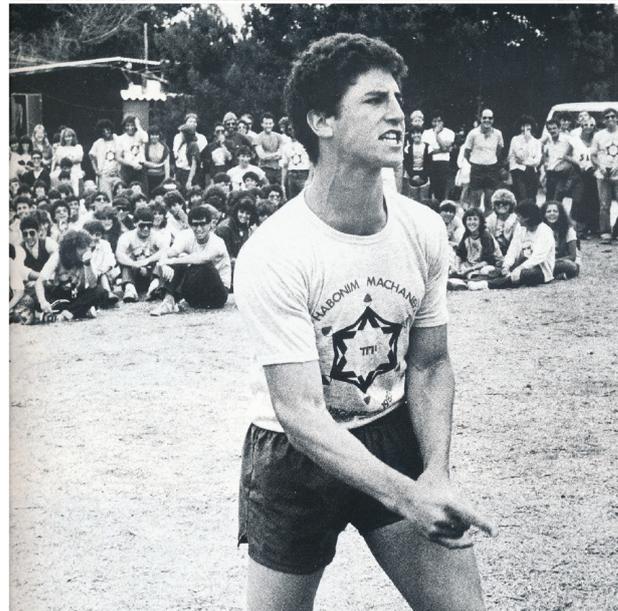
Habonim Dror Southern Africa leaves a rich legacy on which you can build. Habonim's strength has been its ability to adapt to the times. It has always been a youth movement which accepts differences and encourages debate but with steadfast pillars and values.

The world today is going through difficult times. Your role is to ensure Habonim remains relevant to the broader South African Jewish community and to encourage the youth to use the movement to carve out a positive world view and play meaningful roles in society now, and in the future.

# 80s



# 90s



# Gary Sussman

## 1991

Habonim Dror was the best MBA ever given and it was for free. Beyond being tasked with leading and managing people - who were all volunteers - I was forced to make decisions on a weekly basis. As humans, we love to procrastinate. At a young age I was forced to decide - based on intuition and consultation and most importantly goodwill. I made many mistakes, but always learnt. I learnt the importance of getting people to buy-in. I also think it honed my organisational skills and made a great multi-tasker. I use many of my learnings in my daily life. It also gave me enduring friendships and most importantly a strong set of values.

My message to the movement is that every generation has to chart its own course. Follow your intuition. Think differently.



*Gary Sussman among others*

# Caryn Schroder Tamari

## 1992

Habonim was and is the single greatest influence on my life and I feel very privileged to have been part of this Youth Movement.

My time in Habonim taught me to challenge, to question and most importantly to be a critical thinker.

Never see things as they are. Always look a little deeper. Always listen to opposing opinions. Working together with Betar and Bnei Akiva taught me there is not one way.

The value is in the difference.

It's your responsibility to challenge the status quo. Try and do it in the nicest way possible and don't be afraid of listening to good advice.

# Michael Foreman

## 1993

I think it's fair to say that Habo shaped not only my youth but the direction my life has taken. From arriving at the campsite as a *Shtil* for the 1st time until the last camp I attended as *Rosh Machaneh* before making *Aliya*, the majority of my youth seemed consumed by longing to get back to Onrus. The experiences, the friends and special bonds that were made are unrivalled and are forever. It moulded who we were as people and who I am today. It gave us direction and the ability to dream. Making *Aliya*, going to the army and living in Israel were all a fulfilment of those dreams. I have no doubt my Zionism, love and support for Israel and social values are rooted in my time in the movement.

As for the future, take advantage of every opportunity to attend *machaneh* and get involved, soak up the experience, create everlasting bonds and "Let the Sun Shine In"!

# Brett Caminsky

# 1994

Being in the movement, in 1994 can best be described as euphoric.

Being part a liberal youth movement as we celebrated South Africa making the transition into a post-apartheid free society was tremendously exciting. One of the key pillars of the movement of building a free society in SA had been realised and this coupled with the post-Oslo Accords and the left-wing government in Israel led by Yitzhak Rabin gave focus and purpose to a lot of the education of our year-round movement activities. Our senior leadership had a strong ideological foundation and the passion and enthusiasm of all our members was encouraging.

There was a lot to celebrate at the time, and the movement was flourishing.

We knew we were riding the very pinnacle of the wave of ideology that drove the entire movement. The work done by the generations of passionate chaverim before us had shaped the aims and ideals of the movement and it all culminated in the birth of the new South Africa. The movement had embraced pluralism as one of its key pillars and we were accommodating all streams of Jewish expression. We were strongly Zionist and it really felt as if the aims of the movement were being fulfilled. There was a strong movement towards Israel activities with Habonim chaverim attending *Machon*, *Shnat* and *Aliya* programmes. Our relationship with the Jewish community of Zimbabwe was extremely good and we had many *madrichim* and *chanichim* from there.

The movement was extremely vibrant and all our activities were well attended. Habonim Dror was the strongest of the 4 youth movements that were operational at the time and we were extremely proud of our achievements.

If we look back on the last almost 30 years, a lot of things may have evolved, but the need for a positive Jewish and Zionist framework has not changed. There is lots to do to ensure a positive, flourishing society both in SA and Israel. To the current leadership and members of the movement I commend the environment and the positive framework that allows young Jewish children to express themselves.

***Aleh Ve'Hagshem***

# Ivan Foreman

## 1995-1996

I started at Habonim Dror as a Garinim *chanich* in Durban in the 1970's. My father attended Habonim in his youth and my grandfather actually met my grandmother at the first Young Israel camp in KwaZulu-Natal at Warner Beach by Kingsburgh in 1929. My mother was also heavily involved in WIZO Durban and pushed us to take an active part in Habonim. My brother Michael was also very involved in Habonim and was the *Mazkir* in 1993. I attended weekly meetings on Sundays at the Habonim Bayit in Silverton Road in Durban. I attended many *Mini Machanot* and went to my first camp in Onrus in 1987 in *Amelim*. I was also a *madrich* in Durban, *Bakoach* of Durban and sat on the *Va'ad Machaneh* for a number of years before becoming the *Mazkir Klali* in 1995 & 1996. Coming from Durban with a pretty small Jewish Community, Habonim was a way to meet other Jewish Youth from the rest of South Africa and Zimbabwe and camp for me opened up a whole new group of friends, many of who are still some of my closest friends today.

When I took responsibility for the movement in 1995 there was so much going on at the time. The ANC had just become the main party in South Africa for the first time and Nelson Mandela was trying his best to mend the bridges after 27 years in prison but also hold off the hardliners in the ANC who wanted retribution for all their years of suffering. In Israel, Yitzhak Rabin was Prime Minister and pushing hard with his peace agenda with Palestinians which ultimately resulted in his assassination at the hands of a right-wing Jewish zealot in November 1995. The 3 pillars of Judaism, Socialism (Social Action) & Zionism were all under constant debate. There were a number of folk who wanted the movement to ditch Zionism as a pillar all together and focus our ideology around social action in South Africa. That led to some interesting discussions with some of the *Shlichim* who, if I remember correctly, actually walked out when the debates got particularly intense. When it comes to Judaism - pluralism was the best way to describe the movement's attitude and we did our best to welcome all types of Jews into the movement and ensure we had Kosher food & kept Shabbat at all movement functions in order not to exclude a small minority of religious members. At the time in SA and especially Johannesburg there was a big drive to religion and Bnei Akiva membership & camp numbers were doing very well.

The movement was also going through a very difficult financial period as the Jewish Agency / Zionist Federation stopped a lot of the funding which was available in the past. This resulted in a much smaller amount of *shlichim* being able to come to SA. As the 1994 camp was pretty small, we almost ran out of money to pay salaries for our 3 part time secretaries until money came in for camp fees in November 1995. Many discussions took place with the Zionist Fed and leadership about the possibility of selling the campsite and thankfully in the end we agreed not to and rather decided to build on the site and use the campsite to help generate more income for the movement. It was during this period that we sold the Orange Grove *Bayit* where I was living at the time with a few other *bogrim*.

We also sold the Parkview *Bayit* and bought the new Highlands North Bayit which coincided with the arrival of the Lotzof family in Johannesburg. We also ran a successful 65th Anniversary event with the help and support of the *Manhig*, Theo Kopenhager, and a very active parents committee. I also initiated the first Habonim Southern Africa website as a way to promote *machaneh* and keep the members updated about future events. There was no social media in those days so having at least a website was a pretty big move. As the incoming *Mazkir* in 1995 I had very little idea of the job required to run the movement from an ideological perspective as well as ensuring we could keep afloat financially. Only in my second year in 1996 did I really feel I was able to make a major impact and help steer the movement in the right direction. My recommendation therefore was and still is for the *Mazkir/a* to always be a 2 year appointment however I understand this wasn't always possible. I left SA for Israel in January 1997 with a large group of chevra for Kibbutz Tzora, satisfied that the movement was in a very strong position both ideologically and financially.

My years in Habonim Dror were definitely some of the best of my life so far and the national seminars and camps at Onrus were no doubt my best holidays. The *hadracha* seminars and overall experience of being a *madrich* taught me how to be a leader and the importance of *dugma ishit* (personal example) which I use in my daily life as a business leader within my company. I made friends at the various seminars, camps & Israel tours who are still some of my closest friends today. My advice to any *chanichim* & *madrichim* today is to get even more involved and contribute to the movement as much as you can. The more to put in the more you will get out. If you don't like what the movement stands for then make an effort to change it and help develop it into a positive force for change. Habonim gives you a unique opportunity to make a difference with a group of likeminded people so embrace it, and have a lot of fun along the way!

***Aleh Ve'Hagshem***

# Brian Levin

# 1997

I was born in Welkom in the Free State. Although smaller than the rest of the country, at the time it was common for Jews to come from smaller centres (like Klerksdorp or cities in Zimbabwe). My introduction to Habo happened when *madrichim* would come to these small centres and run *peulot* for us. Lindi Rudnicki was one of the first *maddies* I met there. It was such a novelty for Jewish kids in small centres to engage in these *peulot*, *Gangeshlach* being a definitive highlight. My first *machaneh* was *Machaneh Chazon* when I was in *Amelim*. Back then, boys and girls were in different age groups. For a small kid from Welkom, where the Jewish community was only about 150 people, going to a *machaneh* with Jews from all over the world was mind-blowing. Although I wasn't completely committed, I came back every year after that. A few years passed, and I transitioned from *channie* to *maddie*, from *maddie* to *rosh*. Towards the end of '95, our *shaliach*, Colin Lotzof spoke to me about being *Mazkir*. I never aspired to this position, but one thing led to another and I took it on.

The 90s were marked by the intense ideological talks we had. This is, of course, indicative of the time. In South Africa, we had the transition from apartheid to democracy. In Israel, the *Kibbutz* movement was changing drastically - this also impacted people wanting to go on *Machon* or *Shnat*. People making *Aliya* weren't moving to *kibbutzim*. Everything was changing. Internally, the 'socialism' pillar of the movement was coming under scrutiny. At *Veida* in the early 90s, a gathering filled with very strong personalities, we adopted 'pluralistic Judaism'. This was also reflective of the community at the time, which saw much divide between religious and secular - and Habo needed to navigate these new community shifts. We also spoke about dropping Zionism as a pillar at *Veida*, not for any anti-Zionist reasons, but because there was a feeling that we now needed to focus our energies on building up the new South Africa (while Israel was already established, and the *Kibbutz* movement was changing structurally).

To this day, I am not sure why I was approached for *Mazkir*. But, I took a break between my studies and did it. I worked with Ivan, and grew a bond with the *Shlichim* and their families. They felt that I could do a good job. For multiple reasons, *machaneh* numbers were on the decline. Among them, the strong leaders at the time were making *Aliya*. Once I got my footing as *Mazkir*, however, we managed to see more positive trends. Habo was never shy to make anyone uncomfortable if something important needed to be said. Personally, it was an important milestone for my own leadership - hiring a train for *machaneh* costing R100 000 (at the time) was the most amount of money I had ever seen! I still have friends to this day from *Habonim*. Regardless of their current work positions and accomplishments - engaging in conversation with past *chaverim* is as if nothing has changed. When you've had those deep conversations with someone over a campfire, you build these long-lasting relationships.

For me, Habo was an escape. It is a place where you can just exist how you are. For a small town boy who was bullied and conscious about his weight, Habo gave me the space to figure out who I was. I loved how you could have any opinion, and even if people disagreed completely with it, they would still respect you. The level of confidence Habo gave me is magical, along with the friends who have shaped me forever.

I am now 47 with kids. So many things in life have changed my perspective since I was in Habo. But I see how insecure kids are today - I hope that Habonim still gives them the space to be comfortable in their own skin. Be honest with yourself, and spend time with the people who make you comfortable. Try to keep perspective - step back and realise the bigger picture when things are getting hard. Don't be afraid to reach out to the older generation for help. We have also had to learn during our time to gain perspective. We might not be familiar with your situations, but there are good lessons to be learnt. Learn these lessons, and don't reinvent the wheel. Focus on what is good, not what is bad, and use this 'good' as your foundation to build on. What you are teaching to *chanichim*, you are teaching for life. And when you are in a Habo space, be it a *machaneh* or a meeting...take a step back, take a mental picture of the moment, and don't take it for granted. It is the most magical time in your life.



*Va'ad Poel 1996: Colin Lotzof, Brian Levin, Ivan Foreman, Melissa Faigen, Lisa Dobrin*

# Anthea (Alpert) Kadman

# 1998

The year I was *Mazkira Klalit* was 1998, a year where there was a complete "brain drain" of *madrichim*. I was constantly challenged to revitalise the Johannesburg *Ken* while at the same time provide SA Jewish youth with an excellent reason to join or stay involved in Habonim. Highlights include working with enthusiastic *shlichim*, trips to country communities and knowing that Habonim really would rise from the ashes despite the depressing current numbers. *Machaneh Dor Chadash* did manage to lift the movement's spirit and hoped to be on the turning point of something I had grown up with a decade previously.

Today as I write this, I sit in Tel Aviv after making *Aliya* almost 23 years ago. What started as a spark of Zionism from my alma mater, Herzlia at age 15, became being a part of a way of life that guided and continues to guide me till today. Habonim gave me a place to be the best person I could be, engage in topics from the mundane to the extraordinary with friends from all the country, an alternative universe of possibilities. Even though my sons are part of the scouts movement, I feel like they will never know the movement the way all of you know it. Keep dreaming the dream, and know that you've made the right decision to be a part of Habonim Dror SA.

# Brett Steingo

# 1999

My time in Habonim Dror was decidedly untypical. Until the end of my first year of university I had never heard of the movement. Some friends I made at the University of Cape Town had attended as *channichim* and invited me to attend with them at the end of the year. Four of us were interviewed by Paul Schroder and while their interviews took a couple of minutes each, Paul and I ended up chatting for almost an hour. He was the first Jewish person that ever spoke to me about anti-racism and what can be done to promote it. At my former school we had a few activist Jewish families but I never discussed politics with them or got any real exposure to what their parents were involved in. Habonim was the first place where I really encountered young people engaging in political ideology and activism. This is what Habonim was for me – a sense of purpose, a sense that by learning, understanding, engaging and acting – that we could do something meaningful, both as individuals and as a team of like-minded individuals. I was an overly serious late/post-teen and the fun, the friends, the beach, the *machaneh* were all amazing – unforgettable – but secondary to me at the time. I was asked to take the mantle as *Mazkir* after only 3 years in the movement. I moved back to Johannesburg where there were two active *madrivot*. I got a 4-day handover and on my first meeting with the *Manhig*, he told me “the Kibbutz movement is dead, Habonim is dead, it should merge with the other youth movements”. I did not know what a *Manhig* was, or what he was meant to do, but we never met again. In my first Zionist Fed meeting they told me funding would be slashed to the lowest point in ten years and that my focus for the year should be on selling the campsite. I focused instead on re-establishing an intellectual and ideological core for the movement. Bnei Akiva was at its peak and The King David Schools had changed its constitution from “national-traditional” to “Orthodox Zionist”. Opposition to the Peres victory on the school campus was overt. We ended with the smallest, but most intense, (and, many *chanichim* and *madrivot* told me) memorable, *machaneh* in years.

I feel that following that tough year, Habonim *bogrim* really wrestled with the reality of the occupation, with the contradictions within and between pluralistic and cultural Judaism, with the fallout from the global Socialist experiments. Not, of course for the first time, but on a level far deeper than over the previous four or five years. This was the most important aspect of Habonim for me – wrestling with G-d (or the God Idea, or the Ideal), identity, reality and our place in the world.

So while today I am probably not a Zionist in the eyes of most past *bogrim*, while I am certainly not a Socialist and while my Jewish practice is somewhat inconsistent but diametrically opposed to the pseudo-orthodoxy practiced by the majority of South African Jews, I still have a very soft spot for Habonim. I love seeing and speaking to the young *madrivot* at Limmud. I wish for them that they savour the opportunity to grow and develop their thinking within this unique environment of *chevruta* between hundreds of hungry young minds wrestling with G-d, identity, reality and their place in the world. Develop your thinking, expand your knowledge, act courageously and have fun. The rest is commentary.



*1999 Machaneh Vaad: Daniel Hasson, David Reinhardt, Brett Steingo, Nirit Sumeruk*

2000



# David Reinhardt

## 2000

The turn of the century was turbulent for the movement, for South Africa and for Israel. The movement was coming to terms with how to define its social agenda in the context of a post-apartheid South Africa: some of the rallying cry of the social agenda had lost its attractiveness to potential *chanichim* as there was less of an obvious rallying point. In Israel, the Camp David accords were signed and our *machaneh* was named Salaam B'Olam in the spirit of optimism that briefly existed at the time. Within the Jewish community, Bnei Akiva had grown to be the dominant youth movement in South Africa over the prior few years. This was due to a broader *ba'al teshuva* movement for a community that felt under threat, tacit support from the Jewish schools and access to very generous donors. In very practical terms, this translated to a massive decline in engagement at Habo through the late 90's which in turn, left the movement almost bankrupt.

At the outset of the year 2000, we had two key focus areas: **(1)** keep the movement afloat through to Machaneh 2000 with a view to growing engagement by focusing on **(2)** ensuring there was regular activities in all *kenim* (weekly in Cape Town and Johannesburg with visits to Durban and Harare). Collectively, we felt this would grow the number of *chanichim* and community engagement again which would create a base to begin regrowth. In these aims we were largely successful, there was regular activity and the machaneh numbers for year end were sufficient to act as a growing base for the coming years. We changed some of the communal support functions around the movement, including asking Errol Anstey to take on the *manhig* role from Theo Kopenhager. We managed to pay the bills (without capitulating to pressure to sell the campsite!) and, supported by Errol's vision - begin sowing the seeds of using the campsite to generate meaningful funds (rather than a few bookings a year).

In the following years, the movement found meaningful social action campaigns to engage in and re-establish itself as an option for Jewish youth who want to engage in communal and Zionist activity that is not led by a religious agenda.

My message to Habonim is to embrace the opportunity. Time in Habonim is time where you're allowed to explore your own identity and how you want that to be a positive force for influencing yourself, your community and society at large. Learn about Israel, about South Africa, about Judaism, about society and about whether Wicks Stores really is haunted. Being 20 years beyond my active days in Habo, I can say there is no other time in your life where you will have the opportunity to learn, laugh, grow, try, fail and succeed at so many different things in such a short space of time with such a supportive group of people around you. George Bernard Shaw would have it that youth is wasted on the young. I would say that youth is wasted on those that don't spend time in youth movements.

# Terri Edmunds

# 2001

Habonim Dror was one of the greatest influences of my youth, shaping who I would become and the decisions I would make with my life. Habonim gave me roots and wings. Most importantly, it taught me to think critically and question everything. During my time in the movement from 1985 to 2002, I saw much change take place; changes in ideology, direction and standing. However, the one thing that always remained was the *chaverim* of the movement who believed in the future of Habonim and its role for the Jewish youth of South Africa as well as its ability to enact change in whatever we put our passion behind. My time as *Mazkira* was exciting and challenging. It was an honour serving the movement while we celebrated 70 years of Habonim Dror Southern Africa across the country. As the movement grew, we ended up with a larger camp than what had been expected. It was a privilege to be able to hand over a strong, developing movement to the upcoming leaders, securing a future for passionate *chanichim* and *madrachim* to rise up and fulfil their dreams of an enduring Jewish youth, a thriving Israel and a better South Africa.

*"The only conviction I embrace absolutely is this: whatever I believe, I may be wrong"* – Martha Beck. The power of Habonim has always been in the youth asking questions, having a dream of a better society and self, and empowering ourselves and our *chaverim* to fight for that change. Question everything. Question yourself, your leaders, your peers. The movement that helped build the State of Israel, that fought against *apartheid*, that raised generations of leaders, was made up of people who wanted to effect meaningful change and were always asking how and why. To the *chanichim* and future leaders of our movement, our country, and our community, it is a privilege to stand in the shoes of those who came before us, arm-in-arm with our *chaverim*, to feel the power of those beside you and behind you, to build a better society, a better you, a better future for those that will come after you.

*Aleh Ve'Hagshem*

# Joey Hasson

## 2002

I left Habonim Zimbabwe for *Machon* in Israel in 1998, and returned to join the Cape Town *Ken* in 1999. The 90's were a bright and a hopeful era to be 20 years old. The Berlin Wall had fallen, Nelson Mandela was President of a democratic South Africa, the Good Friday Agreement brought peace to Ireland and its loyalist North, and the Oslo Accords seemed to sketch a way out of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and music, was at its peak...

My years in Habonim are often remembered for the mass food-poisoning incident (1998), the smallest machaneh in numbers but not in spirit (1999), and the kitchen burning down the year I was *Mazkir Klali* and *Rosh Machaneh* (2002). My abiding memory of that time is the main mifkad (Kikar Rabin) covered in teary-eyed teenagers – images of mifkad eish seared into their memories – saying goodbye to friends at the end of camp as Pretenders' hit 'I'll stand by you' blares from the speakers.

There were no smartphones, no Instagram and no Twitter. There were great friendships, struggles of becoming a leader and certainly long nights spent in ideological debate about what direction the movement should take. As new leaders there was a sense that something big and important had been handed down to us, although we weren't quite sure what to do with it. In interpreting Habonim's socialist pillar, we came up with 'Service to Humanity' – an idea which I feel still holds up, even if the name is now gone. Those were special years for me because they embody my first experiences of what the anthropologist Victor Turner called *communitas* – a feeling of togetherness, equality and belonging. Now in my 40s, I can see that time with clarity and with pride. And I know it's a rare and difficult thing to build. Though some of my ideas have (I hope) matured, I still see an earnestness and a modesty in grappling with why the world was as unjust as it was, and how people coming together could make it otherwise.

A message to today's movement: Looking at the world as it is, it is certainly an anxious and difficult time to be young. The world you are inheriting is more unequal, less stable and imperilled by the actions of the older generations. Young people are having to make decisions older leaders are either too afraid to make, or too self-interested to make. But look around, young people are doing this. They know there is another way. So I would say to you, don't take too much unsolicited advice for oldies like us. Don't look backwards. Look forwards and be true to your principles and to yourselves. Dare to know, dare to tread the unpopular path. Being in Habonim changed the course my life without a doubt. The movement posed a set of questions which let me see community, identity and action in terms which made sense for me. My answer was to seek a world that was socially and economically more just, more human. My hope is that your time in the movement will similarly light a path for you that is meaningful.

# **Doron Isaacs**

# **2003**

Habonim was the formative experience of my life — the only part that felt somehow pure and unfaltering, uninhibited by presumed wisdom! It was wonderful in the literal sense, immersive, a total world that we found, made and were remade by — truly.

Two messages to the Bogrim of today: The first is to work in the movement as hard as any young person is capable, longer and with more intensity than you've imagined possible — you will be repaid 100 times over! The second is to continue to take every opportunity, or make new ones, to connect directly with Black young people in South Africa and with Palestinian young people in Israel and the Occupied Territories, them no different from you, dreaming dreams, but weighed down by poverty or occupation, your partners to build a new empathy and solidarity we all need. Tomorrow can still be better than today and only you can lead us there!

*Aleh Ve'Hagshem*



*Doron Isaacs 2003*

# Wayne Sussman 2004-2005

Habonim Dror taught me simultaneously to always be young at heart and to grow up quickly and take responsibility. Both are beautiful things.

Habonim also gave me the compass to guide me as an individual, a family man, a community member, a citizen. It gave me the values to look at building relationships in South Africa, Israel and the world.

You stand on the shoulders of giants. Humble folk who also stood on the shoulders of giants who walked before them on Onrus, on Nahoon, on Leaches Bay. Ordinary folk who made their mark on Kfar Blum, Cape Town, Tuval, Toronto, Yizreel, New York, Tzora and next to the Thames. The world has changed a lot since 1930, the movement has had to adapt to these changes. However, the essence of the movement remains the same. Continue to be close to nature and simple in your ways, continue to have energy and urgency, continue to work hard, make decisions and take responsibility. A strong, vital Habonim is a gift to the community and the country.



*Wayne Sussman 2005*

# Gilad Isaacs 2006

My decade and half in Habonim was the formative experience of my life. It taught me to think, care, act and question. From weekly meetings in Durban as a young *Garinim channie*, to thirteen *machanot*, to my time as *Mazkir*, Habonim shaped my youth and young adulthood. What I learned about the world and myself set me on my path as a social justice activist, work I continue today. I remember with equal fondness the protest I led as a *Sayarim channie* against the closure of the *Shtilim* glades, the skits in full drag and carefree dancing, and the long conversations about struggles for freedom. Such is the magic of that time, a seamless merging of the educational, ethical, political, comical, fanciful, and bizarre. We lived and breathed it. We shaped it. It changed us. We loved it.

My message to the movement is to be kind. Be guided by an instinct to stand in solidarity with the oppressed and view the claims of the powerful with scepticism. Be brave. Don't let any other authority deter you from the moral clarity that is needed to guide your steps in the fraught politics of our time.



*Gilad Isaacs and Mikael Hanan 2006*

# Daniel Mackintosh

# 2007

The movement gave me an unshakeable faith in the agency and capacity of young people. It taught me that just because we were 20 years old, did not mean we couldn't do a heck of a good job building an ideological organisation, educating young people, and running *machanot*.

When I was Mazkir in 2007, we were riding a wave. We just had a machaneh of over 1000 people, a winter camp of 160 *chanichim and madrichim*, *Bogrim* 1 seminar and a *Bogrim* tour to Israel planned for Jan 2008 (where we had a chance to see the Occupation in the West Bank for 3 days). The movement was a place of energy and possibility, conversation, sweat, learning and developing new young leaders. We also asked hard questions about our role as young white people, how we could seek to be allies in making South Africa a more equal place (rather than just giving tzedakah) and what it meant to be connected to Israel while supporting Palestinian human rights. On the downside, it was also a place that I did not feel comfortable to come out as bisexual, even though, on paper, we were all committed to LGBTQ+ rights - I have heard that the Habo of 2022 is much more inclusive of a variety of sexualities and genders.

Over everything, the movement was a moment to build something with people I cared deeply about, because, as I learnt later in life, 'if I can't dance, then I don't want to be part of your revolution' (a summary of what Emma Goldman, the Jewish anarchist and writer of the 20th century, said).

My message to Habonim today is that while you are in the movement, treasure the relationships you are creating together. Take the time to lift up one another's leadership and make an effort to draw in those young people on the fringes - they are often the most talented.

And when you leave Habonim, don't let debating and thinking about the world as it should be confined to your youth. I learnt to dream around the campfire at Habonim. Five years after I left the movement, I learnt the method of community organising, a set of tools to bring a little of the world as it should be into the world as it is, but, without the movement teaching me the skill of idealism, I would have become cynical and started to lust after status and material objects.

# Adam Sack 2008

My time in the movement was an absolutely magical period of my life. Those were my formative years where my values were shaped and where I grew into the person I am today. It was a time where I formed unbelievable friendships - outside of my wife and family, these are the top relationships I have, still to this day. Habonim was a place of unbound imagination, (anything and everything was possible) creativity, incredible fun and learning. It gave me the opportunity to express myself fully, to take on enormous responsibility and build invaluable skills. What stood out to me was how I was surrounded by so many intelligent and talented people who wanted to improve Habonim and always strive to take it to another level. It was always a place of counter-culture that offered a different perspective on important issues and ideology. Habonim always felt like it was progressively ahead of the Jewish community in how it saw Israel, Judaism and the world.



*Adam Sack 2008*

# Daniel Linde

# 2009

I was fortunate to be an active member of Habonim Dror Southern Africa from 2001, then as a *Sollelim chanich*, to 2009, when I had the privilege of serving as *Mazkir Klali*.

Habonim was an exciting and progressive political home. It provided the space for us to ask questions and explore our identities freely, and to participate in debates about the world around us and the communities we participated in.

It was the only space in South Africa where we could be passionate about Israel yet still centre in our politics a condemnation of the occupation. We were equally determined to play some small part in organising against social inequality inside South Africa. We were committed to ideals and, sometimes in those years, dealt with public backlashes for our refusal to budge from those.

While we were immensely serious about our work, and the impact it could have on young Jewish people in the country, we also experienced the movement as its own brand of fun. It was a fun built on personal connections. Our televisions and cell phones were absent – our socialising was present and inter-personal, constructed around firesides and in the discussions that took place after an impactful peulah.

The movement was filled with laughter; That laughter could be sparked by the silliest skits, or it could itself be political – the type of laughter that Hannah Arendt considered a tool for intellectual development and expression.

At a personal level, my time in the movement was life changing. It shaped my friendship circles, deeply affected my world view and thought processes, and impacted my academic and career paths. I do not take for granted the great fortune I had in being a small part of it, and in being surrounded by the most incredibly inspiring and dedicated chevre.

I wish you all the best in taking the movement forward, with all the unique challenges you face as young leaders in the South African Jewish community in 2022 and beyond. No doubt the Covid years have compounded those challenges, but every challenge carries its own opportunities; yours is to build the movement around your own vision and drawing on the best of its traditions and history. Treasure your time in the movement, and make the most of the opportunities it provides both for personal growth and development, and for community building and progressive education.

# Kayda Podgers

# 2010 - S'gan Mazkir Klalit

I started attending Habonim events as an *Amelim channie* in 2003, and fell in love. To me, Habonim wasn't just a *machaneh* at the end of the year, it was a community of passionate and empowered individuals with the vision of making the world a better place. And the campsite wasn't just a location for the movement's events, it quickly evolved into a home for thousands of youth to come together to learn, challenge, grow, inspire and aspire to create change. I am yet to see the magic created on that campsite replicated in any other environment. And it was that magic that inspired me to become a movement worker in 2010, working intently to create a space where our *chanichim* could be themselves but also to create a space where questions, critical thinking and discussion were what allowed us to imagine a different vision for the future. HDSA was instrumental in shaping who I am and how my life played out all these years later.

My wish for the movement today is to remember that the movement isn't the movement without the people in it, so remember to...

Nurture your passion - for every event, for every *channie*, for every social justice issue that matters to you - and channel it to create meaningful change.

Challenge each other, but also listen to each other intentionally to hear what you can learn.

Be authentic - this is how you can truly inspire.

Embrace differences - in opinion, in lifestyle, in ways of thinking - this is what empowers us to become visionaries.

And most importantly - savour every piece of the magic and every opportunity to connect. HDSA will always be a home.

# 2010-2020



# Ross Engers

# 2011

I was a latecomer to Habonim Dror. I set foot on the campsite for the first time in Shomrim, and felt immediate regret that I had missed years of *machaneh*. Perhaps trying to make up for lost time, I attended every Habo event from then on - every Friday night meeting, every *Mini Machaneh*. I stuck around for as long as I could, eventually moving to Johannesburg to lead the movement as *Mazkir* alongside five of my chaverim. My time in Habonim taught me how to think critically; how to be silly; how to build real, long-term community; and how to commit to something much larger than myself. Serving as *Mazkir* in 2011 was both daunting and an incredible privilege. The six of us took very seriously the responsibility of leading the movement with progressive values. There was sometimes a tension between our ideological positions on Israel, and our ability to keep the movement financially healthy. We would often ask ourselves "Can we keep growing our membership and still maintain a counterculture?" It was an honour to work alongside dedicated chaverim that could answer, unequivocally, yes.

It is so easy to dismiss as cliché, but you really won't appreciate the full extent of your time in the movement until you are looking back on it, wishing you were still in it.

The movement is a magical place where idealism, creativity, silliness, passion, and conviction come together like nowhere else I have experienced. Give it all the time you can, no one regrets too much time in Habonim - there is simply no such thing.



*Ross Engers 2011*

# Gabi Altamiramo

# 2012

For me the movement was so defining for what I could be & how far you can go if you put your mind to it. It taught me about passion, friendship & how to have genuine fun while making an absolute fool of yourself.

We were beyond our years. To think back now on what we achieved at 22 years & younger is inspiring. The movement gave me a space to be unapologetically myself. It gave me the confidence of opinion and taught me how to formulate and argue one, all while devoting my spare time to giving back, educating and creating a safe fun place for kids.

My message to the current leadership is to lean on the past & believe in what your role in the future could be. You have a magical space & movement that means so many different things to so many people. Remember to not always take yourself so seriously & just have fun creating incredible memories.



# Roxanne Joseph

# 2013

My time as first a *chanicha* and then bogeret of the movement shaped me into someone who doesn't just accept things at face value, who asks questions and tries to stand up for the things I believe in. I learnt about friendship, bravery, camaraderie, confidence, compassion and kindness from my *madrichim* and peers, and will forever be grateful for everything they and the movement gave me. From summers at Onrus to Friday nights at the *bayit*, and everything in between, Habo is also where I got to be silly, goofy, creative and have fun while doing it. It will always be one of the most important and best experiences of my life.

To the *chanichim* and *bogrim* of 2022, as well as all those who came before and those who are yet to experience the magic of the movement, give and take everything you can from your time with Habo. Soak it all in, but don't forget to take a moment to stop and reflect on it all. There truly isn't anything else like it out there. Laugh, cry, learn, teach, don't take yourself too seriously, engage in discussions about all kinds of topics and open yourself up to a feeling that will stay with you long after you move on. To all of the current *chaverim*, whether you experience a weekend-long seminar, go to every Friday night meeting on offer, represent the movement at community events or spend a summer at *machaneh*, you're the future. Not only of knowledgeable, fiercely passionate left-wing Jewish and Zionist leaders, but also of South Africa and the rest of the world. Always remember who you are, because you'll carry a piece of the movement with you wherever you go.

***Aleh Ve'Hagshem***

Rise up and fulfil.

# Ilan Price

# 2014

Habo was an immeasurably special place, and was formative for me across every dimension. I struggle to put my experiences and feelings about my time in the movement into words, much less a few paragraphs.

On an ideological front, the movement was there to build social consciousness, solidarity, and activist spirit in our chaverim, to inspire values of social justice and equality. Our role was to educate, champion, and role-model these values in the context of our increasingly right-wing, conservative community. Despite my feelings that our movement's activist energies should be devoted at least as much to South Africa, it was our progressive politics on Israel which ended up dictating the most inspiring (or to many in the community, controversial) times of 2014. We were proactive on this front that year, campaigning and educating within community structures on the moral costs of the occupation and its incompatibility with democracy in Israel. And we responded with moral clarity to a war which caused immense human suffering. It was incredibly inspiring to see the movement stand up for these values even in the face of threats, social and financial pressure. I recall with huge pride the energy, resilience, determination, intellectual engagement, and sense of purpose recounted by our chaverim at those times.

And yet while we took the movement seriously, the movement was equally special for all the ways in which it was extremely 'unserious.' Silly games, hilarious skits, outrageous dancing, some rather risqué humour - we were all so much freer within Habo than without. Most of all, Habo built deep bonds of kin and friendship which for me and many others will persist our whole lives, and for which I could not be more grateful.

Habo's magic is that it is at once an intellectual, ideological hub; and a home for carefree fun, laughter, and friendship. Without both, the movement could not sustain the necessary energy and commitment of its chaverim, and motivate the right people to take up its leadership. So treasure and protect this unique character always.

There will be times when you feel you must take a stand within the community and act or speak for what is right and just. Trust yourselves and your principles despite the potential disinterest or even anger with which you think it may be received.

And if you take only two things from your time in the movement, let them be the lifelong friendships and the principle of *dugma ishit*.

# Micaela Browde

# 2015

It feels almost impossible to put down in a few words what Habonim is to me. It feels to me like one of those games where you are asked to sum yourself up in three words. How is it possible? How can one summarise one's essence into something so brief? It isn't really possible, but it's worth a try. I am the third generation of Browdes to deeply connect to and feel intrinsically a part of Habonim. My grandfather, Jules Browde, was one of the South African movement's very first '*chanichim*'. He went on to serve as Manhig for twenty years. Habonim and its values were core to who he was, and I like to believe that he was core to Habonim. My uncles and dad were *chanichim* and *madrachim*; members of what we know as the VM and the VP. My mother, too, was a member of the movement in Harare, Zimbabwe. And so to love and feel connected to Habonim felt to be almost inherent. Biological, if you will.

When I reflect on what stands out to me most about my time in the movement, I separate it into two periods: the first as a *chanichah* and a junior *madricha*, and the second as my time in the Ken, on the Hanhaggah and ultimately as *Mazkira*.

As a *chanichah* and junior *madricha* Habonim was a space that challenged me and in which I felt safe to challenge. Coming from a school where challenging any aspect of religion or Zionism was not only frowned upon but actively discouraged, this was life-changing. And I don't use that term flippantly. I am who I am because of that space that Habonim provided. It moulded my path; it shaped my thinking. And, of course, it was also the root of unbreakable friendships and unshakable memories – the most fun anyone could ever have.

As a member of the various leadership teams, Habonim taught me about what it meant to be a person in the world. As *Rosh Ken* in 2014, I learned how to really work in a team. I valued the guidance and inspiration of that year's Mazkirut and I took very seriously the commitment I had made to the Johannesburg based chevre. As *Mazkira*, I had to make some difficult decisions. My predecessors had been some of the most controversial in recent history and I had to really think about what the movement needed. I had to balance my personal beliefs about the continued illegal occupation of Palestinian land with the movement's desperate need for money in order to survive. I had to learn to have strength in my convictions, to be able to stand up to a community of people who are wanting to see you fail, and to find a way to compromise without losing sight of my or the movement's truth.

In the last seven years, since my 'retirement', I have felt Habonim every single day – in the work that I do; in the friendships I carry with me; in the way in which I see and critique and understand the world. I am eternally grateful for Habonim, for its chaverim and for its legacy in my life. To the leaders of 2022 and beyond; to those who have kept the movement alive through the hellish years of the pandemic; to the *chanichim* and *madrachim* who are finally making their way home – I feel so excited for you. The challenges you will face are aplenty. Not only are you rebuilding after two lost years, but you are working within an increasingly right-wing community. Your competitors are strong, and it may sometimes feel like you're losing the battle. Do not admit defeat. You have passion and brains and strength beyond your years. You also have the support of an unwaveringly loving community. Value this time and these opportunities for growth and renewal.

I look so forward to watching the movement grow stronger and stronger.

***Aleh Ve'Hagshem***

# Kelly Brook 2016

As a little *Shtilim chanicha*, getting on the train and arriving to the most beautiful place on earth, little did I know that this decision would ultimately path the road to my life today. 12 years of *machanot*, *bogrim seminars*, *Grahamstown jols*, trips to Israel and around South Africa, the best gap year a girl could ask for and friendships to last a lifetime. Habonim made me the fun, loving leader, and friend and taught me all the life lessons I treasure today. It gave me a love for camping, Israel, taught me to practise Judaism that worked for me and helped me believe in a better world and future.

If there is something I learnt from Habo, that's how to have a good time. If you have a few friends, a guitar, a little bit of a music and a place to dance then the world is your oyster. Let Habo teach you to smile, be the person you want to be and do things to make the memories you will remember forever.



# David Schwartz

# 2017

Over my 13 years in the movement, the movement experienced a lot of changes - number of *chanichim* from year to year, political leanings, balancing *kef* (fun) with ideological seriousness, as well of course the ever changing members who make up the *bogrim* body. In my university years, as well as my two years I spent on the *Mazkirut* as well as being *Rosh Machaneh* 2017, the movement played a very central role in the lives of many *bogrim*, as well as was a foundational part of the identity of many *chanichim*. From dilemmas at university of how to explain Habonim to non-Jewish friends, to *chanichim* changing their Facebook names to include their *shichvah* name, involvement in Habonim was deeply a part of a movement chaver's identity and who they were, not just a club or on-going series of events that they attended. Although the movement never managed to establish weekly / frequent peulot for *chanichim*, it never failed to try to be a relevant part of *chanichim's* lives. In my later years in the movement, 2015-2017, the movement managed to reconnect to the idea of *Hagshama*, of what it means to be a Zionist, Socialist-inclined Jew, and started to succeed in directing its members to a path of *Aliya* that includes building a life of bettering Israeli society. Which ultimately also led me to making *Aliya*, to join Dror Israel and leading in *Hanoar Haoved VeHalomed* - Habonim's sister movement in Israel.

My message to the movement today is that firstly, the movement is far more important than I think you can ever truly appreciate while you're in it. The monumental impact that *hadracha* has on the lives of Jewish youth who are a part of the movement is so crucially important to the makeup of the South African Jewish community and Israeli society. Secondly, the foundational questions that have always occupied the time of movement members - how to grow the movement; how to be a regular, relevant and frequent part of *chanichim's* lives; how to educate movement members to a life of *Hagshama*; and how to create a safe and incredibly fun environment for Jewish youth in the diaspora - are all questions that should always plague the movement's *madrichim* and leaders. Never be discouraged by the feeling of facing the same questions all the time, that feel like you don't have the ability to solve them once and for all. Those are the fundamental questions of what is Habonim, and are meant to be answered time and time again by each generation of movement *madrichim*. And just like you will manage to answer them for your *chanichim*, they too will answer those same questions for their *chanichim*.

*Aleh Ve'Hagshem*

# Jess Levitt 2018

I sat on the *Mazkirut* for two years - in 2017 as *S'ganit Mazkira*, and 2018 as *Mazkira Klalit*. My time in the movement is something I look back on with a sense of pride and gratitude. Habo has always been a space where I felt motivated to better myself and try my best to better the community around me. It was always a space that I felt accepted, challenged and where I was pushed to expand my limits of intellect, creativity and skills. The skills I gained from my time on the *Mazkirut*, whether those be practical skills such as how to run meetings, plan seminars, create budgets or personal skills such as how I interact with people, how to work with others and most importantly, skills in leadership, are still very much held closely in what I do today in my personal and professional life. Habo could also be a challenging space at times - socially and politically, but again, there was always space to grow and expand. I think the movement is important to the growth of any chaver lucky enough to experience its magic.

I have been following HDSA quite closely since the start of COVID-19, worried about how things would go and how the leadership would recuperate - all I can say is that I am blown away by the hard work, passion and determination by today's *bogrim*. You are *bogrim* who has very little experience in leadership, yet with powerful and strong memories of the Habo magic you received as *chanichim* and very young *bogrim*. Watching you all channel this into your leadership styles and rebuild the movement with such a strong foundation is quite awe-inspiring. I am very proud to have led some of you as your *madricha*, and I am proud to watch you help the movement soar to new heights.



# Daniel Sussman

# 2019

It is hard to surmise a movement era to only one theme. But – if forced to do so, I think my era in the movement was defined by the relationship between Habonim Dror and the South African Jewish community. At a core level – we strongly believed that Habonim Dror taught a fantastic value system. A value system that produces good people who care for the world around them, a system which empowers youth and one which creates leaders. Although much has changed through our 90 year history, these values have been universal. Key to this value system, as has always been true of the youth movement, was rebellion and counter-culture. But to actively shape the youth and community around us meant, at times, pushing the status quo. Often, we saw ourselves as a communal counter-balance. To keep the community an open, tolerant space for all Jews – Habonim Dror met pushes towards religious conservatism, dogmatic political stances and other forms of systematic racism, sexism and discrimination in our community with a push toward open-mindedness and tolerance. When the community pushed, we pulled. The topic was less important than the idea that the community should remain open & inclusive. Our inspiration came from the burden of this custodianship. If not us – who? And without us – how many more would seek rather to have no connection to the Jewish people, than the narrow choice they would be left with.

I was often asked why I was (and am) so passionate about Habonim. For some Habonim is no more than a summer camp. A place to escape during December and forget about during the rest of the year. Perhaps. For me the answer was much more. In a sentence, for me the beauty and value of Habonim is that Habonim is not the real world. At Habonim, you the youth are allowed to be free, to be passionate and to challenge yourselves. From the young *Shtilim* chanich who finds their independence, to the Sayarim chanicha who leaves machaneh with a will to better their community, to the madrich who deeply believes their work at Habonim is creating a better world. Everyone grows at Habonim. No doubt it is the dreamers - those that have tasted what a different reality could look like - you the *chaverim* of Habonim, who will change the world. You are the next generation of our community, of South Africa and of Israel. Every conversation, thought, challenge and lesson at Habonim will determine how we chose to shape that generation.

Habonim is wherever and whenever the *chaverim* of Habonim chooses it to be. So I encourage you. Choose it, every time it presents itself. You will only be better for it.



**2020 and Above**

# Nina Reitenberg

# 2020

Having come off of an incredibly successful *machaneh* in 2019, I had this amazing feeling of responsibility and excitement over the movement I was about to inherit. That moment for me came on the last night of camp when I stood on the beach giving my address as the incoming *Mazkira*. Chanichim were already crying, consoling their long-distance friends and promising each other to come on machaneh the following year. As I watched the last of the fires burn away, I realised that I was about to be responsible for something that meant a great deal to a lot of people.

After an inspiring and motivating few weeks on the campsite, I returned to Joburg alongside my Co-Mazkira, Amber Gordon, to begin feverishly planning for the year ahead. We threw ourselves into preparations - Shorashim, *Mini Machanot*, a South African leadership tour and a myriad of other exciting projects. I also threw myself into campaigning and marketing the 90th birthday of Habonim Dror Southern Africa. It was, and still is, a huge honour to have been *Mazkira* in the year in which the movement I love and care so deeply for, reached such a monumental milestone. And of course, there was a lot of excitement around HABO 2020 and HUG (Habonim Ultimate Gathering) which was taking place in October that year.

However, in the matter of what felt like a few days, our lives and the movement's future did a complete 180 degree turn. What started out as a joke and something that was only happening in China became a very scary and confusing period for the leadership of the movement. The same year that started out with such momentum and excitement quickly descended into something nobody could have predicted or prepared for. We bought a premium Zoom subscription, and like the rest of the world, retreated online. Friday Night Meetings became nights on the couch huddling one's laptop and plans of a record-breaking Shorashim turnout were dashed.

Amber Gordon and I spent the rest of the year working our hardest to make the best out of a bad situation and ensuring that our *chanichim* and *madrachim* still felt connected to the movement, albeit from a distance. We spent a lot of time consulting *ex-Mazkirim*, doctors, and community leadership on how to run events in the safest and most responsible manner possible. However, it became increasingly difficult to come up with practical solutions as the question of *machaneh* loomed. Despite trying our best to pull off the show stopping camp we all know and love, there was no practical way to do so in a way that kept our chaverim safe and healthy. For the first time in the Onrus era, there was no return to the Onrus campsite for Machaneh that December.

Looking back, 2020 was an incredibly difficult year for Amber and myself. Despite obstacles being thrown our way at every turn and immense feelings of helplessness, I certainly learned a lot from my time leading a movement through a global pandemic. The most meaningful takeaway for me was that the power of the youth and therefore the concept of the movement is able to live (and thrive) in any conditions. Whether it is the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, *apartheid* or Covid-19, we can all agree that the movement is a living, breathing thing that transcends the environment around it.

***Aleh Ve'Hagshem!***

# Aaron Sher

# 2021

Habonim Dror always held a large place in my life whether I was a young *chanich* forever looking forward to going on *machaneh* or a *madrich* and leader helping give the next generation of *chanichimot* the magic I enjoyed. The part I think I will remember the most is becoming a leader over the years while I was at university. When I came back from Shnat I was welcomed into a loving and accepting movement by my fellow bogrimot. After immersing myself in the movement back home for a time I was encouraged to become a *rosh* for *Machaneh*. Prior to this I had not taken on any leadership roles throughout my life and while on the one hand being a *rosh* was something I was planning on doing, on the other I still felt surprised. Taking on this position was a huge turning point not only in Habo but also in my life. I went on to be a leader for years in Habonim and eventually as *Mazkir Klali* and *Rosh Machaneh*. Although it was during Covid and the *machaneh* we were planning could not go ahead, being a leader in the movement during that time was difficult but necessary. The lessons I learned during my time in Habonim will stay with me forever and I never have to try too hard to apply them to everything in life.

This year the movement is finally coming out of an incredibly difficult period after the pandemic. The current movement (its leadership and every one of its members) have clearly been working as hard as they can to bring Habo back into a thriving space that we all know it can be. These things won't happen overnight and it will take time to get to a place where the movement belongs. Your work is not going unnoticed and every leader before you is incredibly proud of what you have and will achieve in the near future.



# Aaron Kruss Van Der Heever

# 2022

It is with supreme grace and privilege that I get to contribute to this project as the *Mazkir Klali*. Privilege is one of the words I would use to best describe my time in Habonim. In no other space in my community, would I be able to be so privileged to learn, grow, and meet new friends- and in time be able to facilitate that exact process for hundreds of young Jews. The fulfilment gained from the feeling of leaving your mark on a *chanich* is an intangible which I plan to pursue for the rest of my days.

Irrespective of the unprecedented challenges faced in our time in the movement, we should be hungrier than ever to push harder to ensure that every Jewish child gets an opportunity to spend time in the Habonim incubator of excellence. Our style and content of education as well as our nurturing attitudes make our *machanot* the premier environment for the cultivation of future leadership for our community, Country and world in its entirety.

My ability to lead, delegate and be confident in self and decision was unlocked by Habonim- and I have no doubts that Habonim helps unlock and bring to the forefront each of our chaverim's special and most blessed qualities.

When it eventually comes time to look back at my time in the movement as opposed to forward, I can with complete surety say that those moments will be ones that stood out in my life as a whole.

We have either all had, or are all on our way to having the juncture of realisation of just how much Habonim has had an effect on our lives. Having lost 2 years as either a *madrach* or *chanich*, we should be grateful for the shaping years we've had in the movement and use every remaining second to look forward to ensuring that we give back to an organisation which has benefitted us so much.

Our main focus now should be committing to the number one thing which underpins our education and performance of our ideology- creating deep, penetrating and long-lasting personal relationships with our *channies*. Without focused, engaged and nourished learners, there can be no learning.

Habonim has historically created *channies*, who go on to be *maddies* with a shared mindset "I would like to give to my *channies*, what my *maddies* gave to me". Let us be fearless in ensuring that this cycle is not broken!

A Luta Continua- The struggle continues.

I thank you all for your commitment, proactivity, bravery, loyalty and pride in your contributions to the Habonim Dror Southern Africa. None of our progress this year could be achieved without the hard work of each and every one of you. Our "Homecoming" *machaneh* will be one that once again cements the importance of the space that we provide, as well as begin to put all of our *chaverim* onto the track to becoming well-rounded, principled, grounded individuals - part of their education which is often omitted by schools or other institutions.

In the spirit of the fading Southern African spirit and legacy on Habonim (which I am certain is being expertly honoured in this very booklet), I would like to end with an addition to the usual Habonim signing off.

*A Luta Continua*- The struggle continues.

***Aleh Ve'Hagshem***

## Mira Rudnick (incoming Mazkira Klalit)

# 2023

Habonim Dror Southern Africa has been a massive part of my life for some time now. I started coming to camp when I was in *Amelim*, and that *machaneh* changed my life in so many ways. One of the most formative experiences I ever had in my life took place that *machaneh* during a peulah in the *Amelim* cheder ochel: Camp was coming to an end and we were in one of the last peulot centered around identity formation. As the trigger, we needed to build these little blocks out of cardboard and decorate them with symbols, words and ideas we felt were fundamental to our identity. To guide us, the madrich running the peulah read out some examples, "values, religion, interests, sexuality, gender, family" and so on. They all seemed sensible and obvious until this *maddie* read out 'Habo' as the last example. I remember being stunned by this. How could my summer camp be comparable to my family, gender or religion in the formation of my identity? I have been here for three weeks, how could this be a part of my identity already? I refused to see this as a legitimate suggestion but in my attempt to dismantle what I thought to be a ridiculous suggestion, I stumbled upon a seminal moment of realisation in my life. The most magical moment on that *machaneh*, and maybe in my life, was the moment I comprehended that Habonim was something that could take up space in my identity. The moment I finally realised how much bigger Habonim was than just my summer camp. The moment I finally realised that I had something so precious and powerful to help build me as a person. I didn't understand exactly why or how, but I knew as soon as my maddie said it, that Habonim was more central to my identity than I had ever imagined, I just needed to hear it out loud from someone else.

That was the moment that kept me going back to camp until it was finally my turn to be the maddie reading out examples in a *chadar ochel*. Before being a *madricha*, I thought I knew what loving Habo meant. I had always been passionate and dedicated to the movement, but *Machaneh L'dor V'dor* (2019) showed me a completely different way of loving Habo. It wasn't just about my belief in the movement, it was about the movement's belief in me and how much I thrived in that space because of it. There were many elements which contributed to this feeling, but I am certain of the most significant being my channies, Ogen. They changed everything. They taught me so many things without even knowing or trying. They forced me into being a better version of myself every day. And so, at the risk of sounding slightly obsessed, I truly did, and still do adore them. They catapulted my love and passion for Habo to heights I never knew possible, something for which I'll always be grateful to them. And something for which I'll always feel obligated to do for them. An obligation I hope I have fulfilled, and will only continue to fulfil, by taking up leadership and giving everything I have to the movement that gave me everything it had.

This has not been without its hardships and challenges, some new, some not and some with which the movement has grappled since its inception. However, if there was one common experience amongst *Mazkirim* from any generation, be it 1950, 1990 or 2020, I would imagine that at the end of a long and difficult day working from Habo, their fulfilment from doing so outweighed any and all challenges faced during the day. Habonim is, at its core, fueled by the fulfilment it gives to its people. So while not a single event, programme or even day I have had working for this movement has gone exactly to plan and not posed their own unique challenges, I would not change a single thing, because those are the things which drive me, propel me even, into working harder.

If I have learnt anything from my year of movement work, it's that Habo is nothing if not ever changing and evolving. Stagnancy is our biggest threat and one with which we constantly battle. Losing that battle is not an option. We must keep moving, keep evolving, keep changing and growing. That is exactly what I plan on doing for the remainder of this year and the next. During my last leadership position, in the movement as Mazkira Klalit 2023, I envision for this youth movement, my youth movement, a year of movement.

*"If you do not change direction, you might end up where you are heading" - Lao Tzu*

***Aleh Ve'Hagshem***

# Habo 2020 (in 2022)

The Habo 2020 project was initiated five years ago, at a meeting on Kibbutz Yizreel following Kaleidoscope 2017.

With the pending 90 th anniversary of Habonim SA in 2020 (some say 2021), the idea was to try to recapture some of the magic of our movement experience by combining the content-rich Kaleidoscope program with a gathering that - transcending a conventional reunion - would seek to combine the inevitable nostalgia with *"what's next?"*

After two years of countless meetings involving dozens of chevre, momentum was building toward the Habonim Ultimate Gathering (HUG), incorporating Kaleidoscope, in October 2020.

Then came the pandemic and our gathering became virtual. Many have called Habonim Engaged in Dialogue (HED) the "silver lining" of a very difficult period. HED was fundamentally different from the plethora of other virtual programs spawned by the pandemic because binding HED's 2,500 participants from around the world are a web of connections deeply rooted in our formative Habonim experiences and values.

The movement's resilience has always been reflected in its adroitness in responding - with relevance - to changing circumstances. And so with Habo 2020 (in 2022): the A-Guard Tour, Mini-Kaleidoscope and HUG. So many people have poured so much passion, creativity and energy into these programs over so long that any list will no doubt miss some important contributors. For this, my apologies. But...

...a huge thank you to manhig Wayne Sussman and manhig "emeritus" Errol Anstey; 2022 mazkir klali Aaron Kruss van der Heever; past mazkirim(ot) Daniel Sussman, Nina Reitenberg, Aaron Sher and Adam Blumenthal; rosh a-guard and HED inventor Mark Kedem; rosh HUG Hilary Herzberger; HED maestro Felicity Swerdlow; gizbar Mark Finky; committee stalwarts Benzie Segal, Jackie Pillemer, Valerie Shikli, Shelley Wollach Zeevi, Belinda Copitch, Bruce Oppenheimer, Estelle Geva, Jonni Zausmer, Paul Horwitz, Simmy Zivel and Steve Hellman; and Brad Gottschalk, for compiling this remarkable booklet and for giving us great confidence in the movement's future; and last but definitely not least - Dave Bloom - for your unfailing devotion to every detail.

As we look ahead to the movement's centenary in 2030 (or 2031?), one can only feel awe at what our unique family of builders - from seedlings and saplings through guards and graduates (ours is, after all, an ongoing graduation) - have built over these past nine decades. To each of you - Kol hakavod!

**Stephen Pincus**

