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DINA BRAWER, United Kingdom
Yeshivat Maharat

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Dina Brawer reflects on her journey from rebbetzin, a title defined in essence by being married to a rabbi, to soon-to-be maharat, a designation conferred after attaining semikha, rabbinic ordination.

Brawer sees herself as a grassroots activist,

advocating for the reclaiming of a dynamic vision for Orthodox Judaism in the modern world, and blazing the trail for a new depth of engagement in Jewish teaching and learning available to women.

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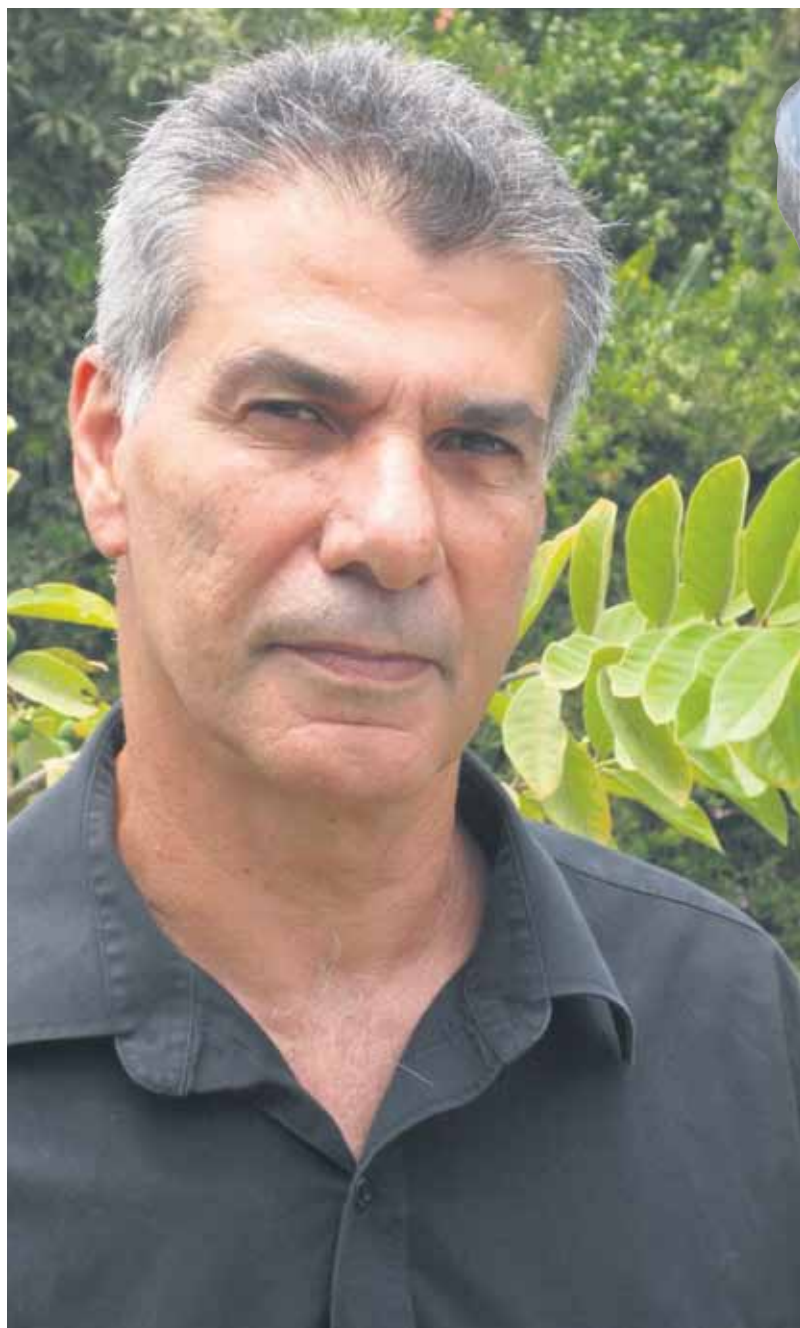
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AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF A REGION IN CONFLICT

AVI MELAMED, Israel
Middle East strategic intelligence analyst

AVI MELAMED is the head of the Intelligence and Middle East Affairs programme at the Eisenhower Institute. Avi is a former Israeli senior official on Arab Affairs and Intelligence official. Avi has spent almost thirty years interpreting Middle East affairs. He spent many years operating in Arab cities and communities, often at considerable personal risk. Fluent in Arabic, Avi has a network of

contacts, sources and unparalleled experience, which provide an insider's view of the constantly-changing Middle East landscape.

He is also the founder and creator of Feenjan (Israel Speaks Arabic), a non-profit initiative that presents contemporary Israeli society and culture to the Arab world in Arabic.

Avi will present on topics dealing with ISIS, the changing Middle East and the impact on Israel's geo-strategic environment, the thawing of the Arab Spring and the international BDS campaign



When, where, who to contact

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Friday 31 July, Saturday 1 August and Sunday 2 August 2015 at the Indaba Hotel in Fourways. (Book for weekend or Sunday only)

Contact: 0834519176
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Limmud Cape Town

Friday 7, Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 August 2015 at the Protea Technopark in Stellenbosch. (Book for weekend or Sunday only)

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Limmud Durban

Monday 10 August 2015 at the Durban Jewish Centre.

Contact: 0832800498
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THE SURGEON WHO'S A SANGOMA

DAVID CUMES, United States
Surgeon and sangoma

SOUTH AFRICAN-BORN David Cumes, now based in California, has a unique blend of professions: he is a surgeon and a sangoma, an author and extensive traveller, and he has taught medicine at Stanford University.

Cumes learnt first-hand about traditional healing methods from the Khoi San in Southern Africa and Curanderos in Peru. He has been initiated as an inyanga, and has written six books arguing the case for ancient African wisdom.

Limmudniks can look forward to some of our most original sessions, as Cumes introduces us to the spellbinding world of traditional healing, spirit guides and crossing into the afterlife in his sessions *Spiritual Universals - Links between Southern African Indigenous Wisdom and Kabbalah*; *Spirit Guides and the Dream Time*; and *Death - A Ticket to a New Destination*.

We haven't forgotten the kids

LIMMUD South Africa prides itself on hosting conferences around the country with a fantastic range of topics and presenters. Yet it is not only adults who can enjoy all that is on offer; Young Limmud presents a wide variety of activities which encourage Jewish learning and interaction for our young participants.

No matter the age of your children, we have a programme suited to their needs. There is a crèche for babies and toddlers, and activities planned for primary school-age children.

Our teenage participants have several options for their engagement with Jewish learning: some centres offer Teen Limmud, with

a programme catering specifically to high school-age informal learning. Teens are also welcome to attend Young Limmud sessions, or enjoy presenters from the adult programme.

The sessions offered at Young Limmud cover a broad range of interests, including arts and crafts, interactive games, sports, drama, music and Shabbat-friendly activities.

Past years' programmes have included treasure hunts, puppet-making, drum circles, candle-dyeing and even a Master Chef – Young Limmud edition!

A core component to the Young Limmud ethos is the fact that it is so much more than a

babysitting service. The programme is created with the participants' needs in mind, focusing on how best to encourage Jewish learning through these fun and dynamic activities.

These programmes are planned and run by our fantastic volunteers, each of whom has had experience in youth movements or teaching in formal day schools.

Leaders with a combination of expertise guarantee that participants of the Young Limmud programme are not only safe and cared for, but are also exposed to fun, structured learning opportunities, ensuring that Limmud truly is an experience for the whole family.

Some key principles

FAMILY DISCOUNTS: Limmud SA is an intergenerational learning experience! If you would like to attend the Limmud conference for the weekend with your family, you could qualify for a discount of up to 40%. To apply, please contact us at limmudsa@gmail.com

KOSHER FOOD: There's delicious food and snacks, constantly available, thanks to the fully kosher catering of Gary Friedman.

VOLUNTEERS: Limmud is organised almost entirely by teams of volunteers. We believe there is space for everyone to contribute in their own unique way. We would be delighted if you would volunteer to help.



'Jack in a Shack' reminisces on the forgotten people. Page 10.

South African Jewish Report

www.sajr.co.za



Photo: Kabelo Masilo

Young black SA leaders 'see for themselves'

A group of 15 young black South African leaders had the wrath and might of the ANC brought upon them, for daring to go on a fact-finding visit to Israel last week, to see for themselves what the Israel-Palestine situation is. The information-gathering tour, conducted by the SA Israel Forum under Dan Brotman, saw the delegates, all members or leaders of ANC youth organisations, travelling to Israel in their personal capacity. But Deputy Minister in the Presidency Obed Bapela, accused them “of bringing the ANC into disrepute” and threatening disciplinary action against them. Natan Pollack, national chairman of SAUJS (pictured second from left), a co-host with Brotman, emphasised that it was not “a pro-Israel trip”, but one to expose the young people to both sides of the Israel-Palestine story and that they had a full itinerary. “This has been no holiday.” Not all the young people are phased by the outcry against their visit. Chairman of the Wits branch of Sasco (SA Students Congress), 24-year-old Nthabiseng Molefe, is adamant that should she be invited again, she would go. It has also emerged that Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, the virulently anti-Israel NGO, offered the young people R40 000 each to buy them out of cancellation waivers they had signed with SAIF. No-one took up the offer. See page 2.

ANC spits fire over young leaders visiting Israel

The brouhaha that has erupted in the wake of last week's tour to Israel by 15 ANC youth leaders has started to gain momentum, with a deputy minister accusing them of bringing the ANC into disrepute.

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Wits legal office rules Dlamini Hitler comments free speech

Mcebo Dlamini, former Wits SRC president, has been absolved by the university for expressing his admiration for Hitler, but the SAJBD's charges of hate speech against him continue.

2

Iran deal: Israel to lobby Congress – and reconsider a strike

Benjamin Netanyahu has decried an agreement over Iran's nuclear programme and has again called it “a historic mistake for the world”. A strike against Iran has not been ruled out.

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When Tinkerbell waved her magic wand for Joseph

Pam Green saw Joseph Phukubje's plea for help on a board he held up in a street. She put it on Facebook and it went viral, with Joseph offered a lucrative job. He is overcome with emotion.

6

Feisty Wendy Appelbaum fights the just fight

Wendy Appelbaum was the driving force behind the application that resulted in the landmark Western Cape Court ruling last week declaring garnishee orders against low-income workers, illegal.



7



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ANC spitting fire over young leaders visiting Israel

ANT KATZ

The brouhaha that has erupted in the wake of last week’s study tour to Israel by 15 high-flying young South Africans, has started to gain momentum.

The private information-gathering tour of future SA leaders to the Middle East, conducted by independently-funded SA Jewish group SAIF (SA Israel Forum), saw the delegates travelling in their personal capacities to Israel and Palestine last week.

Natan Pollack, national chairman of the SA Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS), joined SAIF Executive Director Dan Brotman to host the group.

The group was unique in that they were all young, black, youth leaders holding influential positions in ANC structures, or organisations supporting it.

It included the niece of a senior government minister; two of the infamous “Wits-11” - removed from the Students Representative Council and censured for breaking up a concert by an Israeli-born German pianist last year. There were also high-ranking members of traditionally anti-Israeli organisations such as the SA Students Congress (Sasco); Wits SRC’s secretary general; and members of the ANC Youth League.

Since news of their trip leaked ahead of departure, many of the young people have suffered severe intimidation on social media and by their organisations who have called several to attend disciplinary hearings.

Deputy Minister in the Presidency Obed Bapela, an avid supporter of BDS-SA, went on the attack against the delegates in weekend papers after the story had broken in Israeli daily Haaretz last week.

Bapela charged the students with bringing the ANC into “disrepute” and said that the party would “summon” them to an investigation. The SA Zionist Federation and SA Jewish Board of Deputies issued a media release on Tuesday where they took “the strongest exception” to Bapela’s uncalled for attack

against the students.

In speaking with the delegates from the trip, Jewish Report found that they were by no means soft-on-Israel and many have returned still aiming to support pro-Palestinian causes. But all were clear that they could now do so with a better understanding of the situation on the ground.

One of the young, ANC-supporting future leaders, 24-year-old Nthabiseng Molefe, chairman of the Wits branch of Sasco, said she blamed BDS for the intimidation. “The ANC has nothing [to do] with this,” she told Jewish Report.” Their name was dragged into it by BDS.”

BDS had offered her and other delegates R40 000 each in cash to buy them out of cancellation waivers they had signed with SAIF. Not one delegate accepted the offer, she said.

On Tuesday evening Sasco suspended its members who went on the tour, pending an investigation. Nthabiseng is adamant she would go again, knowing about all the negative ramifications she has faced.

Not unexpectedly, BDS-SA’s newest poster-child, Mcebo Dlamini (the recently unseated “I Love Hitler” president of Wits’ SRC), has taken a break in his heavily-booked speaking schedule to lead a social media campaign.

Dlamini suggests bringing back “necklacing” - the practice of placing a burning tyre over the head of a “sell-out” - for those who went on the trip.

“This was not a pro-Israel trip,” says Pollack, but one to expose young people to both sides of the Middle East story.

Pollack insists that delegates had gone in their private capacities and had a very full fact-finding programme. This had been no holiday.

The trip focused on how to bring Israeli innovation and its start-up culture to South Africa, “but we consistently encouraged them to question and challenge what they were being told”.

Wits legal office rules Dlamini Hitler comments free speech

ANT KATZ

Mcebo Dlamini, controversial former president of the Wits SRC, has been absolved from hate speech, for expressing his admiration for Hitler, by the university’s legal office, who found it to be in the realm of freedom of speech.

But a charge of hate speech laid against Dlamini by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies at the police and SA Human Rights Council, still goes ahead. The university legal office’s decision, “is relevant only in respect of the internal rules and procedures of Wits University, and has no judicial relevance outside the confines of the University.

“The SAJBD remains convinced that Mr Dlamini’s comments are not protected by the Constitution and will continue to pursue the cases of hate speech that have been laid both with the South African police and with the SA Human Rights Council.”

The university’s legal office said in its statement on Tuesday: “On the basis of existing case evidence, the legal office found that Mr Dlamini’s utterances did not breach the exceptions to the Constitution regarding freedom of speech.”

But it found there were grounds for Dlamini to be charged “for failing to meet his fiduciary requirements as SRC president. However, given the fact that he has already been removed from this capacity, the university does not deem it appropriate to charge him in this regard.”

Dlamini had not been removed by Wits Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib for his Hitler remarks, but for an unrelated 2014 incident where he was alleged to have assaulted a Wits lecturer.

The university maintained that Dlamini’s Hitler remarks - which he has since repeated

- were “abhorrent”. And the university was “embarrassed” that “one of its own” could make such remarks.

“However, given the commitment to freedom of speech, as espoused in the Constitution, the university is committed to providing a space for the free exchange of ideas, whether or not it agrees with those ideas.”

Meanwhile, the council of the university said an independent appeal and review committee which was tasked to review the university’s decision to remove Dlamini as SRC president, found the university had acted accordingly.

Dlamini maintained that all white people had an element of Hitler in them.

Dlamini on Wednesday threatened in Wits’ Vuvuzela student newspaper to sue Habib if the latter did not apologise. Later on Wednesday, Habib told the Jewish Report that, “There will be no apology. Let me be very clear, I stand by whatever I have said. I would hope that Mcebo would have the maturity to learn from this situation. He is welcome to waste his money in court.”

Meanwhile, Leon Jamaine Mithi, a law student who heads up the ProjectW faction of the Wits SRC and polled the most votes in this year’s SRC election, shocked everyone on campus this week by resigning.

Prof Habib, who has been in Cape Town all week, has reportedly seen the resignation letter. In the letter Mithi essentially blames Habib’s “inaction” to a “litany of travails” he has had to endure over the past two years.

“It is my view that the Vice Chancellor has not acted in the interests of the students in creating a functional body and that the Vice Chancellor has been biased towards the interests of the BDS movement as well as the MSA movement within the SRC,” said Mithi.

At war with war



Parshat Matot-Masei

Rabbi Ari Shishler
Chabad of Strathavon
Jewish Life Centre

We Jews are at war. This is not a war against anti-Semitism, nor is it the battle to defend Israel’s borders. It is not a war against terror or against media bias. This is not a new war; in fact, it is the longest-running war that the Jewish people have fought.

Ours is the war against war itself. It is our battle against strife and division and discord. Our battle cry is: “Hashem Echad”, G-d is one and His people ought to be one.

Unity has its enemies, like the Biblical nation Midian and its spiritual counterpart that all too often invades the Jewish community. Midian was the nation who, on the advice of the rancorous prophet Bilam, dispatched their

women to seduce the Israelite men.

Midian had hoped to drive a wedge between Jews and G-d, between husbands and wives, and between the various tribes of the Jewish nation. The very name Midian implies disharmony. Moses’ last mission on earth was to launch a battle to destroy Midian. Only once Midian would be defeated, could the Jews enter the Promised Land.

To a Jew, every occurrence should hold a clue to a spiritual message. When an incident impacts our entire nation, and especially when it is recorded for posterity in the Torah, we should examine it for clues into our own spiritual development.

Before the Jews could enter the Holy Land and begin their journey of spiritual discovery, they had to vanquish Midian. To claim Israel, the Children of Israel would still have to conquer seven Canaanite nations, but none of that could happen until Midian was no more.

Any of us can identify Israel on the map, but we may not realise that each of us also has an “Israel”, a holy essence within us. As our ancestors had to conquer seven nations before they could inherit Israel, each of us has to master seven major facets of our character in order to gain access to our spiritual depth.

Before we can step onto our spiritual path, though, we need to fight to eradicate disharmony. No person can begin their spiritual journey until they are ready to connect and unite with the other members of our Jewish “army”.

In our daily prayers, we ask G-d to bless us all “as one”. That does not only mean that we want G-d to bless all of Israel, it is also an acknowledgement that we know that He will be most prepared to bless us when we stand unified.

Every year, we read the Torah portion of Mattos, which describes the war against Mid-

ian during the period of the “Three Weeks”, when we mourn the destruction of ancient Jerusalem and our Temple.

We lost our Temple in Jerusalem when we no longer stood unified. We will regain our Temple in Jerusalem when we reclaim a non-negotiable sense of unity. Jewish unity is not a nice-to-have; it is the single most important component of our heritage.

Shabbat Times		
Parshat Matot-Masei July 17 / 1 Av July 18 / 2 Av		
17:16	18:07	Johannesburg
17:39	18:33	Cape Town
16:57	17:50	Durban
17:18	18:10	Bloemfontein
17:10	18:04	Port Elizabeth
17:03	17:57	East London

South African

Jewish Report

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South African Jewish Report

Are we all on same page on Israel-Palestine question?

There is a generally held perception among South African Jewry that the current South African government is strongly critical of Israel and that many of its leadership see Israel as a tyrannical, or Nazi-like regime.

It is easy to see why. Just this past weekend, the ANC’s Obed Bapela, deputy minister in the presidency, slammed a group of students who visited Israel under the auspices of the South Africa-Israel Forum. Many of the students were members of the South African Students Congress (Sasco) and the ANC (see story page 2).

“We have a clear position that supports Palestinian freedom,” said Bapela. “No leader of the ANC in a private capacity or for the party will visit Israel. It will be putting the ANC in disrepute,” he added.

This was followed by Sasco’s National Executive Committee’s decision to temporarily suspend all its members who participated in the “propaganda trip to Israel” pending a disciplinary hearing.

And exactly a year ago, during last summer’s Gaza war, ANC Deputy Secretary-General Jessie Duarte, condemned Israel and called its defensive strikes on Hamas targets “barbaric attacks on the defenceless Palestinian people of Gaza”, adding that Israel had turned the “occupied territories of Palestine into permanent death camps”.

She announced that all branches of the ANC would join the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in organising protests for the immediate end to Israeli violence against the Palestinian people.

Bapela and Duarte are just two of a group of powerful government ministers and office bearers who have been outspoken in their calls for a boycott of Israel or have shown strong support for the BDS movement.

Others include ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe, former Deputy Minister of International Relations Ebrahim Ebrahim; Minister of Trade and Industry Rob Davies; Deputy President and current ANC chairman, Baleka Mbete; Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande (who is actually heading the Communist Party); and of course everyone remembers former Minister of Intelligence Services Ronnie Kasrils, who referred to Israelis as baby killers.

For our community their rhetoric is very threatening. The Jewish Board called it reprehensible that Bapela condemned and threatened to punish individuals simply for exercising their democratic right to freedom of thought and association.

And so too, Duarte’s comments last year which did not take into account South African Jewry’s generally held view that Israel was protecting itself from Hamas terror tactics in the Gaza war, was met with disgust by the Jewish Board.

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein said she should be held accountable for her “morally repugnant words, which have brought the ANC into disrepute”.

What is probably most difficult to deal with for our community is that many government ministers seem so aligned to the BDS movement - a campaign whose supporters have often and openly called for an end to the State of Israel.

Yet despite the virulent criticism of Israel and the loyalties shown to BDS by vocal government and ANC members, President Jacob Zuma and senior members of his Cabinet have never publicly steered away from their support for a two-state solution.

According to a statement released by the government news agency last year after the Gaza war, South Africa supports “a contiguous and economically viable Palestinian state existing side by side in peace with Israel, within mutually agreed and internationally recognised borders based on the 4 June 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital”.

In fact, South Africa has expressed great enthusiasm for engaging with both sides to share some lessons about reconciliation and contribute towards a peaceful solution - appointing two envoys last year - former Minister Zola Skweyiya and former Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad -for this purpose. The pair were in Israel very recently and met with Israel’s Director General of Foreign Affairs Dore Gold.

So, while the harsh rhetoric coming from senior government officials seems to confuse people about the official party line, there is still no evidence that our current government would change course and decide to support an Arab-run, one-state outcome.

With local government elections next year, the Democratic Alliance has avoided battles on this hot-button issue. The good news is that despite misunderstood comments from DA leader Mmusi Maimani, the party is clearly also aligned with the idea of a two-state solution and a peaceful outcome for the Israeli-Palestinian issue (see letters page 9).

And although there are many issues that our own community and our major political parties and government have to grapple with and may disagree on, it seems that, at least for now, we are all on the same page when it comes to the Israel-Palestinian question.

– Vanessa Valkin, Editor



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaking to the media from his office in Jerusalem following the finalisation of a nuclear deal with Iran, on July 14.

Iran deal: Israel to lobby Congress - and reconsider a strike

BEN SALES
TEL AVIV

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has decried an agreement over Iran’s nuclear programme hundreds of times - most notably in a March speech to a joint session of Congress.

Now that the agreement is signed, experts say Netanyahu has one way left to block it: Go to Congress again and persuade it to reject the deal.

The agreement finalised Tuesday morning in Vienna, will relieve Iran of crippling international sanctions in return for that country limiting its uranium enrichment, ridding most of its stockpile of enriched uranium and submitting to agreed-upon inspections of its nuclear facilities.

The deal stipulates that Iran freeze and store - but not dismantle - much of its nuclear infrastructure, and requires inspectors to request access to some Iranian facilities before entering.

Sanctions are set to be lifted once Iran fulfils its commitments to deactivate centrifuges, restructure its nuclear facilities and transfer or dilute its uranium stockpile. Sanctions could be restored within 65 days if a committee of representatives from world powers and Iran determines that Iran has violated the agreement.

Portions of the accord will expire between 10 and 25 years from the date the accord is adopted. The United Nations Security Council is expected to endorse the accord in a resolution.

Netanyahu has made opposing Iran’s nuclear programme the defining issue of his premiership, and has consistently criticised the potential agreement since negotiations began in 2013. On Tuesday, at a meeting with Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders ahead of the accord’s announcement, he called the agreement a “historic mistake for the world”.

He commented at a news conference: “Far-reaching concessions have been made in all areas that were supposed to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons capability. In addition, Iran will receive hundreds of billions of dollars with which it can fuel its terror machine and its expansion and aggression throughout the Middle East and across the globe.”

The agreement also was criticised by Israeli opposition leaders, and the Israeli public has long been sceptical of a deal. In February, an Israel Democracy Institute poll found that 61 per cent of Jewish-Israelis thought President Barack Obama would sign a deal even if the Israeli government said it harmed Israel’s security.

Yair Lapid, chairman of the opposition centrist Yesh Atid party, said Israel should concentrate its criticism on the provision for inspecting Iran’s nuclear facilities.

“We should focus on the inspections regime, which is the Achilles’ heel; it’s the weakest part of the deal,” Lapid said in a statement on Monday. “I started discussing the issue during my visit to Washington last month and they’re willing to listen.”

The only thing standing in the way of the deal’s implementation now, is a vote in Congress. Senators and congressmen will have two months to parse the deal’s details, and will vote to accept or reject it when Congress reconvenes in September.

Obama has promised to veto a rejection, and overriding that veto would require a two-thirds majority in both houses.

That, analysts say, is what Israel’s government will lobby for. Jonathan Rynhold, a senior research associate at Bar-Ilan University’s Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies, said Israel would need to build a broad coalition of the deal’s opponents - including former members of the Obama administration - if it is to convince enough lawmakers to reject the deal.

“Israel can’t do this on its own, but if there’s a coalition of people who for their own reasons think it’s a bad deal, that could change things,” he said. “You’ve seen criticism by other people who used to be involved in policymaking by Obama.”

Republicans have staunchly opposed a deal. But while some Democrats have also voiced scepticism about the agreement, reaching two-thirds would mean convincing a sizeable chunk of the party to oppose its president’s signature foreign policy initiative.

“The question is how much the Democrats will be willing to debate with the president,” said Ephraim Kam, a senior research fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies. “The Republicans will be able to debate. They don’t like the president, don’t like the agreement. The Democrats won’t want to come out against the president even if they don’t like the agreement.”

Some experts said that Netanyahu’s March speech before Congress damaged the effort to fight the deal by forcing Democratic members of Congress to choose between backing Israel and supporting Obama. But Ephraim Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat Centre, said that the speech might have helped galvanise opposition to the agreement by spelling out the dangers it posed.

“I think Obama’s policy gave presence to Netanyahu’s speech,” he said. “They gave it a lot of attention, he got a lot of attention, and his claims sounded sensible in public opinion.”

Should the effort in Congress fail, some Israeli politicians have declared that there’s only one avenue left to prevent a nuclear Iran: a military strike. Netanyahu has floated the threat of a strike for years, saying that Israel has the right to defend itself by itself. Warnings of a strike built up until the nuclear talks began in 2013.

Once America was engaged in negotiations with Iran, talks of an Israeli strike subsided somewhat. But now that America has signed the agreement, Lapid again hinted at the possibility of bombing Iran’s nuclear facilities.

“If it is signed, the world needs to know Israel holds all the options,” Lapid told JTA last week. “We need to understand what all the options are. Israel can’t allow a nuclear Iran.”

Experts have assessed that an Israeli strike on Iran would not be able to destroy its nuclear programme. And Kam said that Israel would be hard-pressed to launch a strike against the backdrop of a deal supported by the world’s major powers.

“I think it’s in the fridge,” he said of plans for a strike. “It’s not an option right now. To go militarily against an agreement that’s initiated by the great powers is a tough move. It’s not impossible, but it’s hard.”

But Inbar said a strike had grown more likely, as the deal has left Iran with the capability to enrich uranium, giving it the ability to produce a bomb. If that happened, he said, Israel would have no choice but to strike.

“It obligates us to a path of military attack,” he said. “The Americans don’t care about our interests. There’s no choice. We can’t wait.” (JTA)

Photo: HADAS/PARUSH/FLASH 90

Israel’s nuclear bombs the guarantor of ‘never again’



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Amidst all the diplomatic noise currently going on about Iran’s nuclear programme, and attempts by world powers to stop it achieving nuclear weapons, it seems strange to remember that South Africa was once a nuclear-armed nation - a pariah state armed to the teeth, with military sanctions imposed on it from the international community.

The UN Security Council approved a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa in 1977 because of apartheid.

Something many people would rather not remember is that Israel - among various major powers such as France, who also doesn’t like to talk about it - is believed to have helped South Africa in the 1970s to achieve its military power, conventional and nuclear.

Those were very different days. It was during the Cold War, with its “MAD” - mutually assured destruction - philosophy holding the fragile peace between the USSR and the West, each with their nuclear bombs pointing at each other.

Israel had yet to conclude peace treaties with its neighbours such as Egypt and Jordan, and its “pariah” status at the UN and elsewhere was extreme - it looked for all the friends it could find. Nuclear weapons for Israel seemed the ultimate guarantor for the “Never Again” mindset after the Holocaust.

South Africa no longer has any enemies at its borders which would even remotely suggest a need for nuclear weapons. Removing apartheid ended all that. Sadly, however, Israel doesn’t have that luxury - it still lives as a “fortress” in a profoundly hostile region, knowing that its military power - including its nuclear weaponry, which has never been officially confirmed but is known to exist - remains essential to its survival. One wouldn’t know it walking down the beachfront in Tel Aviv, where everything seems so peaceful and safe.

The deal just concluded with Iran comes after more than a decade of negotiations. It specifies that all sanctions will be lifted from Iran, but temporary restrictions - such as on arms trading - will remain in place for a period of time. All the

economic sanctions and bank-related sanctions will be lifted immediately after the agreement is adopted.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu slammed the world powers over the imminent deal. “Iranian leader [Ali] Khamenei has said that the US should be fought even if an agreement is reached, [Iran President Hassan] Rohani is heading a hate march in which US and Israeli flags are being burned and calls for death to America and Israel are being made, and at the same time, concessions are being offered to Iran,” he said at the start of his weekly Cabinet meeting.

He said the deal reminded him of the one signed between the US and North Korea in 1994, meant to put an end to the communist state’s nuclear programme. Former US President Bill Clinton made a speech the day the US and North Korea concluded the agreement, saying it would bring the latter to dismantle its nuclear weaponry and the world would become a safer place.

But in 2003, North Korea renounced the whole arrangement, and resumed its military nuclear activities. According to some estimates it possesses several nuclear bombs today.

South Africa ended its nuclear weapons programme in 1989, not because it was forced to, but as part of the euphoria and idealism of building a peaceful, democratic nation integrated into its African region. All the bombs - six were constructed and one more was under construction - were dismantled.

South Africa signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1991 and played a leading role in establishing the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty - also referred to as the Treaty of Pelindaba - in 1996.

South Africa has lots of problems, but we can be thankful we don’t have enemies at our borders wanting to destroy us.

Will Israel ever be able to publicly dismantle its nuclear weapons, like South Africa did? Seems very unlikely. In the Middle East, the trend is in the opposite direction, as the region descends further into chaos, and countries like Saudi Arabia are making it known that if Iran achieves nuclear weapons, it would feel the need to do so as well. We must hope that somehow Iran will be deterred from achieving nuclear bombs and a nuclear arms race in the Middle East can be avoided.

Around the Jewish World

ISRAEL’S CHANNEL 2’s CINDERELLA STORY

TEL AVIV - Blonde, blue-eyed Israeli Sofia Mechetner, 14, became the new in-house face of Christian Dior, though she has zero modelling experience. Her \$265 000 contract included introducing the Dior Haute Couture autumn-winter line for 2015 at Paris Fashion Week recently.

It’s likely that her single immigrant mother can stop cleaning offices and caring for the elderly, and Sofia can get them a bigger place so she will no longer have to share a room with her two younger siblings in a modest apartment in Holon.

At 178 centimetres tall, Sofia caught the eye of a talent scout from Israel’s Roberto Management Agency, which sent her with a chaperone to Paris for a photo shoot and audition at the Viva Modelling Agency.

However, when Viva discovered that Sofia was only 14 and had never modelled, the shoot was cancelled. The disappointed pair took a walk and stopped at a Dior store when head designer Raf Simons just happened to be there.

Simons was struck by Sofia’s looks and told the company’s casting director about her. He contacted the Viva Agency, thinking she was a client. Needless to say, the agency reconsidered its initial rejection. Several weeks later, back in Holon, Sofia got the news that she got the Dior gig. Some quick lessons on runway modelling and she was off to Paris.

Channel 2 followed her around Holon for a few days before the trip, showing her picking up her sister and brother from school and preparing food for them, folding laundry and giving a tour of the one-room flat. Photos of models are posted on the walls above her mattress on the floor. It has been noted that the teen strongly resembles a young Kate Moss, the British supermodel also discovered at age 14. - Israel21c


RACE-WALKER MONTAG FAVOURED TO WIN GOLD

MELBOURNE - As the top-ranked female race-walker in the world under the age of 18, Jemima Montag, is odds-on favourite to win gold at the 9th International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Youth Championships in Cali, Colombia next week.

Montag leapfrogged from fourth to outright number one in the international 5km race-walk rankings after recording a sizzling 22 minute 4,29 second effort at the Australian youth team’s recent pre-departure camp. A repeat performance would be enough for Montag to be first across the finishing line, but the modest 17-year-old Melbourne athlete is modest.

“You never know what happens on the day...In race-walking, there’s disqualification, reports, judge... I’m pretty confident; I’ve got a good ranking going in, but there’s lots of fast Russians.

“This is my third international competition, one of which was Maccabiah 2009, so I’m not petrified, just really excited to go.” - Australian Jewish News



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When Tinkerbell waved her magic wand for Joseph

SUZANNE BELLING

It was not Pam Green of Glenhazel’s day, or actually her week. Someone drove into her car; then there were problems with her insurance and she had to drive to Sandton (although she works nearby) to have the damage assessed.

“To crown it all, I drove down a wrong road and had to do a u-turn to get back to where I was supposed to go. When the traffic light turned green, I did this and, in the corner of my eye, I spotted a man holding up a beggar’s banner.

“I ignored it and drove past. Then fate intervened. Something told me to go back, so I parked my car and walked back to the man to offer help.”

The beggar, Joseph Phukubje, a homeless man living under the Grayston bridge, was not holding up the normal banner asking for money, work and offering blessings.

He was holding up his CV and matric certificate and was asking for help to find a job. He admitted he had used drugs and had been sent away from his sister’s home in Mpumalanga.

Pam, who has a history of voluntary work and is an activist providing relief for victims of xenophobia, gave him food and toiletries to clean up. She said she would put a post on Facebook and see if she could help.

She took copies of his CV and matric certificate and bought him a cheap cellphone in case there were responses to her post.

“It was absolutely amazing. I went back to the office at 14:30 and over 1 000 people had received the post, which was linked to 500 others. Thereafter, it went totally viral.”

Pam’s phone was beeping continuously and by the evening she was inundated with responses. One, in particular, looked promising. “It was from Ntando Kubheka who shared a mutual Facebook friend.”

An interview was set up. Pam helped Joseph with money for taxi fare and bought him airtime. She was a little uneasy that Joseph might “cop out”, but after “a little wobble”



Photo supplied

“Fairy godmother” Pam Green with Joseph Phukubje.

he turned up for the interview and landed a job with Ntando’s Locomute, a company that hires out cars at a per minute charge.

“They said Joseph could try out all the divisions in the company and choose a job where he felt he would fit in.”

Pam sobbed at her desk when she heard the news. At the time of this interview she had 36 500 shares on Facebook. They have probably doubled by now.

Through social media, Joseph obtained clothes and a place to stay. He was totally overwhelmed.

“Pam, is it real?” Joseph asked his benefactor. “People have been stopping and speaking to me, with all kinds of offers.”

Pam, dubbed “the fairy godmother”, is over the moon and so inundated with requests from people seeking jobs that she created a Facebook page, “Second Chances”, and wants to expand it into a fulltime activity.

“I have always thought of myself as a free spirit, a kind of Tinkerbell fairy and am known for dressing up as one for parties. I have found my path, my truth,” she said.

And Joseph “a special young man”, has found his.

Ambassador Lenk presents credentials to King Letsie III

SUZANNE BELLING

Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, CEO and spiritual leader of the African Jewish Congress, recently accompanied Israel’s Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk to Lesotho, when the ambassador presented his credentials to King Letsie III. Lenk is non-resident ambassador to Lesotho, Swaziland and Mauritius, which fall under the aegis of the AJC.

“I bring a message of friendship, of a relationship that has been warm even before the independence of Lesotho in 1966.” Lenk commented on the motto of the country “Khotso, Pula, Nala” which means “Peace, Rain, Prosperity”.

“This is a very meaningful message and one that speaks deeply to me and my people. The message inside those three ideals directly connects to my people and Israel’s history, challenges and priorities.

“The politics of my region are far away from Lesotho, perhaps even further than the 7 000 kilometre distance from Lesotho to Israel. We watch with interest [the] recent events in your kingdom and send hope for peace and stability for the new government and all the people of Lesotho.”

Lenk told the king that, since Israel’s founding of a homeland for the Jewish people in 1948, the country had continually sought to live in peace with its neighbours.

“At the same time, when necessary, like any state, we must act to protect our people from danger, from terrorism, from attack.”

He said in spite of instability, Israel had achieved peace with some neighbours and was talking about the benefits of potential peace with others.

The ambassador explained that although Israel was about one-third smaller than Lesotho, it had become a world leader in important areas during its 67 years of independence.

“Our scientists and innovators have developed internationally renowned capabilities in health and the sciences to make our world a better place.



Israel’s Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk, King Letsie III of Lesotho and AJC CEO Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft.

Feisty Wendy Appelbaum fights the just fight

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

Wendy Appelbaum (pictured) was the driving force behind the application that resulted in the landmark Western Cape High Court ruling last week declaring emoluments attachments orders (also known as garnishee orders) obtained against low-income farm workers and others, unlawful. The high-flying businesswoman and daughter of Liberty Life founder Sir Donald Gordon, became a household name when she took on Auction Alliance some three years ago in a case of so-called “ghost bidding”. She agrees that that case has had the effect of focusing her attention in a new direction.

“Injustice is something that drives me quite wild,” she says, “and I believe that was my visceral reaction to the Auction Alliance case. I believe that we all have a role to play in this country and I think that people who sit back and complain... One really needs to do something about it.”

She feels that it is “really sad” that civil society has to take government to task, but if that is what is necessary to allow “this wonderful country” to stay that way and fulfil its potential, then so be it.

So, how did her involvement in the recent issue come about? “Basically, it stemmed from me looking at the garnishee orders (court orders that compel employers to deduct from an employee’s salary money that he or she owes a creditor) that my staff on my wine estate had against them and thinking there was something wrong with the system.

“I really needed to go quite deeply into it, so I went to the bookstore, bought the National Credit Act and the Magistrate’s Court Act and I read them,” she recalls.

“I realised that this couldn’t possibly be right and started to think about how it could be changed. The real tragedy is that it’s the poorest of the poor that have been the victims here.”

The Marikana issue had initially focused her conscience around the level of debt in the country and had galvanised her into action. “I was absolutely appalled that government was not looking after its people - there is absolutely no political will to care for the poor,” she says.

But Appelbaum will not take all the credit for the successful outcome of the recent court case, describing herself simply as “a connector of people. That’s how the court case came about - I was just the conductor.

“I found all these players in the field and connected them to the point where we sat down and brainstormed ideas of how we could change the system. I didn’t do it alone.”

She had been quite prepared to fund the case on the basis of “bang for buck”, reasoning that the outcome would have such ramifications for the poor that it was a no-brainer in terms of an investment. In the event, attorneys Webber Wentzel and advocate Anton Katz SC thought it a brilliant idea, saw the national interest of the project and acted pro bono.

Now that she has cut her teeth in the field, does Appelbaum foresee consumer advocacy becoming a bigger part of her life? “I certainly will step up to the plate where I think it is necessary - absolutely!”

It is not surprising then to learn that her personal philosophy is encapsulated thus: “I love a good fight, but I prefer a fight for good.”

Appelbaum has in fact moved on to the next project and is involved in the anti-corruption march being organised by human rights organisation Section27, for August 19. “The public

interest from all corners of society has been absolutely remarkable,” she comments.

“I think the country is just getting to the point where enough is enough. With the use of social media, I think we can make this go viral.”

This sounds as if a political career is in the offing, but Appelbaum dismisses this out of hand. “Absolutely not - I don’t have a political bone in my body! As you see, I cannot be anything but straightforward and absolutely honest and I think, unfortunately, politics and those kinds of personality traits don’t mix.

“What I’m interested in is keeping South Africa on the straight and narrow; I think we’re having a wobble at the moment and I think that civil society does have an incredible role to play in crafting a new future for the country.

“I believe there is enough goodwill and enough people who have had enough of what is going on, so I do believe that the possibility for change is near.”

Mentioning other areas of “terrible unfairness” particularly towards the poor, Appelbaum slams the state of education as “diabolic” and says that people’s human rights are being eroded daily with devastating results for the country. She is very involved in this sphere, spending, as she says, “an enormous amount of time” examining new models of education.

While she has farmed at DeMorgenzon wine estate in Stellenbosch for 12 years, Appelbaum’s influence is felt nationally with her involvement in business schools and her substantial role in medical training. “The healthcare available to the underprivileged in this country is equally poor,” she adds.

On her move to the “heavenly” Stellenbosch from Johannesburg, she reflects: “I didn’t think I would ever settle down in the countryside

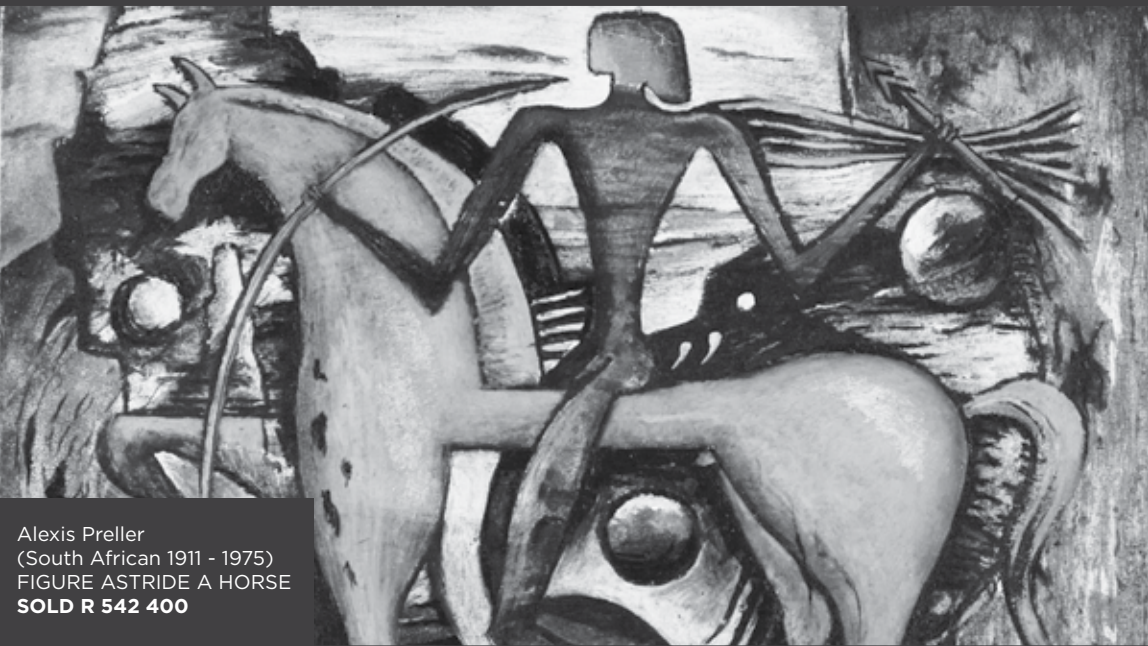


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as well as I did, but with modern technology there’s nothing you cannot do from any place on the planet. It’s just that my office is now in a far more beautiful place, probably one of the most beautiful in the world.”

Known as a most active philanthropists, Appelbaum feels that the more one has, the more responsibility one has to share it with those who don’t. “How many beds can you sleep in? How many cars can you drive?” she wants to know.

“I do think one has a responsibility to society - it’s been ingrained in us as a family since we were born that those who have, put back. I don’t think paying tax is enough - you need to be able to sculpt and make positive change.”



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The legacies we inherit and which we leave our children

LIONEL SLIER

“Are children our legacy?” is a rather philosophical/rhetorical question posed by well-known radio personality and blogger, David Batzofin (pictured).

At a United Zionist Luncheon Club meeting recently, he juxtaposed the legacy he inherited from his parents, and they from their parents before them, and a visit to a white squatter camp the other side of Pretoria, where people were “invisible” - to what they call “outsiders” - those preferring not to see them.

“I come from a generation that brought up their children in a certain fashion. My dad left school after standard six, but for ages I never knew this. He had the same job for 36 years. For my barmitzvah he gave me a bicycle - but shortly afterwards he sold it.

“He lived by a certain set of ethics which he passed on to me - neither a borrower nor a lender be.

“We always had shoes on our feet, bread on the table and a roof over our heads. I lived by his ethics. I have a daughter in Cape Town who lives by the ethics I have passed on to her.”

He asked: “How do we stop our children doing the same and do we want to? Is that a legacy? Or are we all wired internally and genetically? This is how things are always done?”

He told the story of a mother who always broke the legs of a chicken before she cooked it. When asked why, she replied that her own mother had always done that. When the granny was asked why she had always broken the legs of a chicken before cooking it, she replied that her pot was small so she had to do that.

Batzofin spoke how, after 1948 and the



arrival of the National Party apartheid government, people still voted for them. When asked why, the reply: “Better the devil you know...”

He told of an interview he did with internationally acclaimed playwright Athol Fugard. When Fugard’s anti-government play “Sizwe Banzi is Dead” opened, Batzofin’s parents would not allow him to go to the first night as the “political police” (the feared Special Branch) would be there taking names and photos.

Years later, when he was with Fugard, he asked him why he had left South Africa. Fugard replied that he wanted to earn money so that he could go fishing!

Batzofin said that Fugard’s legacy should be a statue - but there is none (because he ran)!

Then Batzofin switched tack: “I was at a white squatter camp outside Pretoria.

“White squatter camp? Indeed! There are a few thousand Afrikaners living in squatter camps around South Africa today, with several near Pretoria. I spoke to many of the people living in this camp, which does not even have a name. It is simply Plot 111.

“We conversed in English, Afrikaans and a mixture of both. They all wanted to share their stories and spoke freely, except one woman who had suffered from alcohol abuse and did not want her children to know her whereabouts. This was her legacy to them?

“Many of the people there had suffered from some form of abuse - physical, sexual, alcohol, bullying and more.

“None of the children in the camps had had any sort of education. What would the legacy left to them by their parents be? What legacy would they in turn leave? There was a 12-year-old boy who lived in a chicken coop.

“These squatter camp residents spoke of ‘outsiders’ - those people for whom the squatter camp inhabitants were invisible.

“Compare these people, especially children, and especially those who are lucky enough to know their grandparents and can share their legacies. We are leaving these people behind - an outsider group as I said, ‘invisible.’”

Batzofin said this visit had been “one of the best things I have ever done. I am humbled.”

He is writing a book “about them, for them”. It was the toughest thing he ever had to do. “It will be a positive story and also a legacy to them and for them.

“We are all children and grandchildren who have received legacies and who will in turn leave legacies for our children and grandchildren down the generations.”

Taking kindness to the streets

In honour of Mandela Day this Friday, July 17, Chabad’s “Change our World for Good” campaign will have a number of activities, Chabad said in a media release.

Rabbi David Masinter, founder of the organisation, says that the yellow ARK (distributed by Chabad), a yellow plastic money box shaped as an Ark, is an acronym for Acts of Random Kindness and the idea is simple: Fill the yellow Ark with spare change and donate it to anyone who may need it.

“Mandela Day is another opportunity for us to share the ARK with fellow South Africans and change the world as we honour Madiba as well,” Masinter explains.

The Change our World for Good Campaign is collaborating with The Creative Counsel (TCC), headed by Gil Oved and co-founder and joint-CEO Ran Neu-Ner. TCC has strong manpower and has generously offered their time to give out 3 000 ARKs today (Friday) at the Grayston and Rivonia intersection.

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BE CAREFUL NOT TO USE MIDEAST POLITICS FOR LOCAL GAINS

We are entering the silly season where the media get caught up in the hype of the upcoming (municipal) elections and the parties provide the bait. Expect much of the same, but expect worse - especially when it comes to the Middle East issue.

(DA leader) Mmusi Maimane was quoted out of context in the Sowetan newspaper and the Jewish Report painted a biased picture of his position (on Israel and the Middle East).

The DA has a policy on the Middle East that is balanced and seeks a two-state solution. We state that peace must be sustainable and monitored by a body that can enforce the resolutions. We want an end to all forms of violence and killings and hope for the day when we see a long and lasting peace.

We are adamant that finger pointing is not

the answer, nor is trying to make election gains out of complicated pains.

I personally believe that this Middle East conflict has given rise to movements that seek to both incite violence and hatred against cultures and religions and these objectives are condemned in the strongest terms. We should be pushing for global peace rather than fighting for war.

We live in a country that was born out of injustices of the past that served a biased and prejudiced agenda of a few. Overcoming this through peace, should be one of our greatest assets and should be protected from becoming one of our biggest embarrassments.

Darren Bergman

Member of Parliament

PROGRESSIVES DON’T DISCRIMINATE AGAINST GAYS IN SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

In reply to Geoff Sifrin’s recent column about gay couples not having a home in the South African Jewish community, I suggest that this very narrow view of what constitutes the Jewish community reflects the view of only the most conservative and vocal members of SA Jewish Orthodoxy who fail to engage with the changes around them.

The Progressive movement in South Africa welcomes gay marriages and asserts that a person’s sexual preference does not define their moral, ethical and spiritual Jewish identity.

The South African Constitution makes gay marriage legal and it is sad when there is a perception that Jewish ideology is less than and out of step with the Constitution.

We believe in individuals’ human rights and their right and responsibility to make personal choices. This includes the right to choose to live out one’s sexual preference in mature,

committed, adult relationships with the legal sanction of both civil and religious society.

We will not be counted among those who discriminate against gay marriage. It is shameful that some within our society feel it is their right to contravene the South African Constitution and discriminate against others because of sexual preference.

In many years working as a marriage counsellor, I have seen some within the fold of Orthodox Jewry who abuse their children, have extramarital affairs, abandon their spouses and behave in ways considered immoral and unethical by halacha.

Not even these Jews are excluded from the Orthodox community despite contravening Jewish law and inflicting harm on others.

Diane Fine

Congregant of Beit Emanuel

DA’S MAIMANE ACCUSED OF SOMETHING HE NEVER SAID

I have read the open letter to the Democratic Alliance MPs and I have read the newspaper report on what apparently was stated by DA leader Mmusi Maimane (regarding the DA’s stance on Israel and the Palestinian territories).

Firstly, it must be noted that clearly the report (which intimated that the DA would have to rethink its Israel policy) was wrong as the few people who I have spoken to who were present at (Gauteng DA MPL) Jack Bloom’s book launch in Johannesburg (where the remarks were said to have been made), have said that the purported recording was absolutely incorrect.

Secondly, the DA stance has always been and still is in support of the parliamentary stance of a two-state solution (for the Mideast crisis). Dr

Bryna Lewis of Port Elizabeth is confusing the stance of the ANC with the stance of government, which is completely different.

In the scheme of things, Middle Eastern politics should not be a hot topic in South Africa, but unfortunately there are certain individuals who want to bring an anti-Israel agenda into every debate and discussion. I understand why Dr Lewis is upset, and I am happy to engage with her on the DA stance at any time. I value my friendship with Bryna Lewis and it would hurt me to see a misquote somehow interfering with our long and trusted association.

Michael Bagraim MP

Cape Town

I’LL BE DAMNED IF I DO, I’LL BE DAMNED IF I DON’T!

The Nazis said that Jews needed to leave Europe (or die), since they weren’t “true” Europeans. Now many Muslims and the international left (including here in South Africa, the ANC/SACP, Cosatu, BDS and SA Jewish Voices for a Just Peace) are saying that Jews need to leave the Middle East (or die) because they are “actually” Europeans!

As Israeli writer Amoz Oz put it: “Out there, in the world, all the walls were covered with graffiti: ‘Yids, go back to Palestine,’ so we came back to Palestine, and now the world at large shouts at us: ‘Yids, get out of Palestine.’”

As David Hazony said: “If you reject the Jews having a right to a country of their own, and you do it half a century after the state has become a successful thriving fact, and you do it to justify acts of terror against civilians and collective boycott and public displays of hatred and you do it mainly or only at Israel, despite all the horrors of the world, then you are an anti-Semite!”

As the Nazis dehumanised the Jews before the Holocaust was launched, so the Arab and leftist media and educational networks demonise the Jews of Israel in the same way. Israel right from the start accepted the United Nations partition plan for Palestine, but the Arabs violently refused it. Israel magnanimously offered the land through Ehud Barak’s offer at Camp David in 2000 and Ariel Sharon’s unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005 and each time received a violent response, making it quite clear that the issue is not about land but about the very existence of Israel, the very existence of the Jewish people.

SA Jewish Voices for a Just Peace seemingly wants genocide and justifies the killing of Jewish babies in Israel. They organise public displays of hatred (and daily put up hate speech on their Facebook page) and should not be tolerated by any Jewish community.

Gary Selikow, Johannesburg

Guidelines for letters

Letters up to 400 words get preference. Provide your full name, place of residence, and daytime contact phone number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.

DA POLICY ON MIDDLE EAST REMAINS A TWO-STATE SOLUTION

I can assure Dr Bryna Lewis (of PE) concerning a Sowetan report about DA leader Mmusi Maimane’s (critical) remarks about Israel at my book launch (last week Wednesday) that it was an appalling misreport.

Maimane was asked a question on this matter among other things, and the general response to his reply was positive, as captured by the Jewish Report article on the meeting.

Charisse Zeifert responded to the Sowetan

on behalf of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, to the effect that nobody was “stunned” by his approach as the two-state solution is a commonly accepted position. The person who asked the question later posted a picture of herself with Maimane on her Facebook page, so this is all a storm in a teacup. The DA position on this issue has not changed at all.

Jack Bloom MPL

Johannesburg

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‘Dial a Mensch’ – the name says it all

GARY ARENSON

We live in a bubble - a bubble where people assume that all the Jews within our community have sufficient financial resources and family support. The reality is different, and there are many people who do not have the ability to get to a medical appointment or even to the shops. With resources stretched to the limit, a paid ride literally means less in their trolleys.

Some have vehicles, but have no-one to turn to if they get stuck; family members are often continents away. And not all Jews have a community, and if they have the misfortune of needing a shiva minyan, they have nowhere to turn to.

“Dial a Mensch was founded 11 months ago because of all these realities, and in this time has assisted hundreds of people in need.”

A call through to the number 08 18-18-18-18 gets answered by a dispatcher and the ever-growing group of volunteers is made aware of the requirement either via a phone-call to them

or a WhatsApp group. If they can assist, they are sent the details.

Initially set up to provide non-emergency lifts, basic road side assistance and help with shiva house minyanim, the vast majority of calls received on a daily basis are for lifts. People need to get to hospital, to shops for food, to pharmacies, to a hairdresser, to visit a sick friend, to collect a food parcel...

“Sometimes taking over 10 calls a day, Dial a Mensch needs the support from those who can give an occasional lift. There is no specific time commitment, one helps when one can.”

Dial a Mensch is independently funded and asks for no money from the people it assists, and neither does it fundraise from the community. The angels of the organisation are its dispatchers and volunteers, people who give a little of their time to transform someone else’s day.

To play your part, please contact me on 082-776-3504, or send an e- mail to info@diala-mensch.co.za. If you have a licence and you own vehicle, you can make a difference.

World News in Brief

Bono dedicates song to Peres

JERUSALEM - A moving tribute awaited former Israeli President Shimon Peres last week when U2 frontman Bono dedicated the song “One” to the Israeli statesman during a concert in Toronto.

Peres, attending a conference in Canada, was surprised when he received a personal invitation from Bono to be his guest at the concert.

“We understand, President Peres, that you have tried to be the voice of reason. And you’ve dedicated a lot of your life, all of your life, to try and bring peace in this really dangerous region,” the Irish singer said before performing the song “One”.

“Don’t give up on the two-state solution. At age 92, we know we can count on you,” he told Peres. (JNS.org)

Jerusalem ranked 10th-best city

NEW YORK - Readers of Travel + Leisure Magazine ranked Jerusalem as the 10th-best city in the world for 2015.

“Christians, Jews, and Muslims converge to worship in this 4 000-year-old holy city, and their respective churches, synagogues, and mosques surround the historic Old City,” the magazine said.

“Here, you can tuck a miniature prayer into the Western Wall, or see a fragment of clay engraved with cuneiform at the excavation site at Temple Mount. The iconic, gleaming gold Dome of the Rock is best photographed from the Austrian Hospice, which offers unparalleled views of the city and Mount of Olives.”

Kyoto, Japan, was ranked first. (JNS.org)

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‘Jack in a Shack’ reminisces on the forgotten people



Jack Bloom holding his newly-launched book “30 Nights in a Shack – a Politician’s Journey”, with his parents Hymie and Tzipa Bloom (left and right) and cousins Joe and Carol Rivkind.

SUZANNE BELLING

Helen Suzman had a motto: “Go see for yourself”, as she was known for visiting areas where people suffered, particularly under apartheid.

Jack Bloom, a member of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature since 1994, leader of the DA in the legislature from 2011 till 2014, took her credo a step further: “Go experience for yourself,” he said. “Don’t forget the forgotten.”

At a crossroads in his life, Bloom decided to spend 30 nights - one evening every month - with the “forgotten” in their shacks throughout Gauteng.

It started on August 21, 2011 when he visited the scene of a devastating shack fire in Jeppestown in central Johannesburg. Fifty-six shacks had burnt down through a fire started by a paraffin stove.

“I spoke to an elderly man, who had been there since 1980. He cried on my shoulder and I could easily have cried with him but I held back, which I regretted later,” Bloom wrote in his newly-launched book “30 Nights in a Shack - a Politician’s Journey”, launched at the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre last week Wednesday.

Bloom returned to the scene of the fire, spending the night with the old man and his four sons in their partially rebuilt shack. “There was no shelter from the elements, as there was no roof.”

He wrote that there was an open fire and the smell “assaulted my nostrils” and he thought of the effects on children. He was cold in his sleeping bag, did not sleep much and was awoken by a cell phone alarm at 04:00, wondering how the phone was charged without electricity.

After his first night, Bloom appealed for help publicly. He resolved it would not be “out of sight, out of mind” - hence his decision to spend a night each month with a

“forgotten” community.

His next visit was to Stinkwater which had one tap for 8 000 people. The bigger problem was that water in the area was contaminated by a collapsing sewerage system.

Bloom received extensive recognition and publicity for his campaign, and was dubbed “Jack in a Shack”.

On his visits to the poor communities, he came across Doctor Hlahane, who had rescued young men from a life of crime and drugs and formed a choir. Bloom saw to it that they were fitted out with black suits and the choir members chose to complete their outfits with blue DA T-shirts!

Bloom embarked on projects in the shanty towns, including providing some with solar lighting, tackling the problem of a rat infestation in Alexandra township and getting “down and dirty” by sanitising pit toilets, using enzymes and bacteria.

Bloom’s journey changed his way of thinking. He became Jewishly observant, donned a yarmulke, blessed people and started davening regularly. He even lit Chanukah lights, the flames of which blended with the candle-lit home of shack-dwellers.

This influence was a result of his new-found association with Chabad and especially with Rabbi David Masinter, director of Chabad House in Savoy. He became a regular shul-goer at Rabbi Masinter’s shul in Riverclub.

He visited the grave of the late Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson in Crown Heights, New York, which increased his faith and observance.

In all, Bloom visited over 100 informal settlements. Some of the shacks were beautifully furnished and had tended gardens. His project improved the living conditions of many and his book records his journey in a most readable and enlightening way.

He was really “leading from the front”.

World News in Brief

Iran stages massive anti-Israel and anti-US rallies

TEHRAN - A few days ahead of the deal reached on Iran, millions of Iranians reportedly turned out in rallies across their country, calling for “death to Israel” and “down with America”, as they burned flags and effigies of President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The demonstrations are part of Iran’s annual “Al-Quds Day” rallies, which call for the “liberation” of Jerusalem.

“There are two sides in oppression: oppressor and the oppressed. We back the oppressed and are against oppressors,” current Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Twitter, referring to both America and Israel.

Khamenei military aide Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi said “armed struggle” was the only way to free Jerusalem.

“Muslims’ unity and continuation of armed jihad (struggle) and the Islamic resistance of the Palestinian nation constitute the only strategy for saving and liberating the Holy Quds,” Safavi said, the semi-official Fars News Agency reported. (JNS.org)

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What's On

SA JEWISH REPORT 11

Today, Friday (July 17)

- UZLC hosts DA MPL Jack Bloom on “The Political and Economical Prospects for South Africa”.
Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria (011) 485-4851

Sunday (July 19)

- RCHCC hosts an exhibition of paintings by Wilma Shein. It opens today at 18:00 and closes on Sunday, August 16. Gallery hours: Monday - Thursday 09:00 - 16:00. Friday 09:00 – 12:00. Closed on Saturday. Information: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088, a/h (011) 728-8378, e-mail rhcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net
- Chabad's Shul in Sandton Central, presents “Learn, Shmooze, Pray”. Time: 08:15. Enquiries: (011) 440-6600.

Monday (July 20)

- UJW Adult Education Division hosts Mr Justice Ivor Schwartzman, former justice of the South Gauteng High Court on “Proportional Representation: Does it Answer the Quest of Democracy?” Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R35. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.
- Chabad Seniors Club for men and women includes free transport; memory enhancement with occupational therapist Cynthia Liptz; lectures and discussions; refreshments and lunch; iPad lessons, and more. Venue: Chabad House, Savoy. Time: 09:00 - 13:00. Information: Rabbi Ari Kievman (011) 440-6600.

Tuesday (July 21)

- Chabad House presents “Muitplex of Shiurim”.

Wednesday (July 22)

- Afrika Tikun is the beneficiary of a breakfast talk by renowned futurologist Clem Sunter at the Hyatt Regency Johannesburg, 191 Oxford Road, Rosebank. Breakfast from 07:00 - 08:00, talk from 08:00 - 09:00. Cost: R650 pp (excl VAT) or R5 850 per table of 10 (excl. VAT). Contact: Kirsty or Angela, (011) 326-1740 or 081-427-0427 or kirsty@eventmechanics.co.za

Thursday (July 23)

- Sydenham Shul hosts international author and lecturer Rabbi Dr Laibl Wolf of Melbourne, for a weekend of lectures July 23 - 25. Today, Thursday July 23 at 19:45, “Zuma, Blatter . . . Cohen?! Raising Valuable Children in a Valueless World”. Friday July 24 at 07:45, “Kicking Bad Habits - the Neuro-Plastic Brain”; Why You Do What You Do - and Do it Differently. Friday night July 24: Young Adults Dinner with a talk on “Love, Exploitation & Commitment” - Is it About Me, or is it About You?

Friday (July 24)

- UJW Adult Education Division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer in the dept of English at Wits, on “The Prodigal Summer” - a novel by Barbara Kingsolver. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R35. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

Saturday (July 25)

- UJW Adult Education Division hosts Mr Justice Ivor Schwartzman, former justice of the South Gauteng High Court on “Proportional Representation: Does it Answer the Quest of Democracy?” Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R35. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

Community Columns

----- A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies -----

Bapela’s rant in conflict with principles of democracy



Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

Africa is quite happy to involve itself in such interactions. At our meeting with President Jacob Zuma and senior members of his Cabinet last September, we were told that government wishes to engage with all sides in helping to bring about a peaceful solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. However, it would appear that according to Obed Bapela, at least, Israel should be treated differently from every other nation.

Seeking to prevent people from visiting Israel, whether through threats of disciplinary action, expulsion or other sanctions, is also starkly in conflict with the fundamental principles of democracy on which our society is based. Just two weeks ago, we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter which, among other things, asserts the right of all citizens to “travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province, and from South Africa abroad”.

Essentially, Mr Bapela is demanding that members of his party follow the agenda of BDS-SA, an organisation that aggressively lobbies against South Africans having any contact whatsoever with Israel.

BDS has no compunction in resorting to threats and intimidation and even, as we have since learned, offering financial incentives to dissuade people from going on the trip. Such tactics aim at shutting down any possible debate, and imposing a single, distorted interpretation of events on the public.

It is an overtly fascist tactic, and it is dismaying indeed that it has evidently gained a degree of support within the ruling party.

• Listen to Charisse Zeifert on Jewish Board Talk, 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday 12:00 - 13:00.

This column is paid for by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

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Aaron participates in ‘Junior Tour de France’

JACK MILNER

Sometimes first gaining experience is more important than winning and that appears to be something cyclist Aaron Fleishman is likely to have learned after a stint in Europe.

A chance meeting in Plettenberg Bay with one of the country’s top cyclists, Douglas Ryder, set in motion an opportunity that allowed Aaron to race in Europe.

Ryder clearly understands the necessity of getting international experience and exposure and told Aaron how South Africa needed to get juniors into Europe to learn how to race.

That opened the door for the 17-year-old

King David Victory Park learner as Ryder then spoke to the DCM Youth Cycling Team in Belgium on behalf of Aaron and, “the plan was afoot”.

Aaron flew to Europe at the end of June to ride for the DCM Youth Cycling Team in the Tour De Valromey, the Junior Tour of Flanders and then in local one day races and one or two stage races.

The Tour De Valromey is known as the Junior Tour de France and takes the riders through some of the same areas although it is a lot shorter than the three weeks of the senior event.

However, things did not go well for Aaron and although no details are available as yet as to what the circumstances were, he

failed to finish the first stage of the event and obviously is therefore not allowed to participate in the balance of the race.

Something may have gone wrong with the team as there were three withdrawals from DCM Team.

As far as his cycling career is concerned, Aaron started riding as soon as he could walk, but only began racing when he was 13. Starting on his mountain bike but now doing both road and mountain biking, Aaron is ranked No 3 Junior in the National XCM Cup (Ashburton Series) and rides in 2015 for the Design In Motion Cycles team.

The chance to get to Europe and ride against the best juniors in the world is a great opportunity to learn how to compete at the highest level. Many top sportsmen such as tennis player Abe Segal have always believed that as a junior one can learn more from your losses than your victories. Not that Abe enjoyed losing too often!

The Belgian team has had riders such as Thomas de Gendt and Nick Nuyens who have gone on to bigger things.

“To go on my own on this trip is a huge step forward in my cycling ambitions,” Aaron told cyclingdirect.co.za. “I have to say huge thanks to Doug Ryder for putting this together, my parents and my private sponsors for their financial support as this is very expensive, as well as my coach Bruce Diesel, for getting me into shape for this – and also my dietician.”



Aaron Fleishman, 17, has been cycling in some of the top junior events in Europe.

European Maccabi Games returns to Berlin

JACK MILNER

An official Jewish sporting event will be staged in Germany for the first time since the Second World War with the European Maccabi Games being staged in Berlin later this month. The opening ceremony will even be held in the same Olympic park as the 1936 Olympic Games, organised by Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party.

Jewish involvement in organised sport has a troubled history in Europe. Almost all Jews were banned from the German delegation at the 1936 Olympic Games, sparking protests worldwide by anti-fascist demonstrators. In the 1972 Munich Olympics, 11 Jewish members of the Israeli Olympic delegation were taken hostage and eventually murdered by the Palestinian group Black September.

In fact, anti-Semitism in European sport can be traced as far back as the banning of Jews in some Austrian sporting events in 1886.

Consequently, European Jews sought an alternative source of competitive sport, free of systematic discrimination and anti-Jewish sentiment.

The European Maccabi Games are the Jewish European sporting championships, held every four

years in a different European city. It is an offshoot of the World Maccabiah Games, which take place in Israel every four years. Most nations require participants to have at least one Jewish parent or grandparent to qualify to compete.

The choice of Berlin as this year’s host city is particularly significant. It reflects a remarkable turn for the nation once at the centre of the worst Holocaust in history.

Once a place of discrimination and racial hatred, the setting’s significance has not been lost on Daniel Collins, head of the delegation for Great Britain at this summer’s Games, who told The Guardian: “What unites all 2 500 participants from the 36 represented nations is that on all our uniforms and playing kits will be a Star of David.

“I doubt any games anywhere will be as emotionally charged as this one; thousands of Jewish people parading in the Olympic stadium, which houses such meaning, not only to the world’s Jewish community, but to the world’s sporting community.”

As anti-Semitism continues across parts of Europe, organisers hope the Games will stand as a testament to the enduring richness of Europe’s Jewish community.

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4 Volunteering one's time is a key feature of almost everything we do. No matter how small the contribution, we encourage participants to take an active part in all aspects of our conferences.

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5 Shabbat and kashrut are observed in all public areas. We recognise that in private areas, people will behave as they wish. Should participants wish to hold a prayer group, they may do so providing they supply all resources and are responsible for the session or prayer group in its entirety.

GET BLOWN AWAY BY THE BIBLE

JOEL M HOFFMAN, United States
Biblical Scholar, author, raconteur

MISSOURI or Massachusetts, TED talks or Limmud conferences, biblical scholar Joel Hoffman blows away his audience wherever he presents. He has written or contributed to over 20 books which include *The Bible's Cutting Room Floor: The Holy Scriptures Missing From Your Bible*. He is also the author of the thriller series *The Warwick Files*. He will present on topics such as *3 000 Years of Jewish Continuity as Seen Through 3 000 Years of Hebrew*, *Four Exiles and Four Spiritual Revolutions*, *The Bible Doesn't Say That* and *The Mystery and Majesty of the Dead Sea Scrolls*.

RETHINKING THE POLISH ROLE IN SHOAH

ANNAMARIA ORLA-BUKOWSKA, Poland
Social Anthropologist

ANNAMARIA ORLA-BUKOWSKA specialises in studying the long and fraught relationship between Polish Christians and their Jewish neighbours, particularly during the Shoah. Her influential studies have questioned the 'uninformed' anti-Polish bias of much Jewish writing about the Holocaust. She is based at the Jagiellonian Uni-

versity in Krakow and also works at the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau. She has guest-lectured internationally, was a Koerner Holocaust Fellow in Oxford Centre and a Yad Vashem Fellow. Dr Orla-Bukowska is co-editor of a book which explores the evolving relationship between Poles and Jews. Her sessions will explore issues such as the Jewish relationship with the symbol of the cross, and the lessons we can learn from the Righteous among the Nations in the former Soviet bloc.



THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF A STRANGE TRIBE: JEWS



SAMUEL HEILMAN, United States
Sociologist, author and teacher

SAMUEL HEILMAN studies Orthodox Judaism the way an anthropologist studies exotic tribes: he is interested in the beliefs, the rituals, and the impact of modernity on ancient traditions. The difference between Heilman and the anthropologist is that he himself is an observant Orthodox Jew, one who started his studies at a yeshiva. Over forty years, he has taught in cities around the world and become the go-to-guy for the US media whenever there is an article on Judaism. His ideas are often controversial, and the latest of his eleven books, *The Rebbe: The Life and Afterlife of Menachem Mendel Schneerson*, is perhaps the most controversial of all. He will present on *The Future of Jewry as Seen by a Sociologist*.

A JEWISH-SHE BEAST AMONG THE VIKINGS



ANNIKA HERNROTH-ROTHSTEIN, Sweden
Writer and political activist

SWEDEN'S Annika Hernroth-Rothstein made international headlines when she filed for asylum in her own country on the basis of religious persecution, aiming to force her government to protect the Jewish minority and acknowledge the growing anti-semitism in the country. She describes herself as a political adviser, writer, conservative and 'Jewish She-Beast'. She is a strong defender of Israel, European Jewry and a campaigner for the protection of religious rights. She will tell her own life story at Limmud – her grandparents were forced to hide their Jewish identity in Sweden – and also present on *The Local Story Behind Global Jihad*.

THE SENSATIONAL LIMMUD 2015 MIND-BLAST

THE BBC’S NUMBER ONE

YAIR DALAL, ISRAEL
Award-winning Iraqi-Jewish musician

THE BBC World Music Awards named him the best musician in the Middle East. Grammy-nominated Yair Dalal brings a tantalising fusion of classical European, Arab and Indian music to the Limmud South Africa stage.

Dalal’s Iraqi-Jewish descent deeply influences his work, adding a unique aspect to its sound. An eclectic and versatile musician, Dalal not only plays the oud and violin and sings accompaniment, he also composes his own music.

This remarkable artist, who also works as a peace activist, will share his unique musical wisdom at Limmud South Africa by revealing the little known history of the music of Middle Eastern Jews in a session *Chalgi Baghdad* (Baghdad Bandstand). He will also do a live concert.



LET’S NOT FORGET OUR GREAT LOCAL SPEAKERS

JOHN PERLMAN
Well-known radio personality John Perlman is the founder of The Dreamfields Project, an NGO which provides football equipment, league programmes and fields for township and rural kids. He hosts *Today with John Perlman* on Kaya FM.

ADAM MENDELSON
Adam Mendelsohn is the new director of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town. *The Rag Race*, his recent book about Jewish success in America and British Empire, won a National Jewish Book Award in the United States in 2015.

ADAM HABIB
Professor Habib is Vice Chancellor at the University of the Witwatersrand – an academic, activist, administrator, and prominent political media commentator and columnist. He has played an important mediating role during the recent student conflicts. He will present on *An Open Environment: Towards Robust and Respectful Debate on Campus*.

GLYNIS BREYTENBACH
Glynis Breytenbach is a whistle-blowing former prosecutor, whose long-running dispute with the National Prosecuting Authority made headlines. Now a Member of Parliament for the DA and Shadow Minister of Justice, she will present on *The State of the Opposition*.

COURTNEIGH CLOUD
Courtneigh Cloud is a third-generation Holocaust survivor who has written and directed an award-winning play about her grandfather titled *The Boys from the Ashes*. She works as an educator with the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre. She will perform *The Boys from the Ashes*.

TERRY KURGAN
Terry Kurgan is an award-winning artist, writer and curator. Her work explores photography, memory, public intimacy, and a range of South African issues. It has been exhibited in Johannesburg, New York, London, Paris and Berlin. She will present *The Secret Life of Family Photographs*.



WHAT ABOUT THE OUTSIDERS?

DON FUTTERMAN, Israel
Programme Director of the Moriah Fund. Director of the Israel Center for Educational Innovation

DON FUTTERMAN is a civil rights activist who works at promoting social justice and democracy in Israel. He is particularly concerned with the treatment of minority groups such as the Ethiopians, with whom he works on some innovative educational projects. He lobbies on behalf of the African migrant communities in Israel and also works with Bedouins and other minority groups.

He is best-known in Israel as a high-profile columnist on Haáretz and as a radio personality on a popular new Tel Aviv internet radio station, where his show, *The Promised Podcast*, discusses current political issues, in particular his concerns about settlements and the Netanyahu government. He will speak about *The Ethiopian Aliya: Success or Failure?*, *The Politics of Power: How Israel treats its Bedouin citizens & African refugees*



THE HALACHA OF BUSINESS MORALITY

NAFTALI BRAWER, UK
Chief Executive, Spiritual Capital Foundation

A BRILLIANT and engaging public speaker, Naftali Brawer approaches religious subjects from the sides or from underneath, with surprising results.

In his thought-provoking sessions, Brawer will explore topics such the economics of prayer, the ‘evolution’ of God, the complicated relationship between Halacha and social values, and the role of violence in the Bible.

Naftali Brawer is a broadcaster, columnist and published author. Ordained a rabbi at 22, he holds a PhD from University College London and his academic interests include Hasidism and theology.

He served as the spiritual leader to one of the largest Orthodox synagogues in Europe, has been involved in inter-faith and human rights work, and is currently the chief executive of the Spiritual Capital Foundation, which consults on moral leadership in business.

